



PARKLANDS BULLETIN

WEEK 1



1st September - 5th September
2025

Headteacher's Message

Dear parents and carers,

It has been lovely to welcome back all of our pupils and staff after the Summer Break. We have reminded all pupils of our expectations related to uniform, behaviour, and attendance. We appreciate your continued support with this as we return to our serious academic focus for another year. Overall pupils have been wonderful and have returned to us with the correct uniform and ready to work. In a small number of cases an area for continued focus will be make-up and jewellery and we would appreciate your help in ensuring that your children are upholding the standards of uniform that we expect.

This year we have welcomed a number of new and returning staff members. These are:

- Mrs Kothia and Miss Law, who have both returned from maternity leave to curriculum leadership positions.

We have also welcomed some new staff:

- Mr Christie - Curriculum Leader for Business Studies; Teacher of Computing
- Mrs Butterworth and Mr Kalil - Maths Teachers
- Miss Taylor - Science Teacher
- Mr Chadwick - Returning Science Teacher
- Miss Aspinall - Learning Support Assistant
- Mr Herbane - Languages Teacher

In addition, Miss Rhodes has joined the Senior Leadership Team as Assistant Headteacher.

In addition to the return of all pupils to school, we held our welcome to Year 11 Evening on Wednesday night for parents and carers of Year 11 pupils. This event was the start of a busy year for Year 11 as they begin to prepare for their final GCSE exams.

Wednesday next week is our KS3 Home Study Evening. This event is open to parents and carers of all KS3 pupils and will provide information about our Home Study programme and will also provide valuable advice and strategies for supporting your child with their Home Study.

We look forward to another successful and exciting year for our Parklands Community.

Mrs. Batson
Headteacher

Whole School Messages

Key Dates - September 2025

- Tuesday 9th September – *Welcome to KS3 Home Study* evening (more information to follow)
- Tuesday 9th September - Year 10 Review Day and Trackers will be sent home
- Friday 26th September – Macmillan Coffee Morning (more information to follow)

Y9 and Y10 same day detentions

Please be aware that if your child should receive a **BfL 1 or 0** they will be required to serve a same day detention after school from 3pm until 3.30pm. We hope this sanction may lead to an improved focus and better behaviour in lessons. We will endeavour to notify you by text message should your child need to attend the detention however please be aware this may not always be possible depending on the time of day. For example, if your child receives a 1 or 0 during their P5 lesson we may not be able to notify you ahead of picking your child up at the end of the day. You can also monitor your child's BFL on the EduLink app under the 'Attendance' section.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Polite reminder - Dropping items off at reception

Parents and carers are welcome to drop off forgotten items at reception, however please note that we are not able to notify pupils to let them know an item has arrived. Due to the high volume of PE kits and equipment we receive throughout the school day this is not possible. However, pupils are regularly informed and reminded that if they realise they have forgotten something they are able to check at the office to see if an item has been dropped off, even if a parent/carers hasn't been able to notify them prior. Pupils can continue to check throughout the day.

Please speak with your child to let them know that this is the protocol and therefore should they forget anything, they will know where to look.

Cashless systems - SCOPAY

To ensure smooth transactions that can be tracked and recorded for trips, food payments, uniform and more, we ask that payments are made online on SCOPAY wherever possible. We aim to reduce the amount of cash that is handled in school to improve efficiency and security. If you do not have a SCOPAY account, please email admin@parklandsacademy.co.uk stating your child's full name, form group and year group and a SCOPAY link will be sent to you. If this link does not arrive in your inbox please check your junk box.

Lockers

We are currently allocating recently purchased lockers to pupils. Once allocated the key will either be sent out via form tutors or a message will be sent out to ask students to collect it from the office. Due to the volume this can take some time, so please don't worry if your child hasn't received their key yet. Please email admin@parklandsacademy.co.uk with any questions.

Whole School Messages

Year 11

Welcome back to school, and thank you to everyone who attended the 'Welcome to Year 11' evening last Wednesday. I hope the evening provided you with valuable information about the year ahead. If you were unable to attend, the key information is attached [here](#).

I will be responsible for tracking and monitoring Year 11 pupils' progress towards their GCSE exams, and for working with their House Achievement Leader to ensure we provide the right support for each pupil to achieve their best. We have a range of effective support and intervention plans that we will put in place throughout the year.

If you have any questions regarding academic performance at any point this year, please feel free to email me.

Kind regards,

Mr Metcalf
Assistant Headteacher
Year 11 Achievement Lead

This Week in KS3 Religious Studies

Welcome back to the new term! Each week, we will share three discussion questions for each year group so you can talk with your child about their current Religious Studies learning. This is a great way to engage with their thinking, explore their ideas, and support their understanding of key concepts.

Current Units:

- **Year 7: Ultimate Questions – Is it possible to find answers to ultimate questions?**
- **Year 8: Prejudice and Discrimination – Why do people discriminate?**
- **Year 9: Human Rights and Social Justice – Do we still need human rights today?**

This Week's Questions –

Year 7 (RS & why is matters)

- Why do we study Religious Studies at school?
- Where do religions originally come from?
- Why might RS matter for our lives outside of school?



Year 8 (Stereotyping)

- What is a stereotype, and why can it be harmful?
- Do you think everyone has unconscious prejudices?
- Can stereotypes ever be positive, or are they always negative?



Year 9 (Introduction to Sikhism)

- What do you already know about Sikhism?
- What are the 5 Ks in Sikhism, and why are they important?
- How does Sikhism compare to another religion you know?



Attendance

Weekly Attendance Update

As part of our ongoing commitment to fostering a positive and successful learning environment at Parklands, we would like to provide you with an update on the overall attendance across the school. Regular attendance is essential for student success, and we want to share important information regarding current trends, key attendance goals and ways we can work together to support all of our students.

We currently have 59 students who have 100% attendance so far this year. If your child is one of these students please congratulate them and continue to encourage their attendance, it is a great achievement.

House	This week %	This year %
ANZ	97.1%	97.1%
ASA	97%	97%
EUR	96.8%	96.8%
SAM	96.6%	96.6%
AFR	97.9%	97.9%
Totals %	96.8%	96.8%

Students are expected to be in the school building at 8:25am, heading to form at 8:30am and be in form by 8:35am. If they are arriving between 8:35am and 9:15am for any reason they need to enter through the pupil entrance and be signed in at the Top Office.

Whole School Messages

Perfect 3s

Excellent Behaviour for Learning goes hand in hand with achievement. It is an excellent indicator of how your child is performing in lessons. Who's had the Perfect 3 since we've been back?

Year 7: 212 pupils to date

Year 8: 198 pupils to date

Year 9: 208 pupils to date

Year 10: 212 students to date

Year 11: 188 students to date

All: 1018 students

How many had the perfect 3 in the previous week?

Year 7: N/A

Year 8: N/A

Year 9: N/A

Year 10: N/A

Year 11: N/A

All: N/A

Please congratulate your child if they have the Perfect 3. All BfL scores can be seen in the Edulink app.

How many pupils have a BfL score of 2.99 - 3?

Year 7: TBC

Year 8: TBC

Year 9: TBC

Year 10: TBC

Year 11: TBC

All: TBC

Students, please click the link to see what clubs, trips and activities are happening in school [Parklands Bulletin](#)

Weekly Learning Support Board - please click [here](#)



Learning Support Board
Week Commencing
8th September 2025

"The first step towards getting somewhere is to decide you're not going to stay where you are."
J. P. MORGAN



LANCASHIRE LOCAL OFFER
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Local Offer in Lancashire

Have You Heard the News?
Welcome to the new school year. This is a time of many new beginnings. New year sevens, new subjects, everybody moving up a year, GCSE study for our newly promoted years 10s and 11s, and new teachers. Some returning after time away. Best wishes to you all. Remember that the door to N17 is always open (even when it appears to be closed).
Learningsupport@parklandsacademy.co.uk



What kind of cheese is this?
Last week's answer: Minimum speed



Joke of the Week
What did you learn at school today?
NOT ENOUGH. I have to go back tomorrow.

EVERY MOMENT IS A NEW BEGINNING.



Follow us on Instagram:
[p_h_s_learningssupport](#)

Useful Links

- ADDitude Magazine
- Autism Eye
- Autism Parenting Magazine
- British Dyslexia Association
- The Communication Trust

- FIND Newsletter
- GOV.UK Covid-19 Information
- Headspace (Meditation & Sleep)
- KOOTH Mental Health Support
- Local Offer
- NHS Urgent Mental Health Helpline
- Witherslack Group

Whole School Messages

Welcome back to South America House!

It's lovely to see both familiar faces and new ones around. The uniform and standards have been high during the first week, which is great to see – let's keep it up!

Just a reminder that pupils need to be in their form rooms by **8:35am** each morning.

There will be a South America House assembly next **Thursday 11th September**. Pupils should go straight to the hall where they will be registered.

All pupils should now have their Scopay code and logins. If you have any issues, please email me kburrill@parklandsacademy.co.uk or pop by the HALS office.

Thank you

Miss Burrill

Welcome back, Europe House!

I hope you've all had a fantastic summer break and are feeling refreshed and ready for the new school year.

A special welcome to our **Year 7s**, it's great to have you with us! You're now a part of Europe House, and we can't wait to see you get involved in school life.

To our **Year 11s**, good luck as you start your final year. It's an important one, and we're all here to support you in achieving your goals.

I'm really looking forward to a great year ahead, with everyone getting fully involved in our **House competitions** and showing your best behavior.

Let's make this our best year yet!

Mrs Fox

Europe House Achievement Leader

Whole School Messages

🎉 We're Winners of the Derian House Junior Challenge! 🎉

We're delighted to share that, after raising an amazing £1,485.29 during Learning Challenge Week, we have won the Derian House Junior Challenge!

This year's challenge brought together 20 school groups from across Lancashire and South Cumbria, each given the task of turning a single £50 note into as much as possible for Derian House Children's Hospice.

The results were nothing short of inspiring — through creativity, teamwork, and determination, the students collectively raised over £7,500 in support of their local children's hospice.

We are incredibly proud of our pupils, grateful to everyone who supported us, and thrilled to have made such a meaningful difference #PROUDTOBEPARKLANDS



THE PERU CREW PRESENTS



MOVIE

Night

THURSDAY

25TH SEPTEMBER

6-8PM

TICKETS £3

BUY ON SCOPAY

YEARS 7, 8 AND 9 ONLY

See Mr Johnston in The Library for more information

Whole School Messages

PE Update week beginning 2nd September 2025

Welcome back to the start of a new school year! All PE extra curricular clubs will officially start next week! We always get a fantastic turn out for our clubs and look forward to the year ahead. We have something on almost every night after school. There is no need to sign up just look at the extra curricular timetable, choose an activity, bring a kit and attend! This half term we have

- **Boys Football** - Y7 Monday. Y8/9 Thursday Y10/11 Tuesday.
- **Girls Football** - All years Friday
- **Netball** - , Y8-11 Monday, Y7-9 Tuesday, Y7-11 Thursday
- **GCSE Handball** - Friday
- **Rugby** - all years Thursday
- **Cheerleading** - teams are split into key stage 3 and key stage 4 and train.
Y7,8,9 Thursday, Y10/11 Tuesday
- **Pom Dance** - Y7 Monday, Y8/9 Thursday, Y10/11 Tuesday
- **Dance** - Y7 Monday, Y8/9 Wednesday, Y10/11 Thursday.
-



DANCE & CHEER CLUBS



Monday

3pm - 4pm
4pm - 4.45pm

Year 7
Year 7

Dance, in the Hall
Pom Dance, in the Gym

Tuesday

3pm - 4.15pm
4.15pm - 5pm

Year 10 & 11
Year 10 & 11

Cheerleading, in the Gym
Pom Dance, in the Gym

Wednesday

3pm - 4pm
4pm - 5pm

Year 8 & 9
KS3 Dance

Dance, in the Hall
Dance Team, in the Pavilion

Thursday

3pm - 4pm
4pm - 5pm
3pm - 4.15pm
4.15pm - 5pm

Year 10 & 11
KS4 Dance
Year 7, 8 & 9
Year 7, 8 & 9

Dance, in the Pavilion
Dance Team, in the Pavilion
Cheerleading, in the Gym
Pom Dance, in the Gym

Friday

3pm - 4pm

Year 10 & 11

GCSE Contemporary Dance
in the Pavilion

* PE kit or Dance kit must be worn and hair tied back *



WRAP UP LANCASHIRE



As a school we are getting behind local initiatives and charities.

If you have any unwanted WARM COATS AND JACKETS at home please bring them in and dump them in the designated bin in the FITNESS SUITE PE office.

We will take any unwanted coats and give them to charities that support the homeless, refugees, children living in poverty and people fleeing domestic violence

*Coats must have working zips and be in good condition/clean.

PE HOODIES AVAILABLE



We have a large amount of PE hoodies available in school in a range of sizes for **free**.

These can be worn during PE lessons.

Please encourage your child to come and collect one from the PE office.

We have many without initials but when these run out we can offer pre-loved hoodies that do have initials on.

First come first served.

KS3 Dance Team Auditions 2025

Limited Places!



Monday 15th September 3.50pm - 5pm * Hall * Open to Years 7-9

You do not need to prepare anything. You will be taught a short routine then perform in groups.

The KS3 Dance team - will compete in both local and national dance competitions.

Have 2 routines to learn before the show next year.

Must have high levels of commitment and attendance and a good BFL.

Team members must be available for; Shine for Sally - Saturday 22nd November (evening) & Sunday 23rd November (afternoon), School dance show - 4th - 6th March 2026, and the National schools cheerleading competition - Sunday 28th June 2026.

Macmillan Coffee Morning



Our Macmillan Coffee Morning is happening on Friday, 26th September. More information to follow.

Whole School Messages

Ski Trip 2027

SKI TRIP

- 5 full days with ski instruction
- Ski hire
- Boot hire
- All meals provided including breakfast on the outbound and inbound journey
- Full area ski lift pass
- Apres ski programme including bowling, pizza, ice cream & disco
- Trip hoody
- Helmet hire
- Comprehensive winter sports insurance.

Open to years 7-9

The next trip will not go until 2029 so don't miss out!

13th February 2027

7 days

Total cost: £1590

Deposit: £100



Deposit Payments Via ScoPay

Email Miss Marr more information.

gmarr@parklandsacademy.co.uk

Letters available from the pavilion office.

The deadline to sign up has been extended to Friday 12th September.

Menu



OUR MENU WEEK 2

Choose your favorite dish



Monday

Main Meal

Chinese chicken curry £2.40 (70g)

Vegetarian option

Curried veggie noodles £2.40 (75g)

Jacket Potatoes

with various fillings (GF) (37g)

Grab & Go

Pizza twist £2.10(25g)
Chicken wrap £1.90(77g)
Meat & potato pie £1.50(23g)



Tuesday

Main Meal

Beef hotpot £2.40 (GF) (65g)

Vegetarian option

Cheese pie served with veg £2.40 (65g)

Jacket Potatoes

with various fillings (GF) (37g)

Grab & Go

Sausage roll £1.50(24g)
Cheese pasty £1.50(25g)
Pizza twist £2.10(25g)



Wednesday

Main Meal

Lasagna £2.40 (70g)

Vegetarian option

Mac & cheese £2.40 (GF) (65g)

Jacket Potatoes

with various fillings (GF) (37g)

Grab & Go

Pizza £1.50(24g)
Chicken wrap £1.90(77g)
Herby potato cubes £1.50(19g)



Thursday

Main Meal

Cottage pie £2.40 (GF) (64g)

Vegetarian option

Veggie pasta bake £2.40 (65g)

Jacket Potatoes

with various fillings (GF) (37g)

Grab & Go

Panini £1.90(35g)
Pizza twist £2.10(25g)
Chicken wrap £1.90(77g)



Friday

Main Meal

Sausage & mash £2.40 (64g)

Vegetarian option

Quorn sausage & mash £2.40 (65g)

Jacket Potatoes

with various fillings (GF) (37g)

Grab & Go

Panini £1.90(35g)
Chicken wrap £1.90(77g)
Steak pie £1.50(28g)



Click [here](#) for career news.



For those of you who are new to Parklands, Career News is the weekly magazine covering all aspects of careers here at Parklands. In this week's issue, you will find details of open events at local colleges and training providers; virtual work experience opportunities in the medical, business and finance fields; online courses that pupils can complete in their own time; advice and guidance; apprenticeship vacancies; career of the week and much more.

Dates for the Diary:

Preston College open evening Wednesday 1 October from 4pm - 7pm
 Wigan & Leigh open evening Monday 6 October from 4.30pm - 7pm
 Bolton Sixth Form open evening Wednesday 8 October from 5pm - 8pm

Keep an eye out for further college open dates and for the Careers Calendar - coming soon.
 Year 11 will be making applications to colleges after the half term break, as interviews will start in January. They will have a number of assemblies and advice sessions about this, so please don't panic - nobody will miss out.

ONE STOP SHoP

A monthly drop-in where families can visit to access advice & support with:

Housing

Emotional Health &

Wellbeing

Finances

Home Safety

Relationships

Foodbanks... & more

TEL: 01257 516316

EMAIL: chorleyfamilyhub@lancashire.gov.uk

Inspire
Youth Zone
Chapel St
Chorley
PR7 1BS

Thursday
11th Sept

9am till
12 noon

FAMILY
HUB
CHORLEY

INSPIRE
CHORLEY
YOUTH ZONE

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

RECOGNISING & MANAGING STRESS

According to recent studies, over 60% of young people report feeling regularly overwhelmed – with stress impacting their learning, emotional wellbeing and social connections. If left unaddressed, stress can lead to more serious concerns such as anxiety, depression or disengagement. This guide offers ten practical, evidence-based strategies to help children and young people recognise, manage and recover from stress in healthy ways.

1 SPOT THE SUBTLE SIGNS

Look out for changes in mood, behaviour, or energy levels, such as irritability, withdrawal, clinginess, or frequent headaches. These may indicate that a child is feeling overwhelmed. By tuning into these cues early and offering a calm, non-judgemental space to talk, adults can help children feel heard and supported before issues escalate.

2 KEEP CONVERSATIONS FLOWING

Make time for open, informal check-ins – whether it's during car journeys, over dinner, or in quiet classroom moments. Let children know it's okay to talk about what's bothering them. Regular, low-pressure conversations create a safe space where emotions are validated, not dismissed.

3 MAKE MOVEMENT PART OF THE DAY

Physical activity can dramatically reduce stress hormones while improving mood and focus. Encourage movement through activities children genuinely enjoy – from team sports to dancing around the kitchen. Even light activity like stretching or walking the dog can help us all unwind.

4 SUPPORT HEALTHY SLEEP PATTERNS

Poor sleep makes stress harder to manage. Establish a calming evening routine that avoids screens before bedtime and promotes winding down, such as reading, listening to music, or chatting quietly. Good sleep hygiene helps reset mood, enhances concentration, and boosts emotional resilience.

5 PRACTISE MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness doesn't have to mean long periods of meditation. A few slow breaths before lessons or short family meditation sessions before bed can make a real difference. These simple habits help children ground themselves, reduce emotional reactivity, and build inner calm over time.

6 SET DIGITAL BOUNDARIES

Excessive screen time, especially before bed or on social media, is linked with higher stress levels. Set clear expectations for when and where devices can be used and suggest screen-free alternatives like crafts, nature walks, or board games to promote digital balance and reduce overstimulation.

7 NURTURE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Strong relationships act as a buffer against stress. Whether it's a trusted adult, a sibling, or a good friend, ensure children have people around them they can talk to and spend quality time with. Help them build those bonds through shared activities and meaningful interaction.

8 PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION

Set realistic goals and praise effort, not just outcomes. When children feel pressured to be perfect, stress naturally follows. Celebrate small wins and help them reframe setbacks as learning opportunities. This helps build confidence and reduces the fear of failure.

9 TEACH EVERYDAY PROBLEM-SOLVING

Use real-life scenarios to build resilience. Encourage children to identify problems, consider possible solutions, and choose a plan of action. Practising these steps builds a sense of control and reduces the helplessness that often accompanies stress.

10 BE THE MODEL THEY NEED

Children notice how adults respond to challenges. Model healthy coping strategies such as taking breaks, asking for help, or calmly expressing frustration. By showing how you manage stress constructively, you help normalise these behaviours and encourage children to do the same.

Meet Our Expert

Anna Bateman is Director of Halcyon Education Ltd, Director for Wellbeing and Family Services at Leigh Trust, and lead expert for mental health at The National College. Anna specialises in strategic mental health solutions for schools, supporting educators and families to improve resilience, emotional literacy, and overall wellbeing for children across the UK.



The National College

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about GROUP CHATS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

On messaging apps, social media and online games, group chats are one of the most popular ways that children connect. Group chats allow messages, images and videos to be shared in one place and help friendships flourish; however, they also come with a number of risks.

TEASING AND BULLYING

Children of all ages are keen to fit in socially, and group chats can sometimes complicate that process. While group chats can foster connection, they can also give way to mean comments or jokes at someone's expense, especially when others join in for laughs. When bullying happens publicly, in front of friends and classmates, it can intensify the emotional impact – adding to embarrassment, anxiety and feelings of isolation for the child being targeted.

UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Children often can't control who is added to a group, which can lead to privacy concerns. Sharing personal details in group chats can be dangerous, and children have no control over what others do with the material they send. Some members of the chat might even decide to use such information maliciously.

PEER PRESSURE

Children may feel they have to constantly stay engaged just to be included and keep up with the conversation. In some cases, they might partake in inappropriate behaviours – like sharing explicit photos, jokes or teasing – just to fit in. Group settings can also encourage children to act in ways they normally wouldn't, or stay silent when they know something is wrong, out of fear of being excluded. Some children may find it difficult to leave toxic group chats.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some group chats may include inappropriate language or imagery. Even if a child isn't actively participating in the conversation, they may still be exposed to this content simply by being part of the group. Some apps have disappearing messaging features, where content is only available once or for a few seconds, which makes it harder for children to report something they've seen.

EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

Exclusion in group chats is common and can take several forms. Sometimes a new group is created specifically to leave one child out on purpose. In other cases, the chat may happen on an app that a child doesn't have access to, making it impossible for them to join in. This can cause feelings of being left out – even unintentionally.

VIDEO AND LIVE CHATS

Many popular apps allow children to engage in live streaming with interactive chats or have group video chats. Anyone can be added to these streams, and often children tag peers in the comments and have conversations which are unmoderated. There's a risk of being exposed to inappropriate or violent content and offensive language, either in the group videos or via the group chats.

Advice for Parents & Educators

CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats can become an arena for children to compete for social status. Help children consider how people might feel if they behave unkindly. If a child does upset someone, encourage them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

SET SOME GROUP CHAT RULES

Discuss safe group chat practices, such as asking a peer for consent before adding them to a group chat, or leaving a group chat if a stranger is added. Tell children that if they're added to a group they didn't agree to beforehand, it's OK for them to leave immediately.

BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If a child encounters inappropriate content or feels uncomfortable in a group chat, encourage them to block and report the sender and leave the group. Make sure children know it's OK to leave a group chat if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Group chats are an excellent way for children to connect and feel like they belong. However, remind them that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded. Instead of responding to the person who's upset them. Validate their feelings and empower them by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. You can also encourage children to speak up if they witness others being bullied.

PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

It's vital for children to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Ensure they understand the importance of not revealing personal details – like their address, their school, or photos they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they can't be certain where it might end up or how it might be used.

SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Being bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be an irritating distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to children that they can still be part of a group chat while disabling notifications. In fact, it would be healthier for them to do so, helping them avoid the pressure to respond immediately.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant at BCyberAware, who has developed anti-bullying and cyber-safety workshops and policies for schools in Australia and the UK. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government, comparing the internet use and online behaviours of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



The National College

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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about TECHNOLOGY ATTACHMENT

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

In today's digital age, children are increasingly forming emotional and habitual attachments to their devices. With 98% regularly accessing the internet and nearly half engaging in live streaming or content sharing, their online presence is greater than ever. This guide explores the phenomenon of technology attachment in young people and offers expert advice on fostering healthier digital habits.

WIRED FOR REWARD

Children's brains are particularly sensitive to reward-based stimulation, and some digital platforms, especially those offering quick-hit content like short-form videos, are designed to exploit this. The instant gratification of likes, comments, and rapid scene changes triggers dopamine releases, making these interactions highly addictive. Over time, this may contribute to changes in attention patterns and a reduced inclination towards activities that involve prolonged focus or delayed gratification, such as reading, problem-solving, or creative play.

NIGHT-TIME TECH HABITS

Screen use late into the evening can disrupt natural sleep patterns by suppressing melatonin, the hormone that regulates sleep. Children engaging with stimulating content may experience delayed bedtimes, lower sleep quality, and increased fatigue during the day. Additionally, fear of missing out (FOMO) on online interactions can cause anxiety and resistance to logging off, creating a cycle of late-night engagement and tired mornings.

SHAPED BY SCREENS

For many children, digital spaces have become a key arena for identity exploration and expression. Social media encourages them to curate their image carefully, with likes, comments, and shares serving as social validation. This environment can tie self-esteem to online feedback, making children vulnerable to comparison, self-doubt, and pressure to present a perfect version of themselves, even when it doesn't reflect reality.

DIGITAL WORLD DANGERS

The internet can expose children to unfiltered content, some of which may be inappropriate, misleading, or harmful. Cyberbullying, exposure to idealised lifestyles, and online predators are all risks children face, often without fully understanding the consequences. Misinformation can shape distorted worldviews, while constant comparison to others can erode self-confidence. Without guidance, children may internalise these digital dangers, impacting their emotional and mental health.

DIGITAL DEPENDENCY BUILDS

Devices often become digital comfort blankets. In moments of boredom, anxiety, or loneliness, children may instinctively reach for screens to self-soothe. This reliance on digital distraction limits their ability to develop healthy coping mechanisms, such as mindfulness, conversation or physical activity. As the habit builds, their dependency may displace real-world experiences and emotional resilience.

FRIENDSHIPS & FILTERS

Technology transforms how young people socialise, often replacing face-to-face interaction with text-based or image-based communication. While messaging apps and social media enable connection, they may also limit emotional expression and the development of essential interpersonal skills, such as tone recognition, empathy, and reading body language. As a result, some children may become less confident with exchanges in person and more reliant on digital personas to navigate friendships.

Advice for Parents & Educators

READ THE ROOM

Pay attention to behavioural changes that may signal unhealthy tech attachment. This includes mood swings, increased secrecy about online activity, withdrawal from family time or hobbies, and visible distress when separated from devices. These cues can indicate deeper emotional reliance or even exposure to distressing content. Early recognition allows for proactive support and meaningful conversation.

DON'T WAIT, REACH OUT EARLY

If a child's relationship with technology starts affecting their emotional wellbeing, school performance, or social connections, don't hesitate to seek help. Open up discussions with teachers, pastoral staff, or digital wellbeing professionals. Early intervention is key, and a supportive network can provide tools, resources, and reassurance for both children and adults navigating this evolving digital landscape.

SHAPE DIGITAL BOUNDARIES

Create a balanced digital environment with clear guidelines on when and how devices can be used. This includes screen-free zones (e.g. bedrooms, dining tables), app restrictions, and time limits. More importantly, involve children in these decisions and explain the reasoning behind them, even reflecting upon your own digital use so they can see it's something we all have to manage. Turning boundaries into a dialogue, not just directives, helps build trust and encourages self-regulation.

SET THE STANDARD

Children often model the behaviour they see. When adults demonstrate healthy digital habits, such as prioritising face-to-face conversation, balancing screen time with other activities, and using devices with purpose, children are more likely to follow suit. Share your own positive uses of technology and invite children to do the same. This collaborative approach helps demystify tech use and encourages responsible engagement.

Meet Our Expert

Philippa Wraithmell is an award-winning educator, author of *The Digital Ecosystem*, and founder of EdRuption and Digital Bridge. Digital Bridge supports the relationship between families and technology, empowering everyone to be balanced and digitally well. With over 15 years in digital education and wellbeing, she supports families, schools, and governments to build balanced and safe digital cultures.



The National College

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about VPNs

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

BYPASSING RESTRICTIONS

VPNs are commonly used by young people to get around blocks on school networks or parental controls. This could include accessing social media, gaming sites or adult content that would otherwise be filtered out.

ACCESSING INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

When a VPN is active, content filters can no longer see which sites a child is visiting. This means they could access inappropriate content without detection. This also makes it harder to intervene when a child is engaging in risky behaviour, as it may be difficult to detect it's happening.

REDUCED TRANSPARENCY

VPNs may make parental monitoring software ineffective, stopping parents from monitoring their child's activities, including their ability to identify potentially harmful or inappropriate content or online contact. This in turn may prevent parents from protecting their children from attempted sextortion or other online threats.

FALSE SENSE OF ANONYMITY

Children believing that VPNs make them 'invisible' online may seek to explore unsuitable internet content, including content which might otherwise be blocked. This may result in them seeking and accessing increasingly inappropriate – or even harmful – content.

INCREASED EXPOSURE TO MALWARE

Many free VPN apps are poorly regulated and may carry hidden malware. Young people installing unverified software could unknowingly open up their device (and home network) to spying, data theft, computer viruses, or even remote access by criminals.

RISK OF MALICIOUS VPN PROVIDERS

Although VPNs may increase privacy from network or service provider filtering and monitoring, this results in providing user and usage data to VPN providers. Some VPN providers may track user activity and sell that data to advertisers – or worse, malicious third parties. Not all VPNs are trustworthy.

Advice for Parents & Educators

EXPLAIN THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF VPNS

Explain how VPNs can help protect user data and therefore may be appropriate when using public or other unsecured Wi-Fi, or while dealing with sensitive corporate or personal data.

EXPLAIN THE RISKS OF VPNS

Discuss online risks, including harmful, disturbing, and criminal content. Inform children about criminal contact, such as sextortion, and how VPNs may restrict adults from monitoring children's internet use and helping them avoid these risks.

FREE ISN'T FREE

Discuss the risk of 'free' VPNs and how they may sell or use people's data, which adds privacy risks. Additionally, discuss the potential for added malware in VPN downloads, and how these compromise devices and apps, leading to potential fraud or theft.

CHECK DEVICES FOR VPNS

VPNs can be installed as both apps and browser extensions, so regularly check these on the devices used by the young people in your care. If they have been using VPNs, discuss it, listen to their reasoning, and inform them of the associated risks. In some cases, it may be appropriate to block VPN use via parental controls and other settings.

DISCUSS ONLINE BOUNDARIES

Reinforce the importance of keeping safe online and how filtering and monitoring helps keep young people safe – explain this to them rather than just 'being strict'. Encourage an open conversation around what they're accessing and why.

Meet Our Expert

This guide has been created in collaboration with Gary Henderson, director of IT at a large independent school in the UK, an ambassador for the Association of Network Managers in Education and the Vice Chair of the Independent Schools Council Digital Advisory Group.



The National College



Parklands Preloved uniform

Pass it on, don't throw away,
A uniform's here to save the day!
Keep it going, let it flow,
Helping pupils as they grow.

Please send any preloved uniform into school
to Mrs.K O'Reilly.

Thank you.

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about...



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they will have a **free meal** every school day

It's easy to find out if you qualify –

Lancashire

Website: <https://lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/free-school-meals/>

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Is **additional funding** for our school to
ensure we can support pupils
to **achieve their full potential**