



Headteacher: Miss Georgina Turner
 Email: office@rackham.cambs.sch.uk
 Telephone: 01353 662436



Main Street,
 Witchford,
 Ely,
 Cambridgeshire
 CB6 2HQ

Working together to be the best we can possibly be.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4.13

6th December 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

What a fantastic week full of performances and Christmas spirit! I am sure you will join with me in congratulating our amazing pupils and adults on such success, from Pre-school to Year 6.

Safeguarding:

Leading up to Christmas, we will be sharing guides related to presents you may be considering.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about LEGO FORTNITE

Epic Games have recently introduced three new game modes to Fortnite: Rocket Racing, Fortnite Festival and, finally, LEGO Fortnite: a survival game using official LEGO characters. There are lots of great mechanics that encourage creativity in children, but – as with any online game – it's important to stay aware of the potential risks.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

MONETISATION
 LEGO Fortnite utilizes a similar on-the-hoops shop to the main Fortnite game. When this title was released, the makers introduced thousands of LEGO variants of the original Fortnite cosmetic items. Owning an original Fortnite cosmetic means you own one of the LEGO version of our favorite sport, but the addition of these extra variants could potentially cause more interest in young players, making it more tempting to play fast money for those in-game accessories.

ONLINE PLAY
 LEGO Fortnite can be played online, as with the base game. While players 13 and over can play without it's first created, they can then invite anyone on their in-game friends list to play with them. If any 13+ players are on this friends list, they can be added onto the server. Thankfully, Epic Games has implemented a solid reporting system, as well as tools to kick other players from the game.

FEAR FACTOR
 There is no explicit violence in LEGO Fortnite, but there is a lot of combat. While the battles in LEGO Fortnite remain very cartoonish and child-friendly, a lot of the action involves basic axes, axes, with spikes, skeletons or scary-looking monsters. The game can get a little spooky at times, which could potentially scare younger players.

COMPLEX GAMEPLAY
 LEGO Fortnite is a survival game, though it's not as simple as something like Minecraft. There are lots of complex crafting options and loads of items to collect. Encouraging various routes to seek out and forward. The gathering and crafting elements of the game can get quite complicated and confusing, which could be a source of frustration for some younger players.

Advice for Parents & Educators

LEGO IS FRIENDLY
 Much like real Lego, this game is incredibly intuitive. It's friendly, fun and accessible to younger players could still enjoy this title even if they'd never played Fortnite before. With mechanics designed to be a far more family-friendly gaming experience all round – worth bearing in mind if you're concerned about children and young people being exposed to violent or frightening content.

SET LITTLE CHALLENGES
 As we've noted, the game is a lot more difficult than many games, which could be frustrating or upsetting for some younger players. While the game does a great job of setting realistic targets for players, it can still feel overwhelming. If parents suggest smaller challenges – such as building a house – children can flex their creativity, express themselves with their builds and feel a real sense of accomplishment.

PLAY TOGETHER
 Take some time to play the game together. Not only will that help with some of the complicated tasks, but it's also just a fun pastime. Playing with family members also reduces the potential for younger players to invite strangers to enjoy the game with – if any are on their friends list. Furthermore, playing with children will let you more effectively limit their time spent on the game, instead of "watch it for", you can now say "let's play some more later!"

MONITOR SPENDING
 If a child has provided their parents' email address and been given consent to make in-game purchases, it's worth keeping an eye on how much gets spent on the game currency, V-Bucks. It's very tempting to buy cosmetic skins in LEGO items as a way of expressing yourself and looking cool and unique. As you may know already, the average skin costs between £5-15, which can add up very quickly if not tracked and limited. Keep in mind that you can make it necessary to enter a PIN code to validate every purchase using the game's parental controls, and you can prevent the game from saving your payment information whenever you make a purchase. Furthermore, players under-13 automatically have their spending limited to \$100 (£78.53) per day.

Meet Our Expert
 Daniel Upcombe is a writer specialising in technology, video gaming, virtual reality, augmented reality and Web3. He has also written 10 guidebooks for children, covering games such as Fortnite, Apex Legends, Halo Infinite and Minecraft. With work published by the likes of PC Gamer, Kotaku, Pocket Gamer and IGN, he has reviewed more than 85 games and products over the past year.

Wake Up Wednesday
 The National College

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Release date: 07.08.2024 last reviewed: 09.08.2024

Wellbeing and Mental Health:

On 11th December 2024, on Channel 4, Emma and Matt Willis present a documentary about when they and pupils at a school removed use of phones. **Swiped: The School that Banned Smartphones.** Screen addiction is a real thing.

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one topic of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

It can be challenging for parents and carers to know whether children are spending too much time on their devices. Furthermore, it's even more of a challenge to know whether a child is addicted to the internet and social media. As technology is becoming more pervasive, children and young people are experiencing tech-related dependencies. Do you as parents and carers have the knowledge to identify and support children and young people who may be developing an addiction to their devices?

47% of parents said they thought their children spent too much time in front of screens

What parents need to know about SCREEN ADDICTION

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Children as young as 13 are attending 'smartphone rehab' following growing concerns over screen time. There are now help centers in the UK which deal with screen addiction for children and adults showing the seriousness of device addiction. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has officially recognised gaming addiction as a modern disease. The condition was confirmed as part of their International Classification of Diseases (ICD) which serves as an international standard for diagnosing and treating health conditions.

LOSS OF INTEREST IN OTHER THINGS

Your child may become less interested in anything that does not include their device. You may notice that your child is missing school time and generally being less engaged with other activities in the home. It is important to discuss this with your child as soon as you notice a behaviour change.

CONFIDENCE, SUPPORT & ADVICE

The Children's Commissioner report 'Life in Likes' explored how children aged 8-11 are using social media today. It showed that children are using their devices to speak to their online friends about their problems and seek acceptance and support, removing face-to-face interactions.

APPS CAN BE ADDICTIVE

Apps have been designed with 'psychological tricks' to constantly keep grabbing your attention. One example of this is on the app Snapchat, where you can gain 'streaks' when interacting with your friends. If you don't respond, you lose the streak. This addictive nature of apps aims to engage children and keep them coming back for more.

LACK OF SLEEP

7 out of 10 children said they had missed out on sleep because of their online habits and 66% said they had neglected school work as a result. It is important that children get the sleep they need in order to focus the next day.

Top Tips for Parents

NOS National Online Safety

LIMIT SCREEN TIME

In today's digital age, technology is an important part of a child's development so completely banning them from their device will mean they are missing out on a lot, including conversations and communication with their friends. Rather than banning them from using their devices, we suggest setting a screen time limit. Work out what you think is a suitable and healthy amount of time for your child to be on their device per week. Remember that your child may need to use devices for their school homework so only set screen limits on recreational time on their device. Once you have established this, have the conversation with them to discuss why you are implementing a screen limit. There will be others in your child's friendship group who will not have screen limits set and will be sending messages when they do not have access to their phones.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Children model their behavior on their peers, so if their parents are constantly on their device, they will see this as acceptable. Try limiting your own screen time and follow the same rules you have set for them. If you have asked your child to not use their device at the table, make sure you don't. Try setting house rules that the whole family abide by.

REMOVE DEVICES FROM THEIR BEDROOM

Setting a rule about removing devices from bedrooms will help your child to get the sleep they need and be more focused the next day at school. 20% of teenagers said that they woke up to check their social network accounts on their devices. Even by having a device switched off in their bedrooms, they may be tempted to check for notifications.

LESS TIME MEANS LESS EXPOSURE

There are many risks associated with devices, such as cyberbullying, grooming, sexting, viewing inappropriate content etc. Less time spent on a screen means that a child will be less exposed to these risks.

ENCOURAGE ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

It may seem like an obvious solution, but encouraging children to play with their friends, read a book, or playing outdoors will help them realise they can have fun without their device. Playing football, trampolining, camping, going for a walk or swimming are all healthy replacements for screen time. Try to join them in their outdoor activities to show your support.

MOBILE-FREE MEAL TIMES

Have you tried to settle your child by giving them a tablet at the dinner table or restaurant? This may seem like a quick fix to calm them down but in reality, it is encouraging them to use their device as a distraction from conversation and dealing with their emotions. We suggest removing all technology from the dinner table and having conversations with your family about how their day has been.

STATISTICS

- 52% of children aged 3-4 go online for nearly 9hrs a week
- 82% of children aged 5-7 go online for nearly 9.5hrs a week
- 93% of children aged 8-11 go online for nearly 13.5hrs a week
- 99% of children aged 12-15 go online for nearly 20.5hrs a week

www.nationalonlinesafety.com Twitter - @natonlinesafety Facebook - /NationalOnlineSafety

Earrings and school uniform, a reminder:

Health and Safety regulations about wearing jewellery in school state: 'earrings, ear studs and other jewellery (metal or plastic) must not be worn during sporting activities, P.E., swimming, design technology or food technology lessons'.

Pupils should not wear jewellery in PE lessons. Children with recently pierced ears should not wear tape over the studs as de-gloving injuries can still occur. As PE lessons are relatively short, studs should still be removed during the 6 weeks after piercing unless the parent or carer has advised in writing that they cannot be removed due to a medical condition. Adults will not be able to help children with either removing or putting in stud earrings children should be taught at home how to do this independently.

Pupils with pierced ears may wear one pair of simple studs. Nose studs or any other body studs are not permitted.

Christmas Dinner and Christmas jumpers:



Christmas Dinner will take place on Thursday 12th December for Reception and KS1 classes and on Friday 13th December for KS2.

Please ensure you have booked your child's meals for Thursday and Friday on MCAS by the end of today, Friday 6th December. School packed lunch options will be available for KS2 children on Thursday 12th and for Reception and KS1 children on Friday 13th.

Children are invited to wear a Christmas jumper on their Christmas Dinner day if they wish.

Christmas table decorations:

The Rackham kitchen team are working hard to make the children's Christmas Dinner tables look extra festive this year, and we would love your help. We are running a competition for the best table decoration.

There are only 3 rules to the competition:

1. Must be homemade.
2. Not too big.
3. Be clearly named.

If your child would like to enter, they should bring their entry in on their Christmas dinner day (Reception and KS1 on Thursday 12th and KS2 on Friday 13th December).

Their entries should be brought to the hall in the morning and placed on their class table with names clearly written on each entry.

Each entry will be judged by the kitchen team, and there will be a prize for the best one in each class. The decorations will then be used for the tables over lunchtime. Decorations can be taken home on Friday 13th December.

Apply now for a Primary School place in September 2025:



If you have a child born between 1st September 2020 and 31st August 2021, you need to apply for their Primary School place before 15th January 2025. This also applies to children at The Rackham Pre-school for admission to The Rackham Primary School. The link to the application page can be found here:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/apply-for-a-school-place/primary-reception-junior-or-middle-school>

Witchford Parish Council – request for children's views:

Witchford Parish Council is going to put in a new play area at the village hall in Bedwell Hey Lane and they would like to get as many views from children in the village as possible.

The Parish Council have five shortlisted designs and want to know which one children like best.

The designs and a form are on the Parish Council website (see below). They will also be having an open session at St Andrews Hall opposite The Rackham School on Wednesday 11th December 3-6pm for people to come and look at the designs. <https://witchfordparishcouncil.gov.uk/>

The Mayor of Cambridge is seeking a Christmas card design, can you help?

As the festive season approaches, all primary school pupils in the region are invited to take part in a special competition to design the Mayor's Christmas card for this year.

Here's how it works:

- The competition is open to all primary school children across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- Pupils are encouraged to draw their best Christmas card design, which celebrates the joy and magic of the holiday season.
- Once complete, scan or take a photo of their designs and email them to mayorsoffice@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk by Friday, 6th December.

Please download the entry form here: [Mayor's Christmas Card competition form](#). The winning design will be selected and announced on Monday, 11th December, and will proudly feature as the Mayor's official Christmas card for 2024.

FREE healthy relationships courses for parents and carers:

The Family Hubs Team are running courses in January and February 2025 to support parents who would like to improve the relationship with their partner or ex-partner.

Face to Face and online courses are available.

Free of charge. Book here: [Parents Booking Form](#).

Pre-School updates:



Please remember to log existing injuries using the online form. We have copied the QR code for this form below this message to give parents and carers direct access to the online form.



As it is getting colder, and Pre-School Leaders aim to be out in all safe weather, please provide suitable clothing for children including named gloves and hats.

Water bottles should be filled with water rather than squash. This is the current recommendation.

Please find further details on our website: [Healthy Eating | The Rackham C of E \(VC\) Primary School](#)

Timelines for external referrals within the Local Authority:

Parents and Carers may already be aware that schools in Cambridgeshire are facing lengthy waiting lists for referrals to external services.

If you would like an update on the progress of a referral for your child, please contact the office in the first instance. Thank you.

Barracudas Activity Camps:

BARRACUDAS
ACTIVITY DAY CAMPS

HIGHER RATED School Holiday Camps!!!

AT A SCHOOL NEAR YOU IN **2025!**
EARLY BOOKING OFFER!

LOWEST RATES GUARANTEED
BOOK BY 31ST JANUARY

SAVE UP TO £100!

- 4½ to 14 year olds!
- 80+ Activities!
- Choice each session!
- Specialist Courses!
- Flexible bookings!

SCAN ME!

OFTSED REGISTERED

barracudas.co.uk
01480 467 567

Trustpilot ★★★★★

Uniform orders:

Uniform items for school and pre-school pupils (including jumpers) are now available from Sigma.

Pre-School: [Clubs & Groups - Sigma Embroidery & Printing](#)

Primary School: [Clubs & Groups - Sigma Embroidery & Printing](#)

Orders must be placed by parents and carers and can be collected from Sigma Embroidery on Sedgeway Business Park, Witchford.

Fire&Chill Christmas holiday club:

Fire&Chill is a unique, 'Not for Profit' youth group in Witchford for school years 6 to 9, with a Forest School twist. Led by qualified leaders, regular weekly sessions run Wednesdays 5-7pm in the woods or the village hall.

Due to demand, we're offering a FULL DAY SESSION at Witchford Village Hall this Christmas. Activities will include pizza making, crafts with natural materials, toasting marshmallows, park, games, and a tuck shop (max £3 spend for tuck shop). Led by Sarah-Jane, Kerry, and young leaders Dani and Charlie, it's a perfect fit for older children seeking adventure and a place to hang out. Join us for a day of fun and excitement, socialising and 'chilling'!

HAF VOUCHERS ACCEPTED!

To book visit <https://bookwhen.com/butterfliesforestschool>



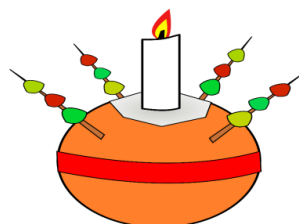
St Andrew's Church, Witchford notices:

CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

SATURDAY 14TH DECEMBER 4p.m.

Led by: Rev Canon Stephen Leeke

**ST. ANDREW'S
CHURCH
WITCHFORD**



CAROL CONCERT
TUESDAY
10TH DECEMBER 7 p.m.
ST. ANDREW'S HALL,
WITCHFORD
with THE ISLE
SINGERS



REFRESHMENTS
RETIRING COLLECTION
ALL WELCOME

CAROL SERVICE

CAROLS and READINGS
SUNDAY 22ND DECEMBER
6 p.m.
ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH,
WITCHFORD
ALL WELCOME



Attendance:

The Rackham has an updated policy on Attendance. Please follow this [link](#) to read the policy on the school website.

Thank you to all our parents and carers for supporting our drive for improved attendance. The Government has identified a child's attendance of 96% and above is the key figure to give best chance of academic progress. Please can we remind you that absence must be reported to the office by 9am on each day of absence.

This week's attendance: 93.5%

ATTEND TODAY
ACHIEVE TOMORROW

EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT - DON'T MISS OUT



Looking forward to seeing everyone next week.

Best wishes,

Miss Turner

Dates for your diary:

9 th December	Rocksteady Christmas Concert 9.30am (booking required)
11 th December	FWR Christmas disco
12 th December	Piano and Choir concert 9.30am (booking required)
13 th December	Christmas Dinner – Reception and KS1 (Christmas jumper day) Christmas Dinner – KS2 (Christmas jumper day)
19 th December	Last day of term
23.12.2024	CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY 23.12.2024 – 03.01.2025
6 th January 2025	First day of term.
8 th January	Year 4 Burwell Parent Meeting 6pm
W/C 20 th January	SEND Coffee Morning date tbc
30 th January	Y3 Parent or carer school dinner (booking required)
3 rd February	Children’s Mental Health Week
10 th February	Year 4 to Burwell House (10 th – 12 th February)
11 th February	Safer Internet Day
W\C 17 th February	HALF TERM