PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

Severndale Academy

13/02/26

THIS WEEK'S UPDATE

Dear Families,

We have come to the end of another busy half term, with the prospect of springtime ahead and hopefully some sunshine, fingers crossed!

Thank you to all our families who have engaged through Evidence Me this half-term, it means the world to our staff when you comment on the 'parent share' evidence, and share the interesting activities our learners get up to at home and in the community.

We have continued to have some fabulous parent workshops this half term, and more to come after the break, in addition to parents' evening in-person and on-line, which you will receive letters about today.

A quick reminder about medication: please don't send your child's medication pre-mixed in their food or drink, as this poses a health and safety risk in school.

Don't forget that if you have a question, query, grumble or praise, please contact your child's teacher, Department Co-ordinator, AP, VP or me! We are all here to listen when you need us.

Wishing you a great half-term week,

Lucy Lee

Important Dates for Your Diary

Spring 26

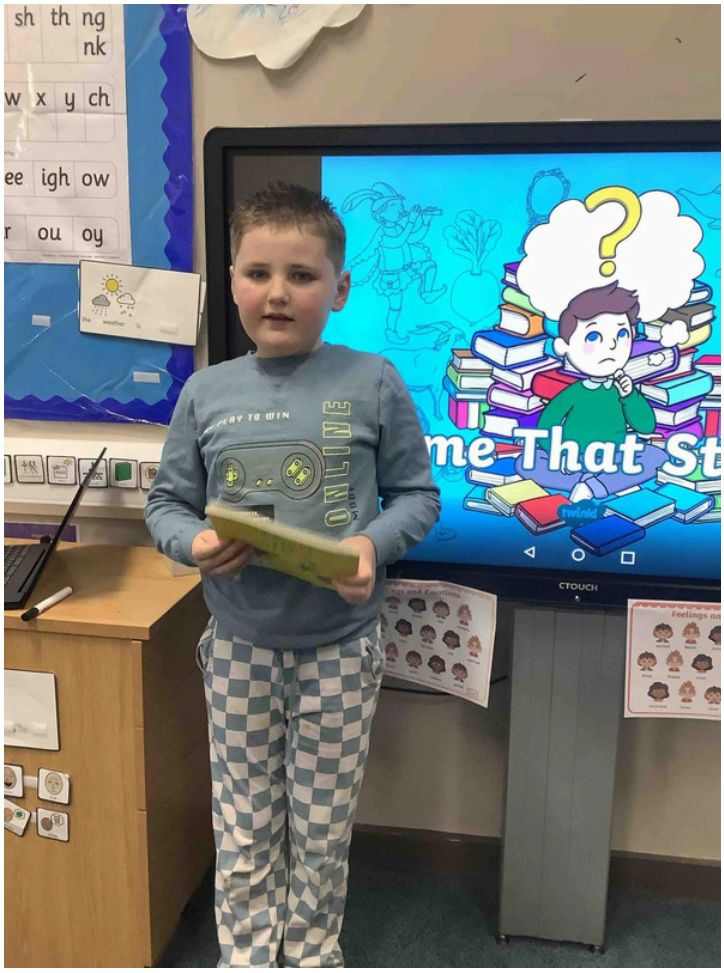
- Friday 13th February - Valentines disco (KS3)
- Friday 13th February - Break up for half-term (16th -20th February)
- Monday 23rd February - Severndale's careers week
- Monday 2nd March - Parents Evening on site at Monkmoor/Futures/Mary Webb
- Friday 27th February 9.30-11:00 - Parent Partnership: Helping children to play workshop
- Tuesday 3rd March - In- person parents evening held virtually on 'SchoolCloud'
- Thursday 5th March - World book day
- Wednesday 11th March 9.30-11am - Parent Partnership: Toileting with Bev Young (School nurse)
- Friday 20th March - Comic relief
- Friday 27th March 9.30 - 11am- Parent Partnership: Feeding Trust (Support for children with limited diets) with Jenny Arnold (Assistant Principal and Foundation Lead)
- Friday 27th March - Break up for Easter (30th March - 10th April)

All Parent Partnership sessions run from 9.30am to 11.00am in the Communication Outreach Room. Coffee and biscuits will be available. If you would like to attend or have any questions, please email Lorna at lorna.matley@LCT.education. Please arrive at reception and you will be collected from there.

National Storytelling Week

Last week we celebrated National Storytelling Week. Children in Foundation and Key Stage 2 came to school wearing their pyjamas for a day focussed on stories.

We had story themed assemblies, a chance to share our favourite stories and opportunities to explore stories through sensory exploration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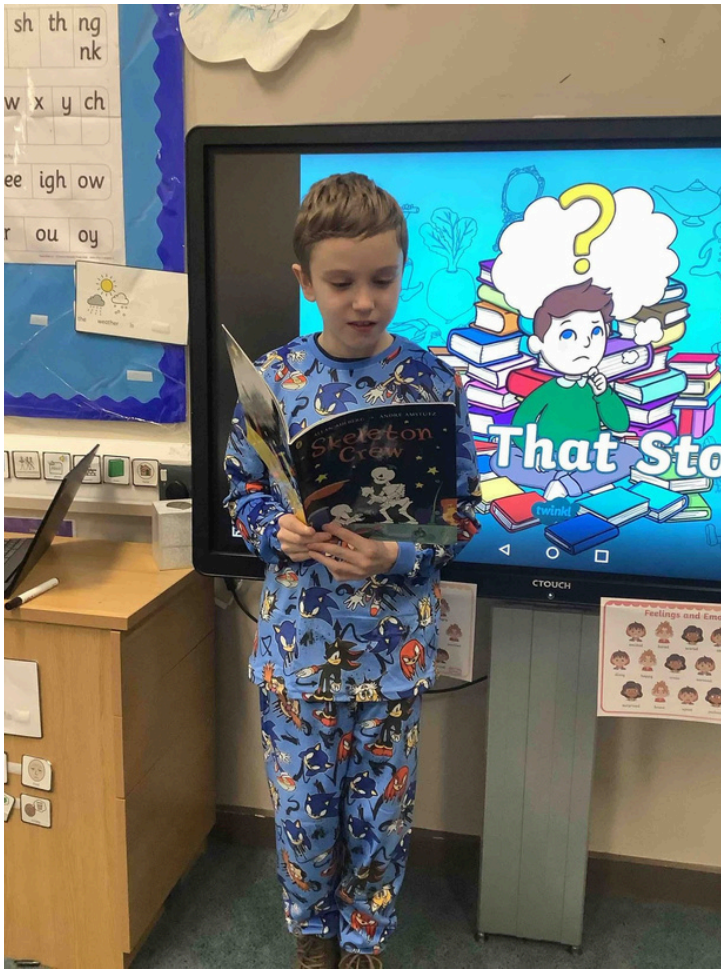
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Safer Internet Day

This week was Safer Internet Day.
The theme for Safer Internet Day this year is: Smart tech, safe choices - Exploring the safe and responsible use of AI

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

AI-ENABLED SCAMS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is quickly becoming a widely used tool, with lots of positive applications being discussed and developed. Sadly, however, as with most technology tools, there are those who will seek to use it for malicious and dishonest practices, with children and other vulnerable groups particularly at risk.

PHISHING EMAILS: BETTER & QUICKER

Phishing scams – emails designed to trick people into handing over login details or money – are not new, and do not rely on AI; however, AI has made them far more dangerous. Criminals can now generate highly convincing emails at speed, mimicking an organisation's tone, branding and language with ease. This makes phishing attempts harder to spot, especially for young people who may not yet know what to look out for.

ONLINE MARKETPLACE FRAUD

Online marketplaces are now a common way to buy and sell everything, from second-hand clothes to cars. Criminals are exploiting this by using AI to enhance or completely fake product photos and videos, and pressure buyers into paying deposits or full amounts upfront. These tactics are becoming more advanced, making it vital to pause, check, and verify the sale before parting with any money.

VOICE IMPERSONATION

AI can now realistically impersonate a person's voice when given a small sample of someone's speech patterns. This is especially concerning where voice has been enabled as an alternative to password-based logins. One such example was the use of AI deepfake audio as part of a fake kidnapping scam: the criminals used an AI voice clone of a 15-year-old to convince her parents she had been kidnapped and elicit a ransom.

EMPLOYMENT SCAMS

Using AI, criminals can create fake online profiles that seem completely real. These synthetic identities can chat with young people about fake job offers, asking for money to secure a visa or paperwork. In 2025, The Guardian reported a scam targeting young people with promises of quick cash, posing as TikTok staff.

INFLUENCER & INVESTMENT SCAMS

AI tools now make it easy to manipulate video and audio, with technology available that can generate entirely fake content using the likeness of celebrities or influencers. Criminals are using this to create convincing videos of well-known figures promoting fake products or services, which young people can be particularly susceptible to. Cryptocurrency scams are a common tactic, luring people into investing in schemes that do not exist. Once payment is made, the criminal simply disappears with the money.

ROMANCE SCAMS & SEXTORTION

AI chat bots can now mimic real conversations, often accompanied with realistic fake photos and videos, which makes it easier for criminals to build trust with young people – among other things, this can lead to fraud or sextortion. In 2024, the NCA's CEOP Safety Centre received 380 reports of sextortion. Alarmingly, in the first five months alone, police received an average of 117 monthly reports involving under-18s, showing how serious and targeted this threat has become.

Advice for Parents & Educators

THINK CRITICALLY

The key to addressing the increasing growth of AI-enabled scams is to think critically and show caution. Inform children that if something is too good to be true, then it probably is. Encourage them to stop and carefully consider what they are seeing and reading before taking any action. For example, if a social media post expresses urgency, proceed with caution; if content seems unusual, even from a known person, it may be that their account has been hacked.

USE TRUSTWORTHY SITES AND SERVICES

Online marketplaces are useful when buying and selling items; however, where possible, encourage children to use reputable companies and their online shopping sites. These companies are likely to have more sophisticated cyber-security safeguards in place, underpinned by consumer legislation, enabling them to control how products and services are displayed and traded on their sites.

SEEK TO VERIFY

Criminals may breach an influencer's account or spread misinformation and fake content; however, their approach will generally be limited to a single account, site or service. Where possible, show children how to verify information to check its legitimacy before proceeding. Small actions, such as phoning the person who is the subject of a suspicious email, or checking content via an individual or company website or social media sites can make the difference. The greater the risk, the more effort we should expend to confirm whether the information presented is true or false.

REPORT IT

As the sophistication of scams increases, the likelihood of being tricked by them also increases, especially when not paying attention or acting quickly. It is important that young people know how to report incidents as they happen. Show children how to report their concerns to the social media site, Action Fraud, banks, and other individuals or organisations linked or involved. If you are unsure of the most effective reporting channel, contact Action Fraud.

Meet Our Expert

Gary Henderson is the Director of IT at Millfield, a large independent boarding school in Somerset, as well as a member of the Digital Futures Group, Vice Chair of the ISC Digital Advisory Group and an Association of Network Managers in Education (ANME) Ambassador.

#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®

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The Shropshire SEND Local Offer

The SEND Local Offer is a single place for information, services, and resources families of children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

It's been designed with a family's needs at the heart of the process.

Having access to good quality information to help you understand the world of SEND is really important when making decisions about your child's life. This is where websites such as the SEND Local Offer can really help.

The local offer has two main sections. The first is the information section, where systems and processes are explained, such as how to get extra help at nursery or school, or who to speak to if you're worried about your child's progress. This section will introduce you to services that might help your family, and help you to understand what support is available from a range of services across education, health and social care.

The second section is the service directory. This is a comprehensive list of services, clubs, support groups and businesses that might be of use to your family. It provides a brief introduction to what's offered and contact details so that you can find out more. There's also a feedback button for you to provide information about your experience of using a service, and a listing of events and activities that families supporting a young person with SEND might find of interest.

This video explains more about the SEND Local Offer.

Parenting Help and Support Line

The Parenting Help and Support Line are here for all parents, including those parent carers of children and young people with SEND, with a friendly listening ear and practical advice on everything from behaviours that challenge to sleep issues. No judgment, just support.

Call 01743 250950 Monday - Thursday, 9.30am - 4.30pm or Friday, 9.30am - 3.30pm or email: parenting.team@shropshire.gov.uk

LITTLE RAINBOWS

SEN SESSIONS

Previous attachment

SAFE, SUPPORTIVE SEN STAY AND PLAY SESSIONS FOR 0-8S

MONKMOOR SCOUT HUT

10-11:30AM

SATURDAYS

Calm, inclusive play environment
Sensory friendly activities
Gentle structure with space to explore
Signed Makaton songs
Story massage
Opportunity to chat and connect with other parents and carers

CONTACT US

Little Rainbows SEN Sessions

@littlerainbowssen

Where to get help and support

Meet and Chat SEND

There are two Meet and Chat SEND sessions coming up for parent carers of a child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Meet n Chat SEND

Parent Carers can join us for an informal drop-in session where they can ask questions, get advice, and explore the support available to them within Shropshire. Speak to a range of professionals who can help with:

- Education, health, and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- School support and advocacy
- Health and Wellbeing for children with SEND
- Social care and family support
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Advice for navigating SEND challenges

Each session will have different professionals available, but parent carers are encouraged to come along, have a chat, and find the help they need!

Visit the Family Information Service (FIS) directory for information on dates and venues.

Early Help Coffee and Chat Drop Ins

It's fair to say that all parents from time to time need some help and support with issues that impact on family life. There is help and support available in Shropshire through our Early Help coffee and chat drop ins – some of which are also stay and play sessions.

You can get free Information, advice and support on all aspects of family life, at our Family Drop-Ins. You can chat, have a cuppa and see how we can help you with:

- Family life
- Parenting support
- Domestic abuse support
- Money worries
- Housing support
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- and much more

To find your local drop in please visit the Shropshire Family Information Service Directory.