

Robert Browning, Snowfields and Tower Bridge Primary Schools

We learn and succeed together



 [@robertbrowning.bsky.social](https://www.bsky.social/@robertbrowning.bsky.social) [@towerbridgeschool.bsky.social](https://www.bsky.social/@towerbridgeschool.bsky.social) [@snsprimary.bsky.social](https://www.bsky.social/@snsprimary.bsky.social)
Find us at: www.thebridgesfederation.org.uk

Newsletter 6th December 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,
We thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the London Bridge Lantern Parade on Thursday after school. The year 5 children proudly showed off the lanterns they had created and we were entertained by our Federation choir.

Please be reminded that we are nut free schools and only nut free food can be brought into school for packed lunch. Please be aware that chocolate spread should not be used as a sandwich filler in a school packed lunch because it contains nuts and has a high sugar content.

You can check your child's attendance through the Scholarpack parents app. Your child's attendance should be as close to 100% as possible. All routine appointments should be made out of school hours. If your child's attendance falls below 90% this means that on average your child is missing at least half a day of school a week and they are classed as having persistent absence. Please speak to a member of staff on the gate if you need support with improving your child's attendance.

Your child is expected to wear school uniform everyday, this includes a school jumper, white shirt/polo shirt and grey trousers/skirt/pinafore dress. Please name your child's school uniform, we have pre-loved uniform available should you need any.

Have a lovely weekend, please support your child to arrive ontime, the school gates open at 8:45am.



Important!

Scholarpack is changing to Arbor **6th January 2025**

We will be changing our MIS system (Scholarpack) to Arbor from 6th January 2025. You will need to download a new app from your app store to continue to receive messages from the school and to be able to send us messages. Please see page 2 of the newsletter for further details.



Dates For Your Diary



Tower Bridge

Tuesday 10th December - Pop-Up Book Shop
Thursday 12th December -KS1 Performance to parents 10am and 2pm - see school page
Thursday 12th December -Y4- 6 Disco 3.45 - 5pm
Tuesday 17th December -EYFS Winter Performance
Tuesday 17th December - Class Parties - wear own clothes
Wednesday 18th December - Christmas Dinner
Friday 20th December - Festive Jumpers
Friday 20th December- Break Up
Monday 6th January - Spring Term Starts

Robert Browning

Wednesday 11th December- KS1 Performance to Families 2pm
Tuesday 17th December -EYFS Winter Performance
Tuesday 17th December - class parties - wear own clothes
Wednesday 18th December - Christmas Dinner
Friday 20th December - Festive Jumpers
Friday 20th December- Break Up 1pm
Monday 6th January - Spring Term Starts

Snowfields

Friday 13th December 10am - KS1 Christmas Show
Tuesday 17th December 10am - EYFS Winter Performance
Tuesday 17th December - Class parties - wear own clothes
Wednesday 18th December - Christmas Dinner
Friday 20th December - Wear a festive jumper
Friday 20th December- Break Up at 1pm.
Monday 6th January - Spring Term Starts

Term Dates 2024-2025 are on the Federation website

[Term Dates – The Bridges Federation](#)

Term time holidays will not be authorised.

Other important dates for this year can also be found on the school website here:

[Diary – The Bridges Federation](#)

Applying for a Reception place

If your child was born between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021, you must apply for a primary or infant school place for September 2025. You will need to apply online. Please click on the link here: [eAdmissions](#)

On **January 6th 2025** all 3 schools are moving to Arbor.

We will no longer be using Scholarpack.

Parents please see below guidance explaining what you need to do. From **January 6th** you will no longer be able to send or receive messages with the school via Scholarpack.

If you need any help please contact your child's school.



We're using Arbor's free Parent Portal and Parent App

We've chosen Arbor to help us manage our school.

Arbor is a simple, smart and cloud-based MIS (Management Information System), which helps us work faster, smarter and more collaboratively as a school. The Parent App and Parent Portal mean we can keep you informed about your child's life at school in a much more accessible way. Log into Arbor to see and update your child's information, get live updates and make payments or bookings on the go!

The Parent Portal works on Google Chrome (computer or laptop) and you can download the Parent App from the App Store or Google Play Store on your phone (Android 5.0; iOS 10.0 and upwards).

How to get started

1. Wait for your welcome email from us telling you Arbor is ready - you won't be able to log in before
2. Click the link in your welcome email to set up your password
3. Go to the App or Google Play Store on your phone and search 'Arbor'
4. Click 'Install' on Android or 'Get' on iPhone then open the App
5. Enter your email, select the school, then enter your password
6. Accept the Terms & Conditions and enter your child's birthday

The Sunnyville School of Magic
W10 5BN, London, GBR

Enter your password

Log In

Forgotten password?

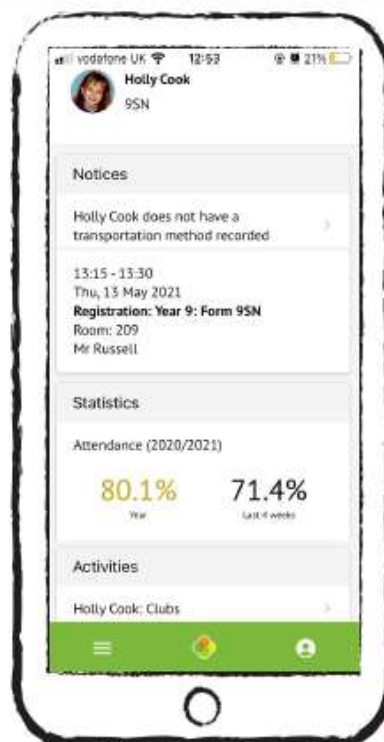
Need help using Arbor?

Contact the school office if you have questions about Arbor, the App or Parent Portal. Tell us the type and model of your phone, e.g. an iPhone SE, and include screenshots or screen recordings.

To safeguard student data in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Arbor only works directly with schools.

Some tips to try:

1. Ensure your username is the email address you use for Arbor. Ask us to **check the email address** linked to your account.
2. **Reset your password** from the login page, or ask us to do this.
3. If the login email was sent to you more than 96 hours ago, the **password link will have expired**. Ask us to send it again.
4. Ask the school office to check that your email address has not been used twice - e.g. on another guardian or child's profile.
5. **Enter the birthday** of one of your children to log in.
6. Only relatives who are **Primary Guardians** of a child can access the Arbor App. Ask us to check you can access Arbor.





end of term

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 10th December

- Pop-up bookshop open

Thursday 12th December

- KS1 Performance to parents with small children 10am

Thursday 12th December

- KS1 Performance to parents no small children to attend 2pm
- Year 4, 5 and 6 School Disco 3.45-5pm

Tuesday 17th December

- EYFS Winter Performance 9.30am
- Class Parties (wear own clothes)

Wednesday 18th December

- Christmas Dinner

Friday 20th December - wear Festive Jumpers and Break Up 1pm

winter
RAFFLE

We will be selling raffle tickets in the mornings and afternoons from next week for the Winter Raffle. There are lots of lovely prizes on offer including:

- Unicorn Theatre family ticket for "Pig Heart Boy" 26/1/25 at 2pm
- toys
- toiletries
- gift sets
- books

More prizes to be announced soon.

Tickets cost £1 per strip and we will draw the winners on Friday 20th December in the last assembly of the term.



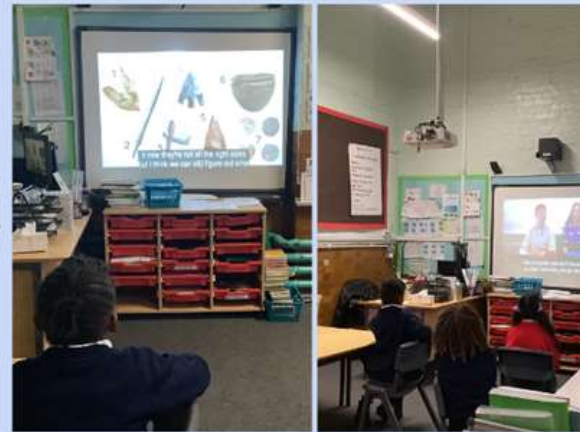
School Jumpers

Please write your child's name on the label of their school jumper. We cannot return them to the correct child if they are not easily identified with their name.

Thank you.



Year 3 took part in a live history lesson delivered by the London Museum. In this session, we discovered more about Prehistoric Britain and looked at artefacts which were collected by archaeologists. We had the opportunity to explore how artefacts were collected and what they were used for in the Stone Age and Bronze Age period.



Some of Purple class visited JSS Search and participated in a design challenge. More of Purple Class will visit later in the year. Thank you to JSS Search for offering us such a wonderful opportunity.



Purple Class took part in the Junior Citizenship Scheme this week in Peckham where they learned valuable skills for staying safe on public transport, in our community, during emergencies and when managing money.



Thank you to the Folio Society who kindly donated books this week to the school.



Festive Fundraiser - Wednesday 18th December

On **Wednesday 18th December** we will be holding a festive fundraiser after school. Please donate any cakes, sweets, chocolates or prizes. If you are able to help out, please speak to Shanaz or Sarah Murray (Parent Governor). A huge thank you to Bennett Construction, who have also donated towards the prizes.

We look forward to seeing you there!

KS1 Christmas Performance

Red Class and Orange Class look forward to welcoming parents and carers to our KS1 Christmas Show on Wednesday 11th December at 2pm.



Year 5 and 6 Football

This half term Year 5 and 6 have been developing their football skills. The girls have been very lucky to work with Joe from PESSN to develop their skills.



Red Class Learning


The children in Red Class have been learning about the properties of 3d shapes.

Thank you!

Thank you to Morrisons for our mini Christmas tree! The children have really enjoyed making decorations.




Snowsfields Primary School




Here is a science investigation carried out by children in Year 6. They looked at how light travels.




Children in Green class used atlases and maps to locate Roman settlements and found the modern name for each of the cities.




The children from Blue class became historians for the day, examining Viking artefacts in the British Museum.



Thank you to staff in Rainbow class for revamping the sensory room so beautifully.



A huge thank you to Luca's parents for their generous donation of a trampoline to Rainbow Class!



The children in Orange class travelled back to 1666 to explore The Great Fire of London. They enjoyed some storytelling sessions, hands on activities and guided walking tours.



Yellow class learnt about Prehistoric London. They took part in a live stream delivered by the Museum of London. They explored some real objects from the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. They also got a glimpse of the largest-ever Bronze Age hoard found in London.



Winter Raffle



We are selling raffle tickets (£1 a strip) at the gate. Funds raised will go towards our enrichment activities. We have some lovely prizes such as Accessorize jewellery, toys, toiletries, a special winter hamper, and limited edition music and sports merchandise. The draw will take place on Friday, December 20th. Thank you all for your support.



Our school value this week is:
O - Overcoming Challenges



Reading Raffle Winners



Our core value this week is: Respect

Reading Raffle Winners



Times Tables Rock Stars

Our school value this week is:
S - Supporting others to succeed

Reading Raffle Winners





	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	11 ½	7	825
Year 2	5 ½	9	1475
Year 3	3	14	575
Year 4	18	14	125
Year 5	11	9	400
Year 6	13	7	1000

Overall whole school attendance for week beginning 25/11/2024: 91.32%

**1st Place Attendance: Year 3
1st Place Punctuality: Year 1 and year 6**



Overall whole school attendance for week beginning: 25/11/2024: 96.13%

**1st Place Attendance: Y5
1st Place Punctuality: Y4, Y5, Y6**

	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	17	6	92.92%
Year 2	19	6	92.08%
Year 3	3	10	98.97%
Year 4	15	4	94.00%
Year 5	0	4	100%
Year 6	8	4	97.33%



	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	11	11	625
Year 2	12	20	125
Year 3	9	6	1425
Year 4	22	17	325
Year 5	11	8	500
Year 6	13	5	850

Overall whole school attendance for week beginning: 25/11/2024: 94.73%

**1st Place Attendance: Y3
1st Place Punctuality: Y6**

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Find us at: www.thebridgesfederation.org.uk

ATTENDANCE UPDATE

Being in school and having the best attendance possible underpins all the many benefits of school for your child, such as their learning, wellbeing and wider development. We want to work with you to ensure that attendance for pupils at the Bridges Federation is the best it can be.

As a parent, you are legally responsible for making sure your child gets a suitable full time education. This means making sure your child is in school every day except when

- Your child is too ill to go to school.
- You have permission for a leave of absence from your child's school for them not to attend. You should only ask for this in exceptional circumstances. Generally, a holiday will not be classed as an exceptional circumstance.
- Your religious body has a day especially for religious observance.

If my child needs to be absent from school, what do I need to do?

You should contact us as early as possible (no later than 10am) on the first day of absence to explain why. If you do not, we will contact you to find out where they are.

My child is ill. What should I do?

If your child is ill, read the NHS's 'Is my child too ill for school?' advice to help you decide whether they can go to school. Contact us as soon as possible to let us know that they will be absent.

Do I need to provide medical evidence to support my child's illness related absence?

We may ask for medical evidence when your child is absent due to illness. This may be in cases where:

- Your child is regularly absent due to illness, to assess how we can help by putting support in place.
- We have reason to believe your child was not too ill to attend and a conversation has not resolved the issue.

If you are asked to provide evidence this does not need to be a letter from your doctor or consultant, and doctors will not usually provide such letters. It can, instead, be appointment cards, prescriptions, or notes of previous consultations (including from the NHS App.)

To avoid disruption to your child's attendance, medical and dental appointments should not be booked during the school day whenever reasonably possible.


My child is struggling to attend school. What can I do?

The first step is to talk to us about why your child is missing school, and what help we can give. You should still do everything you can to help your child attend as much as possible whilst waiting for help and support to be put into place. Information on who you can contact for help, including the school's senior leader responsible for attendance, can be found in our attendance policy on the website. We follow the expectations laid out in the DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance.'


<https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2024/07/aaa-guide-for-parents-on-school-attendance-19th-Aug-version.pdf>

<https://thebridgesfederation.org.uk/home/attendance/>

Family support



FITNESS & WELLNESS FOR WOMEN



- BREATHING
- STRETCHING
- DANCING
- YOGA TECHNIQUES
- AND MORE

Venue
The Lewington Community centre
9 Eugenia road
Rotherhithe SE16 2RU

TUESDAYS STARTING 17TH SEPTEMBER 2024 10AM - 11:30AM

For more information
02035369609, 07394662602
Admin@parentskills2go.com
Parentskills2go.org

Crèche will be provided

Connect with Us
@parentskills2go



Southwark Young Carers

We support young people living in Southwark aged 8-24, who provide unpaid care or support to a family member with a long-term illness, disability, mental health condition or a substance misuse issue.



For further information, please contact our Hub: youngcarers@imago.com





Free Workshops for Parents and Carers

Do you want more guidance on how to talk to your children, teens and young people about vaping, alcohol or drugs? Do you want to be informed on the current themes and trends we come across working with young people in the borough?

Substances are more accessible today than ever before. For parents, carers or anyone responsible for children and young people, it can feel overwhelming and difficult to know how to respond.

We're offering FREE online workshops for parents and carers in Southwark, to give advice and guidance to help you navigate this quickly changing landscape.

We'll cover:

- Current trends amongst young people
- Strategies for talking to young people about substances in an open and supportive way
- Practical advice on how to keep your children safe from the dangers of substance misuse

For further information contact:

- Email: Southwark.YoungPeople@cgl.org.uk or scan the QR code for a direct link to the eventbrite page.
- You can call us on: 020 3404 7499



The Nest - Wellbeing Hub

The Nest operates a drop-in service every **Saturday between 10:30 and 14:30**. Therapeutic practitioners and support workers can offer 1:1 emotional support, information & advice and signpost you to the appropriate services.

[Drop-In Service | The Nest](#)



BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF AUTISM

(6 WEEKS ONLINE PROGRAM)

Understanding Autism & How to support Your Children At Home or Early Years Setting

Starts Monday 16th September, 2024
6:00pm-7:30pm

For more information
02035369609, 07394662602
Admin@parentskills2go.com
Parentskills2go.org

Zoom details will be sent after registration

Connect with Us
@parentskills2go

HELPING YOUR CHILD MANAGE THEIR FEARS AND WORRIES

NOV-DEC 2024



5 WEEK ONLINE GROUP FOR PARENTS/CARERS AIMED AT HELPING YOU SUPPORT YOUR CHILD IN OVERCOMING ANXIETY WHILST DEVELOPING THEIR INDEPENDENCE AND BRAVE BEHAVIOURS.

THIS COURSE IS BASED ON CBT EVIDENCE-BASED GUIDED SELF-HELP TECHNIQUES.

WEDNESDAY 1-2PM
13TH NOV, 20TH NOV, 27TH NOV, 4TH DEC, 11TH DEC

TO SIGN UP, PLEASE CONTACT ROSA OR ANNA:

ROSA.KORNFEIN@GROUNDWORK.ORG.UK
07999 402 360

ANNA.GEISSMANN@GROUNDWORK.ORG.UK
07912214700



family
info

Parent Skills 2Go
SOUTHWARK ADULT LEARNING SERVICES

ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (ESOL)

CLASSES ARE STARTING!

Come to test your level on
WEDNESDAY 6TH NOVEMBER 2024
Time: 10am - 1pm

Venue: The Lewington Community centre
9 Eugenia road
Rotherhithe SE16 2RU

CRÈCHE WILL BE PROVIDED (FIRST COME FIRST SERVE BASIS)

For details and to register: 02035369609, 07394662602
ParentsSkills2Go.org

Impact on Urban Health

BERMONDSEY CENTRAL HALL

SOUTH LONDON MISSION

YOU'RE WARMLY INVITED TO OUR

Christingle Service

A fun, children-oriented service full with activities

Sunday 15 December 2024 • 10:30am

Bermondsey Central Hall Methodist Church
256 Bermondsey Street, SE13UJ

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Parent Skills 2Go
Community Led Learning

VOLUNTEER WITH US & GET SKILLED UP

FREE TRAINING PROGRAM

TRAINING DATES:
4TH OCTOBER 2024: MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM TRAINING (ONLINE)
19TH OCTOBER 2024: TEAM BUILDING & CONFLICT RESOLUTION
8TH FEBRUARY 2025: READING & STORYTELLING DELIVERY/PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF ACTIVITIES
6TH & 13TH MAY 2025: COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR VOLUNTEER
4TH JULY, 2025: ANNUAL & MANDATORY SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA
ALL VOLUNTEER TRAINING IS FREE TO ATTEND. HOWEVER, YOU NEED TO COMMIT TO A MINIMUM OF 18 TO 16 DAYS OF YOUR TIME TO VOLUNTEER WITH US (EXPENSE PAID)

Contact with us:
02035369609, 07394662602
Admin@parentskills2go.com
@parentskills2go

Parent Skills 2Go
Impact on Urban Health

SOUTHWARK SCHOOLS' INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Southwark Council is already undertaking several projects to tackle air pollution in schools, and one that you might not know about.

Asthma - Air Quality Monitoring & Engagement Project for students in Year 6 and above

This project will see air quality sensors placed in classrooms and the homes of pupils with asthma, offering a live insight into the air quality they experience.

Teachers and students will participate in a specially designed curriculum to deepen their understanding of air quality's effects on health and discover strategies to **minimise** harmful emissions.

This initiative builds on existing air quality efforts and provides tools such as a dedicated webpage and monitoring devices to assist schools in fostering a cleaner, healthier educational atmosphere.

School staff and parents can register interest by filling out the form on this QR code or by emailing:
<https://forms.office.com/e/Z6WmR25Z64>
environmental.protection@southwark.gov.uk
www.southwark.gov.uk

Climate School Action Plan
Check out the Climate School Action Plan Guide which includes actions to improve air quality.

made in London

NSPCC

What are the PANTS rules?

- Privates are private
- Always remember your body belongs to you
- No means no
- Talk about secrets that upset you
- Speak up, someone can help

NHS
South London Children and Young People's Community Immunisation Service

Missed your flu vaccine?

Live or go to school in the borough of Southwark? Aged 4-16?
Come down to a flu catch-up clinic and protect yourself this winter!

Saturday 23 November, 10:00 - 14:00
Big Yellow Storage, Southampton Way, SE5 7SW

Saturday 30 November, 10:00 - 14:00
Big Yellow Storage, Southampton Way, SE5 7SW

Saturday 7 December, 10:00 - 14:00
Big Yellow Storage, Southampton Way, SE5 7SW

No need to book an appointment.
Call 020 8614 5496 for more information.

Let's talk PANTS with Pantosaurus! | NSPCC

Enjoy FREE access to classes

Sign in or download the Southwark Leisure App and click on the 'free online classes' button.

Over 20 adult class programs, Kids Born To Move classes, 2000 plus workouts, plans and challenges. Stream from the web, your mobile and TV.

Family fun

FREE*
WINTER HOLIDAY CAMP
AGES 7-13

COME LEARN, PLAY AND MAKE NEW FRIENDS

20th, 21st Dec 2024 & 2nd, 3rd Jan 2025
12:00pm - 4:00pm

Harris Academy - Bermondsey
95 Southwark Park Rd
SE16 3TZ

For: 07874872093
holidays@proteachas.co.uk
@astrotouchas

Department for Education

PE & SCHOOL SPORTS NETWORK

FREE GIRLS FOOTBALL

EVERY MONDAY (17:00-18:00)
@ BURGESS PARK ASTRO TURF

WORLD CATS
OPEN TO ALL GIRLS AGED 5-11
WORLD CATS
OPEN TO ALL GIRLS AGED 12-14

SQUAD

*PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER

DRAWING ROOM

Family Studio

A space for families to draw, make and experiment alongside an artist!



Over the autumn our Family Studio sessions will be on the first Sunday of the month.

Sunday 6th October
Sunday 3rd November
Sunday 1st December

Drop in between 12-4pm

All Free! All Welcome!

Drawing Room
New Tannery Way
Bermondsey
London
SE1 5WS
(Just off Grange Road)

www.drawingroom.org.uk

WINTER FUNDRAISER
Primary School

Winter Fundraiser

Wednesday, 18th December
3:30pm

Donations needed of!

- Prizes for Tombola/Lucky Dip.
- Sweets/Chocolates
- Small party bag toys
- Cash Donations (Closest to the Day)

Volunteers Required to help Set Up & Sell (Contact Shanae)

All funds raised Will Go towards the Amazing School

BANKSIDE OPEN SPACES TRUST

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Autumn is here again, and our programme of FREE afterschool sports coaching at Marlborough Sports Garden is back! [Click out our incredible range of free sports coaching sessions for your children!](#)

All levels are welcome at our free sessions - they are a great way of trying out a sport, honing skills, and playing active and sociable with friends after school. See below and [on our website](#) for our full autumn programme 2024.

Tuesdays:

- Touch Rugby, 3.45-5.15pm for ages 5-11, delivered by LSEU
- Girls Football, 3.45-5pm for ages 5-11 (girls only), delivered by [Girls United](#)
- Roller skating to music, **advanced**, 3.45-5.15pm for ages 5-11, delivered by [Lambert CIC](#)

Please note: Unfortunately, this time we cannot provide equipment for everyone, so please bring your own rollerblades or roller-skates, helmets and pads.

Wednesdays:

- Beach Tennis, 3.45-4.30pm for ages 5-7 and 4.30-5.30pm for ages 8-11, delivered by [Beach Tennis Tennis](#)
- Basketball, 3.45-5.15pm for ages 5-11, provided by [London Basketball Association](#)
- [Sunrise Soccer Schools](#), 3.45-5.15pm for ages 5-11

Thursdays:

- Beach volleyball, 3.45-5.15pm for ages 5-11, delivered by [Deep Dish](#)
- Roller skating to music, **beginners**, 3.45-5.15pm for ages 5-11, delivered by [Lambert CIC](#)
- Cricket, 3.45-5.15pm for ages 8-11, delivered by [Surrey Cricket Foundation](#)
- Wall Ball, 3.45-4.30pm for ages 8-11 and 4.30-5.30pm for ages 11+, delivered by [UK Wall Ball](#)

Please register for afterschool sports here:
<https://www.banksideopenspaces.org/>

Get the most from your afterschool sports sessions - from Tuesday to Thursday for ages 5-11.

Your health needs to be protected, from each night's exercise, through swimming, for everyone!

WEEKLY SPORTS SESSIONS!
AT MARLBOROUGH SPORTS GARDEN

Bankside Open Spaces Trust

WEEKLY SPORTS SESSIONS
MONDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER - FRIDAY 25TH OCTOBER

Day	Time	Activity	Delivered by
Monday	3.45-5.15pm	Touch Rugby	LSEU
Tuesday	3.45-5pm	Girls Football	Girls United
Wednesday	3.45-5.15pm	Beach Tennis	Beach Tennis Tennis
Thursday	3.45-5.15pm	Beach Volleyball	Deep Dish
Friday	3.45-5.15pm	Basketball	London Basketball Association

FUN FOOTBALL SESSIONS FOR EVERY GIRL

WORLD CATS FOR GIRLS AGED 5-11

SQUAD FOR GIRLS AGED 12-14

Bankside Open Spaces Trust

FUN FLIPPERS

Swimming Lessons

Evelyn Lee Gardens and Pool, Marlborough Grove, London, SE1 5JT

Times available: Wednesday 1-4 pm, Saturday 9-4 pm

Baby & Pre-School Swimming

Swim Academy (for all ages & abilities)

Private lessons

Disability, SEN & Adult lessons

Aqua Aerobics

Holiday Courses

Maximum group sizes of 4-1 per class

Monsoon & Private Birthday parties

Contact:
Julie: 07850082775 julie@funflippers.co.uk
www.funflippers.co.uk Facebook.com/funflippers

SEND SATURDAY SPORTS CLUB

AGES 5-12

OPEN EVERY SATURDAY FROM 10 AM

SOUTHWARK

Parent Skills

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE: ARTS AND CRAFTS, STORY & PLAY, MUSIC, JAG GAMES, BUNTING, PUB WITH PAPAHO ETC.

Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays
Starting Tuesday 16th September
3.30pm-5pm

0203338606, 07360482602

The Leighton Community Centre
9 Burgess Road
Bermondsey SE16 3JG

GO JAGS

SOUTHWARK JAGUARS PLAYERS WANTED

SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER WITH CHILD INTEREST CONTACT: WENDY@PARENTSOPENSPACES.ORG

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING APPS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

When looking at options for supporting a child's mental health, the sheer volume can be overwhelming. There are many wellbeing apps available, but unfortunately not all are trustworthy. It's important to evaluate which resources are suitable, reliable and effective. This guide lets you know what to consider before installing such an app, to determine just how useful it's going to be.

QUALITY & RELIABILITY

Mental health apps can be a useful starting point when looking for wellbeing advice and strategies and can be a useful extension to the in-person services available. However, they aren't a substitute. Information on the quality of some of these apps is scarce. They may look cute and child-friendly, but have they been designed by a mental health professional? Furthermore, do they have research to back up their content?

PLACE RESPONSIBILITY ON CHILDREN

Some apps add the words 'kids' or 'children' to their title or use cartoon icons to make them more appealing to young people. When signing up for some of these apps, some will speak to the parent directly, saying something along the lines of "Your child is good to go. Let them take it from here". It's important to remain involved in the child's mental health journey, so regular check-ins are recommended.

DISREGARDING APPROPRIATE SUPPORT

Young people who feel anxious and have trouble sleeping may download a mindfulness app to help. While this is a good strategy initially, it's not addressing the root of the problem. A child could simply try managing these symptoms themselves (as opposed to speaking out and seeking professional help), which could potentially worsen their anxiety in the long run.

LACK OF PERSONALISATION

Mental health or wellbeing apps are useful tools for the short term, teaching users several helpful habits to manage their condition – such as keeping an illness diary, improving nutrition and practising mindfulness exercises. As every person is unique – and children especially will grow and develop in different ways – these apps struggle to tailor themselves to users' individual needs. For example, many apps don't distinguish between the ages of users and can offer extremely generic advice.

DATA SECURITY

As with any other app – not just those for mental health and wellbeing – it's wise to check out the privacy policy before downloading it. Some of these applications may share data with third parties for numerous reasons (such as targeted advertisements), and if a user is sharing personal and sensitive information within the app, they probably don't want it ending up elsewhere without their consent.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Many apps will provide their most basic features for free but will require you to pay for other aspects – such as a more tailored experience or access to additional resources. This could be a one-off fee or a regular subscription. Consider whether this is actually required. Is it benefiting the child, or could they receive the same support from a medical professional?

Advice for Parents & Educators

CHECK THE CREDIBILITY OF THE APP

Before you download a mental health and wellbeing app, investigate the developers. Have they consulted with qualified mental health professionals to create their resource? Also check whether the app is affiliated with any government or mental health organisations, as these are solid indicators of legitimacy. Reviews can also be a useful signpost to the app's quality. There are many good apps out there, but there are just as many that miss the mark.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Trusted mental health and wellbeing apps designed by qualified, reputable organisations can be used alongside the personalised advice and support of fully trained professionals. These apps should never be considered a substitute for counselling or other tailored medical help. If you have real concerns about a child's mental wellbeing, you should seek appropriate advice from a suitable source, such as their GP – or Childline, who can be contacted by calling 0800 1111.

READ THE PRIVACY POLICY

Look into the app's terms of service – especially its privacy policy. Do so by yourself first, then go over it with the child who is considering using the app, to ensure they know what data will be collected and how exactly it will be used. Use all of this information to make an educated decision on whether or not to download that particular app.

ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

Mental health and wellbeing apps can be useful for writing down feelings, tracking your own health and other such activities. These can help if the problem is short-term and temporary – such as a child getting stressed about approaching exams – or if you're currently waiting for professional support. Nonetheless, it is important that children aren't solely reliant on the app and have a safe space to talk about their feelings and experiences in the real world.

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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