

St Bede's Newsletter

Welcome to St Bede's...



Attendance up to 14/02/25

Y1	Y1/2	Y2	Y3	Y3/4	Y4	Y5	Y5/6	Y6
96.33	93.56	96.94	96.08	97.3	93.15	97.26	94.09	96.26

This week's events...

Wed 19th Feb

- Y3/4 Miss Armstrong Class Assembly 9.15am

Thursday 20th Feb

Break up for Half Term

Friday 21st Feb

School Closed

Coming soon...

Wednesday 5th Mar

- Y2 Mrs Daley Class Assembly 9.15am
- Class 1 Pedestrian Training

Thursday 6th Mar

- Dress up for World Book Day £2
- Mrs Daley's Care Home Visit 10am
- Class 1/2 Pedestrian Training
- Y5/6 Open Football Cup
- YMT Parent Meeting 3.15pm-4pm

Friday 7th Mar

- Mayor's Song Contest 6pm Dolphin Centre
- Girls Biggest Ever Football Session @ Eastbourne Sports Complex 3.30pm-5pm



Click to view our school calendar

<https://stbedesdarlington.bhcet.org.uk/school-calendar>

Our Safeguarding Focus This Week...

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about AI VIRTUAL FRIENDS

Artificial intelligence – particularly in terms of how it generates natural language – has seen significant development over the last six months, with companies releasing new AI-based software or adding an AI element to existing apps (such as Snapchat, for example). One form of AI to become especially popular has been the 'AI friend' or chatbot, as children eagerly experiment with these new-found computer-generated companions. There are now numerous apps available with this 'virtual friend' functionality, with the likelihood of it being added to other successful platforms soon.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

CONTENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AI chatbots may not always be able to recognize when content is age inappropriate or harmful and should be filtered out. So there's a possibility that children could be exposed to offensive language or explicit material while conversing with their virtual friend. The companies producing such AI solutions are also unlikely to take responsibility for any content that their algorithms generate.

REDUCED SOCIAL CONTACT

An excessive reliance on chatbots for social interaction could potentially cause a child to begin reducing the amount of face-to-face communication they have, leading to social isolation. If young people become dependent on chatbots to provide companionship, it could very likely hinder the development of their real-life social skills.

LACK OF SENSITIVITY

Chatbot software isn't always sophisticated enough to pick up on subtle emotional cues or recognise signs of distress in children, as most humans would. It might therefore fail to respond appropriately. AI misinterpreting what it's being told or replying insensitively to a young user who's already struggling could potentially impact a child's emotional wellbeing or exacerbate any existing emotional issues.

UNINTENTIONAL BIAS

AI companions are only as reliable as the information they've been programmed with. The algorithms they use, therefore, may unintentionally promote bias, stereotypes or discriminatory behaviour (as many originate from the USA or the UK, for instance, they can display a distinctly western-centric worldview). This could lead to children developing skewed attitudes and behaviours.

COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS

Although many are now undeniably advanced, AI-powered chatbots still have limitations in terms of understanding complex concepts, context and nuance. Depending heavily on chatbots to help with learning or solving problems may stunt the development of a child's own powers of critical thinking, creativity and ability to engage in open-ended discussions with other people.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

Chatbots typically collect data about users, including personal information and conversations. This is ostensibly to improve their performance as they gradually learn about our behaviour – but many experts are warning that there may be significant risks associated with how this information is stored and used (the possibility of potential breaches or misuse by third parties, for instance).

Advice for Parents & Carers

CHAT ABOUT CHATBOTS

If your child is already expressing an interest in AI apps, a relaxed, natural chat should help you to discover which ones they're aware of and how they're using them (or are planning to). Discuss these options with your child and perhaps do your own research to ensure you think they're suitable. Once you're totally happy, you could sit with your young one and begin exploring AI chatbots together.

CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

If your child is keen to engage with AI chatbots, encourage them to do so in a safe environment: ideally in a shared space at home, so you can easily keep an eye and ear on their progress. Set up appropriate content filtering measures in advance – and gently remind them that you'll be close by and ready to help with any questions or concerns that may arise.

FIND A BALANCE

Work alongside your child to establish the right balance in terms of how they might use AI-powered chatbots – and when it's appropriate. It's important to make sure that children are still getting plenty of opportunities to learn to solve problems for themselves, as well as building their interpersonal skills through face-to-face conversations with friends, family members and teachers.

TAKE CONTROL

As with any form of app or game, when it comes to AI chatbots we'd strongly recommend that you consider employing parental controls (either on the device being used or within the software itself) to manage which apps your child can download and use. This is particularly important for younger children, who may be more at risk of being upset or frightened by inappropriate content.

RECOGNISE THE RISKS

It's unlikely that most children will have even considered the potential risks attached to having a virtual companion. So it's probably wise to explain some of the possible hazards and challenges of AI chatbots to your child. In particular, emphasise that AI isn't a real person (however much it might sound like one) and may occasionally tell them something that isn't entirely impartial or accurate.

Meet Our Expert

A Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Gary Henderson is the Director of IT at a large boarding school in the UK, having previously taught in schools and colleges in Britain and the Middle East. With a particular interest in digital citizenship and cyber security, he believes it is essential that we become more aware of the risks around technology, as well as the benefits.



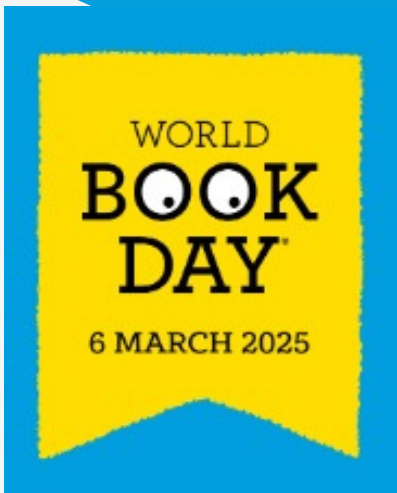
NOS
National
Online
Safety

#WakeUpWednesday



Valentine's Disco





We are looking forward to celebrating **World Book Day** in school after the holidays with lots of fun reading activities.

Here are just a few of the things the children will be taking part in...

Children are invited to **dress up** as their favourite book character on **Thu 6th March**.

We are asking for a donation of **£2** which will go towards refreshing our school library



Children of all ages are invited to share their love of books and reading by designing their own fabulous gift cards.

Six winning entrants will bag **HUNDREDS** of £'s worth of Book Tokens for their schools!

[Click for more info](#)

DESIGN A NATIONAL BOOK TOKEN COMPETITION

Time to get creative!

NATIONAL BOOK tokens

ENTER NOW!

book swap



Children can bring in their own high quality books from home to swap with their peers