

Working together to be the best we can possibly be.

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

10th January 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy New Year! We were delighted to welcome all our pupils and their families back to school this week.

Safeguarding:



Online Grooming is when someone befriends and builds an emotional relationship with a child and communicates with them through the internet with the intent to commit a sexual offence. This type of victimisation can take place across any platform, from social media and messaging apps to online gaming and live streaming. Often it involves young people being tricked, forced or pressured into doing something they wouldn't normally do (coercion) and often the groomer's goal is to meet the victim in a controlled setting to sexually or physically abuse them. In some cases children may be abducted or have long-lasting psychological damage.

What parents need to know about ONLINE GROOMING

CHILDREN ARE MOST VULNERABLE
Unsuspecting children are often most at risk as they are easy to target and unlikely to question the person who is engaging in conversations with them. Groomers will use psychological tricks and methods to try and isolate them from their families and friends and will often choose to target more vulnerable children who may be easier to manipulate. Predators will stalk apps and websites that are popular with young people and will use a 'baiting' approach to find victims, contacting hundreds online to increase their chances of success.

LIVE STREAMING CONCERNS
Predators may use live video to target children in real-time using tricks, games or built-in gifts to manipulate them. Grooming often takes the form of a game where children receive 'bait' or even more for performing sexual acts. Social media channels, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitch, all have live-streaming capabilities, but there are many apps which children can use to live stream, including Omegle, Livestream, BIGO Live, YouTube and many more.

ANYONE CAN BE A PREDATOR
The internet has made the ability to interact with strangers online easy. Many sites and apps are not an individual user entering their own information when signing up. However, individuals can remain anonymous if they choose to enter inaccurate information and many online predator cases are due to groomers using impersonation techniques. However, often the greatest threat comes from adults who 'fish in plain sight', choosing to befriend young children without hiding their real identity.

CAN BE DIFFICULT TO DETECT
Unfortunately, many children find the 'grooming' process before any (parental) intervention as the predator will compliment, encourage, and flatter them to gain their trust, friendship and loyalty - it will be disguised as 'normal' behaviour. This often means children fail to disclose or report what is happening. If the groomer is also personally known to the child, their family and their friends, then this can make detection even harder.

FROM OPEN TO CLOSED MESSAGING
Online predators may contact their victims using any number of ways including social media, forums, chat rooms, gaming communities or live streaming apps. Sometimes there is little need to develop a 'friendship' rapport stage, as the victim has already shared personal information online and is communicating openly with others. Children may also be persuaded to add other online users they don't know as well to gain online credibility through increasing their friends list. Predators will often take this opportunity to slowly build a relationship and then move their conversation with the child to a more secure and private area, such as through direct messaging.

EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS
Online predators will use emotive language and aim to form close, trusting bonds with their victims through showering them with compliments and making them feel good about themselves. Often victims will refer to them as their 'boyfriends' or girlfriends and it can be difficult to convince some young people that they have been groomed, often leading to lasting psychological effects.

National Online Safety
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Safety Tips for Parents & Carers

IT'S GOOD TO TALK
It's unlikely that you can stop your child using the internet, nor can you constantly monitor their online activities, but you can talk to your child on a regular basis about what they do online. Encourage them to only interact and engage with 'true friends' i.e. those friends who don't ask personal questions such as their family and friends. Encourage them to never agree to chat privately with a stranger or someone they don't really know and to never divulge personal information, such as mobile phone numbers, addresses, passwords or the name of their school.

CHECK PRIVACY SETTINGS
In order to give your child a safer online experience, it is important to check privacy settings or parental controls on the networks, devices, apps, and websites they use. Disable location sharing if you can. If you use location sharing apps to check where your child is, communicate openly with others. Children may also be persuaded to add other online users they don't know as well to gain online credibility through increasing their friends list. Ensure that you check options so that location information is never shared with anyone except those they have permission to share with.

MONITOR SOCIAL MEDIA & LIVE-STREAMING USE
It's important to be aware of what your child is sharing on social media and with whom. Create your own profile and become 'friends' with them or follow them so that you can monitor their activity. Similarly, always check on them if they are live streaming and implement privacy controls that hide their identity. You may also be more comfortable being present each time they live stream.

STICK TO 'TRUE FRIENDS'
Make it clear to your child that they should not accept friend requests from people they don't know and to verify friend requests with parents who they do know. Encourage them to only interact and engage with 'true friends' i.e. those friends who don't ask personal questions such as their family and friends. Encourage them to never agree to chat privately with a stranger or someone they don't really know and to never divulge personal information, such as mobile phone numbers, addresses, passwords or the name of their school.

DISCUSS HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS
Talk to your child about what a healthy relationship looks like and how to protect someone who might not be who they claim to be. Explain that groomers will put your child's compliments and engage in conversations about personal information, such as hobbies and relationships. They may indicate how well they play an online game or how they look in a photo. Groomers will also try and isolate a child from people close to them, such as parents and friends, in order to make their relationship feel special and unique.

BE SUPPORTIVE
Show your child that you will support them and make sure they understand they can come to you with any concerns they may have. They need to know they can talk to you if someone does anything they are uncomfortable with, whether that is inappropriate comments, images, requests or sexual comments.

Meet our expert
Jonathan Taylor is an online safety expert and former Covent Internet Investigator for the Metropolitan Police. He is a specialist in online grooming and exploitation and has worked extensively with both UK and international schools in delivering training and guidance around the latest online dangers, social media apps and platforms.

LOOK OUT FOR WARNING SIGNS
Child safety experts have identified key grooming patterns and advise parents to look out for:
- Secretive online behaviour.
- Late night internet or smartphone usage.
- Meeting new friends on social phones.
- Becoming irritable, downcast, sleeping or eating problems or even bedwetting.
- Lack of interest in extra-curricular activities.
- Having new items, such as clothes or phones, unexplainedly.
- Seem withdrawn, anxious, depressed or aggressive.
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends.

www.nationalonlinesafety.com Twitter - @nationalonlinesafety Facebook - NationalOnlineSafety Instagram - @nationalonlinesafety

Wellbeing and mental health:

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about iPADS

Apple debuted the first iPad in 2010, kickstarting the tablet market, and it remains the best-selling tablet to this day. Although Apple doesn't offer a child-specific version, iPads are hugely popular with youngsters due to their ease of use and endless choice of apps. There's a selection of models, with different-sized screens and distinct features – including the standard iPad, the iPad Air, the iPad Pro, and the iPad mini. Thankfully, they all offer parental controls so you can regulate how your child uses the device – and how long they spend on it.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

PHYSICAL DAMAGE
While some tablets (such as the Amazon Fire Kids editions) come with rugged shock-proof cases, iPads aren't built for rough and tumble. They're also more expensive than most other tablets, and any damage your child's iPad suffers could be costly to repair. Buying a child-friendly case and screen protector for the device could be a wise move, especially if it's being used by younger ones.

SCREEN ADDICTION
Like most digital devices, tablets have the potential to become quite addictive. You might find your child spending too long staring at their iPad, which could lead to irritability, mood swings and a loss of interest in more important tasks. If this happens, be sure to visit the built-in screen time settings and ensure you limit how long they're able to spend on the device each day.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Even if it would never occur to your child to go searching online for age-inappropriate sites, apps or information, there's always a possibility that something "unexpected" – perhaps a video that auto-plays or content inaccurately suggested by an algorithm – could appear on their tablet and upset them. You can help prevent this by adjusting the content settings (see our 'top tips' section below).

SIRI SUGGESTIONS

The parental controls built into iOS (the fundamental operating system of Apple devices) enable you to block access to most age-inappropriate content – but your child could potentially still bypass these restrictions (either accidentally or deliberately) by using Siri, Apple's voice-activated digital assistant. To avoid this, toggle the 'Ask Siri' functions to 'off' in the iPad's settings menu.

Advice for Parents & Carers

ENABLE FAMILY SHARING

Before setting the ones above on an iPad, it's a good idea to set up Family Sharing on this. This lets you utilize the parental controls to manage exactly how your child is able to use the device. You can do this fairly easily by going into the iPad's settings; once there, you'll be able to add an existing Apple account (if your child already has one) or set one up from scratch.

APPLY SOME LIMITS

The 'Downtime' function allows you to tell the iPad to lock itself on certain periods (at mealtimes or before bed, for instance), while 'App Limits' removes access to certain apps once they've been used for a specified length of time each day. The iPad can display a reminder when these limits have nearly been reached, letting your child mentally prepare for the end of their gaming or viewing time.

STOP ACCIDENTAL SPENDING

To empower your child with an increased sense of freedom on their device (without giving you real something else to worry about in the process), you could enable the iPad's 'Ask to Buy' feature. Whenever your child tries to download or buy an app, game or product, the iPad sends you a request to approve (or deny) it. This option only becomes available if you've set up Family Sharing.

SET CONTENT AND PRIVACY RESTRICTIONS

The parental controls can stop the iPad from displaying explicit or age-inappropriate content (in apps like iTunes and Safari) or when your child is signed into their account. You'll also be able to restrict the capacity to download and install apps, and you can specify permissions which prevent children from changing the iPad's privacy settings once you've selected them.

TRACK IT DOWN

Just like the iPhone, Apple's iPads have 'Find My' software to help you locate your child's iPad – or indeed, any linked Apple devices that have gone AWOL, including phones, watches and AirPods. If you enable 'Find My' in the settings menu, it will display the last known location of an iPad that's been misplaced, as well as giving you the option to lock a missing iPad that you suspect has been stolen.

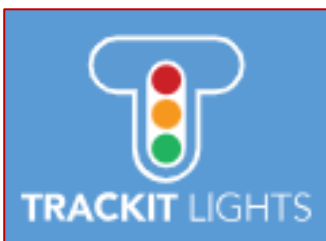
Meet Our Expert

Dr. Sophie Williams is a clinical psychologist with 10 years' experience in working with children and young people. She is also a qualified teacher and has worked in the field of technology for many years.

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You suggested, we listened: Trackit Lights We have considered the suggestion from parents and carers to see the orange and yellow Trackit Lights that indicate warnings given to pupils for anti-social behaviours and agree it is a really good idea. Please keep checking your Trackit Light app and the orange and yellow Trackits should soon be visible. If you would like some help downloading the app, please speak to the office in the first instance.

Dinner bookings:

Please ensure you have booked meals for your child(ren) on MCAS in advance. When registers are taken in the morning we do check and will book the main meal if a child says they do not have a home packed lunch. If no booking is made by parents or during registration, children will be provided with a ham or cheese sandwich school packed lunch.

Year 3 Parent and Carer School Dinner: 30th January 2025:

We would like to invite Year 3 parents and carers to join us for school dinner on Thursday 30th January. The meal will be our extremely popular (and very delicious) roast dinner.

Parents and carers are asked to purchase their school dinner through MCAS under the Products and Trips tab. The meal will cost £3.60. **Meal choice and payment must be made by Friday 24th January please.**

Please complete this form to book your meal once payment has been made on MCAS:

<https://forms.office.com/e/VB1gSULyN2>

Unfortunately, we can only offer for one parent or carer to attend. This will be an annual event moving forwards so will be repeated next academic year.

Children in Year 3 who prefer to have a home packed lunch will still have opportunity for their parent or carer to join them. Adults can still order a school dinner or bring a packed lunch from home to sit to eat with their child.

Please would parents and carers of Year 3 children arrive for school dinner at 12.20pm.

NHS Pharmacy First Service:

Did you know that the NHS Pharmacy First Service enables children and adults to get convenient access to healthcare advice and treatment where appropriate, for seven common conditions without the potential delay of having to wait for a GP appointment? Accessing the service may mean that we can help children feel better and get back to school as quickly as possible, as well as supporting parents/carers to also get better if they are unwell with one of the conditions covered under the service.

There is no need to make an appointment; parents or carers can pop into their local Boots pharmacy with their child and ask for help under the service.

Support for the following conditions can be accessed under the service, free of charge (unless NHS prescription charges apply):

<u>Common condition</u>	<u>Patient eligibility</u>
Earache	1 to 17 years
Impetigo	1 year and over
Infected insect bites and stings	1 year and over
Sore throats	5 years and over
Sinusitis	12 years and over
Uncomplicated urinary tract	Women 16 to 64 years
Shingles	18 years and over

Clubs:

We have availability in KS1 Football (£5 per week) on a Monday afterschool and KS1 Colouring Club on Monday lunchtime. All other clubs are currently full but children can be added to the waiting lists. If your child does not wish to continue in a club, please let us know so we can offer the place.

Victorian Day Photo:



To view the photos, and place orders, please come to the office.

As you will remember, our extremely talented Miss Housden took a photograph of the whole primary school to mark the 180th anniversary of The Rackham just before October half term. **A copy of the photograph is available in the office for parents and carers to see and order.**

Supporting your anxious child course:

SUPPORTING YOUR ANXIOUS CHILD

SUITABLE FOR PARENTS OF PRIMARY AGED CHILDREN

ON THIS COURSE YOU WILL WORK ALONGSIDE YOUR TUTOR AND OTHER PARENTS TO INCREASE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF ANXIETY IN CHILDREN. YOU WILL LEARN HOW TO: -RECOGNISE THE SIGNS OF ANXIETY. - IDENTIFY SOME OF THE POSSIBLE REASONS CHILDREN HAVE ANXIETY. - DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO HELP YOUR CHILD MANAGE THESE FEELINGS IN A SUPPORTIVE GROUP.

EVERY THURSDAY FOR 3 WEEKS
START DATE: 9/01/2025
END DATE: 23/1/2025
TIME: 6PM - 7.30PM
ONLINE

CALL TO BOOK 01353 613013
SCAN QR CODE FOR MORE INFO

Dates: Tuesday evenings, 14th January - 28th January 2025

Time: 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Location: Online

This 3-week evening course is designed to help parents and caregivers understand and support children dealing with anxiety.

Key Features:

- Evening sessions, convenient for working parents
- Practical tips and strategies
- Supportive, expert-led environment

Apply now: [Course Details](#) | [ontrack: Learner Hub](#)

Donation requests:



We would be very grateful for donations of wool please. Any colours, although bright and vibrant colours would be especially welcomed.



If you have had a sort through jigsaw puzzles or board games over the Christmas holiday, please consider donating them to school. We would be pleased to receive puzzles up to 200 pieces. Thank you in advance for your kindness and help.

Parking:

Several cars are parking on double yellow lines, on the zigzags and in the bus bay. Families that have a blue badge are politely requested to display their badge clearly. As a community we must consider everyone's safe access in and out of school. Vehicles that are parked on the double yellow lines or zig zag lines are parking illegally at all times. This includes during Breakfast Club and Afterschool club drop off/collection. Please can you also ensure you are parking considerately in the surrounding roads.

Learn to ride cycle training:

Thank you to all those who have registered an interest in the Learn to Ride Cycle training. We have registered our interest but have been placed on a waiting list for further funding. We will be touch with those who have registered when we hear more.

Leo's and Lion's Winter Warmer event:



The Leo's and Lion's are holding a 'Winter Warmer' event at Ely Cathedral Centre between 10am and 2pm this Saturday 11th January.

They are giving away clean, good condition coats, hats, scarves, gloves & blankets to keep families warm and cozy this winter. We will also be providing a warm welcoming space, with free tea, coffee & biscuits.

FREE: Family First magazine:



Proudly supporting  **NHS** in improving the physical & mental wellbeing of families living in England

Use this link to download your free copy: <https://familyfirst.co.uk/issue1-25>

Term dates for 2025 – 2026:

Term dates for next academic year are now available on the website and can be found [here](#).

Girlguiding:

Did you know Girlguiding is active in your community? 1st Witchford Rainbows, 1st Witchford Brownies and 1st Witchford Guides provide a range of extracurricular activities for girls aged 4-7, 7-10 and 10-14. We work through a variety of Girlguiding themes, go on adventures, play games, do crafts, bake, take part in community events, undertake challenges, learn new skills and most importantly, have FUN! Would your daughter like to join us? We meet in Witchford on Tuesdays in term time, 4:30-5:30 for Rainbows, 6:00-7:30 for Brownies, and Guides meet 6:30-8:00. Rainbows is currently at capacity and running a waiting list, but there are spaces available at Brownies and Guides. Please see www.girlguiding.org.uk for more information, or contact us directly using witchfordrainbows@gmail.com / witchfordbrownies@gmail.com / witchford.guides@gmail.com.

Would you like to volunteer with Girlguiding? We help all girls to know they can do anything! Are you curious, adaptable, thoughtful, ambitious? Could your skills compliment Girlguiding in Witchford? Please see www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested for more information.

Your local Girlguiding leaders, Ellen, Robyn, Brown Owl, Arctic Owl, Butterfly and Squirrel.

Uniform orders:

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

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

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

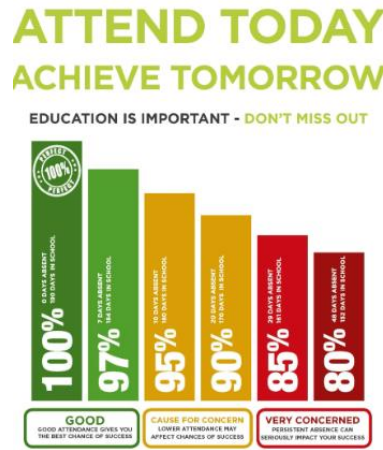
Orders must be placed by parents and carers and can be collected from Sigma Embroidery on Sedgeway Business Park, Witchford.

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: 96.6%



Looking forward to seeing everyone on Monday.

Best wishes,

Miss Turner

Dates for your diary:

14 th January	FWR EGM in the school hall at 7.30pm
15 th January	Deadline for applications for Primary school admission in September 2025
W\C 20 th January	
30 th January	Y3 Parent or carer school dinner (bookings 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
HALF TERM	
W\C 24 th February	
W\C 3 rd March	Parent’s Evenings this week
12 th March	Y1 Parent’s Information Evening Phonics Screen Check (booking required nearer the time)
19 th March	Parent’s Information Evening Y6 SATs (booking required nearer the time)
27 th March	Y2 Parent or carer school dinner (booking required nearer the time)
4 th April	Last day of term