

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Thursday 11th September 2025

Autumn 1 Term

HELLO FROM MRS MITCHELL

Dear Parents and Carers,

What a wonderful start we have had to the new school year at Leavening! It has been such a joy to see our pupils return with enthusiasm, ready for the year ahead, and to welcome the new families who have joined our small, caring community. The first couple of weeks have already been filled with exciting opportunities for learning and growth. A particular highlight was our whole-school topic launch, where the children took part in a First Aid course. This gave them valuable life skills and sparked plenty of curiosity about our learning theme. We have also been delighted to welcome our new Nursery children and new pupils throughout the school – they have already settled in so well, and our older children have been wonderfully kind and supportive in helping them feel at home.

For our Key Stage 2 pupils, the residential trip to Peat Rigg was a truly memorable experience. The children showed such resilience, teamwork and joy while taking on challenges in the great outdoors – a perfect reflection of our school's "Together We Can" ethos.

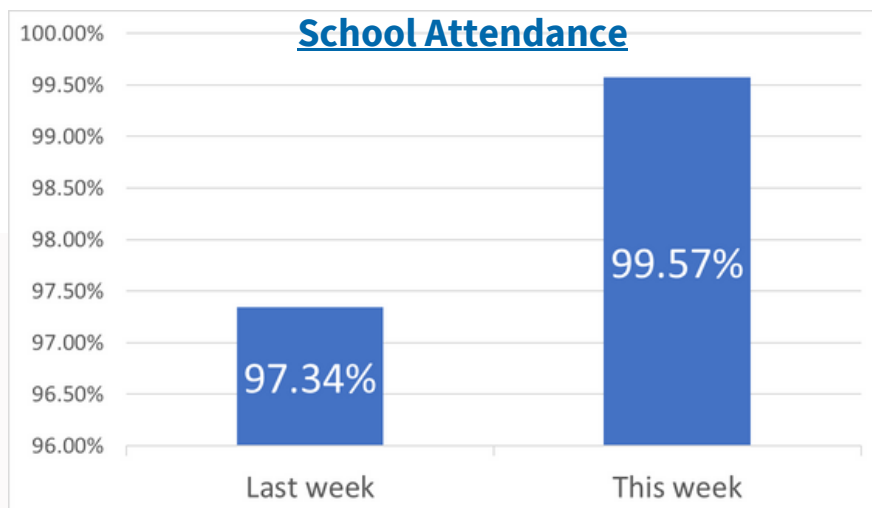
I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to all our new families. We are so pleased you have joined our Leavening family, and I know you will find our school community to be one of warmth, kindness and support.

You will have received a separate email with details of the many opportunities for parents and carers to get involved with school life this term. From classroom visits to special events, there are lots of ways to share in the children's learning journey – and we would love to see as many of you as possible taking part.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We are looking forward to an exciting and successful year ahead, filled with learning, laughter and plenty of achievements to celebrate.



Sian Mitchell
Headteacher



DIARY DATES

SEPTEMBER

Mon 15th RockSteady begins

Fri 19th Skateboarding workshop

Mon 22nd FOLS AGM in school at 2pm. All welcome!

Thurs 25th Parent Maths Cafe 9am

OCTOBER

Weds 1st Reading workshop for parents of KS2 at 3.20pm

Thurs 2nd Reading workshop for parents of EYFS/KS1 at 3.20pm

Mon 6th Open day for reception 2026 & Nursery

Fri 10th Harvest Assembly 9.30am then Tea & Talk. All welcome!

Mon 13th(pm) & Fri 17th (am)

EYFS(Nursery&Reception)

Stay & Play AND Seeing is

Believing in Conkers & Oak Trees

Thurs 23rd School photos(am)

FOLS Halloween disco

5.15-6.30pm

Fri 24th Last day of term

W/C 27th Half term

NOVEMBER

Mon 3rd Training day

W/C Mon 3rd Extra-curricular clubs start-details to follow

W/C Mon 10th Parent/Teacher Consultations-details to follow

W/C Mon 10th Anti-bullying week.Wear odd socks day(Mon)

Fri 14th Children In Need day

DECEMBER

Thurs 4th Christmas Craft afternoon with parents/carers Also Christmas dress-up day in exchange for tombola prize

Fri 5th Christmas Fair after school

Fri 12th Christmas production performances at 9.30am & 2pm

Tues 16th Pantomime visit (Conkers & Oak Trees). Details to follow!

Weds 17th FOLS Movie night 3.15pm-5.15pm

Thurs 18th Christmas parties

Fri 19th Village carol singing 2pm.

All welcome. End of term

Our Safeguarding Team at Leavening CP School:

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Mrs Mitchell**

Our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is: **Mrs Bennett** | Our Safeguarding Governor is: **Mrs Isaacs**

HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS SCHOOL

Peat Rigg residential for Oak Trees Class

Our 3-day residential to Peat Rigg was an adventure we will never forget! We loved crate stacking – it felt like we were building the tallest tower in the world, even when it wobbled at the top. Caving was dark, muddy and a little bit scary, but we all felt really proud of ourselves for being brave and crawling through the tiny spaces together.

Some of our favourite moments were flying down the zipline and learning new skills in bushcraft, like making fires and building shelters. Archery was tricky at first, but it was exciting when we managed to hit the target. The low ropes and abseiling helped us to work as a team and gave us the confidence to try new challenges. It was such a brilliant trip, and one we will remember for a long time!

From Mrs Mitchell: A huge thank you to all of our children for being such a credit to Leavening on the Peat Rigg residential – your teamwork, resilience and enthusiasm made us very proud. We are also very grateful to Miss Templeman, Miss Mitchelmore and Miss Cooke for giving up their time to lead and care for the children throughout the trip. Together we can!

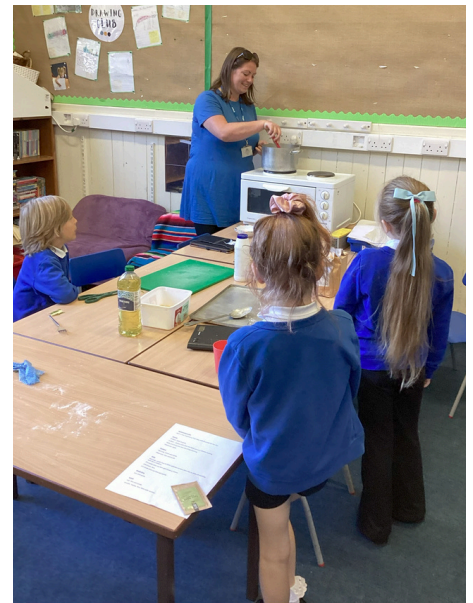




Oak Trees Class continued...

Oak Trees class had a brilliant first PE session of the school year. This half term they are learning the skills and rules of High 5 netball. They have made a positive start with high energy, high enthusiasm and high skills!

Some children in Oak Trees had a wonderful few days at school with a bumper activity pack planned by Miss Templeman to keep them busy. They baked focaccia (using fresh herbs from the allotment) and fairy cakes; crafting until their hearts were content, getting creative with clay and they spent lots of time outdoors, including the allotment and the park. Mrs Peel, Mrs Jacques and Mrs Richrdson had a lovely time with the children.



Malton School

A Specialist Science School

SUPPORT INSPIRE THRIVE

THURSDAY, 25TH SEPTEMBER 2025, 6.30PM

OPEN EVENING

Prospective parents and students in Years 5 and 6 are warmly invited to join us at our Open Evening to experience the excellent provision and opportunities that we offer. Find out how we can support your child by providing them with a nurturing learning environment that both inspires them and enables them to thrive.

Applications to join us in September 2026 should be made to NYC by 31st October 2025 latest using their on-line application form. For more information, visit:

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-admissions>



Malton School Middlecave Road Malton North Yorkshire YO17 7NH

t: 01653 692828 e: office@malton.pmat.academy w: www.maltonschool.org

[f @maltonschool](https://www.facebook.com/maltonschool)

[i @officialmaltonschool](https://www.instagram.com/officialmaltonschool)



Conkers Class

What a fantastic start to the new school year the Conkers have had! All have adjusted brilliantly to their new year groups and our new starters have taken to their new class like ducklings to water!

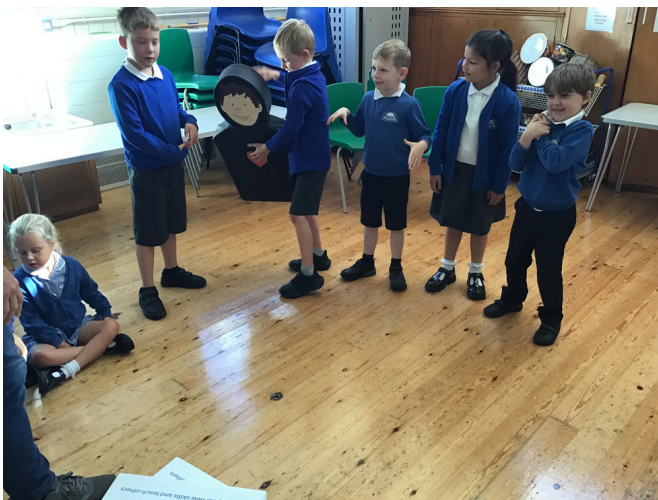
We enjoyed a wonderful first week, spent getting to know each other again and familiarising ourselves with routines and expectations. We thoroughly enjoyed the sunny weather and spent many hours engaged in (voluntary!) manual labour, helping Mrs Raines get our future grassy area ready for seed planting.

Did we have (muddy!) fun!



On Friday, we launched our new topic of 'Blood, Bottoms and Burps' with a fantastic first aid morning; many thanks go to Simon for imparting such valuable knowledge and skills to our Conkers.

We really hope that they came straight home and showcased their skills!



Well done to Riley!

A huge WELL DONE to Riley who won the cup for getting the most points at the Village Show on Saturday.

Congratulations, what a great achievement! 😊



CONKERS

PE
Wednesday
Forest School
Thursday



My PE Kit

OAK TREES

PE
Friday
Forest School
Wednesday

Plain White T.Shirt



With or Without School Logo



Black, Grey or Navy Blue Shorts/Joggers

Black Pumps (Indoor) Black Trainers (Outdoor)



Waterproofs and Wellington Boots for Forest School



NO Bright Coloured Tops or Trainers
NO Jewellery (Including Earrings)



Exciting parental engagement opportunities we have planned at Leavening Community Primary School this term: Part 1



FOLS AGM

We would love to invite all parents and carers to join us for the Friends of Leavening (FoLS) Annual General Meeting on **Monday 22nd September at 2.00pm** in school. The Friends play a vital role in planning and running fundraising events that raise much-needed funds to support our children and school community. This year, we are especially looking for **new faces and fresh ideas** to help us make our events even more enjoyable and successful. Whether you can give a little time or a lot, your support will make a real difference. Please do come along – you'll be given a warm welcome, and together we can achieve great things for our school.

'Help your child love Maths' cafe

We would like to invite all parents and carers to a **'Help Your Child Love Maths'** workshop in school on **Thursday 25th September from 9.00am to 10.30am**. Please feel free to arrive straight after drop-off, when refreshments will be available. The morning will begin with an overview from Mrs Mitchell about our exciting work with the **National Numeracy programme**, before you have the opportunity to join your child in their classroom for some fun, hands-on maths activities. The session will be **welcoming, informal and interactive**, giving you the chance to see how we teach maths, pick up ideas to support learning at home, and most importantly, share in helping your child develop a real enjoyment of maths.

Oak Trees parent and carer workshop on English (reading, writing and spelling curriculum and homework)

We're excited to invite **Oak Trees** parents and carers to a **'Help Your Child Love English'** workshop on **Wednesday 1st October, 3.30–4.15pm** here at school. This relaxed after-school session is designed to give you a clear picture of how English is taught in Key Stage 2, with a focus on **reading, writing and spelling**.

You'll also discover simple, practical ways to support your child's learning at home.

Children are very welcome to join you, and the atmosphere will be **friendly, informal and hands-on** – a chance to see English through your child's eyes and celebrate the joy of words together.

Conkers phonics and reading parent workshop

We warmly invite parents and carers of children in **Reception, Year 1 and Year 2** to join us for a 'Help Your Child Love English' workshop on **Thursday 2nd October, 3.30–4.15pm** in school. This friendly after-school session will guide you through how your child will begin their reading journey in Reception, how this develops through Years 1 and 2, and how we introduce spelling and writing along the way.

The workshop will be **practical, welcoming and interactive**, giving you the chance to see how early reading and writing are taught and how you can support and encourage your child at home. Children are welcome to attend too, making it a great opportunity to explore and enjoy English together.

Open day* also suitable for parents/carers of nursery

We are delighted to invite **parents and carers of children starting Reception in September 2026**, all **nursery children aged 2–3 years**, and any **primary-aged children looking for a new school** to our **Open Day** at Leavening Community Primary School on **Monday 6th October, 9.30am–2.20pm**.

Visits are by appointment only – please contact the school office on **01653 658313** or email **admin@leavening.n-yorks.sch.uk** to book your place.

During your visit, you will be shown around by our Headteacher, one of our governors and some of our fantastic Year 6 pupils. It's a wonderful opportunity to **explore our facilities, meet our children, and experience first-hand the warm, family feel and inspiring learning** that make Leavening such a special school.

Exciting parental engagement opportunities we have planned at Leavening Community Primary School this term: Part 2



Harvest Assembly and Tea and Talk session for parents and carers

We warmly invite all parents and carers (nursery included) to our **Whole School Harvest Assembly on Friday 10th October, 9.30–10.00am**. Please feel free to arrive after drop-off—**refreshments will be available**. After the assembly, we'd love you to stay for our autumn term **"Tea and Talk" to mark World Mental Health Day**—a relaxed session led by **Mrs Peel**, with time to chat, optional mindfulness activities, and a chance to unwind over a cuppa and cake. **All are welcome**; these mornings have been really popular in the past and we'd be delighted to see both familiar and new faces.

Seeing is Believing sessions* also suitable for parents/carers of nursery

We are delighted to welcome parents and carers to our termly **'Seeing is Believing'** sessions, where you can spend time in your child's class and join in with their learning. This term, sessions will take place on **Monday 13th October in the afternoon and Friday 17th October in the morning**. To help us organise the visits, please contact the school office to **book a slot** for one of these times. These sessions are always a wonderful opportunity to see first-hand how your child learns and to share in their classroom experiences. *Please note- the Nursery Stay & Play session is to be confirmed during w/c 13th Oct. Further details to follow.*

Christmas Craft afternoon* also suitable for parents/carers of nursery

Get ready to sprinkle some festive cheer – we're inviting all parents and carers to join us for our **Christmas Craft Afternoon on Thursday 4th December, 1.30–3.00pm**. Come and spend the afternoon with your child getting creative and making some wonderful Christmas crafts to take home. Expect plenty of glue, glitter and giggles as we get into the holiday spirit together. Christmas jumpers, sparkly accessories and festive cheer are very much encouraged – the more the merrier! It's a lovely chance to make special memories, share the joy of the season, and start December with a smile.

Christmas Play

Children will take to the stage for two performance on **Friday 12th December at 9.30am and 2.15pm**. This is always a fantastic event with the children dazzling everyone with their wonderful talents! Due to lack of space, Parents and Carers are invited to one performance only please. Please let us know in advance which show you will be attending, to assist with our planning arrangements. We look forward to seeing you there.

Carol singing in the community

This wonderful event takes place every year lead by Mrs Stockill at the forefront and the children in fine voice! It is always a much-loved event which is enjoyed by all.

This year it will take place on **Friday 19th December at 2pm**.

As in previous years, we will meet at school and go around Leavening Village, with any collected donations from local residents going towards Friends of Leavening School. Parents and Carers are warmly invited to join too. We ask that children and participants wear a Santa/Christmas hat where possible. We hope to spread some Christmas cheer in the community!

Thank you in advance for your continued support.

Supporting Families in Our School Community

We know that every now and then, families may need a bit of extra help — and that's perfectly okay. There are several local and national support options available to families in Harrogate and North Yorkshire, and you are absolutely not alone.

Here's a quick look at what's available:

Free School Meals

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 automatically qualify. For older children, eligibility extends to families receiving certain financial support — and applications are open for those who qualify. [North Yorkshire Council](#)

Help with Childcare Costs

North Yorkshire's Families Information Service can connect you with funding support and suitable childcare options. Plus, there are government schemes like tax-free childcare, two-year-olds' funded hours, and more (depending on circumstances). [North Yorkshire Council](#)[Democracy North Yorkshire](#)

Healthy Start Scheme

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four, you might be eligible for assistance to buy milk, healthy food, and vitamins. [North Yorkshire Council](#) [North Yorkshire Together](#)

Holiday Activities & Food (FEAST)

During school holidays, eligible families can access free food and engaging activities through the FEAST programme. [North Yorkshire Council](#)

Uniform Banks

Local uniform banks are available to help with school clothing costs. Ask your child's school or nursery for details about what's offered in our area. [North Yorkshire Council](#)

The Family Fund

If you're raising a child with a disability or serious illness, the Family Fund offers grants for things like household appliances, sensory toys, clothing, and computers. [North Yorkshire Council](#)

It's all about support — not judgement.

These services are here to help families thrive. If you ever want to discuss your options in more detail, you're always welcome to reach out to us — quietly, friendly, with no pressure attached.

And if you'd like help navigating any of these — from applying to finding the right website — we're happy to lend a hand.

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/community-and-volunteering/cost-living-support-0/help-and-support-children-and-families>



Help Your Child Love Maths!

Want to know more about how to support your children to develop positive attitudes towards maths?

Join us at the school on

Date: 25.09.25

Time: 9am

This is not a maths lesson, and we won't be doing any actual maths! We'll be talking about the importance of maths in the real world, being positive about maths, and boosting our number confidence.



Children's Book Project

Leavening CP School are now signed up to the
Children's Book Project.

This is a fantastic scheme, placing us on 'the map' to
receive donations of free books from bookshops and
other organisations.

These books will be put into our **new library area** for a
term for children to utilise. At the end of term, the
books will be reviewed and we will offer a 'free book
stall' for parents/carers and children (led by our
wonderful Young Leaders Team). Books that have been
donated can then be taken home.

In addition to the above, we are looking for **book
donations from home** please to help supplement our
library resources. If you can help, please drop off your
donations to the main office.

**Thank you in anticipation of your help
with this scheme 😊**



Stay & Play

Leavening Community Primary School

Come and join us every Monday
9.30am - 11am for a cuppa and a chat.

FREE for all parents and carers with
children age 0 - 4 years

Back Lane, Leavening, YO17 9SW



Starts back Monday 15th September!

Any questions please contact Emma

Eisaacs@leavening.n-yorks.sch.uk

Why healthier snacking matters

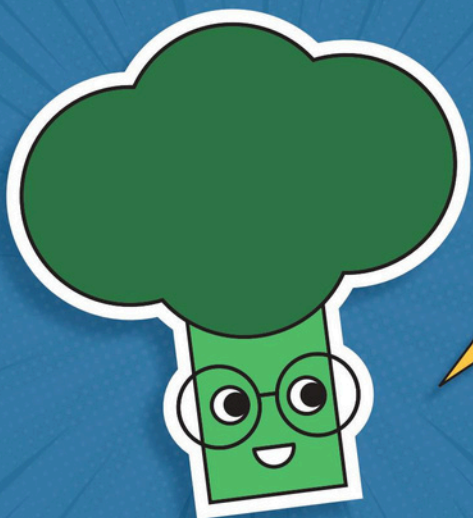
**Snack
tember**

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS OF SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Snacking is a big part of children's daily routine, but many popular snack choices are high in saturated fat, salt and sugars, and low in important nutrients like fibre and vitamins and minerals.

Over time, eating too many of these types of snacks can lead to health issues like too much weight gain and dental problems.

Snacking isn't necessarily bad, it's just about choosing the right snacks.



HEALTHY SNACKS CAN:

- **Provide important nutrients** to support children's growth and development.
- **Be an opportunity** to have a drink to stay hydrated (water or milk are best).
- **Help children feel less hungry** so they don't overeat at mealtimes.

Better snacking. One bite at a time.

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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about ONLINE SLANG

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Slang moves fast – and for many young people, it's not just how they talk, but how they share their identity and feelings. Learning key terms helps adults connect and show understanding, even if the lingo seems baffling at first.

GENERATIONAL MISCOMMUNICATION

Words like 'rizz' or 'slaps' can be misunderstood by adults, leading to awkward moments or a breakdown in trust. These phrases often carry subtle social meanings among young people.

RAPIDLY SHIFTING MEANINGS

Slang changes quickly. A term like 'bop' might sound innocent one week and be repurposed the next. This makes it easy for adults to fall behind and for children to misstep.

SHIELDING BULLYING OR EXCLUSION

Inside jokes and trending terms like 'simp' or 'NPC' can be used to mock or exclude others. What looks like harmless fun might actually reinforce social divisions or bullying.

PERFORMING FOR THE ALGORITHM

Slang often reflects what's popular on platforms like TikTok. Young users might exaggerate or act out for likes, creating online personas that don't match their real selves.

CONTENT MODERATION WITH CODED SPEECH

To avoid content filters, young people sometimes use slang or emojis to talk about serious topics – for example, saying 'unalive' instead of other death-related terms. This makes harmful content harder to spot.

LONG-TERM DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

A slang-filled post might seem funny now but could resurface years later during job checks or university applications – possibly out of context, but still damaging.

Advice for Parents & Educators

KEEP UP, DON'T CATCH UP

Follow youth culture pages or ask your child about new slang. Staying informed shows that you're engaged and open to understanding their world.

ASK, DON'T INTERROGATE

Use open questions to invite conversation. You're not quizzing them – just trying to learn more about their online lives.

FOCUS ON CONNECTION OVER CONTROL

Being someone your child can talk to is more valuable than using strict filters or monitoring apps. Openness builds trust.

ENCOURAGE CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY

Talk about where slang comes from, how it spreads, and how it can impact others. This helps young people use language more thoughtfully.

ONLINE SLANG CHEAT SHEET -

The following slang terms are common examples – please be aware this isn't an exhaustive list and both meaning and prevalence can change swiftly.

COMMON SLANG:

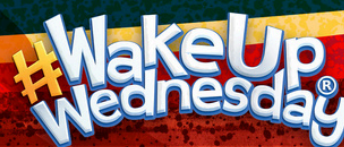
- Sigma** - Independent, self-reliant (often male) mindset; proud outsider status. Often celebrated in motivational memes.
- Skibidi** - Nonsense word from the viral 'Skibidi Toilet' meme; expresses chaos or fun. Usually harmless but pervasive.
- Chat** - The collective audience or group of viewers (e.g. on a livestream). Used when addressing followers directly.
- Lock in** - To focus, commit or get serious (e.g. before gaming or sports). Positive encouragement to concentrate.
- Cooking** - Doing something exceptionally well or gaining momentum. Opposite of 'cooked'.
- Rizz** - Charisma or flirting ability (short for charisma). Can praise social confidence.
- Aura or aura farming** - One's perceived 'energy' or vibe; 'farming' means manufacturing clout.

POTENTIALLY CONCERNING SLANG

- Bop** - An adult content creator (e.g. OnlyFans). Indicates exposure to 18+ material.
- Gyat or gyatt** - Sexualised exclamation about someone's backside. Objectifies appearance.
- Tralero tralala / bombardino crocodilo / tung tung tung sahur** - Spammy references to AI-generated creatures with 'Italian-sounding' names. Can clog chats, derail discussion, and harass others.
- Glazing** - Overpraising or obsessively defending a streamer or celebrity.
- Crash out** - To lose control, give up or have a meltdown; sometimes hints at self-harm.
- Cooked** - Ruined, exhausted or in serious trouble; sometimes mental health-related.
- Unalive** - Euphemism for death or suicide; used to avoid content filters.
- NPC** - Used to suggest someone is lacking independent thoughts or is repetitive and predictable.

Meet Our Expert

Keith Broni is a globally renowned emoji expert and the Editor in Chief of emojipedia.org, the world's number one emoji resource. He has an MSc in Business Psychology from University College London and an MBA from Quantic School of Business and Technology.



The National College®

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

RECOGNISING & MANAGING STRESS

According to recent studies, over 60% of young people report feeling regularly overwhelmed – with stress impacting their learning, emotional wellbeing and social connections. If left unaddressed, stress can lead to more serious concerns such as anxiety, depression or disengagement. This guide offers ten practical, evidence-based strategies to help children and young people recognise, manage and recover from stress in healthy ways.

1 SPOT THE SUBTLE SIGNS



Look out for changes in mood, behaviour, or energy levels, such as irritability, withdrawal, clinginess, or frequent headaches. These may indicate that a child is feeling overwhelmed. By tuning into these cues early and offering a calm, non-judgemental space to talk, adults can help children feel heard and supported before issues escalate.

2 KEEP CONVERSATIONS FLOWING



Make time for open, informal check-ins – whether it's during car journeys, over dinner, or in quiet classroom moments. Let children know it's okay to talk about what's bothering them. Regular, low-pressure conversations create a safe space where emotions are validated, not dismissed.

3 MAKE MOVEMENT PART OF THE DAY



Physical activity can dramatically reduce stress hormones while improving mood and focus. Encourage movement through activities children genuinely enjoy – from team sports to dancing around the kitchen. Even light activity like stretching or walking the dog can help us all unwind.

4 SUPPORT HEALTHY SLEEP PATTERNS



Poor sleep makes stress harder to manage. Establish a calming evening routine that avoids screens before bedtime and promotes winding down, such as reading, listening to music, or chatting quietly. Good sleep hygiene helps reset mood, enhances concentration, and boosts emotional resilience.

5 PRACTISE MINDFULNESS



Mindfulness doesn't have to mean long periods of meditation. A few slow breaths before lessons or short family meditation sessions before bed can make a real difference. These simple habits help children ground themselves, reduce emotional reactivity, and build inner calm over time.

6 SET DIGITAL BOUNDARIES



Excessive screen time, especially before bed or on social media, is linked with higher stress levels. Set clear expectations for when and where devices can be used and suggest screen-free alternatives like crafts, nature walks, or board games to promote digital balance and reduce overstimulation.

7 NURTURE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS



Strong relationships act as a buffer against stress. Whether it's a trusted adult, a sibling, or a good friend, ensure children have people around them they can talk to and spend quality time with. Help them build those bonds through shared activities and meaningful interaction.

8 PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION



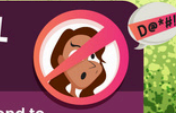
Set realistic goals and praise effort, not just outcomes. When children feel pressured to be perfect, stress naturally follows. Celebrate small wins and help them reframe setbacks as learning opportunities. This helps build confidence and reduces the fear of failure.

9 TEACH EVERYDAY PROBLEM-SOLVING



Use real-life scenarios to build resilience. Encourage children to identify problems, consider possible solutions, and choose a plan of action. Practising these steps builds a sense of control and reduces the helplessness that often accompanies stress.

10 BE THE MODEL THEY NEED



Children notice how adults respond to challenges. Model healthy coping strategies such as taking breaks, asking for help, or calmly expressing frustration. By showing how you manage stress constructively, you help normalise these behaviours and encourage children to do the same.

Meet Our Expert

Anna Bateman is Director of Halcyon Education Ltd, Director for Wellbeing and Family Services at Leigh Trust, and lead expert for mental health at The National College. Anna specialises in strategic mental health solutions for schools, supporting educators and families to improve resilience, emotional literacy, and overall wellbeing for children across the UK.



#WakeUpWednesday®

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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Conspiracy theories are false or misleading beliefs that explain events as secret plots, often involving powerful groups. While once fringe, they are now more accessible through digital media, online influencers and because of algorithmic recommendations. The DfE guidance document, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) explicitly recognises conspiracy theories as potential content risks. This guide will help parents and educators understand the risks, spot the signs, and build children's resilience to conspiracy theories.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

UNDERMINING TRUST

Conspiracy theories can lead children and young people to distrust democratic institutions and British Values, teachers, and even their own families and loved ones. This erosion of trust makes young people more vulnerable to extremist narratives by isolating them from reliable sources of information.

ONLINE ALGORITHM TRAPS

Social media platforms can often recommend sensationalist content. Once a child engages with one conspiracy-themed video or post, algorithms push more of the same, thereby creating an echo chamber that can intensify their beliefs.

MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT

Exposure to frightening conspiracy content, such as global plots, viruses, or government control, can fuel feelings of anxiety, paranoia, or hopelessness. For some young people, it can trigger prolonged distress or obsessive thinking.

GATEWAY TO EXTREMISM

Conspiracy theories can often overlap with extremist ideologies. Narratives that blame specific groups, such as politicians, scientists, or particular ethnic groups, can groom children in ways that foster hate, bigotry, and radicalisation.

CONFLICT WITH PEERS

Belief in conspiracy theories can lead to isolation or conflict at school. Children may struggle with peer relationships if they express these beliefs or become distrustful of others who disagree; sometimes, confrontation can even result in a strengthening of the belief in the conspiracy theory.

ERODED CRITICAL THINKING

Young people influenced by conspiracies may reject evidence-based learning. This risks undermining their academic progress and weakening their ability to think critically, assess risks, or engage in healthy debate.

Advice for Parents & Educators

I WANT TO BELIEVE

CREATE SAFE CONVERSATIONS

Don't mock or dismiss any questions that children and young people ask about conspiracy theories. Instead, create open, judgement-free spaces to talk. This strengthens trust and makes it more likely they will confide in you.

PROMOTE CRITICAL THINKING

Teach young people how to assess information critically. Encourage them to ask appropriate questions, such as: Who is telling me this? What evidence is there? What do other trusted sources say? Use real examples from current media to explain your answers and reasoning.

MONITOR DIGITAL BEHAVIOUR

Be aware of the content children are accessing, especially on platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, or Reddit. Use parental controls, but more importantly, maintain ongoing dialogue about online experiences and influencers.

REINFORCE RELIABLE SOURCES

Point children toward trustworthy and reliable sources of news and information in a variety of formats tailored to the young person's age. Build habits of verifying facts using reliable sources, and teach them how to spot misleading content.

Meet Our Expert

Brendan O'Keeffe is a headteacher and digital education consultant with over a decade of experience in education. As Director of Digital Strategy across multiple schools and an advisor to The National College, he specialises in digital safety, PREVENT, and pastoral care.



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