



SHOBNALL PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



TELEPHONE: 01283 247410 TWITTER: @shobnallprimary E-MAIL: shb-office@shb.itmat.co.uk

4th October 2024

"As we work to create light for others, we naturally light our own way."

Dear Parents/Carers,

I cannot believe how quickly this term seems to be flying by – we are already over halfway through! The children continue to work hard and so many of them have been to see me this week with their work and for their positive behaviour. Keep up the good work children!

Thankfully, some of the awful weather we have been having hasn't dampened our spirits in school!

The children and staff continue to keep smiling and are working as hard as ever! You can hear about what has been going on in our classrooms this week in the 'Shobnall Showcase' further on in the newsletter.

You should have all now received a letter outlining the arrangements for parent consultations, scheduled for Monday 21 October and Wednesday 23 October 2024, 4.00 – 7.00pm. If you have not yet booked your appointment, click on the link that has been sent to your phone to get your preferred slot/s.

Please remember that on **Tuesday 8 October**, the children will be celebrating harvest in our special Harvest Assembly. Please could we ask that you send your child in to school on the day with a tin or packet of food (non-perishable items only), as we are once again supporting the YMCA charity who will come and collect the donations later during that day for the food bank. Thank you!



Thank you once again for your continued commitment to ensuring your children are here, ready, and on time every day. The whole school community continues to embrace our Little Heroes campaign – **HERE, EVERYDAY, READY, ON TIME.**

We hope that you have a great weekend and, as always, we look forward to seeing you again on Monday! Enjoy!

PFA Halloween Disco – Friday 18 October 2024

As you will be aware from last week's newsletter, the first PFA fundraiser will be a **Halloween Disco** on **Friday 18 October 2024!** The infant disco will be 3.45 – 5.00pm and the junior disco will be 5.15 – 6.30pm. The day itself will be a non-uniform day (the theme being party, or spooky wear) free of charge, so no need for children attending the infant disco to bring a change of clothes.

Please note that Shobnall Stars will remain open on that night but will be in the Year 2 classroom on that evening.

Tickets will be on sale next week commencing on **Monday 7 October**, every morning and afternoon pick up by the entrance to the key stage 2 playground and will be priced at £4.00, which includes a drink and some sweets. There will be a range of other goodies on sale at the discos so children will need to bring a little extra spending money on the night should they wish to purchase anything on offer. Prices for these optional extras are:

- Can of Pop – 90p
- Water – 50p
- Fruit Shoots – 60p
- Cartons of Pop – 40p
- Walkers Crisps – 60p
- Raiders Crisps – 40p
- Freddos – 25p
- Sweets – 30p / 50p



The PFA can take card payments for tickets, but due to the bank charges, there will be an additional 5p charge for every transaction. We do hope that you are able to support this event!



Year 5 Whitemoor Lakes Meeting for Parents

There will be a meeting for children and parents on **Tuesday 15 October 2024 at 3.30pm** in the Year 5 classroom about the forthcoming residential trip to Whitemoor Lakes. This is a great opportunity to discover more about the itinerary, essential information and to ask any burning questions that you may have. For parents who are unable to attend, a copy of the presentation and kit list will be uploaded to the class website page.

Mental Health Support Team (MHST) Workshop

We have worked closely with the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) for a number of years now. You may have met our designated link, Sam Lewis, at our Parents' Evenings. She is running a series of workshops for parents this academic year, the first of which will be held on **Thursday 10 October 2024 at 3.30pm** in our school hall. The topic will be the **Impact of Social Media**. We do hope that you are able to attend, as the content is very useful and relevant. Please enquire with Mrs Johnston, our Family Liaison Officer, if you have any questions or would like any further information. We look forward to seeing you there!



Phonics Workshop for Reception Parents

Miss Alexander would like to invite ALL Reception parents to a workshop about phonics on **Wednesday 16 October 2024 at 2.30pm** in the school hall. This will be an informative session on how phonics is taught in school and how you can help your child at home. We do hope that you are able to come along.

World Mental Health Day – Thursday 10 October 2024

The [World Health Organisation](#) recognises World Mental Health Day on 10 October every year.

The theme of 2024's World Mental Health Day, set by the [World Federation for Mental Health](#), is workplace mental health. The theme highlights the importance of addressing mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, for the benefit of people, organisations, and communities.

World Mental Health Day is also a chance to talk about mental health in general, how we need to look after it, and how important it is to talk about things and get help if you are struggling. Click on the links above if you would like to access any of the resources available or would like further information.



Year 7 Secondary School Applications

The application window for a September 2025 start at secondary or high school is now open. Parents can apply online at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/admissions. As in previous years, the local authority is no longer providing paper copies of the 'Information to Parents' booklet. Parents are able to access this booklet on their [website](#). Deadline for applications is **31 October 2024**.

Nursery Places Still Available!

Please note that there are still a few places left in our nursery, so enquire if you or someone else you know within the community, would like a place in our outstanding school. Further information can be found on our school website [Admissions](#) page on how to apply for a place and we look forward to receiving your application.

FREE Uniform!

We continue to accept donations of old uniform via the box situated outside the school office for any parents who wish to donate. Please could we ask that these are cleaned and in good condition before placing in the box outside the school office. If you need any uniform, you will need to pop down to the **Family Hub** on Waterloo Street, DE14 2NJ. The Family Hub do not have the capacity to reply to emails but do have uniform on site all year round and are open Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.00pm.



Online Safety Tips

Online gaming enjoys an apparently ever-increasing level of popularity, and many players are eager to connect with one another as they enjoy a friendly competition or go for the win side by side. Whether it's to strategise and coordinate, or simply have a chat as you indulge in your hobby, the fact remains that plenty of games now offer means for their players to talk to one another, be that in a text or voice format.

Unfortunately, this functionality – which is used to connect with strangers just as often as it is with friends – poses several risks to younger players, and it's vital for parents and educators to understand these safety concerns. This free guide offers

expert advice on the issues that may arise when using in-game chat, and lets you know how to safeguard the children in your care as they make use of this technology.

Reading Corner

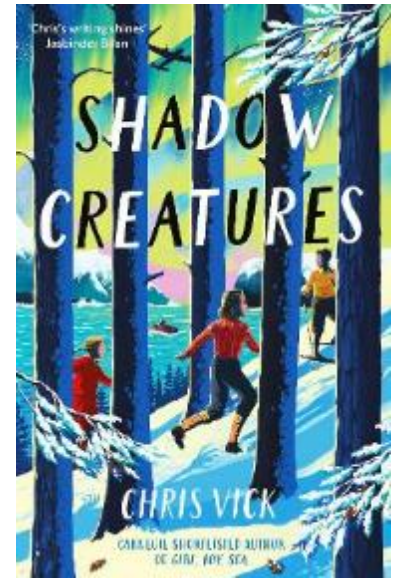
This week’s recommended read is for children aged 11+...

Shadow Creatures

Written by Chris Vick

Inspired by his own family history, Chris Vick has written a compelling and fascinating novel, which not only illuminates a little-known aspect of World War 2 history, but also evocatively weaves in the culture, language, folklore and legends of Norway.

The story is cleverly preceded with a scene from now with Georgy on holiday asking Bestemor (grandmother) Tove and Grandtant (great-aunt) Liva about the old woman encountered in the woods and learning what happened to all of them all those years ago. This demonstrates the point that we do need to capture these stories before the generations that experienced them disappear altogether.



Tova and Liva share the storytelling and their different perspectives on the action as it happens, this adds to the dramatic tension and reveals the very different characters of the sisters, who were just 12 and 9 when the German occupation started. They are telling the old woman’s story too, for this is Agna, the free-spirited outsider in their village, hero worshipped and followed everywhere by Liva, who is determined to resist the rules and restrictions imposed by the invaders. With fishing and hunting forbidden, food rationed, books burnt, and the school curriculum Nazified, there is lots to resist.

Hot Lunch Options 07.10.24 – 11.10.24

WEEK 3	AGAT FRI	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Main dish		Margherita pizza with baked potato wedges	Chicken tikka masala served with rice	Roast beef, with Yorkshire pudding, roast potatoes & gravy	5 Chicken & tomato pasta bake	Crispy battered fish & chunky chips
Vegetarian Main dish		Roasted vegetable pizza	5 Vegetable tikka masala with 50/50 rice	Quorn™ fillet with roast potatoes & gravy	Macaroni cheese	Quorn™ nuggets with chunky chips
Accompaniments		Peas & baked beans Salad bar	Sweetcorn & carrots Salad bar	Carrots & cauliflower Salad bar	Broccoli & green beans Salad bar	Peas & baked beans Salad bar
Desserts		Fruit flapjack	Marble sponge & custard	Lemon cake	Shortbread	Ice cream
Fresh fruit or yoghurt		Fresh fruit or Yoghurt	Fresh fruit or Yoghurt	Fresh fruit or Yoghurt	Fresh fruit or Yoghurt	Fresh fruit or Yoghurt
Jacket potato and sandwich selection		Jacket potato and sandwich selection	Jacket potato and sandwich selection	Jacket potato and sandwich selection	Jacket potato and sandwich selection	Jacket potato and sandwich selection

TO EAT MORE FRUIT

KEY

- 🍌 1 OF YOUR 5 A DAY
- 🌱 MEAT FREE MONDAY
- 👨‍🍳 CHEF'S CHOICE
- 🌿 PLANT BASED / VEGAN

Allergens and Intolerances
 All of our food is carefully hand crafted and prepared on site daily. We have an allergen procedure in place, so please advise you make our catering team aware of your allergens/your child's allergens prior to using the restaurant. Our kitchens are used for multi-purpose production so we cannot guarantee the above dishes are completely free from allergenic ingredients or traces of these.

Attendance

Please read the [NHS 'Is my child too ill for school?' guidance](#) which has further information if you are unsure whether to send your child to school or not.

We are always happy to advise in line with this guidance, so if you are still in doubt, please contact the school office if your child develops any symptoms and we can discuss this further with you.

Please note that children can come to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This includes general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose, or sore throat. However, children should not be sent to school if they have a temperature of 38°C or above.

Let's keep working together to ensure attendance is as good as it can be! Remember, **every pupil, every day!** Thank you for your support.

This week's Attendance Champions are **Year 2!** Well done! Here are the latest figures...

Reception	94.0%	Target
Year 1	90.6%	97%
Year 2	98.7%	
Year 3	97.2%	
Year 4	93.5%	Overall (to date)
Year 5	97.5%	97.2%
Year 6	96.9%	
Overall	95.0%	

Head Teacher's Awards

Reception	Ali Q	Minnie F
Year 1	Cooper Z	Hamza I
Year 2	Rupert M	Teigan W
Year 3	Fynn M	Jacob S
Year 4	Ben S	George N
Year 5	Adam H	Jonah Y-M
Year 6	Flora P	Alfie P

Lunchtime Star Awards

Reception	Kethana R
Year 1	Ava C
Year 2	Aiyla N
Year 3	Penelope T
Year 4	Olivia K
Year 5	Alicia F
Year 6	Kinza M

Team Points

Team Points	Claymills	Rosliston	Sinai	Trent
Points (<i>Week Ending 04.10.24</i>)	34	13	16	34
Position	1 st – 4 points	3 rd – 2 points	2 nd – 3 points	1 st – 4 points
Running Total	15	11	10	13

SHOBNALL SHOWCASE!

Let's have a sneaky peek as to what has been going on in our classrooms this week...

Nursery

Our adventures in Nursery this week...

It has been another fantastic week of learning in Nursery this week.

The children had lots of fun noticing number 1 and 2 and used some fantastic subitising skills to describe what they had noticed. We also used our maths learning from this week to notice 1 and 2 in the environment with some interesting discoveries including some conkers, tree trunks, bins and trays!

Back in the classroom, the children enjoyed using some of their findings to create a range of autumn crafts!

Later in the week the children explored a range of musical instruments and had fun making their musical shakers and talking about what sounds it makes.

Reception

Our adventures in Reception this week...

This week we have continued our home theme by exploring our locality. We had fun spotting and sharing some of our favourite places to visit which included The Meadowside Leisure Centre, Shobnall Park, Costco, Garden King, convenience stores and Barton Marina!

After sharing the story, 'If I Built a House,' by Chris Van Dusen we thought carefully about how we would design our own homes. We then drew some fabulous pictures and explained our creations.

"It's an Elsa House, made of ice from Elsa's magical powers. It's all blue my favourite colour." (Minnie)

"Hot wheels house and it will have a slide to get inside the window." (Jaheem)

"Mine will be a fish tank it will have fish tanks for the windows and a water slide to swoosh down." (Freddie)

We then saw some pictures of some very strange houses that people live in which included, a giant teapot, a home in the shape of a dog, a giant shoe and even an upside-down house with the chimney for a door!

Our maths adventures have included sorting, comparing and matching. We had a great time sorting flower petals into different colours, shapes and sizes. We then matched various sets together at our colourful tea party where we used the petals to make soup, tea and rose bubble juice.

Year 1

In maths, the children have been learning to compare different numbers. They have been using the vocabulary greater than, less than, and equal. The children enjoyed using cubes and lollipop sticks to demonstrate different number sentences. In English, the children have been continuing to write simple sentences with full stops and capital letters. They are working exceptionally hard to segment and write key words. In history, we have been continuing our learning about Queen Elizabeth II and have created a fact file about her life. Miss Barker was impressed with how much all the children could recall from our previous lesson. In geography, we have been labelling the countries that make up the UK, using our map skills. As part of National Poetry Day, Miss Barker shared some different poems with the class. The children thoroughly enjoyed hearing lots of different types of poems. Keep up the hard work Year 1!



Year 2

This week Year 2 has been full of exciting learning and hands-on activities! In English, we've been exploring a real diary entry written at the time of The Great Fire of London. The children have been fascinated by the historical details and are eager to learn more. In Maths, we've been focusing on number bonds, with lots of engaging activities to help build their confidence with

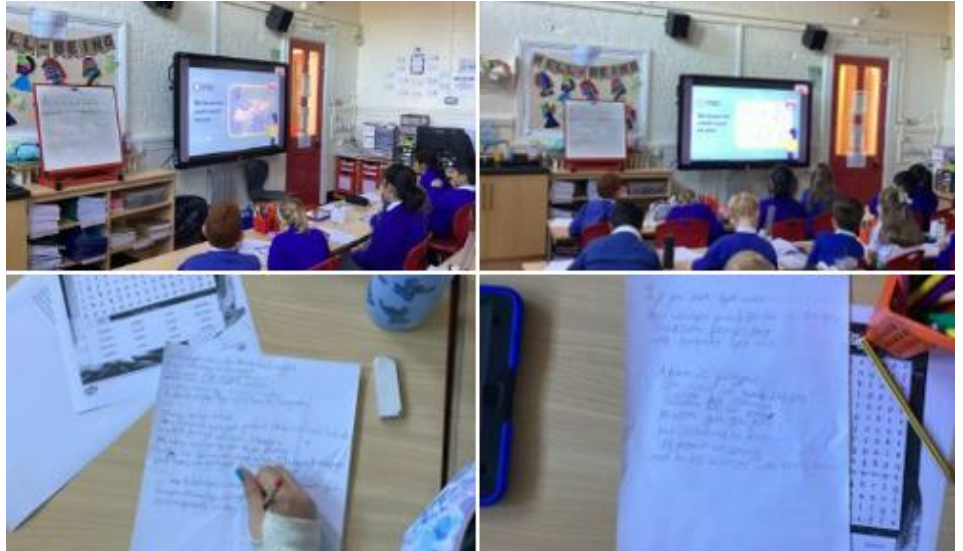
numbers. Our Forest School session was a huge success, with the children practicing fire striking, making creative mud faces on trees, and crafting beautiful fire scenes inside jars. They topped it off with a cozy treat of hot chocolate and biscuits! In Science, we've been exploring how stretchy different materials are, which has sparked plenty of curiosity and excitement. To finish off the week, the children absolutely loved their first martial arts session on Thursday and can't wait for the next one!

Year 3

This week, our Year 3 students have been engaged in a variety of exciting activities! In English, they've been diving into the text "Cave Challenge," exploring new vocabulary and discussing the emotions of the young explorers who discovered the Stone Age caves in France. In Maths, they've begun their unit on addition and subtraction, focusing on number bonds within 1000. In RE lessons, the children have been learning about Sikhism, including the significance of the K's and the Khalsa. Finally, in science, they've been discovering how fossils are formed and even had the opportunity to create their own fossils!

Year 4

What another great week the children have had in Year 4! In maths, the children have been looking at adding 2 four-digit numbers together and I have been so impressed with how well the children have done with this and the presentation of their work has been exceptional! In English, the children have written up their persuasive text to convince me to visit their selected country and it has been great to see how far the children



have progressed with their English in only a matter of weeks. Finally, at the start of the week, the children conducted a scientific investigation to identify conductors and insulators, and the children loved adding in different objects to see if it would conduct electricity! Another wonderful week Year 4! Well done!

Year 5

As always, Year 5 have had a jam-packed week full of learning. In Maths, the children have been learning about addition and subtraction strategies using the column method, which they have flown through! In English, Year 5 completed and published their diary entries about the Apollo 11 moon landing. It has been wonderful to see the children's enthusiasm around this writing topic, and their published pieces of writing are wonderful...there will certainly be some pen licenses being handed out as a result! A highlight of the week was the children's French lesson on Wednesday, where the children learnt about body parts, as well as masculine and feminine nouns. Year 5 were able to translate descriptions of French 'Monster Pets', as well



as write their own descriptions in French. Bravo les enfants, continuez votre excellent travail!

Year 6

This week in Year 6 the children have been learning how to multiply a four-digit number by a two-digit number using short multiplication. Although we found this tricky at first, we have persevered with it, and we are now starting to understand the method. On Wednesday we started our new English unit on narratives. We looked at the model text called 'A Jaguar in the Chicken Coop'

and then create a fact file all about Jaguars in the Amazon Rainforest. This fits nicely with our afternoon topic in geography as we looked at naming and locating countries in South America. For poetry day on Thursday, we heard from different poets on Authorfy. In Science we looked at how shadows can change dependent on distance between the light source and the object. Overall, a great week in Year 6.

Diary Dates 2024-2025

Event	Date/Time
School Closes for Half-Term	Friday 25 th October 2024
INSET Day	Monday 4 th November 2024
School Reopens for Pupils	Tuesday 5 th November 2024
Open Evening	Thursday 7 th November 2024
Year 5 Whitemoor Lakes	Wednesday 27 th November to Friday 29 th November 2024
Year 6 Class Assembly	Thursday 28 th November 2024, 9.00am
Whole School Trip to Pantomime – Jack and the Beanstalk, Lichfield Garrick	Thursday 5 th December 2024, 10.00am
PFA Christmas Market	Friday 6 th December 2024
School Closes for Christmas	Friday 20 th December 2024, 2.00pm
School Reopens for Pupils	Monday 6 th January 2025
Year 2 Class Assembly	Thursday 23 rd January 2025, 9.00am
Year 6 Laches Wood	Monday 27 th January to Friday 31 st January 2025
School Closes for Half-Term	Friday 14 th February 2025
INSET Day	Monday 24 th February 2025
School Reopens for Pupils	Tuesday 25 th February 2025
Young Voices 2025	Thursday 27 th February 2025
School Closes for Easter	Friday 11 th April 2025, 2.00pm
School Reopens for Pupils	Monday 28 th April 2025
May Day Bank Holiday – School Closed	Monday 5 th May 2025
Key Stage 2 SATs Week	Monday 12 th May 2025 to Friday 16 th May 2025
School Closes for Half-Term	Friday 23 rd May 2025
School Reopens for Pupils	Monday 2 nd June 2025
Reception Class Assembly	Thursday 5 th June 2025, 9.00am
Year 1 Class Assembly	Thursday 19 th June 2025, 9.00am
Year 4 Class Assembly	Thursday 26 th June 2025, 9.00am
Year 5 Class Assembly	Thursday 3 rd July 2025, 9.00am
JTMAT INSET Day	Friday 4 th July 2025
School Closes for Summer	Friday 18 th July 2025, 2.00pm
INSET Day	Monday 21 st July 2025

Autumn Term Diary Dates

Event	Date/Time
Harvest	Tuesday 8 th October 2024
MHST Impact of Social Media Parent Workshop	Thursday 10 th October 2024, 3.30pm
PFA Halloween Discos	Friday 18 th October 2024 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception, Y1, Y2 – 3.45pm – 5.00pm • Y3, 4, 5 & 6 – 5.15pm – 6.30pm
Parents' Evening	Monday 21 st October 2024 Wednesday 23 rd October 2024
School Closes for Half Term	Friday 25 th October 2024
INSET Day	Monday 4 th November 2024
School Reopens for Pupils	Tuesday 5 th November 2024
Open Evening	Thursday 7 th November 2024, 4.30-6.00pm
Odd Socks Day	Tuesday 12 th November 2024
Children in Need	Friday 15 th November 2024
Shobnall Stars After School Club CLOSED	Monday 18 th November 2024
Christingle	Tuesday 26 th November 2024

Year 5 Whitemoor Lakes	Wednesday 27 th November 2024 to Friday 30 th November 2024 inclusive
Year 6 Class Assembly	Thursday 28 th November 2024, 9.00am
EYFS Nativity	Tuesday 3 rd December 2024, 9.15am
EYFS Nativity	Wednesday 4 th December 2024, 9.15am
Whole School Trip to Pantomime – Jack and the Beanstalk, Lichfield Garrick	Thursday 5 th December 2024, 10.00am
PFA Christmas Market	Friday 6 th December 2024
KS1 Nativity	Tuesday 10 th December 2024, 9.15am AND 2.15pm
Year 3 Cosy Christmas Celebration	Thursday 12 th December 2024, 9.15am
JTMAT Christmas Concert	Tuesday 17 th December 2024
Christmas Lunch	Wednesday 18 th December 2024
School Closes for Christmas	Friday 20 th December 2024, 2.00pm
School Reopens for Pupils	Monday 6 th January 2025



Funding for Selected Routes

Full or Part-Time Routes

Gain School Experience

Train to Teach

in Local Schools

Primary (3-7) · Primary (5-11) · Secondary (11-16)



The John Taylor SCITT
jtscitt.co.uk

John Taylor MAT

CEO: Mike Donoghue MA (Hons), MBA, NPQH, NLE



Dear Parents/ Carers,

It is with great pleasure that we announce that nominations are now open for the JTMAT Exceptional Achievement Award, which all John Taylor Multi Academy Trust pupils are eligible to be nominated for.

The award, which is open to all year groups in all JT MAT schools, is an opportunity for children to gain recognition for their achievements. Pupils may be nominated for the Exceptional Achievement Award at any point in the academic year, based on the following criteria:

Primary Aged Pupils (KS1 & KS2)	Secondary Aged Pupils (KS3, KS4 & KS5)
County, National or International status in any given activity in the last 18 months.	National or International status in any given activity in the last 18 months.
Grade 1 at KS1 or Grade 3 plus level in music or singing at KS2. Performing in televised programme/ film or National stage production.	Grade 8 level/ Diploma in music or singing. Performing in televised programme/ film.
Fundraising for a charity over £2000.	Fundraising for a charity over £5000.
Success in overcoming adversity.	Success in overcoming adversity.

Parents, carers, staff, or peers can make a nomination using the above criteria.

Please complete the online form via this link: <https://forms.office.com/e/vupT2MPg2V>, the form will ask you to complete a short paragraph (please work to a maximum of 250 words) in order to provide further details regarding the nomination.

Once you have made your nomination and, in the weeks, leading up to the ceremony, please be advised that we will be in contact with you to request supporting evidence, which you should provide to the student's headteacher. Please be advised that you will be notified shortly after this process has taken place to let you know whether your nomination has been successful.

Please provide as many specific details about the achievement as possible, ensuring that you provide full details of which sport/ instrument (eg), the achievement involves.

If successful, pupils will be invited to meet with their headteacher to receive their very special gold pin badge award and certificate of exceptional achievement. At the end of each term students and their parents will be invited to attend a short celebratory event with a senior colleague from John Taylor MAT.

We very much look forward to seeing our school community embrace this opportunity and celebrate those who achieve the award. The deadline for nominations for autumn 2024 is **Friday 29th November 2024** and winners will be announced shortly after that date.

If you have any enquiries, please email jtmat-subjectexcellence@jtmat.co.uk

With Kind Regards,

Mrs G Martin
Director of School Improvement (secondary)

Mrs L Farmer
Director of School Improvement (primary)

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about IN-GAME CHAT

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Video games are continuing to grow in popularity – including, of course, among children and young people – and the emergence of gaming communities has been accelerated by the inclusion of chat functionality across many different titles. While in-game chat isn't inherently a bad thing, it can create some concerns about online safety and the people that children might be interacting with.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHAT

There are a number of ways that gamers commonly chat with one another online. As the name would suggest, in-game chat happens within the game itself. There's also party chat: a group voice conversation that console users can have with anyone on the same platform. This tends to be more commonly used by players who already know each other. Finally, many gamers – especially on PC – will chat via a third-party app such as Discord.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Whether it's text- or voice-based, in-game chat is frequently open to all players to use. Many games default to making it an opt-in function, but some don't: meaning a child could start seeing messages within the game from people they're playing with, regardless of whether they know those individuals or not. While most strangers won't necessarily have ill intent, there are some who may behave inappropriately when chatting to a child – intentionally or otherwise.

DANGER OF GROOMING

It's been reported that some young gamers have encountered older players online who pretend to be a lower age to manipulate children, sending gifts in exchange for chatting and sending photos. Just as on any messaging platform, it's good to advise young people to avoid speaking to strangers; emphasise that they shouldn't accept gifts from anyone online that they don't know.

BULLYING AND ABUSE

While some in-game chat can turn toxic because of how a match plays out, others turn that way because of people who engage in trolling – in essence, behaving in an offensive and abusive way simply to cause pain or get a rise out of whoever they're talking to. These 'trolls' often lean on racial slurs, anti-LGBT sentiment and other hateful rhetoric; they normally feel most confident preying on younger, more impressionable gamers.

POTENTIAL FOR PRIVATE CHAT

If a player would like a re-match with a stranger after meeting them in the game, they can send a friend request, or use the party chat together in the future. For the most part, this is harmless – but it might lead to messages being exchanged in private. This could then escalate to the sharing of private information, and potentially attempts to manipulate or scam younger players.

COMPETITIVE ATMOSPHERE

Certain games are very competitive, and players can sometimes get upset if they feel a teammate is underperforming, an opponent won unfairly, or they're just a bad loser. This can lead to unpleasant messages that stray away from playful 'trash talk' and wander into the territory of bullying. Some players have been known to get incredibly abusive in situations like this, and the impact of this on a young gamer's emotional wellbeing could be severe.

Advice for Parents & Educators

LOCK-DOWN IN-GAME CHAT

In-game chat can often be disabled in the game's settings. This allows children to play without risk of contact from strangers – but it will need to be done in each individual game. Text chat appears in the corner of the screen in many titles, so it's normally easy to take a quick glance and see what's being said. With voice chat, explain to children what behaviour is inappropriate, so they can spot the dangers themselves.

REPORT POTENTIAL OFFENDERS

Most games offer a robust means of reporting other players, so you can flag an account as potentially harmful. This normally leads to the account not being matched with yours in the future and, if that person's conduct breaks any of the game's rules, they may be banned from playing entirely. This is done within the game itself, so each title has a slightly different process, but these tend to be designed for simplicity.

CONSIDER OTHER CHAT OPTIONS

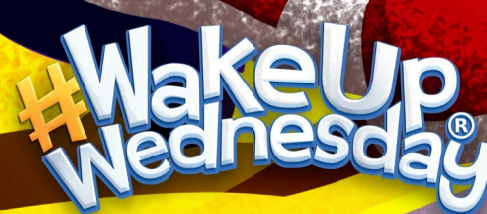
If a child wants to play with people they know, consider using party chat or a third-party service like Discord. This allows everyone involved to chat on a private server and even enjoy each other's company while playing different games. It's also far more secure, as anyone looking to join will need to request and be granted access – normally by whoever is hosting the chat.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Make sure children understand the differences between being competitive and being abusive. Talk about what constitutes unusual or inappropriate behaviour from strangers online. Be clear that if anything ever concerns or worries them, they should tell a trusted adult as soon as possible. Empower children to identify the risks of in-game chat for themselves and reassure them they won't get in trouble for seeking help if anything goes wrong.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is the Editor in Chief of GGRecon and has been working in the games media industry for five years. He's also a parent and therefore understands the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his work has been published at sites including IGN, TechRadar, and plenty more.



The National College