Thank you to Elder class who started the assemblies for 2022, reminding us all of the importance of setting New Years' Resolutions. Have you made any?

We also heard how the New Year is celebrated in different countries. However, in my assembly this week we were trying to remember the past and all of the things we learnt last year. Children are expected to be able to remember what they have learnt before and build on their knowledge and make connections.

Please see the letter this week about the opportunity for Guitar and Ukulele lessons. Stay safe and warm this cold weekend.

Miss Kondo

Welcome back to Spanish

Children will be learning how to say

the days and months in Spanish.

Días de la semana	Meses — Months	
Days of the week		
lunes	Monday	enero	January
martes	Tuesday	febrero	February
miércoles	Wednesday	marzo	March
jueves	Thursday	abril	April
viernes	Friday	mayo	May
sábado	Saturday	junio	June
domingo	Sunday	julio	July
		agosto	August
		septiembre	September
		octubre	October
		noviembre	November
		diciembre	December

Today at forest school, we did three activities which had an element of danger to them but we had adult supervision. It was a lot of fun. Miss Jalali and Miss Woods were the teachers guiding us through these activities. The first activity was the most enjoyable; we got to light a fire. Then we built a shelter which could fit our whole team to protect us from the rain. The final activity of the day was peeling a piece of wood, like you would peel a carrot. We needed to listen really carefully as we were using a knife. Mulberry class thoroughly enjoyed the lesson.

Saynab, Year 4 Mulberry class

Fourth Plinth Schools Award 2022 – Calling All Artists and Designers!

The Greater London Authority have invited us to take part in an exciting art competition, inspired by the contemporary art commissions for the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square.
Welcome to the Fourth Plinth Schools Awards 2022.

How can I get involved?

•Design an artwork inspired by the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square – it can be in all art forms including drawing, painting, collage, sculpture or digital designs.
•Make sure you include your full name and the name of our school on the FRONT of your work.
•Hand in to Mrs McKenna (Chestnut Class) no later than 18th February 2022 for submission for judging in March 2022.

What happens next?

There are winner and runner-up prizes for different age categories: 5-7 years, 8-11 years and 12-15 years, as well as prizes for the best work from each London borough. There'll also be a presentation ceremony at the new City Hall and all winning entries will appear in an exhibition in late spring.

For more inspiration go to: https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/current-culture-projects/fourth-plinth-trafalgar-square/fourth-plinth-schools-awards-2022?source=vanityurl

Previous winners.....

This week's top tip from Mrs Ahmad- West Acton School Therapist

I am here at West Acton on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays this year.

The Importance of routines:

When there is or has been lots of change, especially when things are uncertain, children, like adults respond in different ways. You might see that your child is slower to get ready in the morning or battles with you over doing their reading or Homework. You may have a child who is finding it difficult to sleep or becoming fussier over what foods they want to eat. It is natural that the children may want or need more choices so that they feel a little more 'in control.'

How can parents help?

Creating structure and routines are the most important and effective way of helping a child to feel safe. Knowing what is happening next, is reassuring and settling for them. During the holidays, it is easy to come out of routine, staying up later than usual and waking up later.

As we move into a new year, let's think about what our children need. Thinking about our children's physical needs can help us to create a routine for them. Our children need; food, water shelter, warmth and two key things, fresh air and a good night's sleep.

Set up a daily routine for your child, think about what time you want them to eat so that it fits in with dinnertime and bath times. Take time out during the day to take a walk, not only will this provide your child with the fresh air they need, but getting their bodies moving will help them with their attention and concentration. This will also tire them out and help them to sleep better.

Make sure to add in time for children to play, remember our children release stress and big feelings through their play.

School Dinner Menu

For more details see here: https://www.westactonprimaryschool.org/parents/schooollunches

All information about the school dinners is on our website. Thank you to parents/carers and children who are completing the survey.

House points for this week

Chiswick	882
Osterley	870
Pitzhanger	902
Syon	689

Policy Focus – Safeguarding – FGM

Female Genital Mutilation is illegal and is a form of child abuse and as such, is dealt with under the schools Safeguarding Policy. At West Acton, the Headteachers and Governors expect Safeguarding to be everybody's responsibility and expect all staff to adhere to and follow these policies.

World Health Organisation definition of FGM:
"Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises of all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or non-therapeutic reasons." (World Health Organisation-1997)

West Acton Primary School participated in an FGM project in 2019 -2020 that will educated and supported all relevant members of our school community, this will be run in conjunction with the local Health Improvement Team. Over 20 parents also attended.

FGM is illegal in the UK.

The UK Government has written advice and guidance on FGM that states:

- "FGM is considered child abuse in the UK and a grave violation of the human rights of girls and women. In all circumstances where FGM is practised on a child it is a violation of the child's right to life, their right to their bodily integrity, as well as their right to health. The UK Government has signed a number of international human rights laws against FGM, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- "Girls are at particular risk of FGM during school summer holidays. This is the time when families may take their children abroad for the procedure. Many girls may not be aware that they may be at risk of undergoing FGM."
- "UK communities that are most at risk of FGM include Kenyans, Somalis, Sudanese, Sierra Leoneans, Egyptians, Nigerians and Eritreans. However women from non-African communities who are at risk of FGM include Yemeni, Kurdish, Indonesian and Pakistani women."

From 31 October 2015 onwards, regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales have a mandatory requirement to report visually confirmed or verbally disclosed cases of FGM in girls under 18 to the police.

If you would like to know more about FGM please have a look at the World Health Organisation website.
https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation
Did you know? In Ealing there is a higher potential risk due to the ethnic diversity of these areas. According to estimates by City University, in England there are 137,000 girls and women living with FGM, and 144,000 girls at risk of it.

It is often assumed that FGM is only prevalent in Africa but there are many other countries that also practice FGM. The Home Office has identified women from a number of east African communities – including Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia – as well as Nigeria, the Middle East and Indonesia, and areas of Eastern Europe and South America as being most at risk.

It is believed that one reason that FGM is still practiced in the UK is that people do not know that it is illegal in this country. In fact it has been illegal since 1985 and if a child is suspected to be at risk, the authorities can remove them from the situation. Those that undergo FGM tend to be of primary school age.

West Acton Primary School Weekly Attendance & Punctuality				
W/E:		7th January 2022		
Attendance	90.90%		Punctuality	85
School Targ	96.30%		Class Targets:	0
Class	Attendanc	Attendance Winner	Class	No.Lates
		EYFS		
Acorn	86.50%	FIR	Acorn	2
Reception			Reception	
Olive	84	Punctuality Winner	Olive	1
Banyan	86.00%	OLIVE	Banyan	11
Fir	93.40%		Fir	5
Key Stage 1		Year 1, 2, 3 & ELM	Key Stage 1	
Katsura	91.40%	Attendance Winner:	Katsura	1
Ash	91.20%	ROWAN	Ash	1
Guava	91.90%		Guava	5
Damson	90.40%	Punctuality Winner	Damson	3
Chestnut	84.50%	TSURA, ASH & CHESTN	Chestnut	1
Juniper	87.90%		Juniper	8
Key Stage 2			Key Stage 2	
Holly	88.80%		Holly	5
Rowan	93.20%	Year 4, 5, 6 & BIRCH	Rowan	2
Ivy	90.40%	Attendance Winner:	Ivy	2
Mulberry	90.90%	QUINCE	Mulberry	4
Pine	97.70%		Pine	8
Sycamore	95.50%	Punctuality Winner	Sycamore	5
Willow	97.0%	ELDER	Willow	3
Elder	90.60%		Elder	0
Quince	98.00%		Quince	3
Lime	93.50%		Lime	4
Tamarind	90.90%		Tamarind	4
Zaytouna	91.20%		Zaytouna	2
Woodlands			Woodlands	
Elm	86.50%		Elm	3
Birch	85.40%		Birch	2

West Acton Primary School Weekly Attendance & Punctuality				
W/E:		14th January 2022		
Attendance	94.10%		Punctuality	115
School Target:	96.30%		Class Targets:	0
Class	Attendance	Attendance Winner	Class	No.Lates
		EYFS		
Acorn	88.70%		Acorn	4
Reception			Reception	
Olive	86.30%	Punctuality Winner	Olive	4
Banyan	91.60%		Banyan	14
Fir	93.90%		Fir	2
Key Stage 1		Year 1, 2, 3 & ELM	Key Stage 1	
Katsura	100%	Attendance Winner:	Katsura	5
Ash	95.10%		Ash	4
Guava	96.60%		Guava	6
Damson	94.30%	Punctuality Winner	Damson	0
Chestnut	88.40%		Chestnut	8
Juniper	93.70%		Juniper	11
Key Stage 2			Key Stage 2	
Holly	93.70%		Holly	2
Rowan	89%	Year 4, 5, 6 & BIRCH	Rowan	1
Ivy	100%	Attendance Winner:	Ivy	1
Mulberry	95.70%		Mulberry	4
Pine	98.50%		Pine	7
Sycamore	95.40%	Punctuality Winner	Sycamore	5
Willow	89.30%		Willow	6
Elder	90.70%		Elder	1
Quince	96.50%		Quince	5
Lime	98.60%		Lime	4
Tamarind	96%		Tamarind	11
Zaytouna	97.20%		Zaytouna	6
Woodlands			Woodlands	
Elm	100%		Elm	3
Birch	91.20%		Birch	1

W/c 4th January	Larin	Charlotte	Yazn
Nursery Acorn	Larin	Charlotte	Yazn
Rec Banyan	Selina	Illyahna	Mayu
Rec Fir	Hajar	Taima	Adam H
Rec Olive	Khajiria	Victoria	Noor
Y1 Ash	tbc	tbc	tbc
Y1 Guava	Jahnaye	Shamfa	Layah
Y1 Katsura	Takuto	Sara	Safira
Y2 Chestnut	Aminetou	Miko	Isabella
Y2 Damson	Ali K	Mila	Daniel
Y2 Juniper	Izzy	Adam	Rumaysah
Y3 Holly	Rio	tbc	tbc
Y3 Ivy	Wassim	Jan	Aya
Y3 Rowan	Imani	Eliza	Meshal
Y4 Mulberry	Sena	Saynab	Misaki
Y4 Pine	Aliza	Shadiro	Rayan
Y4 Sycamore	Amelia	Uzayr	Asiya
Y5 Elder	Vas	Max	Fayyad
Y5 Quince	Yuito	Yasmin	Passa
Y5 Willow	Yassin	Kazuki	Kengo
Y6 Lime	Aya	Alisha	Ily
Y6 Tamarind	Taishi	Hadi	Omar
Y6 Zaytouna	Jacob	Elliot	George
Woodlands	Jessie Adam	Mira	Oliver

CLASS ASSEMBLIES

Spring Term

Class	Date
Elder	Friday 14th January
Willow	Friday 21st January
Damson	Friday 28th January
Juniper	Friday 4th February
Chestnut	Friday 11th February
Katsura	Friday 25th February
Ash	Friday 4th March
Guava	Friday 11th March
Mulberry	Friday 18th March

We are delighted to be able to have our class assemblies again.

We hope that parents/carers of the performing class can join us at 9.00am in the Jubilee Hall.

We will confirm on a week by week basis.

HALF TERM

HOLIDAY IS

Monday 14th February to Friday 18th February

Do not send your child to school with COVID-19 symptoms – please test them first.

HM Government

From 10 December

FACE COVERINGS will be required in most public indoor venues, other than hospitality venues

Please wear your mask at drop off and pick up or let us know if you are exempt.

190 DAYS 100%	183 DAYS 96%	179 DAYS 94%	175 DAYS 92%	More than 18 days absence less than 90%
Very best chance of success	Off to a flying start	Less chance of success	Harder to make progress	Persistent Absentee (Not fair on your child)

The effect of absence on progress

A whole year has 365 days; a school year has 190 days. That leaves 175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping and other appointments.

No Absence	10 days absence	12 days absence	19 days absence	29 days absence	38 days absence
190 days of education	180 days of education	178 days of education	171 days of education	161 days of education	152 days of education
100%	95%	94%	90%	85%	80.00%
Very Good		Worrying		Serious Concern	

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION 13+

TikTok is a video-sharing social media app which lets people create, view and download looping 15-second clips. Typically, these are videos of users lip-syncing and dancing to popular songs or soundbites (often for comic purposes), enhanced with filters, effects and text. Designed with young people in mind, TikTok skyrocketed in popularity in 2019 and has featured near the top of download charts ever since. It now has around a billion users worldwide.

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Most videos appearing on a child's feed are light-hearted and amusing. However, some clips have been reported for featuring drug and alcohol abuse, themes of suicide and self-harm, or young teens acting in a sexually suggestive way. The sheer volume of uploads is impossible to moderate entirely — and since TikTok Jump's introduction in mid-2021, users can view third-party content outside the app.

EXPLICIT SONGS

TikTok primarily revolves around videos of users lip-syncing and dancing to music. Inevitably, some featured songs will contain explicit or suggestive lyrics. Given the app's young user-base, there is a risk that children may view older users' videos and then be inclined to imitate any explicit language or suggestive actions.

TIKTOK FAME

The app has created its own celebrities: Charli D'Amelio and Lil Nas X, for example, were catapulted to fame by exposure on TikTok — leading to many more teens attempting to go viral and become "TikTok famous". While most aspiring stars hoping to be 'the next big thing' will find it difficult, setbacks may in turn prompt them to go to even more drastic lengths to get noticed.

HAZARDOUS VISIBILITY

Connecting with others is simple on TikTok — including commenting on and reacting to users' videos, following their profile and downloading their content. The majority of these interactions are harmless, but — because of its abundance of teen users — TikTok has experienced problems with predators contacting young people.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

Like all social media, TikTok is designed to be addictive. It can be hugely entertaining — but that also makes it hard to put down. As well as the punchy nature of the short video format, the app's ability to keep users intrigued about what's coming next mean it's easy for a 5-minute visit to turn into a 45-minute stay.

IN-APP SPENDING

There's an in-app option to purchase 'TikTok coins', which are then converted into digital rewards for sending to content creators that a user likes. Prices range from 99p to an eye-watering £99 bundle. TikTok is also connected with Shopify, which allows users to buy products through the app.

Advice for Parents & Carers

TALK ABOUT ONLINE CONTENT

Assuming your child is above TikTok's age limit, talk to them about what they've viewed on the app. Ask their opinion on what's appropriate and what isn't. Explain why they shouldn't give out personal details or upload videos which reveal information like their school or home address. In the long run, teaching them to think critically about what they see on TikTok could help them to become social-media savvy.

MAINTAIN PRIVACY SETTINGS

The default setting for all under 16s' accounts to 'private'. Keeping it that way is the safest solution: it means only users who your child approves can watch their videos. The 'Stitch' (which lets users splice clips from other people's videos into their own) and 'Duet' (where you build on another user's content by recording your own video alongside their original) features are now only available to over 16s. This might clash with your child's ambitions of social media stardom, but it will fortify their account against predators.

LEARN ABOUT REPORTING AND BLOCKING

With the correct privacy settings applied, TikTok is a relatively safe space. However, in case something does slip through, make sure your child knows how to recognise and report inappropriate content and get them to come to you about anything upsetting that they've seen. TikTok allows users to report anyone breaching its guidelines, while you can also block individual users through their profile.

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

'Family Pairing' lets parents and carers link their own TikTok account to their child's. Through your mobile, you can control your child's safety settings remotely — including limiting screen time, managing their ability to exchange messages (and with whom) and blocking a lot of age-inappropriate content. TikTok's Safety Centre also provides resources for parents and carers to support online safety among families. These resources can be found on their website.

USE RESTRICTED MODE

In the app's 'Digital Wellbeing' section, you can filter out inappropriate content (specific content creators or hashtags, for instance) using 'Restricted Mode'. This can then be locked with a PIN. You should note, though, that the algorithm moderating content isn't totally dependable — so it's wise to stay aware of what your child is watching.

MODERATE SCREEN TIME

As entertaining as TikTok is, you can help your child to manage their time on it in the 'Digital Wellbeing' section. Under 'Screen Time Management', you can limit the daily permitted time on the app (in increments ranging from 40 minutes to two hours). This preference can also be locked behind a PIN. That way, your child can get their regular dose of TikTok without wasting the whole day.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about NETFLIX

Netflix is a subscription-based streaming service that allows users to watch TV shows and movies on any internet-enabled device that supports the software, such as smart TVs, phones and tablets. The pandemic saw a surge in children consuming on-demand content as many families relaxed their screen-time rules. Netflix's diverse range of programming caters for all age groups – so it's important for parents to recognise the potential risks of children using the service and the measures to help their child enjoy a safe streaming experience.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Netflix produces and curates an extensive catalogue of content that can provide hours of entertainment. If they share the same user account as an adult, this can potentially lead to children accidentally viewing all manner of inappropriate content, including nudity, profanity and extreme violence. This can happen easily on shared accounts, as Netflix cannot establish who's watching.

BINGE-WATCHING

Netflix allows users to view shows and movies quickly and easily without adverts or interruptions, making excessive screen time a concern. Binge-watching has become more common during the pandemic, due to Netflix's regularly updated content and algorithms which recommend content very similar to what's previously been enjoyed. Marathon viewing sessions can lead to children staying up too late, affecting their mood and concentration the next day.

SCREEN ADDICTION

From TVs and phones to consoles and tablets, Netflix is available on almost any device with an internet connection – making it extremely difficult to manage children's screen time. The service is now adding games to its mobile app, tempting users to spend even more time on the platform. Screen addiction can distract children from important activities like schoolwork and socialising, and can impact their health by reducing their exercise and sleep.

HACKING ATTEMPTS

With millions of users worldwide, Netflix is often targeted by hackers who try to steal usernames and passwords to gain access to people's accounts. If successful, they can then steal payment details or try to sell stolen personal data on the dark web, providing other criminals with a profitable opportunity. Netflix also doesn't provide two-factor authentication, making the hackers' task that little bit easier.

CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

Netflix's Teleparty feature became popular during lockdown periods as it allows users from different households (friends and relatives, for example) to synchronise when they watch content. It requires an access link to be sent to the people you wish to invite: the link, however, can also be distributed to people you don't know. A text chat feature enables interaction with the other users in real-time: this represents a risk to children if a stranger gains access to the Teleparty.

Advice for Parents & Carers

KEEP ACCOUNTS SECURE

Netflix doesn't use two-factor authentication, so a strong password is vital. Your child's Netflix password should be unique (not one they've used elsewhere) and a minimum of eight characters with a mix of letters, numbers and symbols. Emphasise not to share their login details with anyone and remind them to always log out after using the app – so their account remains inaccessible, even if their device is lost or stolen.

SET UP PROFILE PINS

Netflix account holders can lock profiles using a four-digit PIN. Doing this can prevent your child from accessing the wrong account and viewing content that isn't appropriate for their age. Try setting a PIN for each account on your Netflix app – ideally avoiding numbers that would be easily guessed, such as dates of birth. Remember not to share these PINs with anyone, including family.

CHECK MATURITY RATING

Netflix warns about content that includes violence, sex, profanity and nudity. These warnings form part of the show or movie's 'maturity rating'. Users can restrict age ratings to avoid children viewing age-inappropriate content. On their profile, open the Profile and Parental Control settings and choose the maturity level for the shows and movies you want to allow.

SWITCH OFF AUTO-PLAY

When a show or movie concludes, Netflix's algorithms select content with similar themes that it thinks your child will enjoy next. This new content starts automatically after a 10-second countdown. Disabling this auto-play feature reduces the possibility of your child being shown something inappropriate and provides a natural break to help prevent them becoming too immersed in Netflix.

CREATE A KIDS' PROFILE

Setting up a Netflix Kids experience profile means your child can only access content which is suitable for children aged up to 12 years. All other content is automatically blocked. This rating can be further restricted via the child's profile settings. Setting up a Netflix Kids experience profile will help to prevent your child from viewing age-inappropriate content.

CHECK VIEWING HABITS

Netflix has tools which enable parents and carers to monitor what their child has been watching. Selecting 'Viewing Activity' in each profile's account settings displays a list of what content has been viewed (and when). This can reassure parents that their child is watching age-appropriate content and can open avenues for discussing your child's favourite shows and movies, and why they like them.

SN⚪PCHAT

Snapchat is a photo- and video-sharing app which also allows users to chat with friends via text or audio. Users can share images and videos with specific friends, or through a 'story' (documenting the previous 24 hours) visible to their entire friend list. Snapchat usage rose during the pandemic, with many young people utilising it to connect with their peers. The app continues to develop features to engage an even larger audience and emulate current trends, rivalling platforms such as TikTok and Instagram.

CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

Even if your child only connects on the app with people they know, they may still receive friend requests from strangers. Snapchat's links with apps such as Wink and Hoop have increased this possibility. Accepting a request means that children are then disclosing personal information through the Story, SnapMap and Spotlight features. This could allow predators to gain their trust for sinister purposes.

EXCESSIVE USE

There are many features that are attractive to users and keep them excited about the app. Snap streaks encourage users to send snaps daily, Spotlight Challenges give users to the chance to obtain money and online fame, and the Spotlight feature's scroll of videos makes it easy for children to spend hours watching content.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some videos and posts on Snapchat are not suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's Discover function lets users swipe through snippets of news stories and trending articles that often include adult content. There is currently no way to turn off this feature.

CAUTION

SEXTING

Sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat. The app's 'disappearing messages' feature makes it easy for young people (teens in particular) to share explicit images on impulse. While these pictures do disappear — and the sender is notified if it has been screenshotted first — users have found alternative methods to save images, such as taking pictures with a separate device.

DAMAGE TO CONFIDENCE

Snapchat's filters and lenses are a popular way for users to enhance their 'selfie game'. Although many are designed to entertain or amuse, the 'beautify' filters on photos can set unrealistic body image expectations and create feelings of inadequacy. Comparing themselves unfavourably against other Snapchat users could threaten a child's confidence or sense of self-worth.

VISIBLE LOCATION

My Places lets users check in and search for popular spots nearby — such as restaurants, parks or shopping centres — and recommend them to their friends. The potential issue with a young person consistently checking into locations on Snapchat is that it allows other users in their friends list (even people they have only ever met online) to see where they currently are and where they regularly go.

#NOFILTER

Add ME

Advice for Parents & Carers

TURN OFF QUICK ADD

The Quick Add function helps people find each other on the app. This function works based on mutual friends or whether someone's number is in your child's contacts list. Explain to your child that this feature could potentially make their profile visible to strangers. We recommend that your child turns off Quick Add, which can be done in the settings (accessed via the cog icon).

CHAT ABOUT CONTENT

Talk to your child about what is and isn't wise to share on Snapchat (e.g. don't post explicit images or videos, or display identifiable details like their school uniform). Remind them that once something is online, the creator loses control over where it might end up — and who with. Additionally, Snapchat's 'Spotlight' feature has a #challenge like TikTok's: it's vital that your child understands the potentially harmful consequences of taking part in these challenges.

CHOOSE GOOD CONNECTIONS

Snapchat has recently announced that it is rolling out a new safety feature: users will receive notifications reminding them of the importance of maintaining connections with people they actually know well, as opposed to strangers. This 'Friend Check Up' encourages users to delete connections with users they rarely communicate with, to maintain their online safety and privacy.

KEEP ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Profiles are private by default, but children may make them public to gain more followers. Your child can send Snaps directly to friends, but Stories are visible to everyone they have added, unless they change the settings. If they use SnapMaps, their location is visible unless 'Ghost Mode' is enabled (again via settings). It's prudent to emphasise the importance of not adding people they don't know in real life. This is particularly important with the addition of My Places, which allows other Snapchatters to see the places your child regularly visits and checks in: strangers, bullies and groomers could use this information to engage in conversation and arrange to meet in person.

TALK ABOUT SEXTING

It may feel like an awkward conversation (and one that young people can be reluctant to have) but it is important to talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting. Discuss the legal implications of sending, receiving or sharing explicit images, as well as the possible emotional impact. Emphasise that your child should never feel pressured into sexting — and that if they receive unwanted explicit images, they should tell a trusted adult straight away.

BE READY TO BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger does connect with your child on Snapchat and begins to make them feel uncomfortable through bullying, pressure to send explicit images or by sending explicit images to them, your child can select the three dots on that person's profile and choose report or block. There are options to state why they are reporting that user (annoying or malicious messages, spam, or masquerading as someone else, for example).

What Parents Need to Know about SQUID GAME

With themes of horror and violence, it's important for parents and carers to understand the potential risks posed to young audiences by the nine-episode Netflix-exclusive TV show, Squid Game. The series, rated 15+, is about a world where contestants who are deeply in debt play children's games in order to win cash prizes. The losers, however, are violently killed. The show's popularity has meant it has spread in various guises across online platforms, with a heightened risk of children and young people potentially viewing unsuitable content. That's why we've created this guide to help parents and carers understand exactly what Squid Game is all about.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some might argue that Squid Game contains content that might not even be suitable for older teens, let alone young children. Characters are brutally tortured and killed through stabbings or getting shot as a result of rules developed and enforced by a masked game master. The show also features sexual content and threats of sexual violence, as well as a strong theme of gambling that runs throughout the whole show.

APPEAL TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Whilst the content is very much adult-themed, some features of the show seem to appeal to young children at face-value. The name "Squid Game" may be interpreted as a programme aimed at children rather than adults. The content itself, such as the bright and childish aesthetics, may also appeal to young children, particularly as there's a focus on playground games to go with it.

SIMILAR CONTENT SUGGESTIONS

When using social media and streaming sites, content is recommended based on what is the user has consumed i.e. what they have watched or searched for. Therefore, there is a greater chance of your child being exposed to similar violent or horror-themed content on social media after watching a show like Squid Game.

VIRAL SPIN-OFFS

As well as Netflix, Squid Game has grown in notoriety and prevalence on other platforms, like TikTok and YouTube, with clips of the show going viral. On YouTube Kids, a number of successful channels have taken advantage of the Squid Game trend, creating content such as "How to Draw Squid Game Characters" videos. Its popularity has also led to the creation of app games that put the player in the role of a contestant who is killed if they lose a game.

SCENE RE-ENACTMENTS

Squid Game's pervasive presence on social media has encouraged many content creators to re-enact scenes from the show, which has led to reports of children wanting to also imitate those scenes displayed on social media at home and in school. Much of this content stems from the "Red Light, Green Light" game from the first episode, where contestants attempt to make it past a giant animatronic girl before she shoots them.

Advice for Parents & Carers

USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Netflix has easily accessible built-in parental controls that allow you to set up a profile for your child with a specific age rating, block them from watching certain shows and even lock their account so it can't be accessed by anyone else. Netflix also allows you to access your child's viewing history to make sure they're not watching anything inappropriate for their age.

CHECK AGE RATINGS

Age ratings on TV shows and films are a way to gauge what is suitable for audiences of different ages. If you are unsure about the content your child is watching, check the age rating to see if the TV show or film is deemed suitable for their age group. If not, try watching the show yourself or talking to other parents who have seen it before to get a better understanding of why it's been rated a certain way.

MONITOR ONLINE ACTIVITY

Squid Game has become a social media craze and it's possible your child will see some content related to the show on various platforms. Therefore, it's important to be aware of which websites your child has visited on their smartphone, tablet or laptop, and to also keep an eye out for which accounts they are following on social media platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok.

HAVE OPEN CONVERSATIONS

Making sure your child is comfortable telling you about what they see online can go a long way to ensuring you are kept in the loop about their online use. Showing an interest in what your child is doing online gives you the opportunity to discuss what is and is not appropriate for their age group, and how they might recognise their own feelings towards content they see.

MONITOR BEHAVIOUR

Due to the viral nature of the show, even if your child has not seen Squid Game, it's important to keep an eye on their behaviour. There have been reports from schools of children "playing Squid Game" in the playground and acting aggressively towards the losers as a way to replicate the consequences of losing in the TV show. Viewing content that makes your child feel uncomfortable could also cause them to feel distressed or distracted, so it's important you can easily spot the signs.

WATCH THE SHOW

If you're trying to figure out whether you should let your child watch Squid Game, it might be a good idea to watch the show yourself first. Doing so will allow you to get a better understanding of the show's content and themes, as well as help you decide if this is something you'd feel comfortable with your child being exposed to.

What parents need to know about
INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a hugely popular social networking app with over 1 billion users worldwide. The app, which is accessible on iOS and Android devices, allows users to upload images and videos to their feed, create interactive 'stories', exchange private messages or search, explore and follow other accounts they like. Images and videos can be transformed with an array of filters to edit the shot before sharing and anyone with an account can see others' online 'galleries' if their account is not private. To make posts easier to find, users can include searchable hashtags and captions to their uploads. That's why we've created this guide to help parents and carers understand exactly what Instagram is about.

HOOKED ON SCROLLING

Many social media platforms, Instagram included, have been designed in a way to keep us engaged on them for as long as possible. Behavioural economist, Nir Eyal, calls this the 'Hook Model' and the Instagram feed is a great example of this. Children and adults may find themselves scrolling to try and get a 'dopamine release'. Scrolling may become addictive and it can be difficult to stop until children find that 'something' they are looking for, quickly losing track of time as they get deeper into their Instagram feed.

SLIDING INTO DMS

Direct messages (or DMs) on Instagram allow users to share posts, images, videos, voice messages and calls between each other privately (or in a private group). Even if your child's account is set to private, anybody has the option to message them and send them content. If the person is not on your child's friends list, the message will still be sent to their inbox but the user has to accept their request to see the message.

INFLUENCER CULTURE

Influencers are sometimes paid thousands of pounds to promote a product, service, app and much more on social media. When celebrities or influencers post such an advert, they should add a disclaimer somewhere in the post which states that they have been paid for it. Commonly, this is well-hidden in the hashtags or in the comments of their post, making it unclear that their photo/video is actually an advert. This can be very misleading to young people who may be influenced into buying/wanting something promoted by somebody they admire, creating a false sense of reality and potentially affecting their mental health and wellbeing.

IMPACT ON WELLBEING

In a report by the RSPH, Instagram was ranked the worst for young people's mental health. Using filters on photos on Instagram can set unrealistic expectations and create feelings of inadequacy. Children may strive for more 'likes' by using realistically edited photos. Judging themselves against other users on the app might threaten their confidence or self-worth. In early 2019, Instagram banned images of self-harm and suicide, following the suicide of 14-year-old Molly Russell, who had reportedly been looking at such material on the platform. They since extended the ban to include drawings, cartoons and memes.

LIVE STREAMING TO STRANGERS

Live streaming on Instagram allows users to connect with friends and followers in real-time and comment on videos during broadcast. If your child's account is private, only their approved followers can see their story. It's important to note they may have accepted a friend request from someone they don't know, which means they could be live streaming to strangers. Children also risk sharing content they later regret, which could be re-shared online for years to come. Public accounts allow anybody to view, so we suggest your child blocks followers they don't know. In early 2019, data gathered by the NSPCC found that sex offenders were grooming children on Instagram more than on any other online platform.

IN-APP PAYMENTS

Instagram allows payments for products directly through the app. It operates under the same rules as Facebook Payments, which state that if you are under the age of 18, you can only use this feature with the involvement of a parent or guardian.

EXPOSING LOCATION

Public locations can be added to a user's photos/videos and also to their stories. While this may seem like a good idea at the time, it can expose the location of your child. This is particularly more of a risk if it is on their story, as it is real time. A photo which includes landmarks in the area, their school uniform, street name, house and even tagging in the location of the photo uploaded to Instagram can expose the child's location, making it easy to locate them. If their account is public, anyone can access their account and see their location.

HIJACKED HASHTAGS

Hashtags are an integral part of how Instagram works, but they can come with risks. One person may use a seemingly innocent hashtag with one particular thing in mind, and before you know it hundreds of people could be using the same hashtag for something inappropriate or dangerous that your child shouldn't be exposed to.

IGTV

Instagram TV (IGTV) works similar to YouTube. Users can watch videos from favourite accounts on the platform or create their own channel and post their own videos. It's important to note anyone can create an Instagram TV channel and doesn't have to be friends with a person to follow an account and watch their videos. In 2018, Instagram apologised and removed some of its TV content which featured sexually suggestive imagery of children. As the feature may encourage spending more time using the app, it's important to set time limits to avoid children's sleep or education being disturbed.

Top Tips for Parents & Carers

RESTRICT DIRECT MESSAGES

If your child receives a message from somebody they do not know, encourage them not to accept their message request and 'block' this person; this is the only way to stop them messaging your child again. Children can also 'tap and hold' the individual message to report it directly to Instagram as well as reporting the account itself.

LOOK OUT FOR #ADS

In 2019, the UK's Competition and Markets Authority launched an investigation into celebrities who were posting adverts on social media and not declaring that they were paid for. Influencers must clearly state that they have been paid for their posts, for example using a hashtag like #ad or #sponsored. Teach your child to look out for the signs of a paid post/advert and discuss with them that not everything they see from celebrities is their personal choice and opinion.

MANAGE NEGATIVE INTERACTIONS

If your child is receiving unwanted or negative comments, they can block that account so that they can't interact with them. This stops them seeing and commenting on their posts, stories and live broadcasts. In addition, your child can instantly delete unwanted comments from their posts, turn them off completely and control who can tag and mention them in comments, captions or stories, from everyone, only people they follow, or no one at all.

MANAGE DIGITAL WELLBEING

Instagram now has an in-built activity dashboard that allows users to monitor and control how much time they spend on the app. Users can add a 'daily reminder' to set a limit on how much time they want to spend on Instagram, prompting them to consider if its been too long. In addition, once users have caught up with all the previous posts since they last logged on, they'll receive a 'You're completely caught up' message. Both features can help you have a conversation with your child about how much time they are spending on the app and to set healthy time limits.

PROTECT PERSONAL INFORMATION

Your child may unknowingly give away personal information on their profile or in their live streams. Talk to them about what their personal information is and make sure that they do not disclose anything, including their location, to anyone during a livestream, comment, direct message or any other tool for communication on the platform, even to their friends.

USE A PRIVATE ACCOUNT

By default, any image or video your child uploads to Instagram is visible to anyone. A private account means that you have to approve a request if somebody wants to follow you and only people you approve will see your posts and videos. Children should also use a secure password and enable a two-factor authentication to add an extra layer of security to their account.

FILTER INAPPROPRIATE COMMENTS

Instagram has an 'anti-bullying' filter, which hides comments relating to a person's appearance or character, as well as threats to a person's wellbeing or health. The filter will also alert Instagram to repeated problems so that they can take action against the user if necessary. This is an automatic filter, which should always be enabled. Children can also report abusive behaviour or inappropriate/offensive material directly to Instagram from the app. This includes posts, comments and accounts.

TURN OFF SHARING

Even though this feature will not stop people from taking screenshots, it will stop others being able to directly share photos and videos from a story as a message to another user. This feature can be turned off in the settings. We also recommend turning off the feature which automatically shares photos and videos from a story to a Facebook account.

REMOVE PAYMENT METHODS

If you are happy for your child to have a card associated with their Instagram account, we suggest adding a PIN which needs to be entered before making a payment; this will also help prevent unauthorised purchases. This can be added in the payment settings tab.

DON'T FORGET TO BE VIGILANT & TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT THEIR ONLINE ACTIVITIES!

Meet our expert

Parven Kaur is a social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience of working in the social media arena and is the founder of Kids N Clicks, a web resource helping parents and children thrive in a digital world.

NEW FOR 2020 INSTAGRAM REELS

Instagram Reels is the latest update from Instagram that gives users the ability to record and edit 15-second multi-clip videos with audio, effects, and new creative tools. It is the app's answer to TikTok and can be accessed via the Stories feature. Reels can be shared with friends and family, however, if your child has a public account, it could be shared wider via 'Explore' and viewed by millions of strangers online.

With over 14 million daily users, Discord is one of the most popular communication tools for gamers. It allows you to create or join what are known as 'servers', where different users can talk in groups via text message or voice call. There is also the option to send direct messages and make video calls.

AGE RESTRICTION 13+

What parents need to know about DISCORD

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Your child can access almost any chat server on Discord. This means they can easily be exposed to content and conversations that are inappropriate, upsetting or potentially harmful.

SEXUAL IMAGERY

Despite there being guidelines in place to prevent it, users are able to circulate adult content. This can include sexualised images, pornographic videos and provocative discussions. It's important to stay alert and know the risks that your child could be exposed to.

RISK OF CYBERBULLYING

Interactions on the platform are largely unregulated. This means other users can easily say and show things to your child that might be offensive and upsetting. The competitive nature of gaming can lead users to make abusive and harmful remarks about your child.

HIDDEN CHARGES

Though the basic platform is free, your child will be encouraged to sign up to premium subscriptions, which give extra perks, such as animated emojis and free games. The two options are known as 'Nitro Classic' (which costs $4.99 a month) and Nitro (which costs $9.99 a month). Prices are only converted to pound sterling during the payment process.

RISK OF CYBERCRIME

Cybercriminal groups have been linked to the platform due to reports of hackers sharing stolen data. It's also possible that your child may be encouraged to share the data of their friends, either through peer pressure, or 'for fun', without realising the consequences.

STRANGER DANGER

To create an account, you only need to display a username and profile image. This makes it easy for someone to hide his or her real identity. Predators from anywhere in the world can join a chat server, message your child and quickly leave to avoid detection. Forbes reports groomers have been targeting children susceptible to online coercion on the platform.

National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

Top Tips to Protect Your Child

1 BE WARY OF WHAT'S SHARED

Whatever your child says or shares on the platform can be seen, heard and shared with a much larger audience. Be careful to make sure your child understands this and does not say or share anything that could be deemed offensive, harmful or put themselves or others at risk.

You can find Discord's own guide for parents here: https://blog.discordapp.com/parents-guide-to-discord-c77d91793e9c

2 IMPROVE SECURITY SETTINGS

To help protect your child, make sure they set strong passwords. You should consider using the 'two-factor authentication' function for extra protection. It's also important to remind your child to never to share their personal information, or the details of another user.

3 CHECK THEIR FRIEND LIST

You can restrict who is able to make 'friend requests' to your child in the 'Friends' tab. It's a good idea to deselect the default option that allows anyone to connect. Of course, you should also talk to your child about why it's a risk to allow strangers to connect with them through such platforms.

4 REPORT & BLOCK SUSPICIOUS USERS

Make sure your child knows how to report and block abusive or suspicious users. If you do find your child suffering repeated abuse, contact the platform directly using the email: abuse@discordapp.com. It's a good idea to teach your child how to screenshot any negative interactions too.

5 BE WARY OF NSFW CONTENT

Public forums on the platform are a potential venue for inappropriate content that you should be wary of. There is a Discord mascot known as 'Wumpus', which is supposed to represent anyone under 18. Anyone who posts content unsuitable for under-18s, should mark it NSFW (Not Suitable For Wumpus).

6 SHOW RESPECT TO OTHERS

It's important you actively teach your child to treat other users with respect and behave online the same way as they would offline.

Take the time to read through Discord's Community Guidelines with your child. Find them at: www.discordapp.com/guidelines