



Newsletter

No. 4. 11th November 2022

Website: www.ourladys.devon.sch.uk

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In Our Lady's Catholic Primary School we learn about God and try to follow his footsteps by showing care and respect for one another.

Dear Parents and Carers

Firstly it was lovely to see many of you at the recent parents' evenings this week. These meetings are a really important opportunity to share your child's progress as well as discuss any concerns or worries you may have.

For those who failed to turn up, you will shortly receive an invitation to arrange another appointment. We do ask that if you can't make agreed appointments with members of staff, you show us the courtesy of letting us know beforehand.

It was lovely to attend the Barnstaple Town Remembrance Service with the Kingfisher class today. They represented the school beautifully, showing reverence and respect for the occasion.

A gentle reminder that if your child is going to be absent from school, you must ring in the office by no later than 9.30am. We also require that you ring to report the absence on every subsequent day following the initial absence. **This is an essential part of ensuring the safeguarding of our children and families.**

The school is in the process of updating its Behaviour Policy. The new policy will now be called Good Behaviour and Relationships Policy. A draft copy is attached to this email. If you have any feedback on the policy, please can you share these to admin@olcs.uk by Friday 25th November.

Upper Key Stage Two were fortunate enough this week to join in the BAE Systems, RAF & Royal Navy Education Programme Roadshow 2022. We will share some photos of this event through our social media platforms.

This Wednesday, 9th, was our first Toddler Group run by Cathy Jeffery. This is a free group for parents/carers and their young children to meet, socialise and play. The sessions take place on a Wednesday between 2-3pm. If you're interested in joining the group please make contact with the school office.

Please don't forget the deadline for your child's School Council application is today, Friday 11th. Please make sure any last minute entries are with your child's class teacher by the end of the school day.

Wishing you all a lovely weekend.

God Bless.

Mr Meech and Miss Wilby

Autumn Term Dates

Fri 11th Nov	School Council Applications Close
w/c 14th Nov	School Council Elections
Mon 14th Nov	Shoebox Appeal Deadline
Tues 15th Nov	Applications open for Primary Admissions for Sept 2023
Wed 16th Nov	Kingfisher Class Swimming
Wed 16th Nov	Barn A B's Toddler Group 2-3pm
Fri 18th Nov	Children in Need—spotty day
Wed 23rd Nov	Kingfisher Class Swimming
Wed 30th Nov	Kingfisher Class Swimming
Wed 7th Dec	Last Kingfisher Swimming
Fri 9th Dec	South Molton Brass Band visiting
Tues 13th Dec	Nativity Performance at Church
Weds 14th Dec	Christmas Dinner Day
Thurs 15th Dec	Advent Mass, 10am at Church
Thu 15th Dec	Last day of term
Wed 4th Jan	Pupils Return to School

Any future dates will be shared via parentmail.

Parent Autism Workshop Opportunities

The following topic-based workshops are available for parents/carers of children and young people who are currently on the Autism assessment pathway, in addition to families of children and young people who have received an autism diagnosis.

Topic based Workshops

Friday 18th Nov 10am-12noon
Demand avoidance + PDA

Friday 25th Nov 10am-12noon
Sensory processing and integration

Wednesday 7th Dec 10am-12noon
Managing stress and anxiety

Friday 9th Dec—10am-12noon
Vulnerability and online safety

Tuesday 13th Dec 10am-12noon
Communication—pre/non verbal—support strategies

If you are interested in attending any of these free workshops, please apply direct by email to: educationlearnersupport@devon.gov.uk

As a school we have signed up to access the National on-line Safety software.



They provide regular updates and access to short videos that will help you stay informed on the latest online safety news, quickly gain practical tips and advice, and access free online resources.

Please can you register via the link below to allow you to start accessing these useful and important resources:

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/enrol/our-lady-s-school>

On this week of remembrance we pray for all the departed, especially family members and friends.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.



Amen



Thank you for supporting the poppy appeal. We sold out of all the British Legion Supplies given to us.



We are supporting Children in Need this year on Friday 18th November. This will be a wear something spotty day or a non school uniform day for £1. Please do not buy anything spotty just for the day, children can simply wear their own clothes and not come into school in school uniform.

Operation Christmas Child

This is one of our children's favourite charities and we have always had an excellent response. It is wonderful seeing all the shoeboxes stacked up in school.



Shoeboxes will need to be returned to school by 14th November. Further details can be found on their website:-

www.operationchristmaschild.org.uk

The next newsletter will go home on: Friday 2nd December 2022

Please visit the class pages on the school website for up to date termly information and parent newsletters.

Our Lady's School takes incidents of bullying, including on-line safety seriously. For further information the school's policy is available on our website or please see your child's class teacher if you have any concerns. www.safer.internet.org.uk



Barn-a-b's at Our Lady's

We are excited to be launching our Toddler Group.—Barn A B's Babies. We will be meeting every Wednesday in the school hall starting on Wednesday 9th November from 2pm-3pm.

The aim of the group is to welcome all Parents/ Carers with babies and toddlers of 0-5 to socialise, mix and play together in order to help boost speech, language, emotional and social skills. It's also a great opportunity for all adults to get together for a chat.

The group will be run by Barn A B's and Our Lady's staff. Sessions will be **FREE** and may include some outdoor sessions too. If you are interested in joining the group, please could you email admin@olcs.uk or just come along at 2pm on a Wednesday. Please feel free to bring friends and family with young children along.

We are collecting shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child, please could these be brought into pre-school by Monday 14th November. Further details of what items can go in the boxes can be found on their website:-

www.operationchristmaschild.org.uk.

Cathy Jeffery
Pre-School Nursery Manager

Headteacher's Awards

Very well done to the following children who have been earned Headteacher's Awards over the last few weeks:-

Grace
Reva



We are very proud of you.

Please see the separate attached information on the Christmas Sports Clubs. These are to be booked directly with Primary Sports and not through the school.

Attendance



Congratulations to **OWL** class who have the highest attendance for the Autumn term so far at **97.19%** closely followed by **PUFFIN** class at **96.64%** and **SWALLOW** class at **96.59%**.

Christmas Lunch and Christmas Jumper Day



Christmas lunch will be on Wednesday 14th December at a cost of £2.34 (except for Reception and KS1 children who receive free school meals). If you would like your child to have a school Christmas lunch, turkey and all the trimmings, on this day please book the meal via Scopay in the 'Calendar' section by Monday 27th November.

Even if your child normally receives school dinners and/or free school meals, please ensure that this festive lunch is booked separately. Children and staff are invited to wear a Christmas Jumper for the day at no charge however donations of food for the foodbank will be gratefully received.

Scopay/Invoice Payments

Invoices will be sent out this week for monies due for Breakfast and After School Clubs and Pre-School fees. Please could these be settled via Scopay (ideally) or cash to the school office. Some of these are for small amounts that continue to be issued each month without being settled. To keep our administration costs down it is important that these are paid on time.

Kingfisher Class Swimming

Kingfisher class will continue to go swimming every Wednesday up to and including the 7th December. These swimming lessons are heavily subsidised by the school but we would be grateful if you could make your contribution of £12 via SCOPAY (if you have not already done so).

Please ensure that your child has their swimming kit, towel and goggles (if necessary) along with a warm coat. As they will be walking to and from Tarka Leisure Centre.

Primary Admissions 2023/24

Was your child born between 1 September 2018 and 31 August 2019?

Applications can be made from 15th November for a primary school place for September 2023. You must apply for your child's school place by 15th January 2023 for primary school admissions in September 2023.

You can apply for a school place online at: **www.devon.gov.uk/admissionsonline**

Or

If you cannot access the school admissions website you can get more information by calling the Education Helpline on 0345 155 1019 or by emailing :-primaryschooladmissions@devon.gov.uk.

If you need help applying online or haven't got internet access at home please contact the school, we would be more than happy to help you. You can view your offer on-line from 16th April 2023.

Please ensure that the 2023 Supplementary Form for this school is returned to the school office by 15th January 2023. This form is available from the school office, Barn a B's Pre-School or via the school's website:- www.ourladys.devon.sch.uk under 'Key Documents' and in the 'Admissions' section.

Without this form your child may be lower in the priorities for admission and risk not getting a place at Our Lady's School.

Autism and Us Programme 2022

The programme is for parents and carers of Devon primary and secondary school children, pre or post-diagnosis. Access is for families of children and young people who are currently on the autism assessment pathway, in addition to families of children and young people who have received an autism diagnosis.

Is this course for me?

During and after a diagnosis, parents and carers can have many questions about autism and may feel isolated in managing their child's needs. Children's needs also change over time, and information and advice received when a child is younger may need to be updated to be relevant for the child or young person today.

Attending the Autism and Us Programme gives parents and carers an opportunity to develop their understanding of autism and look at practical solutions to managing and supporting presenting needs.

4 weekly 'live online' sessions (approximately 2 hours each) related to the following topics or themes:

Autism Overview - Tues 15 Nov: 10 am – 12 pm

Communication - Tues 22 Nov: 10 am – 12 pm

Understanding and supporting behaviour - Tues 29 Nov: 10 am – 12 pm

Sensory - Tues 6 Dec: 10 am – 12 pm

To secure a place on any of the above programmes, or to express your interest in forthcoming programmes, please send an email to educationlearnersupport@devon.gov.uk.

We will confirm your booking and provide you with a direct link to the event.

Events will be delivered online 'live' using the Microsoft Teams platform.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

AMIGO

Amigo is a social platform which purports to connect strangers from around the world – and, with built-in translation software, it reduces the expected language barriers. Focusing heavily on one-to-one chat, video calls and live streams, Amigo encourages its users to build up online relationships and unlock exclusive features such as private video and audio calls: essentially, the more that people chat, the more functions become available to them. This is an app designed with mature users very much in mind and is therefore definitely not recommended for children.

AGE RATING
18

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ONE-TO-ONE COMMUNICATION

While online chats and livestreaming are a great way to communicate with people that children can trust (such as friends and family), Amigo encourages users to connect with complete strangers and develop a friendship through private chats, calls and videos. This will be a clear red flag for most parents, due to the possibility of a child encountering inappropriate content or an online predator.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTACT

Within minutes of signing up for our trial of Amigo (and without using a profile photo), users of the opposite sex were messaging with suggestive statements such as "You're just my type" and "Let's have fun". While the app's stated intent is to help people build friendships, some users obviously seek to take those relationships in a more mature and amorous direction.

MEMBERSHIP COSTS

Like many apps that are free to download, Amigo's business model is centred on in-app purchases. Users are encouraged to pay for VIP membership – enabling them to send more messages each day and boosting their profile's visibility. People can also buy coins (again, for real money) which allow them to send virtual gifts and further increase the number of messages they can send daily.

LACK OF AGE VERIFICATION

Amigo makes no secret of the fact that it's for people aged 18 or above. There's no age verification, however, so a young person could simply sign up under a false date of birth. The app's algorithm claims to match users of similar ages (making them more compatible), but either the algorithm isn't very reliable, or most users have entered a fake age which doesn't correspond with their profile pic.

REWARDS FOR REPEATED USE

Amigo gifts virtual coins to users if they reply to messages within 10 seconds, while there are also daily rewards for posting comments, sharing a video, getting likes or simply opening the app. It also encourages increasing 'intimacy levels' with other users to unlock extra features: once someone's online 'friendship' reaches intimacy level 3, they can hold one-to-one video calls with each other.

Advice for Parents & Carers

MONITOR DOWNLOADS

As well as frequent catch-ups with your child about what they've enjoyed doing online, you could consider taking the additional step of physically checking their phone every so often to see which apps they've installed. The safest option could be to enable 'ask to buy' (Apple) or 'purchase approvals' (Android) on their device, meaning your authorisation is needed to download any apps.

RESPECT AGE RESTRICTIONS

Apps have age restrictions for a reason, and Amigo is very definitely a mature content platform. Given that many of Amigo's users apparently use a bogus date of birth, you might want to remind your child about the implications of setting up a fake profile – such as being exposed to messages and videos that make them feel uncomfortable or feeling pressured into chatting with strangers.

BLOCK, REPORT, DISCUSS

Many children already know that connecting with strangers online is dangerous, but it never hurts to refresh their memory. Whatever communication apps your child uses, make sure they're fully aware that if anything online makes them feel uncomfortable, scared or upset, then they can block the user responsible, report the content, take a screenshot as evidence and come to tell you straight away.

ACTIVE LISTENING

If your child does approach you with a concern, make time to stop what you're doing and actively listen. Let them talk without interrupting or showing any judgement, then discuss their options and the possible solutions: this empowers them and reassures them that you're there to be supportive. If the issue is one that has put your child at risk, however, you may wish to contact the police.

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.



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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about HOW TO COMBAT ONLINE BULLYING



Defined as "ongoing hurtful behaviour towards someone online", cyber-bullying makes its victims feel upset, uncomfortable and unsafe. In the digital world, it has numerous forms – such as hurtful comments on a person's posts or profile; deliberately leaving them out of group chats; sharing embarrassing images or videos of someone; or spreading gossip about them. Cyber-bullying can severely impact a young person's mental health – so, in support of Anti-Bullying Week, we've provided a list of tips to help trusted adults know what to look for and how to respond to it.



1. GET CONNECTED

Playing online games together with your child or connecting with them on social media (providing they're old enough) is not only fun but also an excellent way of establishing some common ground to discuss things you've both seen or done online – as well as keeping an eye on who your child is communicating with in the digital world.

2. KEEP TALKING

Regular chats with young people about their online lives are good practice in general, but they can also be an excellent refresher to help prevent cyber-bullying situations. Topics you might want to revisit include why it's important to only connect online with people we know and trust, and why passwords should always remain secret (even from our best friends).

3. STAY VIGILANT

Observe your child while they're using technology and just after they've used it. Are they acting normally, or out of character? Possible signs of a problem may include seeming quiet or withdrawn, jumpy or anxious, angry or repeatedly checking their phone. When you feel it's the right time, you may want to check in with them to see if everything is OK.

4. MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE

If an online bullying incident does occur, it may take a while before your child is ready to open up about what happened. Just gently remind them that they can always come to you with any problems – and that they won't be in trouble. You might also suggest a trusted family member they could turn to, in case they feel too embarrassed to tell you directly.

5. BE PREPARED TO LISTEN

When conversations about online bullying do take place, they're likely to be difficult, emotional and upsetting for both you and your child. Actively listen to your child while they're bringing you up to speed, and try not to show any judgement or criticism – even if they haven't dealt with the situation in exactly the way you would have hoped.

FURTHER SUPPORT AND ADVICE

If you or your child need additional help with an online bullying issue, here are some specialist organisations that you could reach out to.

Childline: talk to a trained counsellor on 0800 1111 or online at www.childline.org.uk/get-support/

National Bullying Helpline: counsellors are available on 0845 225 5787 or by visiting www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/cyberbullying.html

The NSPCC: the children's charity has a guide to the signs of bullying at www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/ and can be reached on 0800 800 5000

6. EMPOWER YOUR CHILD

Depending on their age, your child might not want a parent "fighting their battles for them". In that case, talk through their options with them (blocking the perpetrator, deleting the app and so on). By allowing your child to choose the path they take, you're putting them in control but are also demonstrating that you're there to support them along the way.

7. REPORT BULLIES ONLINE

Cyber-bullying often takes place through a particular app, social media platform or online game. If this is happening to your child, encourage them to report the offender to the app or game in question – ideally with screenshots to support their complaint. Most games and apps have reporting tools specifically to stamp out abusive behaviour and protect users.

8. ENCOURAGE EMPATHY

Protecting themselves online is the priority, of course, but young people should also feel empowered to help if they witness other people falling victim to cyberbullying. Even if they don't feel confident enough to call someone out on their abusive behaviour online, they can still confidentially report that person to the app or game where the bullying occurred.

9. SEEK EXPERT ADVICE

Victims of online bullying frequently experience feelings of isolation and anxiety, a loss of self-esteem and potentially even thoughts of self-harm or suicide. If you think that an incident of cyber-bullying has affected your child's mental wellbeing, then seek psychological support for them. There are some useful contact details in the central panel below.

10. INVOLVE THE AUTHORITIES

If the nature of any online bullying makes you suspect that your child is genuinely in imminent physical danger – or if there are any signs whatsoever of explicit images being shared as part of the bullying – then you should gather any relevant screenshots as evidence and report the incidents to your local police force.

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