

Robert Browning, Snowsfields and Tower Bridge Primary Schools

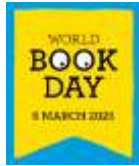
We learn and succeed together



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

Newsletter 28th February 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,



Welcome back, we hope you had a restful break and you had the opportunity to try out some of the sleep hygiene strategies from the last newsletter.

Next week we are celebrating World Book Day on Thursday 6th March we would like the children to dress up as a book character, and they will take part in many book related activities throughout the day.

Sunshine classes at Robert Browning and Snowsfields are celebrating World Book Day on Tuesday 4th March.

There is lots of information about World Book Day activities that you can do at home and dressing up ideas [here](#). Remember to use the £1 World Book Day voucher by 23rd March.

Please remember that on Wednesday 5th March Parent and Pupil review meeting are taking place in school, please arrive with your child in good time for your meeting.

Have a lovely weekend, the gates open at 8:45am, many children are still arriving to school after 9am which disrupts their learning. Please support your child to arrive at school on time every day.

Parent and Pupil Review Meetings (Guardian Consultations)

Parent and Pupil Review day is on Wednesday 5th March. Please contact the school office if you have not made an appointment.



Dates For Your Diary



Tower Bridge

Wednesday 5th March- Parent and Pupil Review Meetings - school closed- please attend your appointment with your child

Thursday 6th March - World Book Day

Friday 4th April - Break Up 1pm

Tuesday 22nd and Wednesday 23rd April - INSET Days - School Closed

Thursday 24th April - Back to School from 8.45am

Robert Browning

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Snowsfields

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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](#)

Digital Safety Online Session

There is a Digital Safety online session on Thursday 13th March at 1pm run by the Southwark Early Help on Microsoft Teams. Please register [here](#).



EGG RAFFLE

From Monday 3rd March we will be selling raffle tickets before and after school for the Egg Raffle which we will draw on the last day of Spring Term. Tickets will cost £1 per strip, you can pay by cash or by card.

If any families would like to donate any chocolate or sweet treats, we would appreciate your donation.

homework PROJECTS



So many amazing homework projects were handed in last half term. Look out for this half term's Homework Sheet to complete - children will earn DOJO points which they can spend at Reward Shop at the end of term.

Safer Internet Day 2025
Tuesday 11 February
Together for a better internet



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

WEDNESDAY 5TH MARCH

Parent and Pupil Review Meetings

THURSDAY 6TH MARCH

World Book Day

FRIDAY 4TH APRIL

Break Up at 1pm

TUESDAY 22ND AND WEDNESDAY 23RD APRIL

INSET Days - School Closed

resilience and responsibility encouraged

[value of the week]
TOWER BRIDGE



Next Friday we will be running a Girls' Football Session along with many other schools in the country. Girls in Year 3 - 6 will need to wear their PE kits on Friday.



World Book Day – Thursday 6th March

We're excited to celebrate World Book Day! Children are welcome to dress up as their favourite book character. We encourage creativity by using what you already have at home – there's no need to buy anything new. **If your child does choose to dress up, please ensure their costume is practical and comfortable for a day at school.** Let's make this a fun and eco-friendly event by reusing, recycling and borrowing to create those fantastic outfits. We look forward to celebrating the joy of reading together!

INTERNET SAFETY POSTER COMPETITION WINNERS

Well done to all the children who entered the Safer Internet Day poster competition. Well done to Rudy and Safiya who were the KS2 and KS1 winners. There were lots of runners up who also won goodie bags of prizes.

Groundwork Update

The next session will be on 11th March- Understanding Anxiety.



Orange Class Trip

Just before half term, Orange Class went on a trip to the Observatory in Greenwich. They had a great time!



Attendance

Congratulations to our attendance hamper winner and also to the children who won wristbands for 100% attendance.

World Book Day

World book day is taking place on Thursday 6th March. (4/3 for Early Years). Your child can dress up as their favourite character- we encourage them to be creative and use things they have at home to create a character! There will be a bake sale after school on Tuesday 4th March to raise money for new books.



Rainbow Class Learning

Rainbow Class have been working hard to practice throwing and catching as part of a team. They have also been learning their times tables!



Red Class

Red Class have been enjoying using the Library in school.



11	x	1	=	11
11	x	2	=	22
11	x	3	=	33
11	x	4	=	44
11	x	5	=	55
11	x	6	=	66
11	x	7	=	77
11	x	8	=	88
11	x	9	=	99
11	x	10	=	110



Snowsfields Primary School

HOMEWORK projects

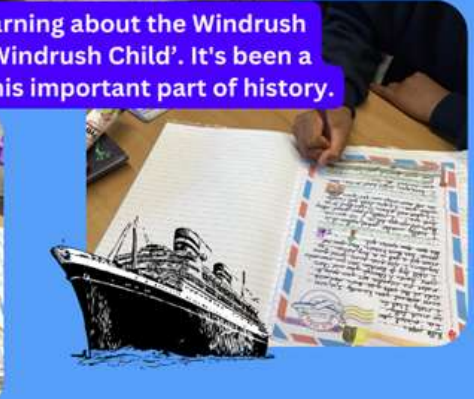
The children completed some excellent homework projects last half term, showcasing creativity and effort. Well done to all!

A big shout out to all the children with a 100% perfect attendance! Thank you to our parents for your support—it really shows how much you value education. Keep it up!

Well done for winning our attendance hamper!

Following the story 'Rosie's Walk' Rainbow class took an alternative walk around our school garden.

Year 5 have been enjoying learning about the Windrush Generation and reading 'The Windrush Child'. It's been a great way for them to explore this important part of history.





Our school value this week is:
R - responsibility and resilience encouraged

 Reading Raffle Winners



Reading Raffle Winners

Our core value this week is: Kindness



Times Tables Rock Stars

Our school value this week is:
L - Love of Learning

Reading Raffle Winners





	% present	Lates	Total
Year 1	84.6%	9	250
Year 2	87.5%	5	500
Year 3	96.1%	14	250
Year 4	93.3%	8	250
Year 5	90.7%	10	225
Year 6	95.2%	4	575

Overall whole school attendance for week beginning 10/2/2025: 90.96%

**1st Place Attendance: Year 6
1st Place Punctuality: Year 6**



Overall whole school attendance for week beginning: 10/2/2025: 94.3%

**1st Place Attendance: Y2
1st Place Punctuality: Y3, Y4, Y5**

	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	13	5	94.58%
Year 2	7	5	97.08%
Year 3	21	3	96.00%
Year 4	24	3	91.53%
Year 5	12	3	91.70%
Year 6	18	7	94.00%



	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	19	10	275
Year 2	22	12	150
Year 3	9	7	875
Year 4	25	11	0
Year 5	19	7	375
Year 6	11	14	300

Overall whole school attendance for week beginning: 10/02/2025:

92.34%

**1st Place Attendance: Y3
1st Place Punctuality: Y5**

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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/>

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?

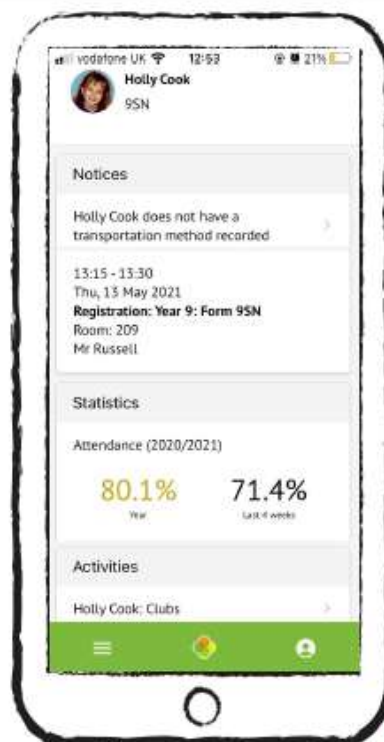
Need help using Arbor?

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.



Family support

FATHER'S GROUP



Join a 12-week course to improve your parenting skills.

Whether you are a father, grandfather or stepdad, receive advice and tips on topics such as positive parenting, improving relationships and role modeling. Crèche provided.

When: 1st Place Family Hub
12 Charnleigh Street, Burgess Park, SE16 0NF

BOOK A PLACE

Email: ben.compbell@southwark.gov.uk
Phone: 07738 860 768

SAFETY IN THE HOME

A ONE DAY COURSE

ACCIDENT PREVENTION & AWARENESS WORKSHOP FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

DATE: TUESDAY 21ST JANUARY, 2025
TIME: 10AM - 12:00PM

VENUE: THE LEMINGTON CENTRE COMMUNITY CENTRE
8 EUGENIA ROAD ROTHERHITHE SE16 2RU

FOR DETAILS & TO REGISTER:
02033308605, 07294062602
Admin@parentskills2go.com
parentskills2go.org

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

Voces for Autism Charity presents

AUTISM AWARENESS COMMUNITY DAY

Tuesday 8th April 2025 | 11am-3pm
Nunhead Green Community Centre, London SE15 3QQ

Come and join us to celebrate Autism Awareness month. There will be lots on offer, for the whole family including:

- Arts & Crafts
- Information Stalls
- Guest speakers

FREE Entry | Tickets available on website | www.vocesforautism.co.uk

Southwark Young Carers

To get involved, you can refer to our website www.imago.community or scan the QR Code

For further information, please contact our Hub
youngcarers@imago.community
0300 111 110

Southwark Young Carers is a service of Imago Community
Registered charity number: 2538 008

We support young people living in Southwark aged 6-24, who provide unpaid care or support to a family member with a long-term illness, disability, mental health condition or a substance misuse issue.

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.

Who it covers:

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

For further information contact:

- Email: Southwark.YoungPeople@tgi.org.uk or scan the QR code for a direct link to the eventbrite page.
- You can call us on: **020 3404 7699**

PARENT SPACE

A QUARTERLY ONLINE & IN PERSON PROGRAM

A QUARTERLY COFFEE MEETING FOR PARENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN TO SHARE THEIR ISSUES AND CHALLENGES AS WELL AS DISCUSS THE SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE FROM THEIR CHILDREN

DATES:
WEDNESDAY 16TH JANUARY 2025 **TIME:** 9:30 - 11AM
WEDNESDAY 2ND APRIL 2025 **TIME:** 9:30 - 11AM
WEDNESDAY 16TH JULY 2025 **TIME:** 9:30 - 11AM

FOR DETAILS & TO REGISTER:
Admin@parentskills2go.com
parentskills2go.org

OR CALL:
0720744377
0729281838
02033308605
01754661842

PLEASE NOTE: COVID-19 MEASURES ARE IN PLACE FOR ALL EVENTS!

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

For parents of children aged 6 - 24 years

This 12-week course helps parents and carers to:

- Build positive family relationships
- Manage anger and stress
- Implement effective discipline strategies
- Understand your child's development
- Recognise and value your family and cultural traditions
- Develop effective communication
- Meet others and share ideas

JOIN NOW

When is it on?
Tuesday 10am-12pm
12 Charnleigh Street, Burgess Park, SE16 0NF
1st Place Family Hub

For more information contact:
020 3404 7699

EPEC BEING A PARENT 1-3

For parents of children aged 1 - 3 years

This 9 week course helps parents learn practical skills for everyday life.

- Looking after yourself as a parent
- Recognise and manage your children's emotions
- Learn positive parenting strategies
- Support your children's resilience

JOIN NOW

Contact: Claire Gager
Email: claire.gager@southwark.gov.uk
Call: 07547 858 846

WHEN IS IT ON?
STARTING 17TH JANUARY 2025

TUESDAY AFTERNOON
1ST PLACE CHILDREN & FAMILY HUB
12 CHARNLEIGH STREET, BURGESS PARK, SE16 0NF

What time?
10am-12pm

Free and stand alone information sessions for parents and carers on a range of topics - 'TAP-IN' to the sessions you need or complete those you don't.

Sessions include:

- Digital Safety - how to support children to be safe online
- Ages and Stages - how to support different developmental stages
- Parental Wellbeing - how to communicate our needs
- Parenting and Autism
- Parenting and ADHD
- More to come...

JOIN NOW

Beth Gilbey
07394 865 980
bethany.gilbey@southwark.gov.uk
EARLYHELP@SOUTHWARK.GOV.UK

We hold in person sessions throughout the year. Contact the team for the next available session.

Family info

SOUTHWARK SCHOOLS' INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Southwark Teaching Schools Trust is pleased to announce a special project to monitor indoor air quality in our schools. This project will use air quality sensors placed in classrooms and the homes of Southwark children, offering a first insight into the air quality in our schools.

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

This project will use air quality sensors placed in classrooms and the homes of Southwark children, offering a first insight into the air quality in our schools.

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 improve indoor air quality.

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

School staff and parents can register interest by filling out the form on this link or by emailing: https://forms.office.com/r/123456789

environmental@southwark.gov.uk
www.southwark.gov.uk

Climate School Action Plan: Check out the Climate School Action Plan Guide which includes a link to improve air quality.



TAP - IN SESSIONS

Free and stand alone information sessions for parents and carers on a range of topics. Join us with Thinking About Parenting and TAP in to....

Digital Safety Thursday 13th March 1pm Online via MS Team	Parenting and Autism Wednesday 5th February 1 - 2.30pm Friday 14th March 11 - 12.30 Both online via MS Teams	Parenting and ADHD Monday 10th Feb 12 - 1.30 Thursday 20th March 10 - 11.30 Both online via MS Teams
Parent Emotional Wellbeing Friday 31st January 10.30am - 12	Ages and Stages Thursday 23rd January 10am - 11.30 Tuesday 18th March 10.30 - 12 Both online via MS teams	



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO JOIN NOW

Beth Gilbey
07394 865 980
bethany.gilbey@southwark.gov.uk
earlyhelp@southwark.gov.uk

Let's talk PANTS with Pantosaurus! | NSPCC

NSPCC

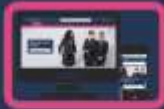


- Privates are private
- Always remember your body belongs to you
- No means no
- Talk about secrets that upset you
- Speak up, someone can help

Price & Buckland

NEW SCHOOL UNIFORM WEBSITE LAUNCH

On the 11th of February we will launch our NEW website. The URL remains: www.price-buckland.co.uk



Website QR code. This will take you to the homepage to search for your school.



If you have ordered from our website before, go to the Account Section and re-set your password. You can use the same password that you have currently.



You can then see previous orders and manage your account.

Any Questions? Call us on 01859 640827

Parent Skills 2024

SEWING SKILLS

10 WEEKS DRESSMAKING COURSE FOR BEGINNERS & INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS

FREE SEWING MENDING STATION (limited to one per household)

BASIC BEGINNERS SEWING CLASS STARTS WEDNESDAY 11TH JANUARY 2025

INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS SEWING CLASS STARTS FRIDAY 17TH JANUARY 2025

VENUE: THE LEWISTON CENTRE COMMUNITY CENTRE 8 EUGENIA ROAD BROTHERHOPE SE16 2BU

COST PER PERSON: £20 (beginners) £30 (intermediate)

FOR DETAILS & TO REGISTER: 02032 284508, 07344082622 admin@parentskills24.org parentskills24.org

Parent/carer support at Robert Browning

With Anna and Toni



We offer non-judgemental and confidential support for parent/carers of children with anxiety and challenging behaviour

Tea/ coffee Morning



Time: 9:00- 9:45

Upcoming dates:

- 21st January - Welcome back! Meet and greet/catch-up
- 4th February- Managing strong emotions
- 25th February - Calming/relaxation techniques
- 11th March- Understanding anxiety
- 25th March- Reflection week



For more information please contact: anna.geissmann@groundwork.org.uk



Online English (ESOL) Course

A FREE 15-week Entry level online accredited course for Southwark residents



Classes will be on

Tuesdays & Thursdays at 10am—12.30pm
25th February - 26th June 2025

(nevertheless only)

plus online Conversation Clubs

This course will take place on Zoom.

Applicants should live in Southwark

To apply for a place on the course in advance please use this link:

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/online-english-course>

Spaces are limited so book soon.

We will contact you to confirm your place on the course.

Southwark Council

LU Learning Unlimited

Free* 15 week Learning Unlimited course for adults interested in becoming Teaching Assistants Award in Support Work in Schools

Wednesdays 9.30am – 12.30pm
From 26th February to 23rd June 2025

We will contact you when you register to arrange an assessment trial. This course will be delivered online using Zoom.

What will I get from attending the course?

- The knowledge and skills required to become an effective teaching assistant
- The City & Guilds Award in Support Work in Schools (Level 2)
- The opportunity to progress to the Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools or to apply for work as a Teaching Assistant
- Free course FAWB form: <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/online-english-course>

How much does it cost?

*The course is free but there is a non-refundable registration fee of £50.

To apply for a place on the course use the link below to complete the online form: <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/online-english-course>

All applicants should have level 2 English.

Please note you will need to complete a portfolio with a full register with a list of homework sheets on request to completion of application form and assessment.

Family
fun



INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY EVENT
(INTERGENERATIONAL)

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S DIVERSITY -OUR STORIES!

SATURDAY 8TH MARCH 2025
TIME: 11AM - 4PM

VENUE: THE APPLEBY BLUE ALMS
HOUSE 94 -116 SOUTHWARK PARK ROAD
LONDON SE16 3RR (OPPOSITE AGE CONCERN UK)
REVERDY BUS STOP

**Activities: Arts and crafts, Massage ,
Poetry, Dance, Food and more!**

FOR DETAILS & TO REGISTER
02035369609, 07394662602
Admin@parentskills2go.com
parentskills2go.org

Proudly supported by



IWDyouth

Saturday 8 March 2025
PLAY LIKE A GIRL SESSION

Location: **Alleyn's School**
Time: **10:00-12:00**
Age group: **5-12**
Level: **All abilities**
Cost: **FREE!**

GIRLS UNITED



girlsunitedfa.org/iwdyouth25



LORD'S

NATIONWIDE CRICKET HUBS



We run a network of cricket Hubs that provide free-to-access training and match play to 6,500 state-educated young cricketers at 164 sites across the UK. The Hubs focus on talent: helping promising youngsters who have been engaged through mass participation activities or non-traditional formats to join cricket clubs, develop their hard-ball skills, and access the formal talent pathways. The Hubs also have a transformational impact off the cricket pitch, helping participants to feel happier and more confident, and improving their focus and performance at school.

<https://www.lords.org/mcc/mcc-foundation/mcc-foundation-in-the-uk>

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about JUSTALK KIDS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

JustTalk Kids is a child's version of the JustTalk app – a highly popular social networking platform – designed for users up to 13 years of age, allowing them to video call, message and participate in group chats. While adults can link their own JustTalk account to their child's and make use of parental controls, it's important to understand the risks associated with the app.

SUBSCRIPTION FOR PREMIUM ACCESS

While JustTalk Kids is free, there's the option to subscribe to a kids' premium account or a premium family account. At a cost, this feature allows children to have access to more fun features such as games they can play with others in a call, exclusive stickers, a badge denoting them as a premium subscriber, and exclusive ringines and themes.

RESISTANCE TO CONTROLS

JustTalk Kids endeavours to allow children the sense of having a chat-based app while allowing parents to set controls (either the app or from their own adult JustTalk account). The basis behind this is positive; however, some children are challenging their parents by refusing to use JustTalk Kids, preferring to use the adult version without any restrictions in place.

KNOWING THE PARENT PASSCODE

After downloading JustTalk Kids, parents can set a passcode which users must enter to add contacts. The parental controls help to manage which content can be viewed and who children can add as a contact; this then allows children to chat with friends in a controlled environment. However, prospective contacts don't have to know a specific username. In theory, someone could type in a random name and then add them as a friend.

POTENTIAL DATA LEAKS

JustTalk and JustTalk Kids claim to be secure and encrypted, going so far as to state that even the developers themselves won't access your data. However, a security lapse in 2022 highlighted that messages were not in fact encrypted – leading to concerns around the security of the app and the transparency of the development team.

CYBERBULLYING

Online chats can provide a sense of anonymity, leading some users to post things which they wouldn't normally say in person. Combined with the option of group chats, there's a risk that young people might join in with this kind of behaviour, escalating it further and potentially turning what should be a fun experience into something deeply negative.

TOO MUCH SCREEN TIME

A report by the UK Parliament Education Committee highlighted a 52% increase in children's screen time between 2020 and 2022 – as well as finding that 20% of children used their smartphones in a manner consistent with screen addiction. Introducing children to social networking apps when they're too young can lead to bad digital habits and a reliance on technology from an early age.

Advice for Parents & Educators

JUSTIFY THE CONTROLS

If parents allow their child to use JustTalk Kids, they should explain that they're putting parental controls in place to make the app safer. Make sure the child knows not to put their full name on the account and doesn't use a photo of themselves as their profile picture. This type of open discussion will help to ensure that a child is aware of the app's potential risks and knows how to reduce them.

TALK ABOUT ONLINE FRIENDSHIPS

Young children could be excited to use this app. However, highlight that they must do so in a positive, respectful and responsible manner. While it can be easy to get caught up in a group chat, it's important to talk to others politely and call out any unpleasant behaviour. Discuss the importance of limiting their contacts to people they know in real life and use parental controls to enforce this.

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.



DOS AND DON'TS OF SHARING

Some children might not understand the potential dangers of oversharing online. Set clear guidelines around what is and isn't safe to share on the internet, and discuss the concept of a digital footprint. Children need to understand that the things they say and share online can never be completely erased. Even if they delete it themselves, it can be saved and distributed by others.

ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

Apps like JustTalk can sometimes lend themselves to bullying behaviours. Parents should monitor what their child is sending and receiving. Check in with them regularly and encourage them to share their feelings (both positive and negative) at home. Remind them that they can block a contact if someone is treating them disrespectfully.

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College