

Robert Browning, Snowsfields 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 6th June 2025



Dear Parents and Carers,

Eid Mubarak to all our families celebrating Eid-al-Adha.

We have been experimenting with dyslexia friendly fonts and background colours over the last few weeks in our Newsletter, we would appreciate any feedback.

Arbor App

The summer term is always action packed, please check the [dates for diary box](#) and make sure that you have the [arbor app](#) downloaded to your phone.

SIAS

The Southwark Information Advice and Support (SIAS) team provides impartial advice and support about special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to parents, carers and young people. Please click on the link for more information:

[SIAS | Southwark Local Offer](#)

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](#)

Dates For Your Diary

Tower Bridge

Wednesday 18th June - Bicycle Security Marking with Safer Neighbourhood Team

Tuesday 1st July - Sports Day Y1-6 (DATE CHANGE)

Wednesday 2nd July - EYFS Sports Day

Tuesday 8th July - 9.00am Moving up to Year 1 meeting (Rec parents)

Wednesday 9th July - Summer Fair

Thursday 10th July - Secondary Transfer Meeting Y5 parents - 9.15am

Monday 14th July - Year 6 Show for parents 2 - 3pm

Wednesday 16th July (AM) - Sunshine Class celebration assembly

Thursday 17th July - Year 6 Leavers Assembly for parents 9.15 - 10.15am

Robert Browning

Tuesday 1st July- EYFS Sports day

Friday 4th July- Sports Day (Date Change)

Wednesday 9th July - Summer Fair

Friday 18th July- Year 6 Leavers assembly

Friday 18th July- 2.45pm- Reception Celebration of learning assembly

Tuesday 22nd July- Break up at 1pm.

Snowsfields

Monday 9th June Year 2 and Year 5 fundraiser 3:30pm

Tuesday 24th June - EYFS Fundraiser 3:30pm

Tuesday 1st July - Sports Day (DATE CHANGE)

Wednesday 9th July - Summer Fair

Thursday 10th July- Transition into year 1 for Reception parents 9am

Thursday 10th July - Secondary Transfer parent meeting - 3:30 pm in Blue class

Tues. 15th July - Sunshine class Graduation, 10am

Thursday 17th July - Year 6 End of year show 2pm

Tuesday 22nd July - Year 6 Leavers Assembly 9:30am

Tuesday 22nd July- Break up at 1pm



STEM

Question for Summer 2
How does the weather affect the way we live our daily lives?

What do you think? Draw, write or explain your answer in anyway you want. Hand to your teacher before 7/7/25 with your name on.

STEAM

Well done to our STEAM question winner from last half term. Don't forget to enter this half term's draw by answering the question: "How does the weather affect how we live our daily lives?"



This week, Year 4 have been experimenting with paint shades, hues and tints in as part of their Art learning.



Eid Al Adha



Eid Murbarak to all of the families celebrating today and over the weekend.

**be the best
you can be -
believe!**

[value of the week]
TOWER BRIDGE

Bicycle Security Marking

We will be hosting a bicycle security marking event on Wednesday 18th June for your bicycles to be marked by the Met Police Safer Neighbourhood Team. This service is free of charge and will take place between 3 and 4pm.



Year 6 took part in a special science workshop involving balloons this week run by pupils at Notre Dame School.



**Year 6 Athletics
Competition**

This week Year 6 took part in an Athletics competition at Southwark Park against other schools. We are delighted to announce we came 3rd overall!



Groundwork Update

Thank you to everyone who attended the sessions this year- we hope you found them useful! The next date for this term:

Tuesday 17th June: Planning the school holidays.

This should be a really useful one, for sharing ideas and finding things to do at a low cost.

Bee Friendly Planting Session

As part of the honeybee programme, the children learnt about what different animals pollinate flowers and plants and why it is so important for us and that the number of bees is declining because of a lack of habitat. They then cleared weeds from the garden beds and planted new seedlings and sowed some wildflower seeds.

Despite the cold windy weather they all had a great time!



Attendance Hamper Winners

Congratulations to our winners of the attendance hamper for the first half of the Summer Term.

Congratulations also to the 78 children who gained wristbands for their attendance.

Remember that the gates open at 8.45am each day- children arriving after 9am are marked as late and WILL have missed some of their learning.

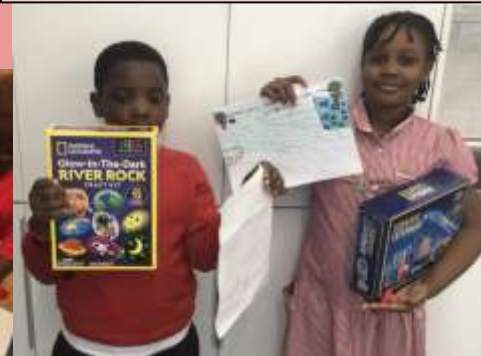
DT in Orange Class and Blue Class

Year 2 and Year 5 have been working hard on their models of cars. They were excited to discuss and show their models to an engineer.



STEAM Question Winners

Congratulations to these superstars who won prizes for their STEAM question homework.



Snowsfields Primary School



Green class is working on an exciting project with the educational charity Guy Fox. The children will learn all about personal finance and publish an information book that will be shared with schools across the country.

Well done to all the children who earned a blue wristband for achieving perfect attendance last half term!



Children in Yellow Class are busy measuring the growth of their sunflowers as part of their science learning. It's been a great way to explore plants and observe changes over time!



Children in Years 2, 4, and 6 are having a fantastic time developing their dance skills with our specialist dance teacher Chantal!



Well done to our Attendance Hamper winners!



Here are some of our children taking part in the Bikeability workshops – learning how to ride confidently and stay safe on the road. A great step towards independence and road safety awareness!



A huge shout-out to Kostek and Hanna's parents for raising an incredible £1,030 for our enrichment clubs through the Marble Show event – what an amazing achievement! Thank you also to all the parents who supported by purchasing raffle tickets. Here are our Marble Show raffle winners!





Our school value this week is:
B - Be the best you can be - believe!



Reading Raffle Winners



Reading Raffle
Winners

Our core value this week
is: Resilience



Times Tables
Rock Stars

Our school value this week is:
E - Empowering Everyone



Reading
Raffle
Winners





	% present	Lates	Total
Year 1	98.8%	3	575
Year 2	98%	3	575
Year 3	92.9%	13	75
Year 4	95.8%	15	300
Year 5	96.8%	12	25
Year 6	96.9%	11	300

Overall whole school attendance for week beginning 19/5/2025: 96.46%

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



Overall whole school attendance for week beginning: 19/5/2025: 95.59%

**1st Place Attendance: Y2
1st Place Punctuality: Y1**

	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	2	2	96.00%
Year 2	0	3	99.13%
Year 3	4	8	92.41%
Year 4	12	3	93.60%
Year 5	7	5	92.76%
Year 6	13	5	98.67%



	Absence	Lates	Total
Year 1	18	1	375
Year 2	91	4	150
Year 3	0	2	625
Year 4	7	5	225
Year 5	13	5	400
Year 6	15	5	325

Overall whole school attendance for week beginning: 19/5/2025:

89.31%

**1st Place Attendance: Y3
1st Place Punctuality: Y1**

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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/>

secondary

transfer

for parents
of Year 5
pupils



**HARRIS ACADEMY BERMONDSEY
OUTSTANDING EVERY TIME!**

Ofsted Outstanding in 2009 | 2015 | 2019 | 2025

#ProudToBeHAB



Outstanding in all areas – including Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, Leadership and Management, and Sixth-Form Provision.

Open Days

3rd June

10th June

17th June



Book a Tour

What Ofsted said about us

“Pupils benefit from an exceptional enrichment offer.”

“Pupils develop a rich body of knowledge and achieve very highly.”



Keep up with the latest school news, student achievements, and community events—follow us!
Stay Connected, Stay Informed - Follow HAB Online!



Contact us if you have any questions at admissions@harrisbermondsey.org.uk

55 Southwark Park Rd, Bermondsey, SE16 3TZ

www.harrisbermondsey.org.uk 020 7237 9316

Harris Academy
Bermondsey

Family
fun

MILLWALL GIRLS PATHWAY CENTRE

MILLWALL
GIRLS
PLAYER

PERFORMANCE

PATHWAY

U7-U15 YEAR
OLDS

HARRIS ACADEMY
BERMONDSEY

SESSIONS EVERY
FRIDAY

16:30PM- 18:00PM

REGISTER NOW FOR A
FREE TRIAL

NFARRELL@MILLWALLCOMMUNITY.ORG.UK



PE & SCHOOL SPORTS NETWORK

FREE GIRLS FOOTBALL

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

WILD CATS
OPEN TO ALL
AGES 5-11
WEDNESDAY
17:00-18:00

SQUAD

PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER

AFTERSCHOOL SPORTS

AT MARLBOROUGH SPORTS GARDEN

FREE

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 2023

Week 1: Tue 27th April 2023
Week 2: Wed 26th April 2023
Week 3: Thu 24th May 2023
Week 4: Thu 11th May 2023
Week 5: Thu 18th May 2023

SUMMER 2023

Week 1: Tue 27th June 2023
Week 2: Thu 19th June 2023
Week 3: Thu 12th July 2023
Week 4: Thu 26th July 2023
Week 5: Thu 1st Aug 2023

TIMES
All sessions start from 3.45 - 5.15pm

LOCATION
Marlborough Sports Garden
Lower Road, SP7 1DD

Get in touch! By email sports@best.org.uk or call 020 7402 3393 or visit our site at www.best.org.uk/afterschoolsports

BANKSIDE OPEN SPACES TRUST

Lewisham Disability Sports Network presents: Lewisham Inclusive Sports Festival

Register Now!

A free event, accessible to all abilities, for disabled young people and their families, aged 5-25!

Register below or scan the QR code:
<https://bit.ly/LewishamMultiSport>

Saturday 2nd June
2 pm to 4 pm
Lodgepole Arena
Silvermere Rd
SE8 4QX

In Partnership with:

Access Sport, GLL, SPORT, Lewisham and Greenwich, LMS, London Borough of Lewisham, Lewisham London Borough

Camilla.Redfern@Accesssport.org.uk 020 7993 9033

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:
 Where: 1st Floor Family Hub, 13 Charnock Street, Burgess Park, SE16 0HT

BOOK A PLACE

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

Parent Skills PARENT SPACE
A 12-WEEKLY ONLINE & IN-PERSON PROGRAM
A 12-WEEK COURSE DESIGNED FOR PARENTS WITH CHILDREN FROM TWO YEARS TO NINE YEARS OLD AND CHILDREN AS WELL AS ADULTS WHO CHOOSE TO SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN

DATES
THURSDAY 10TH JANUARY 2025 11AM-12PM
WEDNESDAY 2ND APRIL 2025 10AM-11AM
WEDNESDAY 16TH JULY 2025 10AM-11AM

FOR DETAILS & TO REGISTER
Admin@parentskills.co.uk
parentskills.co.uk

CONTACT
02007443293
07725370183
02070214114
07394442883

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/carer

- 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-16 Saturday respite sessions for 9-11 years
See timetable on back of this leaflet

For more info visit www.govtsouthwark.gov.uk/children-and-young-people or to book www.govtsouthwark.gov.uk/children-and-young-people

Southwark Young Carers

To get involved, you can refer via our website 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
0300 111 110

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 assist your children/teen from the dangers of substance misuse

For further information contact:
Email: Southwark.YoungPeople@cg.gov.uk or scan the QR code for a direct link to the eventbrite page.
You can call us on: **020 3404 7699**

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
- Agnes 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 865 580
bethany.gilbey@southwark.gov.uk
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 8 - 16 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

Where is it on? Tuesday 6pm to 7.30pm at Burgess Park Family Hub

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/carer support, including: Parent Connect, Parent Circle, Walk & Talk, My Advocacy Partner and whole family gatherings.

<https://theneurodiversityfamilyhub.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

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

<https://bit.ly/1W13nERW>

ART DREAMS Music DANCE

Family info

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 6.0; 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



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.



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

Online English (ESOL) Course

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

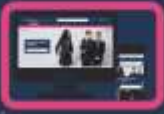


Classes will be on Tuesdays & Thursdays at 10am—12.30pm
25th February - 26th June 2025
(never-time only)
plus online Conversation Clubs
This course will take place on Zoom.
Applicants should live in Southwark
To apply for a place on the course in advance please use this link:
<http://www.southwark.gov.uk/online-english-course>
Spaces are limited so book soon.
We will contact you to confirm your place on the course.

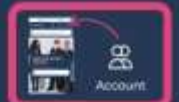
Price & Buckland

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 01899 640327

Parent Skills 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 16TH JANUARY 2025

INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS SEWING CLASS STARTS FRIDAY 17TH JANUARY 2025

VENUE: THE LEWISTON CENTRE COMMUNITY CENTRE 8 EUGENIA ROAD BROTHERWICK SE16 3BU

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

FOR DETAILS & TO REGISTER: 02032886008, 07784603692, admin@parentskills2go.com, parentskills2go.org

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.

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 25th 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 2)
 - The opportunity to progress to the Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools or to apply for work as a Teaching Assistant
 - Find out more: <https://www.cityandguilds.com/en/our-courses/courses/teaching-assistant>
- How much does it cost?
- *The course is free but there is a non-refundable registration fee of £10.
To apply for a place on the course see the link below to complete the online form:
<https://www.cityandguilds.com/en/our-courses/courses/teaching-assistant>
- All applicants should have proof of English.
Please note you will need to complete a portfolio which will require you to write a lot of homework & essays are marked in completion of application form and assessment.

SOUTHWARK SCHOOLS' INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Southwark Council is leading a strategic health partnership to improve indoor air quality and create a healthier environment for all.

Airflow - 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 pupils with asthma, offering a live insight into the air quality they experience.

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

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

School staff and parents can register interest by filling out the form in this link or by emailing: https://www.southwark.gov.uk/123456789



Community Action Plan

Check out the Community Action Plan page which includes a list of services available.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MINECRAFT



Still the best-selling game of all time, Minecraft is a bastion of creativity and community, with hundreds of millions of players building and crafting in its almost endless world. The popularity of Minecraft among gamers of all ages means it's important to remain informed about the game, including how to play it safely and whether it's suitable for the children in your care. That's why we've created this guide explaining the risks associated with Minecraft and how to ensure a purely enjoyable gaming experience.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

SCARY ELEMENTS

While Minecraft can be seen as a kind of 'digital LEGO', certain game modes include creatures accompanied by eerie sound effects. These can be a bit too frightening for some younger players, potentially leading to distressing in-game combat and other encounters – although the combat is quite basic and free from any real depiction of violence.

GRIEFING

Some players in Minecraft take pleasure in deliberately damaging or destroying another person's creations. This behaviour, known as 'griefing', is a form of bullying – it intentionally ruins someone else's experience by erasing hours of their work and forcing them to start over. Many public servers regard griefing as a serious offence and often ban those who engage in it.

ADDICTIVENESS

Minecraft's focus on creativity means that, as with any creative endeavour, it can be easy to get carried away. If your child is finding it difficult to manage their time because they're drawn in by Minecraft's gameplay loop of resource gathering and building elaborate projects, it could have a knock-on effect on their social interactions and schoolwork.

PUBLIC SERVERS AND COMMUNICATIONS

With public servers being so easily accessible in Minecraft, it's highly likely that children will end up chatting with strangers through the in-game text chat. Some servers even place an emphasis on social interaction, actively encouraging communication between players. While there's nothing inherently wrong with this, it does carry certain risks. In addition to the concerns around speaking with strangers online, players who host their own servers may have their IP addresses exposed, posing a further security concern.

ADDITIONAL PURCHASES

Minecraft is available as a free trial on a variety of devices; however, the full game requires a one-off purchase, which is typically around £15. After that, players have the option to buy additional cosmetic upgrades or subscribe to Minecraft Realms. Realms is an entirely optional subscription service that allows users to run their own private server to play with friends. Without proper supervision, younger players may end up making unintended or excessive purchases.

Advice for Parents & Educators

CHOOSE THE RIGHT MODE

Selecting Creative or Peaceful mode allows children to play Minecraft without having to contend with enemies. It's also a great way for you to get used to playing the game with them, since the difficulty level is far lower. This allows you to work together on a long-term project, creating something special without the threat of enemies and creatures attacking you or damaging your building.

HOST A PRIVATE SERVER

The easiest way to find a safe server for children to play on is to make one yourself. Hosting a server prevents strangers from finding it, unless they've been given its address and password. A private server also lets you control who's allowed to enter and – if necessary – ban anyone who shouldn't be there. This is the closest equivalent to parental controls in Minecraft. Hosting a private server, however, will cost a monthly fee.

TALK ABOUT STRANGERS

At some point in their lives, almost everyone will make contact with a stranger online. Talking to children about online safety, therefore, is essential – as is having a plan for dealing with any hostile or difficult people. It's important that a child knows never to tell a stranger about themselves online and that they should come to you straight away if they do encounter a problem.

RESEARCH CONTENT CREATORS

Much of Minecraft's early stages can be an exercise in frustration for players who don't know where to start. Thankfully, there's a wealth of material online and in video format to help you learn the basics. Just be mindful that some of this content may not be appropriate for children, so you should consider watching it yourself first.

PLAY MINECRAFT WITH YOUR CHILD

As a creative building tool, Minecraft makes it great fun for children to team up and construct vast buildings accompanied by imaginative landscapes, much like working with LEGO or model kits. Playing in a game mode that includes enemies can encourage critical thinking and teamwork; however, you should consider which game mode is appropriate for the child in your care.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Gaming Editor at the Daily Star, and has worked in games media for more than 6 years. A long-time gaming enthusiast, he is also a parent and therefore a keen advocate of online safety for children of all ages.



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