

# 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](http://www.thebridgesfederation.org.uk)

## Newsletter 2nd May 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

On Thursday 8th May, it is the 80th Anniversary of VE Day. There is a VE procession and fly by on Monday 5th May in London, please find more information here: [How to watch the VE Day procession and flypast \(5 May 2025\) - GOV.UK](#) the children will be learning about this significant event in history in school.

The year 6 teams and children are on the countdown for their KS2 SATs beginning on Monday 12th May, it is really important that they attend school on time every day. They are all working incredibly hard and preparing well.

Would like your child to take part in an after school enrichment club for the summer term? Please spend some time with your child discussing the clubs they would like to attend and complete the Google form as soon as possible.

Take a look at Google Classroom for information about your child's learning this term. Staff will share this term's topic poster, knowledge organiser and half termly homework project sheet.

Have a lovely weekend and remember that Monday is a Bank Holiday, the school reopens on Tuesday at 8:45am.



Dates For Your Diary



### Tower Bridge

Monday 5th May - BANK HOLIDAY - SCHOOL CLOSED  
W/B 12th May - Year 6 Test Week  
Tuesday 20th May - Groundwork coffee morning  
Monday 26th May - Friday 30th May - HALF TERM - SCHOOL CLOSED  
Monday 2nd June - Back to school - gates open 8.45am  
Wednesday 2nd July - Sports Day  
Wednesday 16th July (AM) - Sunshine Class celebration assembly

### Robert Browning

Monday 5th May- BANK HOLIDAY- School Closed  
Friday 9th May- VE Day Celebrations  
Monday 12th May YEAR 6 TEST WEEK  
Monday 26th May - Friday 30th May - HALF TERM - SCHOOL CLOSED  
Monday 2nd June - Back to school - gates open 8.45am

### Snowfields

Monday 5th May- Bank Holiday - School Closed  
Week Beginning Monday 12th May - Year 6 Test Week  
Monday 26th May - Friday 30th May - HALF TERM - SCHOOL CLOSED  
Monday 2nd June - Back to school - gates open 8.45am  
Wednesday 2nd July - Sports Day  
Tuesday 15th July - Sunshine class Graduation

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](#)

NSPCC

[Support for Parents](#)

The NSPCC has a wide range of information to support parents, please find information [here](#) on how to look after your mental health.





Last weekend and this week we have been focussed on the London Marathon. Children have completed their own Mini Marathon in school, at Southwark Park and as part of the main marathon event on The Mall. Many of the pupils ran beyond their expectations. We also celebrated our amazing Year 4 teacher, Emily Selicks, completing the Marathon on Sunday. Emily ran for the Teenage Cancer Trust and has inspired us all over the past few months with the rigorous training plan. Thank you to all of you who supported Emily on Sunday and for all the parents who gave up their Saturday to support their children at the Mini Marathon event.





A reminder that children should wear sensible shoes for school: Crocs/ strappy sandals are not part of the school uniform. Children should wear trainers or shoes, that they can run in.

## Groundwork Update

Thank you to everyone who attended the sessions last term- we hope you found them useful! Dates for this term:  
**Tuesday 6th May:** Spending time and playing with your children  
**Tuesday 20th May:** Ideas for playing with your children  
**Tuesday 3rd June:** Autism and play  
**Tuesday 17th June:** Planning the school holidays.



## Orange Class Trip

Last Friday Year 2 had a brilliant trip to Beckenham Place Park, they learnt a lot about minibeasts and their habitats.



## Year 6 Fundraiser!

Thank you to everyone who came along and supported the fundraiser. They raised money towards their trips this term.

## Mini London Marathon

On Saturday, 25 lucky children got to take part in the TCS Mini London Marathon. They ran 1 mile past Buckingham Palace and finished at the iconic London Marathon finish line, gaining a beautiful medal for their hard work.





# Snowsfields Primary School



tcs  MINI LONDON MARATHON 25  
#WeRunTogether



Lacrosse sessions

Year 4 and Year 6 enjoyed their first Lacrosse workshop this week. They had a great time learning new skills and trying out a sport that was new to many of them!



Well done to the children who took part in the London Mini Marathon! They did us proud with their energy and determination. A big thank you to the parents and carers who came along to support — it made all the difference!



A big shout-out to the children who represented our school at the PESSN Dance Competition. They impressed everyone with their fantastic performance. Well done, dancers!

100% Attendance



Well done to our yellow wristband winners for their perfect attendance and punctuality, and congratulations to our attendance hamper winner! Thank you to all the parents and carers for your continued support!



London Marble Show 2025

Join some of our parents on Saturday 24th May at Bermondsey Village Hall for a fun day of marble activities, including workshops, games, and historical displays. There will also be a raffle to support Burgess Sports and Snowsfields School. We'd love to see Snowsfields families there!





Our school value this week is:  
O - Overcoming Challenges



Reading Raffle Winners



Reading  
Raffle  
Winners

Our core value this week  
is: Creativity



Times Tables  
Rock Stars

Our school value this week is:  
**W - Working Together**



Reading  
Raffle  
Winners





	% present	Lates	Total
Year 1	90.63%	0	75
Year 2	95%	0	100
Year 3	93.75%	1	50
Year 4	98.48%	1	125
Year 5	92.86%	3	
Year 6	96.55%	2	75

**Overall whole school attendance for week beginning 24/4/2025: 94.78%**

**1st Place Attendance: Year 4**  
**1st Place Punctuality: Year 1 and Year 2**



**Overall whole school attendance for week beginning: 24/4/2025: 91.67%**

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

	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	7	2	90.38%
Year 2	5	4	93.75%
Year 3	6	2	94.17%
Year 4	9	1	89.00%
Year 5	2	2	98.28%
Year 6	5	5	95.00%



	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	6	2	75
Year 2	10	0	75
Year 3	4	0	125
Year 4	14	2	50
Year 5	2	2	125
Year 6	2	4	100

**Overall whole school attendance for week beginning: 24/04/2025:**

**93.72%**

**1st Place Attendance: Y5 & Y6**  
**1st Place Punctuality: Y2 & Y3**

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## 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  
fun



**THE PE & SCHOOL SPORTS NETWORK**

Year Groups 1-7 **FREE**

**GIRLS FOOTBALL CAMP 2025**

**09:30 - 15:30**  
27th - 30th May 2025

Please contact:  
www.peasn.org.uk for more information or to answer any questions.  
Alternatively you can go to our website www.peasn.org.uk

Please scan the QR code above to register your place.

LIMITED SPACES AVAILABLE. ADVANCED BOOKING IS ADVISED.

Venue  
@Michael Faraday Primary School  
Portland Street  
SE17 2HR

**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 23rd April 2025  
Week 2: Wed 24th April 2025  
Week 3: Thu 25th May 2025  
Week 4: Fri 1st May 2025  
Week 5: Sat 10th May 2025

**SUMMER 2025**  
Week 1: Tue 2nd June 2025  
Week 2: Wed 3rd June 2025  
Week 3: Thu 4th June 2025  
Week 4: Fri 5th June 2025  
Week 5: Sat 6th June 2025  
Week 6: Sun 7th July 2025

**TIMES**  
All sessions start from 5.00 - 7.00pm

**LOCATION**  
Marlborough Sports Garden  
London Street, SE1 1DB

**BANKSIDE OPEN SPACES TRUST**

Call 020 7403 3393 or visit online at [www.bost.org.uk/afterschoolsports](http://www.bost.org.uk/afterschoolsports)

Registered charity no. 1056214

**OPEN TRIALS**

**MONDAY 19TH MAY 2025**

**GIRLS FOOTBALL**

**SOUTHWARK JAGUARS**

Scan QR code to register your interest or contact [info@southwarkjaguars.org.uk](mailto:info@southwarkjaguars.org.uk) for more.



# 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:**  
**Where:** 1st Floor Family Hub, 13 Charnleigh Street, Burgess Park, SE5 0HT

**BOOK A PLACE**  
Email: [ben.campbell@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:ben.campbell@southwark.gov.uk)  
Phone: 07738 860 768

**Parent Skills PARENT SPACE**  
A QUARTERLY ONLINE & IN PERSON PROGRAM

A 12 WEEK COURSE DESIGNED FOR PARENTS WITH CHILDREN FROM TWO YEARS TO SCHOOL AGE. THE COURSE IS FREE AND OPEN TO ALL PARENTS AS WELL AS GOOD PARENTS WHO WANT TO IMPROVE THEIR PARENTING SKILLS.

**SERIES**  
WEDNESDAY 10TH JANUARY 2023 10:30-11AM  
WEDNESDAY 14TH APRIL 2023 10:30-11AM  
WEDNESDAY 11TH JULY 2023 10:30-11AM

**FOR DETAILS & TO REGISTER**  
• [admin@parentskillsgo.com](mailto:admin@parentskillsgo.com)  
• [parentskillsgo.org](https://parentskillsgo.org)

**BOOKING**  
07507443293  
07725370083  
02030241878  
07544423853

PLACED HERE TO IMPROVE SKILLS AND SUPPORT

## 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

**SENsational Stay & Play**

Fun FREE groups for children with additional needs or disabilities and their parents/ carers

- Have fun with your child
- Meet other families
- Get advice and support from a range of specialists on topics such as Speech & Language, Behaviour and Autism

Multiple locations across Southwark  
Midweek drop-in sessions for under-5s  
Saturday respite sessions for 5-11 years  
See timetable on back of this leaflet

For more info visit [www.southwark.gov.uk/parentskills](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/parentskills)  
Or to book <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/parentskills>

Southwark Children and Family Centres

**Southwark Young Carers**

To get involved, you can refer via our website [www.imago.community](http://www.imago.community) or scan the QR Code

**IMAGO**

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.

For further information, please contact our Hub  
[youngcarers@imago.community](mailto:youngcarers@imago.community)  
**03000 111110**

Southwark Young Carers is a service of Imago Community  
Registered charity number: 2538 000

**Drug and Alcohol Service** **Young People**

**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.

**Workshops:**

- 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@cg.org.uk](mailto:Southwark.YoungPeople@cg.org.uk) or scan the QR code for a direct link to the event booking page.
- You can call us on: **020 3404 7699**

**BOOK HERE**

**TAP - IN SESSIONS**

Free and stand alone information sessions for parents and carers on a range of topics - 'TAP-IN' to the ones you need or complete the set!

**Sessions include:**

- Digital Safety - how to support children to be safe online
- Agas 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](mailto:bethany.gilbey@southwark.gov.uk)  
[EARLYHELP@SOUTHWARK.GOV.UK](mailto:EARLYHELP@SOUTHWARK.GOV.UK)

We hold in person and online sessions throughout the term

Contact the team for next available session

**STRENGTHENING FAMILIES STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES**

For parents of children aged 0 - 18 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**

We're looking for parents who want to share their experiences and learn from others

**WHEN IS IT ON?**

Tuesday  
10:30 to 11:30am  
Every Tuesday  
13th to 15th April 2023  
Online evening group (Zoom link)  
What time?  
18:00-19:00

Please contact us for more info

## The Neurodiversity Family Hub

The Neurodiversity Family Hub provide specialised clubs for children & young people with SEND in Southwark, including: Teen Tribe, Junior Tribe and Tiny Tribe

As well as parent/carers support, including:

Parent Connect, Parent Circle, Walk & Talk, My Advocacy Partner and whole family gatherings.

<https://theneurodiversityfamilyhub.org/>



# family info

## SOUTHWARK SCHOOLS' INDOOR AIR QUALITY

**Authentic - 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 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 **reduce** harmful emissions.

This initiative builds on existing air quality efforts and provides tools with a dedicated webpage and monitoring device to assist schools in fostering a clearer, 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/6123f6a81a236](mailto:https://forms.office.com/6123f6a81a236)

[environment@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:environment@southwark.gov.uk)  
[www.southwark.gov.uk](http://www.southwark.gov.uk)

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

## 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](http://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

## 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

**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 6TH JANUARY 2025

**INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS SEWING CLASS STARTS**  
FRIDAY 17TH JANUARY 2025

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

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

**FOR DETAILS & TO REGISTER:**  
0203285609, 0738460362  
[admin@parentskills24.org](mailto:admin@parentskills24.org)  
[parentskills24.org](http://parentskills24.org)

## FREE YEAR 6 LITTLE FISH THEATRE SUMMER PROGRAMME

FOR SOUTHWARK CHILDREN

28TH JULY - 8TH AUG 2025 (MON-FRI)

### AT RYE OAK PRIMARY SCHOOL

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK A PLACE FOR YOUR CHILD  
EMAIL: [INFO@LITTLEFISHTHEATRE.CO.UK](mailto:INFO@LITTLEFISHTHEATRE.CO.UK)

TO FILL IN A BOOKING FORM  
CLICK THE LINK BELOW OR  
SCAN THE QR CODE

<https://bit.ly/413nERW>

**ART** **DRAMA** **Music** **DANCE**

**Southwark Council** **LU Learning Unlimited**

## Online English (ESOL) Course

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

**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 TAFE fee - <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/learning-unlimited>

**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/learning-unlimited>

All applicants should have level 2 English.

Please only pay attention to completing it carefully as it will require regular updates to it. Successful offers are subject to completion of application form and assessment.

**Southwark Council** **LU Learning Unlimited**

## 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 times each)

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/learning-unlimited>

Spaces are limited so book soon.

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



## **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](mailto: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 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 chat, 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 (within 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.

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The National College

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

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