

Robert Browning, Snowfields and Tower Bridge Primary Schools

We learn and succeed together



[@robertbrowning.bsky.social](https://www.bsky.social/robertbrowning) [@towerbridgeschool.bsky.social](https://www.bsky.social/towerbridgeschool) [@snsprimary.bsky.social](https://www.bsky.social/snsprimary)

Find us at: www.thebridgesfederation.org.uk

Newsletter 28th March 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for your generosity donating Easter Eggs and buying raffle tickets. There is still time to donate if you would like to. We are looking forward to lots of fun next week.

Thank you for supporting your child to come to school every day on time, we have lots of children who are on track to be entered into the attendance hamper raffle for this half term who have 98% attendance or above.

We always enjoy seeing your children's homework projects arriving at school. Please can homework projects be brought into school or shared on Google classroom by Monday 31st March, thank you.

Also if your child has grown out of their school uniform we always value receiving preloved school uniform which families can reuse. This has huge environmental and financial benefits.

Have a lovely weekend, the gates open at 8:45am, please aim to arrive at 8:45am to support your child to arrive at school on time every day.

We break up on Friday 4th April at 1pm, and the children return to school on Thursday 24th April.

NSPCC

[Online Safety advice](#)

Understanding online safety is tricky for all ages. The NSPCC have advice to help you learn about staying safe online as a family. Click [here](#) for more information.



Dates For Your Diary



Tower Bridge

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

Monday 5th May - BANK HOLIDAY - SCHOOL CLOSED w/b 12th May - Year 6 Test Week

Robert Browning

Friday 4th April- Break Up at 1pm

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

Thursday 24th April- Back to School- gates open 8.45am

Monday 5th May- BANK HOLIDAY- School Closed

Monday 12th May YEAR 6 TEST WEEK

Snowfields

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

Monday 5th May- Bank Holiday - School Closed

Week Beginning Monday 12th May - Year 6 Test Week

Term Dates 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 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](#)

Autism Acceptance Coffee Morning for Parents

Wednesday 2nd April 9:30-11:30 am at Crampton Primary School with free tea, coffee and biscuits.

Services attending includes:

- Southwark Autism Support Team
- Southwark Information Advice and Support (SIAS)
- SENSational Stay and Play
- Sportworks
- Neurodiversity Hub
- Autism Voice

This will be a fantastic opportunity for parents of Autistic children to connect with other parents, get advice and learn about local services available to them.



We are still selling raffle tickets for our end of term Easter Egg Raffle. Tickets are £1 per strip. The raffle will be drawn at the end of term.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

FRIDAY 4TH APRIL

Break Up at 1pm

TUESDAY 22ND AND WEDNESDAY 23RD APRIL

INSET Days - School Closed

MONDAY 12TH - THURSDAY 15TH MAY

Year 6 Test Week

engaging
everyone
everyday

[value of the week]
TOWERBRIDGE
£80.93

Thank you to all the parents and families who linked the school with the ASDA Cashpot for Schools programme.



thank you
CHANTEL



This term, Year 1 to 6 have enjoyed dance lessons with Chantel as part of our PE curriculum. Chantel engages the children effortlessly and they make fantastic progress in such a short space of time. Thank you Chantel!



Groundwork Update

Thank you to everyone who attended the sessions this term- we hope you found them useful! Look out for dates for next term.



Donation Station!

Do you have any construction toys that your child no longer plays with? If so please donate to school to help make our playtimes more fun!



Braille Club

Some of the children have been attending a Braille club, to learn about how visually impaired children communicate.



London Fire Brigade Visits

Year 5 and Year 2 enjoyed a visit from the London Fire Brigade this week. They enjoyed learning about fire safety. Please see the fire safety information towards the end of the newsletter.



New Books!

Thank you to the Royal Observatory for the books that you gave us following the visit from Year 2!



Autism Acceptance Coffee Morning

April 2nd 9.30-11.30am

Crampton Primary School

Iliffe Street

Free tea, coffee and biscuits

Speak to representatives from Southwark:

SIAS

SENSational stay and play

Sportworks

Neurodiversity Hub

Autism Voice

.....and more.....

Snowsfields Primary School

In DT, the children in Green class explored different repeated patterns. They then had a go at creating their own tessellation designs.



The children in Orange Class displayed incredible sportsmanship. Working together, they passed the ball to multiple teammates while maintaining full control, even when under pressure!



Yellow Class had a fantastic time at the British Museum, bringing their classroom learning to life as they explored Ancient Egypt and deepened their understanding of the topic.



Here are some of the exciting sensory journeys and imaginative role-play activities the children in Rainbow Class enjoyed while exploring the story 'The Owl and the Pussycat'.



In Red class, the children learnt the difference between volume and capacity.



We would be grateful for any toy donations! If your child has outgrown their toys and they are still in good condition, please consider bringing them to school for our children to enjoy during playtime. Thank you for your kind support!





Our school value this week is:
E - engaging everyone, everyday



 Reading Raffle Winners



Reading
Raffle
Winners



Our core value this week
is: Resilience



Times Tables
Rock Stars

Our school value this week is:
N - Nurturing



Reading
Raffle
Winners





	% present	Lates	Total
Year 1	93.3%	8	475
Year 2	98%	1	825
Year 3	99.2%	4	550
Year 4	95.8%	11	325
Year 5	93.7%	6	350
Year 6	92.8%	3	850

Overall whole school attendance for week beginning 17/3/2025: 95.29%

1st Place Attendance: Year 3

1st Place Punctuality: Year 2



Overall whole school attendance for week beginning: 17/3/2025: 93.46%

1st Place Attendance: Y2

1st Place Punctuality: Y1

	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	30	3	88.00%
Year 2	5	4	97.92%
Year 3	30	6	90.00%
Year 4	14	6	94.40%
Year 5	15	4	94.83%
Year 6	11	96	96.33%



	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	7	13	375
Year 2	12	14	300
Year 3	5	3	1400
Year 4	22	10	50
Year 5	9	8	725
Year 6	3	14	400

Overall whole school attendance for week beginning: 17/03/2025:

95.33%

1st Place Attendance: Y6

1st Place Punctuality: Y3

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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.

 Arbor

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 modelling. Crèche provided.

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

BOOK A PLACE
Email: ben.campbell@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:
02033398605, 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

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.

What 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 keep your children safe from the dangers of substance misuse

For further information contact:

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

BOOK NOW

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 via website www.vocesforautism.co.uk

Southwark Young Carers

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

For further information, please contact our Hub youngcarers@imago.community 0300 111 1110

Southwark Young Carers is a service of Imago Community Registered charity number 2080008

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.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

For parents of children aged 6 - 24 years

This 10-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

Web or support sessions online

WHEN IS IT ON?

Tuesday 6pm-7pm
12th January - 19th February
10 weeks
Free to join - online
Please email youngcarers@imago.community or call 0300 111 1110

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: 07947 858 666

WHEN IS IT ON?
STARTING 17th JANUARY 2025

TUESDAY MORNING
1ST PLACE CHILDREN & FAMILY HUB
12 CHARNLEIGH STREET
LONDON SE16 0RH

What time?
10am-12pm

Southwark AUTISM ACCEPTANCE COFFEE MORNING

We are excited to invite parents and families of autistic children to our upcoming coffee morning to celebrate World Autism Acceptance Month.

Event Highlights:

- Free tea, coffee and biscuits
- Meet the Autism Support Team
- Connect with other parents of autistic children
- Speak to representative from local services available to you and your child, including:

- Southwark Information Advice and Support (SIAS)
- Specialist Sign and Play
- Speechworks
- Neurodevelopment Hub
- Autism Voice and more!

Register your interest

15.0-17.30pm
2 April
Crompton Primary School
11th St, London SE11 3QA

Free and stand alone information sessions for parents and carers on a range of topics - 'TA-IN' to the support you need or complete the

Sessions include:

- Digital Safety - how to support children to be safe
- 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

We hold in person sessions throughout the year

Contact the team next available

family info



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

Parent Emotional Wellbeing

Friday 31st January
10.30am - 12

Friday 14th March
11 - 12.30
Both online via MS Teams

Parenting and ADHD

Monday 10th Feb
12 - 1.30

Monday 10th March
10am - 11.30

Both online via MS Teams

Ages and Stages

Thursday 23rd January
10am - 11.30

Tuesday 18th March
10.30 - 12

Both online via MS teams

Thursday 20th March
10 - 11.30
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

Or click here

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/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

(seven-free weekly)

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-2025-1637777439>

Spaces are limited so book soon.

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



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 after you register to arrange an assessment time. 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 1)
- 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 FALS form - <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/online-english-course-2025-1637777439>

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-2025-1637777439>

All applicants should have level 2 English.

Please note you will need to complete a portfolio with regular updates to be successful.

Places are subject to completion of application form and assessment.

family
fun



FREE

AFTERSCHOOL SPORTS

AT MARLBOROUGH SPORTS GARDEN

School's out, time to play!
Children aged 5-11 - join us for **FREE** afterschool sports at Marlborough Sports Garden! Fun, beginner-friendly sessions run Tuesday-Thursday, with free play on Monday and Friday. Choose from football, touch rugby, rollerskating, cricket, volleyball and more.

SPRING 2025
Week 1: Tue 2nd April - 4th April 2025
Week 2: Tue 9th April - 11th April 2025
Week 3: Tue 16th April - 18th April 2025
Week 4: Tue 23rd April - 25th April 2025

SUMMER 2025
Week 1: Tue 3rd June - 5th June 2025
Week 2: Tue 10th June - 12th June 2025
Week 3: Tue 17th June - 19th June 2025
Week 4: Tue 24th June - 26th June 2025
Week 5: Tue 1st July - 3rd July 2025
Week 6: Tue 8th July - 10th July 2025

TIMES
All sessions run from 3.45 - 5.15pm

LOCATION
Marlborough Sports Garden
Union Street, SE1 7SD

BANKSIDE OPEN SPACES TRUST

Get in touch by email sports@bost.org.uk or call 020 7403 3393 or visit online at www.bost.org.uk/afterschoolsports

Registration by May 15th 2025



EASTER RUGBY CAMP
SOUTHWARK TIGERS RFC

Monday 7th & Tuesday 8th April
Burgess Park Astroturf - SE5 0JD - 10.00 - 13.30

£30 FOR ONE DAY £50 FOR 2

Book using the QR code or contact chris@southwarktigers.com


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>

Free Home Fire Safety Visits

A fire can start in any room and the effects can be devastating, even a small fire in your home can lead to substantial damage and expensive repairs. The LFB want to stop fires from happening and that is why we offer free home fire safety visits to help keep you and your loved ones safe.

What happens during a home fire safety visit ?

Our firefighters or trained staff will visit you at home, at a time that suits you and carry out a risk assessment. They will give you advice based on your home and individual needs, this includes; information on how to **prevent** fires, the importance of smoke alarms to **detect** a fire and your **escape** plan in the event of a fire.

A visit can take up to 90 minutes or longer if needed and we will fit free smoke alarms if required.

Specialist alarms can be fitted for people who may have a delayed response to escape for example; strobe light and vibrating pad alarms for those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

How to book a Home Fire Safety Visit:

Freephone: 0800 028 4428

Email: smokealarms@london-fire.gov.uk

Text /SMS: 07860 021 319

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety/>

Worried about a relative, friend or neighbour ? Although everyone is eligible for a free home fire safety visit, some people with health problems or lifestyle behaviours can have an increased chance of a fire happening. To help you we have listed some of these examples below:

- **Increased risk factors can include:**

Anyone that smokes; overloaded electrical sockets or poor wiring; unsafe use of candles or naked flames; previous fires or near misses; cooking left unattended; hoarding of any kind or someone who lives alone.

- **They are less able to react because of:**

Mental health conditions such as dementia or learning difficulties; no smoke alarms are fitted or they don't work; alcohol dependency or drug misuse (prescribed or recreational); physical health issues including sensory impairments eg; hearing or sight.

- **They have a reduced ability to escape:**

Mobility issues due to a physical disability; age-related problems or as a result of a long-term illness; escape routes are not kept clear or are blocked due to actions such as hoarding or conditions that affect decision making.

If you know anyone who has **any combination of these risk factors**, give them our details to arrange a free home fire safety visit or simply ask them if they would like you to book a visit for them.

Remember -This is not an exhaustive list, if you are unsure please contact us for extra advice.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about BLUESKY

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

With an App Store rating of 17+ & Google Play rating Mature

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

While Bluesky has been around since 2019, it's suddenly taken off in a big way thanks to a significant exodus from X (formerly Twitter). Indeed, it looks and behaves a lot like Twitter before Elon Musk bought the platform. Bluesky has been touted in recent months as a safer, more open-minded alternative to X – but like any social media site, it still has its share of risks.

NO PRIVATE ACCOUNTS

While most social networks allow accounts to be private, at the time of writing, all Bluesky accounts must be public. The development team has indicated this might change in the future, but the app is built on a public-first protocol. If private accounts are ever introduced, it may only be in a limited way – such as through the implementation of group chats.

INTERACTIONS WITH STRANGERS

Every account being public means that anyone can be contacted by anyone else. While users don't have to respond and can easily block people and move on, it does mean that youngsters are at particular risk of being conned by scammers, messaged by predatory adults or exposed to others with ill intentions. These hazards can be compounded by the fact that Bluesky doesn't require its users to provide their real name.

TROLLING AND BULLYING

While Bluesky currently feels a lot friendlier than X seems to have become, its lack of private accounts means that there's nothing to stop users from trolling and cyberbullying younger people. While accounts can be blocked and reported, a persistent bully could simply create a new profile, potentially making their victims feel unsafe in continuing to use the app.

DANGEROUS MISINFORMATION

Established news organisations have fact-checking and editing processes, but social networks have no such controls and can often serve as breeding grounds for misinformation and disinformation. Bluesky will possibly be no different once it reaches a certain size, and children may not have the critical thinking skills to tell fact from fiction – or to discern an informative, honest user from a malicious one.

ADULT TARGET AUDIENCE

Bluesky isn't designed with children in mind, and there aren't many parental controls on the platform. In an interview with the BBC, Bluesky's CEO originally said that the app would only allow users aged 18 and above to sign up, but a spokesperson later clarified its age restriction as 13+. This could imply the app was originally meant for an adult audience and suggests that making the platform more child-friendly might not currently be a priority.

RAPID GROWTH

At the time of writing, Bluesky seems calm in comparison with other social networks where moderation is lax and the atmosphere toxic – but that's due at least in part to its smaller community. The app has recently been adding as many as a million users per day, and if that continues, there'll be more unpleasant users to handle, and moderators could struggle to maintain the pleasant environment Bluesky is currently known for.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE THE ADULT CONTENT FILTER

Bluesky doesn't have much in the way of parental controls, but there are content filters which can hide sexual and graphic imagery. These are enabled by default for underage accounts but can be manually turned on in the 'Moderation' section of the app's settings. The 'advanced' Bluesky Moderation Service lets you restrict content even further, hiding – for example – self-harm content, extremist rhetoric, and even rude posts.

ENCOURAGE BLOCKING AND REPORTING

Another tool that Bluesky uses to ensure a decent experience is muting and blocking accounts. The former prevents you from seeing a specific user's content, while the latter stops them from seeing yours. If a child is encountering trolls or bullies on the platform, encourage them to use this function, while also reporting the offenders to help make the platform a nicer place for everyone.

LOOK OUT FOR FAKES

Impersonation is a problem on all social networks. While the consequences are usually benign, imposters sometimes attempt to scam or groom children by pretending to be a popular influencer or online personality. Bluesky is unique in that it can be connected to official domains, with users' handles linking to other sites; while this isn't widely used right now, it could be a reliable way to verify celebrities and public figures in future.

KEEP AN OPEN DIALOGUE

As with all social media platforms, moderation and content filters can only do so much; it's highly likely that a child will eventually face something unsavoury. For that reason, it's important to make sure that young people are aware of the risks and know how to handle the technology if anything they see on the app makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard, The Guardian and The New Statesman.



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Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/bluesky-app>

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