

Working together to be the best we can possibly be.

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

17th January 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

What a super week at The Rackham. Our pupils are working hard, and as evidenced by our recent Pupil Voice, enjoying their learning.

Safeguarding:



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about GROUP CHATS

On messaging apps, social media and online games, group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online. Involving three or more individuals, these groups allow users to send messages, images and videos to everyone in one place. While they can be great for connecting with others, there are several risks posed by these tools.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- BULLYING** (56): Teens are often trying to find their place in their social group. Unfortunately, group chats can sometimes lend themselves to unkind comments being shared freely, putting people down to make their peers laugh – often creating a vicious circle that encourages others to join in. Being bullied so publicly – in front of friends and acquaintances – can also amplify the hurt, embarrassment and anxiety that the victim feels.
- EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION** (74): This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: for instance, starting a new group, but deliberately excluding a certain child. Likewise, the chat may take place on an app which one person doesn't have access to, meaning they can't be involved. A child can also feel isolated when a group chat is used to discuss events that exclude them – for example, sharing photos from a day out that they didn't attend.
- INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT** (14): Some discussions in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and unsuitable images or videos. These could be viewed by a child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some apps have features that cause messages to disappear after they're viewed, so children may be unable to report something they've seen, as it can only be viewed once or for a short time.
- SHARING GROUP CONTENT** (64): Group chats can feel more private and protected, allowing children to share inside jokes and video calls with a smaller group of friends. It's important to remember that while the chat's content is private between those in the group, individual users can easily share material with others outside of the group, or screenshot what's been posted. The risk of something a child intended as private becoming public is higher if there are strangers in the chat.
- UNKNOWN MEMBERS** (117): Within larger group chats, it's more likely for children to communicate with people they don't know. These strangers may be friends of the host, but not necessarily friendly towards everyone present. It's wise for young people to avoid sharing personal details and remember that they have no control over what others do with the material they send into the chat.
- NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO** (117): A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications they send to generate. Every time someone sends a message, each member's device will be 'pinged' with an alert. This could result in hundreds of notifications a day. This is often highly distracting, and young people's fear of missing out (FOMO) can cause increased stress time as they try to keep up with the conversation.

Advice for Parents & Carers

- CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS** (74): Group chats can become an arena for young people to compete for social status. This could cause them to do or say things on impulse which could upset others. Help children consider how people might feel if they behave in this way. If the child does upset someone, encourage them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.
- GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT** (117): 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 picked on.
- BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE** (117): If a child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block whoever sent the material, report that person to the host app or platform and exit the group. If any of this content could put a minor at risk, contact the police. Emphasise that it's OK for children to simply leave any group chat that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- PRACTISE SAFE SHARING** (14): In any online communication, it's vital for young people to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Ensure children understand the importance of not revealing identifiable details like their address, their school, or photos that 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 and how it might be used.
- AVOID INVITING STRANGERS** (117): Sadly, many individuals online hide their identity to gain a child's trust and serve their own ends – for example, to gather information on them, to exchange inappropriate content or to coax them into doing things they aren't comfortable with. Ensure the child understands why they shouldn't add people they don't know to a group chat – and why they should never accept a group chat invitation from a stranger.
- SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS** (117): Having a device 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 the group chat while silencing notifications – and that it would be healthier for them to do so, avoiding a situation where they could feel pressured to respond.

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.

#WakeUpWednesday
The National College

Wellbeing and mental health:

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

10 Conversation Starters for Parents

Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.

NOS National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

- 1 LISTEN**

This sounds obvious, but it is not something we are always great at. Active listening is where we listen without interrupting or making judgements and shows interest in what is being said. If your child feels listened to in the 'smallest of problems' they will become confident that you will listen when the 'biggest of problems' arise.
- 2 ASK TWICE**

The campaign from time to change is great. <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/support-ask-twice-campaign>. Be tenacious about your child's wellbeing. Children instinctively know when your questions and support come from a place of wanting to help and care.

Are you sure?
- 3 THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION**

This advice also relates to the first point. If your child can ask you any questions about the smallest of things and you listen and answer without shaming or belittling, then they will have more confidence to ask the biggest of questions.
- 4 BE OPEN AND HONEST**

Children appreciate honesty, particularly if you are having to share information or talk about a difficult subject. For example, you may be talking about death or loss: 'It's very sad that Nana has died' or 'I feel sad that Nana has died'. How you talk about a subject will differ depending on their age and developmental maturity. Talking about death to a younger child for example will be different to that of an older teen, as their experience and understanding of death is different.
- 5 KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP**

Assess the severity of the mental health difficulty you are noticing. Is the difficulty making it hard for your child to function regularly throughout everyday life? How frequently is your child affected, how long does it last and how persistent is it? Are they having problems controlling the difficulty? Talk to your child about your concerns and that it is likely they will need further support beyond family and friends.
- 6 TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NATURALLY**

Speak about mental health as part of everyday life, so that talking about our feelings and those of others is normalised. If the usual 'are you ok?' is not creating an opportunity for dialogue then say something like 'I know when something like that has happened to me I felt like this... is that how you are feeling or are you feeling something else?'
- 7 EMPATHISE**

'It makes sense that you would feel this way, it is understandable'. Children often worry about things that we, as adults, might see as trivial or silly. However, for them at their age and stage it is a big concern and they need our kindness and care when they show their vulnerability and share their worries.
- 8 HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE**

Teens particularly feel that by talking about their worries or concerns that this will make things worse. Reassure your child that you will discuss a plan of action together and what may or may not need to happen next. If they are a younger child, it is likely you will need to lead the conversation and explain next steps.
- 9 MIND YOUR LANGUAGE**

Be mindful of the language you use at home to describe and talk about mental health. Stigma often arises from misconceptions and a choice of language which is harmful. Using the word 'mental', 'man-up' or other such words in a derogatory way won't encourage your child to talk about their mental health for fear of being belittled.
- 10 IT IS OK TO SAY 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT'**

Adults do not have all the answers but often children think they do. It is ok to acknowledge that what your child is experiencing is not something you have come across before or know anything about, but that you will work it out together and seek help together.

Meet our expert
This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.

Sources of Information and Support
Your GP
Young Minds <https://youngminds.org.uk/>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/>
<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/news-and-blogs/parenting-tips/2016/november/a-simple-guide-to-active-listening-for-parents/>
<https://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health>

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.

Cambridgeshire County Council SEND inspection:

Cambridgeshire County Council has received notification from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) that the Cambridgeshire Local Area Partnership for SEND will be subject to inspection from now until 31 January 2025.

Please find the link below to complete the survey before the closing date of 9am on Tuesday 21st January.

<https://ofsted.smartsurvey.co.uk/p/AreaSend/10352388>

School Dinner

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.

The Great Garden Bird Watch:



To take part is really easy, sign up here: [Big Garden Birdwatch](#)

Parent view: Would you be interested?



We may have the opportunity to offer after school Spanish workshops where pupils would learn Spanish. The workshops would be a fun way to learn a language. We would like to find out if this offer would be of interest. The workshops would run for one hour a week and will cost £12 a session on a Tuesday after school. Please let us know if you would be interested in finding out more about this potential offer by completing this

form: <https://forms.office.com/e/fByxKZ4J2W>

Victorian Day Photo:



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.**

Education Inclusion Family Advisor team workshops:



Education Inclusion Family Advisor Team Countywide Online Workshop Offer

The EIFA team would like to present our newly updated workshops on a variety of parenting and family issues.

Please ensure you book onto each workshop individually by clicking on the link or scanning the QR code and completing the registration form.

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Supporting Your Child with Feelings of Worry | Tuesday, 14 January 2025, 12:00-13:30 | Book onto this workshop at: https://shorturl.at/75sOI or | |
| Digital Safety | Thursday, 16 January 2025, 12:00-13:00 | Book onto this workshop at: https://shorturl.at/J7jT9 or | |
| Supporting Your Child with Sleep | Tuesday, 21 January 2025, 12:00-13:00 | Book onto this workshop at: https://shorturl.at/S2Tcx or | |
| Supporting Your Child with Feelings of Anger | Thursday, 30 January 2025, 12:00-13:30 | Book onto this workshop at: https://shorturl.at/moV7e or | |
| Introduction to Family Wellbeing | Tuesday, 4 February 2025, 12:00-13:00 | Book onto this workshop at: https://shorturl.at/TGbQ9 or | |
| Responding to Behaviours that Challenge Us. | Thursday, 6 February 2025, 12:00-13:30 | Book onto this workshop at: https://shorturl.at/zbSrv or | |
| Managing Sibling Rivalry | Tuesday, 11 February 2025, 12:00-13:30 | Book onto this workshop at: https://shorturl.at/uf62T or | |

If you have any questions about our workshops, or the EIFA service in general, please contact earlyintervention@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

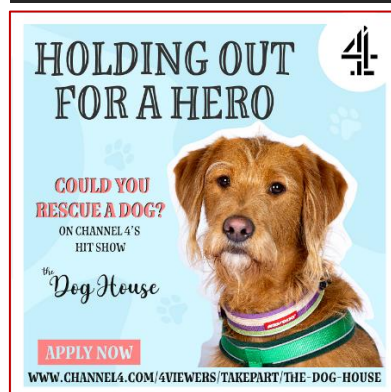


The Dog House:

Could you provide a loving home for a rescue dog? The Channel 4 series, The Dog House is looking for couples, individuals, friends and families who are seriously considering bringing a rescue dog into their lives and are willing to share their reasons for doing so.

Please follow this link to apply:

The Dog House | Channel 4 or email thedoghouse@fivemilefilms.co.uk



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 |

FWR – Dates for your diary:

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
|  | Wednesday 12 th February | Film Night for Reception to Year 6 (booking required nearer the time) |
| | Friday 28 th March | Doughnut Day and Easter Bingo |
| | Wednesday 2 nd April (TBC) | Disco for Reception to Year 6 (booking required nearer the time) |
| | Sunday 18 th May | Yard Sale |

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.

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>

Holiday clubs and activities



Spring Meadow
HOLIDAY CLUB

17th Feb - 21st Feb 2025

New Year 7 area with Pool Tables, Just Dance and Computer Consoles!

Open to R - 7

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 8.00 - 5.45 pm | 9.00 - 4.00 pm |
| £34 | £26 |

Bookings

Scan the QR code OR
info@activeplayeducation.co.uk

play



BARRACUDAS
ACTIVITY DAY CAMPS

HIGHLY RATED School Holiday Camps!!!

AT A SCHOOL NEAR YOU IN 2025!
EXCLUSIVE PARENT DISCOUNT

USE CODE **SCHOOL10** FOR AN EXTRA £10 OFF YOUR BOOKING! SAVE UP TO £110!

*Minimum 2 days. *Not to be used in conjunction with other offer codes

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

SCAN ME!

OFFSEID REGISTERED

barracudas.co.uk
01480 467 567

Trustpilot

Parking:

Parking on Manor Court Road yesterday blocked access for an ambulance. Please ensure you are parking considerately.

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.

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.

Term dates for 2025 – 2026:

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

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: 94.0 %



Looking forward to seeing everyone on Monday.

Best wishes,

Miss Turner

Dates for your diary:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| | |
| 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 |
| 12 th February | FWR Film Night (booking required nearer the time) |
| | 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) |
| 28 th March | FWR Doughnut Day |
| 28 th March | FWR Easter Bingo |
| 2 nd April | FWR Disco – date to be confirmed (booking required nearer the time) |
| 4 th April | Last day of term |
| | EASTER HOLIDAY |