

A word from Mrs Mitchell

Hello everyone

We will be saying goodbye to our wonderful Mrs Smith this term. Mrs Smith has been part of the Leavening family for over 20 years and has worked across the whole school in her time here.

Mrs Smith has made such a difference to the lives and education of hundreds of children from our community over the years and it is the end of an extraordinary era for her.

We wish Mrs Smith all the very best and on behalf of all of the school family, I would like to say a great thank you for her commitment and loyalty to Leavening over the years.

We will also be saying farewell to Mrs D'Arcy in Oak Trees class. Mrs D'Arcy has worked across school during the last 2 years and most recently has been supporting in Oak Trees class a day and a half each week.

We will miss her warmth and passion for children's learning and also wish her well on her future ventures.

My best wishes



Punctuality

School starts promptly at 8.45am:

All children should be in school for this time.

You will now be required to sign your child in as LATE in the office if they arrive after this time. Nursery opens at 8.55am

School Attendance

- Our school attendance last week was:
84.8% vs National attendance last week of **92.1%**
This was **below** the national average.
- Attendance this week so far: **84.2%**
- Attendance this term so far: **91.8%**

DIARY DATES

DECEMBER

Fri 9th

Peter Pan theatre trip
(whole school including Nursery)
Remember pickup & uniform!

Tues 13th

Christmas Movie Afternoon
£4 per child via ParentPay.

Thurs 15th

Christmas lunch (all classes)
Christmas parties in the
afternoon

(Conkers & Oak Trees only)

Boys to bring savoury items

Girls to bring sweet items

(Please bring these in
on the day itself. Thanks).

Note- It will be Christmas
clothing/ non uniform.

Fri 15th

Christmas party for Acorns
(see same info above re food)

JANUARY 2023

Mon 2nd

Bank holiday

Tues 3rd

Training day

Weds 4th

School term begins

FEBRUARY 2023

Fri 10th Feb

Young Voices Concert
(Oak Trees class only)

Note the new rearranged date

IMPORTANT NOTICES:

**Children are NOT to bring any
toys from home into school.**

Recent highlights from across school...



Conkers enjoyed their talk with the Humanist during Inter Faith Week.



Children have also been enjoying our new fishing game in Conkers where they have to match the lower-case letter with the capital letter and then write it in flour, sand, paint or chalk.



Christmas Craft Afternoon

It was lovely to have parents involved in craft making with their child. Oak Trees made origami and decoupage Christmas tree decorations to sell at the Christmas Fair last week. They also made some beautiful Christmas trees made out of wool.



Charlie and The Chocolate Factory: Oak Trees Theatre Trip



Oak Trees children had an absolutely fantastic time at Leeds Playhouse watching 'Charlie and The Chocolate Factory-The Musical' last week. They loved the acting, amazing special effects and the wonderful music, singing and dancing. It was fabulous!



Bethlehem Bake-off Show & Christmas Fair

I'm sure we all agree that the children did an absolutely amazing job of bringing our Nativity show 'Bethlehem Bake-off' to life last Friday. We are incredibly proud of them and we are sure that you are too. It certainly was a special live edition of the popular television programme! As you're aware, the show was filled with surprise contestants: some shepherds from the local fields, a choir of angels from the heavens, and three wise-looking chaps who arrived on camels. As the competition progressed, we learnt what brought them all to Bethlehem: a very special baby was to be born in a nearby stable, and they were all there for a slice of the action!

I'm sure you'll all agree that everyone from the Music Manager, the Stage Managers, and the Production Crew all helped to make the show run smoothly, and that the catchy and creative scenery really helped to bring the show to life too! The singing was magical too; the children sang their hearts out! Bethlehem Bake-Off certainly had all the ingredients for a truly egg-cellent nativity! We thank you very much for your support with the show, from providing fabulous costumes to cheering them on. Thank you.

The Christmas Fair raised a fantastic £281.20 for Friends of Leavening School. A HUGE thank you to everyone who supported this event. A big shout-out especially goes out to Emma Isaacs and Nicola McEvinney for their help on the day as well as Neil Clark and Miss Cooke for their amazing efforts with the programmes. Please note, **we do have a few programmes and Christmas craft/decorations left** that children made. **Any donations towards these are most welcome.** Do please come and have a look in the office! Thanks for your support.



A few reminders, requests and other information...

Our Children In Need Recent Fundraiser raised **£68!** Well done everyone and thanks for supporting!

Can we make a plea for any old utensils such as:

wooden spoons, ladles, rolling pins, metal cutlery, 4 (ideally matching) china cups, 4 saucers, 4 plates that you no longer need? We're trying to remove plastic equipment from our EYFS home corner, and move towards more natural resources, as it teaches and encourages children to look after things carefully. Thank you in anticipation.

Tues 13th Christmas Movie Afternoon £4 per child via ParentPay. Please let the office know which film your child would like to watch (this also provides consent). The options are: Nativity (U) or the Grinch that stole Christmas (PG).

Thurs 15th Christmas parties (Conkers & Oak Trees classes) **Thurs 15th (Acorns party - Fri 16th)**

Boys to bring savoury items Girls to bring sweet items.

Children may children can bring Christmas cards into school and post them in the Christmas post box.

We will distribute them to the children each day. They will need the name and class of the child on the envelope.

Information to schools from Public Health England. To confirm, we have had 1 case of medically confirmed Scarlet Fever as of Tuesday 6th December 2022.

Infection control advice In schools and nurseries infections can be spread through close contact between children and staff and through shared contact with physical surfaces such as table tops, toys, taps, and handles [16]. As recommended in the current 'Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and other Child Care Settings' [17], staff and parents should be reminded that children and adults with scarlet fever should not return to nursery or school until at least 24 hours after starting treatment with an appropriate antibiotic. Hand washing remains the most important step in preventing such infections. Good hand hygiene should be enforced for all pupils and staff and a programme should be put into place that encourages children to wash their hands at the start of the school day, after using the toilet, after play, before and after eating, and at the end of the school day. It is important that hands are washed correctly (see Resources for link to hand hygiene resources for schools). Liquid soap via a soap dispenser should be made available and there should be a plentiful supply of paper towels. Public health management of scarlet fever in schools, nurseries and other childcare settings 10 Children and adults should be encouraged to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough and sneeze and to wash hands after sneezing and after using or disposing of tissues. Spitting should be discouraged. Breaching the skin barrier provides a portal of entry for the organism, therefore children and staff should be reminded that all scrapes or wounds, especially bites, should be thoroughly cleaned and covered.

"The Governors would like to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas.

We are really pleased with the atmosphere in school and the improvements to the curriculum. Improvements are always welcome and we won't rest in our efforts to get the best we can for the children.

WE look forward to next year knowing the staff are passionate about the children and our school.

Although times are not easy the quality of our school is clear .
Governors are inspired by the enthusiasm shown by the school community, as well as by the staff and pupils.

We are particularly grateful to head teacher, Mrs Mitchell, who has led us through difficult times with great commitment, passion and professionalism"

Merry Christmas
James Robinson (Chair of Governors)

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH

An estimated one-third of children have a social media account, so it's important that trusted adults know what content young people are consuming, what they're posting and the interactions they're having. On social media, it can be easy to go down 'rabbit holes' that aren't beneficial to our wellbeing. As platforms grapple with managing such 'legal but harmful' content, lives are being impacted – sometimes to tragic effect. We might be daunted by the scale of the tech giants and their content which so entrails young people, but we can still help children to be aware of their mental wellness: recognising when something isn't OK... and knowing what to do about content that upsets them.

1. UNDERSTAND THE ALGORITHM

Algorithms rank content by user interest: someone who regularly interacts with sports news, say, will see the latest results at the top of their feed. Likewise, if a user browses content that can cause harm, that's what will be recommended to them in future. Someone who's had a bad day and looks for posts which reflect their mood will find similar content being suggested to them more and more.

2. AVOID THE MAIN FEEDS

Avoiding the default feeds on social media platforms limits the amount of recommended content that's shown. Users can opt to only scroll through the accounts they follow, use restricted modes, or highlight posts that they don't want to see more of. Explore the platform safety settings to see how you can take control of what your child's phone shows them when they open the app.

3. DISCUSS WHAT THEY'VE SEEN

Chatting about what your child's seen online keeps you aware of the content they're interacting with. Don't assume that platforms are screening out inappropriate material, or even that your child would recognise content as being harmful. Discuss who they follow, what posts they like and what comes up in their feeds: if alarm bells ring, it could be time for a more in-depth talk or to seek support.

4. LEARN HOW TO HIDE CONTENT

If your child stumbles across unsuitable content on social media, there's the option to hide that post as well as indicating you'd prefer any similar material not to be suggested in future. On some platforms, you might also be able to block posts that contain specific words, which is an excellent way to start taking control of what your child sees online.

5. SET DAILY LIMITS

Phones and most apps can tell you how much they're being used. Spending too long online can mean a child misses out on other activities that are important to all-round wellbeing. You could set some family rules – for everyone to follow – around device use, such as screen time limits and tech-free spaces: involving your child in creating this agreement makes them more likely to stick to it.

6. MONITOR THEIR ACTIVITY

Keeping a discreet eye on how your child is using social media can help ensure they're not entering potentially dangerous situations. As they grow up, of course, children need space to exercise their independence – but you can still occasionally ask to see what they're looking at. Be transparent about your own social media use and try not to sound judgemental about your child's.

7. TURN OFF PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

Even for adults, it's tempting to check an email or message as soon as the alert sound pings. Push notifications encourage people to open their apps and spend time on their device, so turning them off will help your child to practise mindful use of tech. Most of us have other things that we need to focus on as a priority – and those notifications will still be there later, when we have more time.

8. USE DEVICES TOGETHER

Giving children internet-enabled devices and complete freedom to explore platforms on their own can result in exposure to hugely damaging content. You could consider making a particular area at home a designated space to use phones, tablets and so on – making it much easier to monitor what content your child is viewing and (if necessary) steer them away from any potentially harmful paths.

9. ENCOURAGE OTHER ACTIVITIES

Mental health professionals often highlight the importance of exercise, quality time with loved ones, a balanced diet and restful sleep for our mental wellbeing. Spending hours on social media can cause us to sacrifice other activities that our brains need to feel well – so encouraging your child to put down their phone and enjoy something that doesn't involve a screen can be immensely beneficial.

10. TALK ABOUT PEER PRESSURE

Most platforms default children's accounts to private, so only people they've accepted as friends can see their posts. This reduces the risk of bullying or unkind comments, but – just like offline life – the digital world can still make children feel as if they need to act or look a certain way to fit in. Talk to your child about peer pressure, and listen to any concerns so you can provide the support they need.

Meet Our Expert

Shazia Sarwar-Azim is executive headteacher at a specialist primary school and, as an emotional therapy coach, works with school leaders to focus on the SEND, mental health and wellbeing agenda. A passionate advocate for vulnerable learners, Shazia is a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and the author of *The Rainbow Within*, a book which supports children with SEMH needs.



Sources: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-52048205>
<https://iprousocial.com/insights/social-media-usage-2019/>

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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION

13+

(certain features are restricted to over-18s only)

TikTok is a free social media platform that lets users create, share and watch short videos ranging anywhere from 15 seconds to 10 minutes in duration. The app gained notoriety for its viral dances, trends and celebrity cameos and can be a creative, fun platform for teens to enjoy. Now available in 75 languages, it has more than a billion active users worldwide (as of spring 2022) and is most popular with the under-16 age bracket. In fact, a 2022 Ofcom report found TikTok to be the most-used social media platform for posting content, particularly among young people aged 12 to 17.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

While TikTok's "Following" feed only displays videos from users someone follows, "For You" is a stream of clips based on their previously watched content. Most videos on a child's "For You" feed will therefore be light-hearted and amusing, but it could potentially surface something unsuitable. TikTok's guidelines prohibit the sharing of illegal or inappropriate content, but the sheer volume of uploads mean they aren't manually monitored and vetted.

18

CENSORED

DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

Due to TikTok's immense popularity, some young people have unfortunately been influenced by videos challenging them to perform harmful, criminal or even deadly acts. One extreme example was the "blackout" trend, which encouraged users to hold their breath until they passed out from a lack of oxygen. It led to two families filing lawsuits against TikTok over the tragic deaths of their children.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

With around 1.1 billion users globally, the potential for contact from strangers on TikTok is high – especially as accounts created by over-18s (or youngsters using a false date of birth) are set to public by default. This not only means that someone's profile is visible to everyone else on the app; it also lets their videos be suggested to others and enables anyone to comment on them or download them.

IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but users have the option to buy TikTok coins, which can be used to purchase emojis in the app. These emojis are then sent as rewards (retaining their monetary value) to other users for videos they've created. Coin bundles range from £9.99 to an eye-watering £99; TikTok's policy is that they can't be bought by under-18s, but it's possible to bypass this with a fake birthdate.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

Like all social networking platforms, TikTok can be addictive: figures show that young people are investing increasing amounts of time in it. In the UK, children with TikTok spend an average of 102 minutes per day on the app, versus 53 minutes on YouTube. This compulsive repeated use can interfere with their sleep patterns – leading to irritability – and distract them from other activities.

TIKTOK NOW

Introduced in late 2022, the 'TikTok Now' feature lets users post a daily video or photo at the exact same time as their friends. Users receive a synchronised notification at a random time of day, giving them three minutes to take a video or real-time photo. This addition can not only be a distraction to young people but could lead to them inadvertently sharing private content such as their location.

Advice for Parents & Carers

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account with their child's and control their settings remotely. Parents can then, for example, turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content); set screen time limits; and manage their child's ability to send messages (and to whom). Children can't alter these settings without parental approval.

MAKE ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Although under-16s will have their TikTok account set to private by default, bypassing this setting is relatively easy. However, parents have the ability to manually set their child's account to private – meaning that their videos won't be visible to strangers and they won't be able to exchange messages with people who aren't on their friends list.

LIMIT IN-APP SPENDING

If your child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can alter the settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We'd recommend that you enable this feature, as it's quite easy for a young person – without realising what they're doing – to spend a significant amount of real money buying TikTok coins so they can unlock more features of the app.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If your child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's crucial to talk about the potential risks in this type of app. For example, ensure they understand not to share any identifying personal information – and that they realise they could be exposed to inappropriate content. Thinking critically about what they see on TikTok can help children become generally more social media savvy.

READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that your child might be spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something inappropriate or upsetting that they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the possible signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as are failing to complete homework or regularly not eating meals.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid *The Inquirer*, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



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