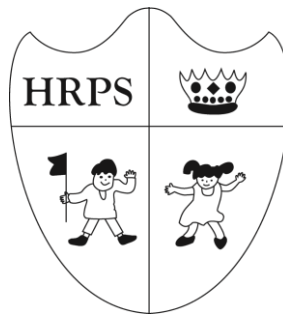


Houghton Regis

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NEWSLETTER

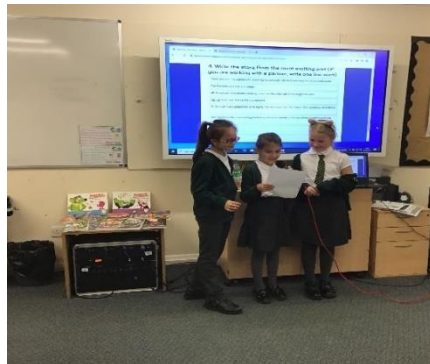
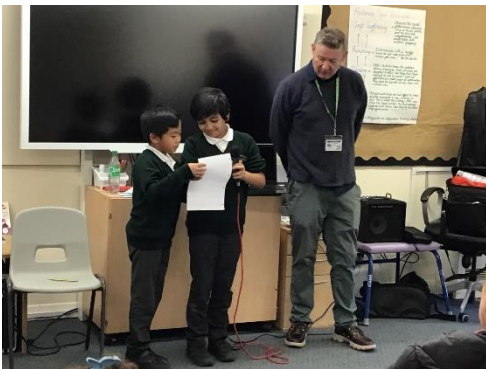


24 November 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

A.I.M. High Writing Day at Chantry Primary Academy- Friday, 17 November

Last Friday some of our Year 4 children had an enjoyable and rewarding day working with the author Robin Price at Chantry Academy School. He showed them how to write an exciting story by starting at the most exciting part in the story. They worked together and wrote one sentence each and then finished each session by reading out their stories over the microphone. What fabulous stories they created- he was really impressed!



Robin Price is a bestselling children's author who has written four book series for children (aged 6-15) including the Spartapuss series and the London Deep graphic novels.

Celtic Harmony Trip Year 3- Friday, 17 November

On Friday 17 November, Year 3 visited Celtic Harmony and were transported back to the Stone Age! The children made dens which helped them understand how people protected themselves from the weather and animals in the woods. They used training spears (sticks) to simulate how people would have hunted animals including woolly mammoths!

The children then went hunting and gathering in the woods, learning about what people would gather and what they would avoid gathering. They learnt and watched a technique called flint knapping, which is how people in the Stone Age made tools. The children contributed to the making of a soup using kale, rosemary and thyme before listening to a story from the Stone Age. It was a great learning experience for the children. Staff at Celtic Harmony commented on how amazing the children were and how engaged they were throughout!



National Space Centre Year 5- Monday, 20 November

Year 5 had a brilliant day at the National Space Centre in Leicester on Monday, 21 November. They learnt about how humans are changing the Earth, saw spacesuits, learnt more about our Solar System, explored our universe, saw a piece of the Moon and had a go at directing a Mars Rover buggy. They also climbed the four exhibition decks of the Rocket Tower to find out about the Space Race and the history of rocketry. One of their favourite parts of the day was in the Sir Patrick Moore Planetarium, where they had a tour of the night time sky. The children looked at the stars, visited different planets and explored the mysteries of Space, whilst voting to answer questions. We are very proud of how well the children represented our school.



London Concert- Tuesday, 21 November

Earlier this week the school choir performed extremely well at the recent London themed concert.

There were a range of songs performed, all very well, from 'Money, Money, Money' by Abba to 'Waterloo Sunset' by The Kinks to some well-known London themed nursery rhymes. Some of the many highlights included 'Maybe its because I'm a Londoner' which was beautifully accompanied by Mrs Gommon, our piano teacher and 'London's burning,' which was sung in three parts and led by Mrs Neilson, our music advisory teacher. Another favourite was the very moving performance of Ralph McTell's 'Streets of London.'



I know that many of the adults present were very moved as well as impressed by the performance. There were also some super piano performances by Eleni and Matei. A big well done to all the children and staff involved.

Children in Need

Our School Parliament is pleased to announce that we have raised £429 for Children in Need. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their generous donations which helped us to reach this total.



Various classes from across the school were also successful in completing the 1000 'bearpee' challenge! It was great to see the children dressed in spotty or colourful clothes to raise awareness for this charity. Thank you for your continued support.



Message from PTA



Disco tickets are still available from the Gazebo until Wednesday, 29 November.

If your child attends breakfast or after school club, they can bring £3 in a named envelope and hand it in to the school office. The PTA will ensure your child receives a ticket.

8 December



Nursery & Reception 2pm - 3pm

Year 1 & Year 2 3.15pm - 4.15pm

15 December



Year 3 & Year 4 3.20pm - 4.20pm

Year 5 & Year 6 4.30pm - 5.30pm

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a wonderful weekend.

Kind regards

Mr James Edwards

Headteacher



Free school meals

If you think you meet the free school meals eligibility criteria, please call the Local Authority on 0300 300 8306. When you call to apply for free school meals, please have the following information ready:

- National Insurance numbers and dates of birth for you and your partner
- Dates of birth for your children
- If you receive support from the National Asylum Support Service, your NASS number

If your application is successful, please contact the school office to confirm this to enable us to update our records to reflect this.

School Admissions 2024

Central Bedfordshire Council have produced a booklet to help you with applying for your child's school place for 2024.

The following link will take you to the booklet

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/5/school_admissions

The national closing dates for applications to be received by the School Admissions Team are:

15 January 2024

- Starting School 2024
- Transfer to Middle 2024



UPCOMING EVENTS

Event	Year groups involved	Date
Herrings Green Activity Farm	Year 1 & Year 2	Thursday, 30 November 2023
The Snowman at the Peacock Theatre	Year 2-5	Friday, 15 December 2023
<u>Christmas events</u>		
Save The Children - Christmas Jumper Day	All	Thursday, 7 December 2023
PTA Christmas Disco	Nursery & Reception	Friday, 8 December 2023, 2-3pm
PTA Christmas Disco	Year 1 & Year 2	Friday, 8 December 2023, 3:15-4:15pm
Jingle and Mingle	Early Years	Monday, 11 December 2023, 9:10am and 2:00pm
Christmas Dinner and Jumper Day	All	Wednesday, 13 December 2023
PTA Christmas Disco	Year 3 & Year 4	Friday, 15 December 2023, 3:20-4:20pm
PTA Christmas Disco	Year 5 & Year 6	Friday, 15 December 2023, 4:30-5:30pm
Reception Nativity	Reception	Thursday, 14 December 2023, 9:15am and 2:30pm
Year 1 Nativity	Year 1	Tuesday, 19 December 2023, 10.30am
Year 1 Nativity	Year 1	Tuesday, 19 December 2023, 2pm
Last day of term	All	Wednesday, 20 December 2023 school closes at 2:00pm



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***This week's
Attendance Awards***



Reception/KS1 Prince Louis—
Indigo 96.8%

Lower KS2 Princess Charlotte –
Yellow 99.3%

Upper KS2 Prince George—
Emerald 99.5%



Star Awards

			
Danny DETERMINATION says, "DON'T GIVE UP."	Colin CURIOSITY says, "THINK FOR YOURSELF."	Chloe COMMUNICATION says, "RESPECT OTHERS."	Izzy INDEPENDENCE says, "DO YOUR BEST."
Francesca K	Layla T	Jaden	Crue O
Jaxon-James G	Jake L	Bradley E	Olivia G
Adian F	Isla C	Jessica Rose B	Noah E
George F	Lexie S	Leo W	Annabelle L
Emilia C	Liam D	Nathan S	Reina V
Darin A	Oliver H	David J	Eleni W
Elsie H		Alisia C	
Chloe S			



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 enthral 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 alert 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.com/news/technology-6204905>
<https://sprsocial.com/insights/social-media-algorithms/>

NOS National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday



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You Are Invited To

HRPS Christmas

Disco



FRIDAY 8TH DECEMBER

NURSERY/ RECEPTION | 2-3PM

(Bring clothes to change in to)

YEARS 1 AND 2 | 3:15-4:15PM

(Bring clothes to change in to)

FRIDAY 15TH DECEMBER

YEARS 3 AND 4 | 3:20-4:20PM

(Bring clothes to change in to)

YEARS 5 AND 6 | 4:30-5:30PM

Entry is £3 which includes a free drink & bag of sweets to every child

Payments can be made to the PTA in the gazebo (morning and afternoon) starting Nov 13th.

Both cash and cards are accepted.



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