

WOODHAM BURN PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER 7TH FEBRUARY 2025

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Message from Mr Sparrow

We have had a busy few weeks in school where children have been working hard to learn new things. I have had the pleasure of seeing so many young people's amazing work this week; it's clear that children understand the importance of working hard to be able to learn.

Escape boxes

Year 5 and 6 had to be Teamwork Tigers this week to try and crack the code to some escape boxes linked to their history work. The children were given information that linked to a problem to be solved. The children spoke so positively of the buzzes and there was brilliant discussion heard.



Pirates

School became all very scary place as Year 2 weren't in school and we instead had a horde of scary pirates. The password to their classroom was Treasure and they were determined to find gold. The adults did a great job of whipping the scary crew into ship shape as they were soon getting on with work like they were our normal Year 2 class. So many smiles on faces – and that wasn't just the adults!



Science Spectacular

On Monday, our school Science Ambassadors had the opportunity to attend Woodham Academy alongside several other schools for a whole day of Science.

We developed skills in public speaking, teamwork, confidence, communication and cooperation.

Science mentors from Woodham Academy, guided us through 8 different experiments. We are excited to share and present these with the rest of the school very soon!



Road Safety - Nursery

Last week went on a road safety walk, we used various road crossings around the town. This week we will be using our road safety equipment in the nursery garden and practise what we have learnt and what we know already.

We went on a local bus and were describing the road such as straight, bumpy, twisty, curved, round (roundabout) etc, we will be using these words in other activities this week. When we returned to nursery the children created a representation of our journey, and what we seen on the way. A special thank you to all of our volunteers who make our outings possible.



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about HEALTH & FITNESS APPS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Physical wellbeing apps are useful tools for monitoring and improving our health. They allow us to balance nutrition, set goals, track our activities and sleep patterns, and motivate us to exercise. Nonetheless, there *have* been some reported drawbacks; this guide outlines some of these concerns and explains how to use fitness apps safely.

LACK OF PERSONALISATION

Many apps take a one-size-fits-all approach, failing to account for the varying ages and abilities of children: a 16-year-old, for example, will have different physical needs to a child of 10. This can create unrealistic expectations and set exercises which may be too advanced for younger children or too simple for older ones.

NOT DEVELOPED BY EXPERTS

Some fitness and wellbeing apps are developed by experts in the field – but a concerning number of them *aren't*. As such, these platforms may contain inaccurate information. They may present safety concerns by giving incorrect advice regarding physical activities or might include age-inappropriate content which would clearly cause more harm than good.

REDUCED INTERACTION WITH OTHERS

Physical wellbeing apps can remove the social and interactive elements which physical exercise can offer – for instance, meeting people at fitness classes, at the gym or during any other such activities. Research has found that young people generally dislike this aspect of fitness apps, suggesting that they would rather exercise in the company of friends or other like-minded individuals.

DATA AND PRIVACY CONCERNS

Fitness and wellbeing apps tend to collect a lot of personal information from their users, including name, location, date of birth, details of their physical health and more. It's worth keeping in mind that some of these apps may sell this data to third parties. We'd advise that any apps young people download should have the correct legislation in place to protect their safety and privacy while using the service.

ADDITIONAL COSTS

While many fitness apps are free to download, the initial content is quite basic. Users will only receive more helpful content (such as new workouts, nutrition advice or a personalised plan) by signing up to a subscription or paying for extra features. This can incentivise users to spend money on the service – a cost which can quickly mount up.

DEPENDENCY ON THE APP

While physical wellbeing apps can help motivate young users to manage their fitness, there's a possibility that – without being sent frequent rewards and reminders – children could start to lose their natural drive to be active. Young people may also become obsessed with tracking their exercise, health and eating habits: this can have negative effects on their mental and emotional wellbeing.

Advice for Parents & Educators

EXERCISE AND SOCIALISE

Highlight the importance of children enjoying fitness activities with family and friends, rather than always exercising alone. Emphasise the fun they can have by interacting with others rather than solely relying on an app to maintain their regime. Remind them of the importance of staying active, as well as the benefits of doing so with company.

PROMOTE POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

While we want children to be active and healthy, we must also ensure they don't become fixated on how they look and begin take things too far. During childhood and adolescence, the body is still growing and changing. It's vitally important for young people's wellbeing that we promote a positive body image and a healthy relationship with food, empowering them to make informed decisions about their diet and lifestyle.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian Government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



REVIEW THE APP FIRST

Before allowing someone under 18 to install a fitness and wellbeing app, check its age rating, read its reviews and scroll through its data policy, to ensure its suitability for younger users. You could also try it yourself, to see if it's appropriate for the child's particular needs and decide if you're comfortable with them using it. Ensure that any privacy-compromising features – such as location tracking – are disabled.

USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

As with all apps, it's important for parents to familiarise themselves with any controls on the app and to use these on a child's account. The specific settings vary between platforms but – most commonly – these will relate to screen-time limits, disabling or capping in-app purchases, and managing social aspects or features which aren't age appropriate. By utilising these controls, you can help to ensure a child is getting a safe experience.