

# BOORLEY PARK NEWSLETTER 16

## HEADTEACHER'S MESSAGE

Welcome back! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas break and are as excited as we are to embark on a new year filled with possibilities and growth. As we step into 2025, all the staff want to wish everyone a Happy New Year. We are thrilled to have Mr Cannons join our team as the new Assistant Headteacher this week. Please do introduce yourselves and say hello when you see him at the gate. He is eager to meet our wonderful families and is thrilled to be joining our school community.

Mr Cannons will be focusing on building strong relationships with our children, understanding their individual needs and supporting their journeys. He will play a pivotal role in enhancing our teaching and learning practices to ensure they are as effective and engaging as possible. This focus aligns with our new school values of Inspiring Minds, Nurturing Futures and Strengthening Community, all of which are central to our vision here at Boorley. We look forward to making this term a successful and rewarding one for our children as we continue to work hard to provide the best educational experience possible for your children.



## INSPIRING MINDS

In Year R, we have taken part in Big Schools' Birdwatch 2025! We have learnt about the different species of birds we might find in our local area and the varying features they have to tell them apart. This week, we used binoculars to go birdwatching and found crows, blackbirds, seagulls, sparrows and magpies in our school grounds. To support our learning we have been reading books about birds and their features, habitats, nests and eggs. We even got to explore and investigate a real bird nest and hatched eggs! To extend our learning during the Big Schools' Birdwatch, we have been filling up bird feeders with seeds and providing shelter for the birds with our bird house in the early years garden.



# NURTURING FUTURES

In assembly this week, we focused on New Year's resolutions and explored how this relates to our school value of "Nurturing Futures." We unpicked the meaning of the word "nurture," understanding it as the act of taking care of something important—ourselves, each other, and our environment. The children learnt that nurturing ourselves involves maintaining a healthy lifestyle through exercise, eating nutritious foods and staying hydrated to support our brain development. We discussed how the effort we put into our learning today paves the way for a wealth of opportunities in the future. Furthermore, we recognised the importance of caring for our environment and the children acknowledged their role in protecting both our school grounds and the wider world.

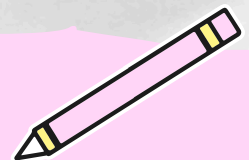


# STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

In our ongoing commitment to Strengthening Community, we are excited to share that Mr Cannons has written a letter to introduce himself to you which we invite you to read.

Mr Cannons invites parents or carers to join our Boorley Park Steering Group for Inclusion and Diversity. This group aims to foster an inclusive environment where every voice is heard and every member of our school community feels valued. Your participation in this initiative will be instrumental in creating a diverse and supportive community in which your insights and experiences will support us in making Boorley as inclusive as possible.

[WWW.BOORLEYPARKPRIMARY.ORG/](http://WWW.BOORLEYPARKPRIMARY.ORG/)





# SAFEGUARDING NOTICES

As we welcome you back to school for the spring term we recognise that it can be a struggle to get back into the school routine after the excitement of Christmas! Please remember that attendance is a vital part of a successful school experience. When children attend school regularly, they have the opportunity to engage in learning, build friendships, and develop important social skills. Each day is filled with exciting lessons, activities, and new discoveries that contribute to their growth and understanding. We encourage you to ensure your child is present in school and on time every day, as each moment in the classroom is a chance to learn something new and share in the fun of learning together.



## KEY DATES



### January 2025

Thursday 16th January - 9:00-11:00am - Year R - Little City Workshop in School

Thursday 23rd January - 9:00am - Promoting the Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools Parent Workshop

Friday 24th January - Year 2 Trip to Blue Reef Aquarium

### February 2025

Tuesday 4th February 2:45-3pm Year 3 Parent Workshop - In the Hall

Wednesday 5th February 9:30-10:00am Year 2 - Fox Class - In the hall

Thursday 6th February 9:30-10:00am Year 2 - Hedgehog Class - In the Hall

Thursday 6th February 3:00-3:15pm Year 4 Parent Workshop - In the hall

Friday 7th February 3:00-3:15pm Year 5 Parent Workshop - In the hall

Monday 10th February 3:30pm-7.00pm Parents Evening

Wednesday 12th February 3:30pm-5:30pm Parents Evening

Thursday 13th February Year 4 Trip to Winchester Cathedral

**Friday 14th February INSET day - School closed to all pupils**

**Monday 17th February – Friday 21st February Half Term**

Monday 24th February – First Day of Term



# 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

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

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

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

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

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

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications they tend 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 screen time as they try to keep up with the conversation.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

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

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

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

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

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

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 disabling 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.



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Sources: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11-18/lets-talk-about/socialising-online/group-chats/> | <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/chat-app/>