



Welcome to the Oxlip Learning Partnership Newsletter for Parents and Carers: Summer 2025

The Summer Term usually brings Sports Days and transition events in each of our schools, and this year is no exception. All schools enjoyed magnificent sports days, from inflatable obstacle courses to new school records.

Transition events also took place this term, from reception intake to Year 6 transferring to high school. Within schools, children also experienced transition to their new classes and met their teachers ready for September.

While we say good bye to our Year 6s as they move on to their secondary education (some of which will remain with us at either Stowupland or Copleston), we also say good luck to our Year 11 and Year 13 leavers and wish them well in the next stages of their education and careers.

Online Safety

Among children – and especially teenagers – TikTok boasts approximately 220 million users, providing a near-endless reel of short clips intended to entertain, educate and more. However, along with its enormous userbase comes a significant number of possible risks: Ofcom have dubbed it the most likely app on which teen users would potentially suffer harm.

With the platform reaching astronomical levels of success among the younger generation, it's vitally important for parents and educators to understand the risks it poses. The **guide on page 4** lets you know about the most prominent potential dangers associated with TikTok and offers expert advice on how to safeguard youngsters who are navigating the site.

News from our Schools:



At Britannia, Year 6 enjoyed the most joyous of weeks away in early June, in their luxurious

sea view hotel in the Isle of Wight. This is a long-established tradition at the school and even some of our parents went to the same location back when they attended Britannia themselves as young pupils. The weather was very kind to us, the beach activities were amazing and days out to locations such as Carisbrooke Castle and Black Gang Chine ensured the week will be etched in pupils' memories for many years to come.

At the other end of the school, our Nursery children are bursting with excitement about moving into a newly landscaped Reception class outside space which will, all being well, be open to them from their first day back after the Summer holidays. The area is going to be completely redesigned and rebuilt over the forthcoming six weeks to make it the best and most exciting area it has ever been in the school's history. It will be the stuff of every four- and five-year old's dreams!

Finally, we are having our entire main school hall ceiling soundproofed over the holidays meaning conversations will be way more audible when pupils return in September. We are having a brand-new Arc resource room constructed outside on the main playground, the surface of which is also going to be completely rebuilt over the Summer holidays. So, an extremely busy month and a half lies ahead of us...



Cedars Park
Primary School

This term at Cedars Park, Year 1 pupils took a trip to Felixstowe as part of their geography unit of work, looking at the features of coastal towns as well as different human and physical geography. The children had lots of fun in the sea and even got an ice cream!

Back in June, Year 4 had their first experience of playing in a large musical ensemble at the Apex Concert Hall in Bury. Over 250 children took part from schools across Suffolk. They played a selection of arrangements from a variety of genres and took part in a vocal workshop during the day. In the afternoon, the children performed a concert for their parents.

Year 4 had a fantastic time at the Sports Festival at Stowupland High School. They competed in teams as either Canada or USA against other local schools, performing a variety of skills such as archery and hockey. The children worked really well as a team. Kestrels (Canada) were the runners up, each being awarded a Silver medal, but Kingfishers (USA) were the winning team and won the competition, each gaining a Gold medal. Well done Kingfishers!

All students from EYFS to Year 6 produced some wonderful artwork for our whole-school project based on 'The Dot' by Peter Reynolds. The idea was to encourage our less confident artists with the line from the book, "Just make a mark and see where it takes you." The resulting work is making the exhibition area look fantastic and will remain in place into next term.



Bacton
Primary School



Mendlesham
Primary School

This term, children from Bacton and Mendlesham have had the opportunity to take part in whole-class visits to Pipers Vale Gym, as well as a memorable residential trip for Years 5 and Year 6 to Dover. Highlights included an exhilarating experience on the Nuclear High Ropes course.

Bacton have had Wooden Roots African drummers into school for pupils to learn the art of West African drumming. Through storytelling and rhythm, the workshop brought the rich traditions of this ancient instrument to life, teaching not only technique but also the important role drumming plays in community, communication, and celebration. The children also took part in a Colour Run, organised by the Friends of Bacton Primary. This raised an amazing £1,015 for improvements to the Library. Bacton will also be improving their play area over the summer to include outdoor gym equipment. Plus, the school will be redecorated throughout and all staff/children are very excited about it.

Mendlesham have had parents/carers in for an Art Exhibition to showcase children's work, which is supported by our inhouse Art specialist, Mrs Casey.

Also, Willow Class, the wonderful Reception class, embarked on a playful travel expedition, boarding a pretend flight to Spain led by enthusiastic KS2 stewards. Through this immersive experience,

children explored the workings of airports and deepened their knowledge of travel in an exciting, hands-on way.

Both schools have held parent focus groups which will help to drive school improvement further.



At Rose Hill we are wrapping up a hugely successful year with joy and pride. From our wonderful **EYFS Graduation** and the unforgettable **Year 6 Prom**, to the adrenaline-filled **Nuclear Races** and a truly **outstanding production of Cinderella Rockerfella** — it has been a time of celebration, achievement, and unforgettable memories. Well done to all our pupils, staff, and families who made it all possible!



It has been an incredibly busy summer term at Copleston and we have been particularly proud of our Year 11 and Year 13 students throughout their exams. We celebrated their hard work with two wonderful Prom events and a huge Year 11 friendly football match in their final lunchtime, cheered on by huge numbers from other year groups.

We have had numerous trips and visits including three overseas visits which are currently taking place involving Year 12 and Year 13 students and supported by the Turing Scheme. These have taken students across the world to Tanzania, Peru and Thailand where they are taking part in community projects and making memories that will last a lifetime! Year 10 history students also visited Berlin, visiting sites that brought their studies to life. Closer to home, students embarked on numerous smaller trips and visits including successful field trips around Suffolk for their Year 10 geography and Year 12 biology studies. Year 7 students visited Parliament and were able to put their questions to their local MP and Year 12 students participated superbly in a residential Aspiration Programme at Chigwell School.

Within school, it was wonderful to welcome our new Year 12 and Year 7 students for inductions and we also welcomed a group of visiting students on a Spanish exchange who have enjoyed their taste of life in a UK school. Year 8 students were treated to a thrilling performance of Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' from a visiting theatre company.

We also recognised many sporting successes. A team of staff participated in the Midnight Walk in May and with sponsorship from colleagues, raised almost £1,000 for our incredible neighbours at St Elizabeth's Hospice. Staff also enjoyed receiving handwritten postcards for students on national Thank A Teacher Day. Sports Day is always a Copleston highlight, and a fantastically inclusive event, with inflatable obstacle courses and traditional games alongside conventional athletics events.

We finished the year with our wonderful Celebration Evenings and the addition of our student raffle and ice cream vans this year created a lovely sense of occasion and a chance for students, staff and parents to mingle after each event. We would like to wish all our students, staff and all who support our Copleston community a very happy and restful summer holiday.



Stowupland
High School

This term has seen a number of memorable events at Stowupland High School.

At our traditional Sports Day, two long standing school records were broken - Fitz Eze shaved 0.4 seconds from the

Year 9 200m record to finish in a mightily impressive 25 seconds flat, and Dylan Hayward smashed the Year 7 Shot Put record with an immense throw of 8.41m

Year 10 students went to an array of providers near and far to complete their week of work experience. Employer comments were highly favourable and our students were superb ambassadors. One of our students drew the following comment from his employers *"His cleverness and positive attitude stood out, and he integrated seamlessly with the group. It was a real pleasure having him with us. If he chooses to pursue a future in this industry, I have no doubt he has a bright and promising path ahead."*

Meanwhile, Year 10, 11 and 13 students have been working hard to complete their Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh assignments, including the latest hiking weekend in Sherwood Forest. Our Year 11 Prom was a superb event, celebrating the end of exams for this outstanding group of students. As ever, the students found a bewildering range of transportation options to use in their entrance to the Fynn Valley Golf Club, and dressed for the event with impeccable taste and class.

We were treated to a stunning celebration of dance, music and drama at our annual Summer Showcase in

early July. Congratulations to everyone involved in an impressive show, and thanks to the Performing Arts team for their inspirational work with so many students. The Year 11 Art exhibition, premiered at this event, remains a visually stunning feature of the concourse and drew highly appreciative comments from the Showcase audience as they mingled before the show.

Year 5 students from a range of local primaries enjoyed their Culture Day at the High School, with a focus on communication. They were treated to a version of the Hungry Caterpillar in French performed by our Year 8 French Drama society, they built their own periscopes in Science and communicated without words in PE. Our Year 7 guides provided a warm, welcoming and friendly face for our visitors, guiding them brilliantly and keeping a tally of the merits and golden tickets each Year 5 earned during the day.

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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about TIKTOK



WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Adults tend to associate online videos with YouTube – but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a stream of short clips tailored to users' interests, based on what they've already watched. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while much of the content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where youngsters "were most likely to encounter a potential harm".

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT



While TikTok's Following feed only displays videos from familiar creators, For You is a collection based on a user's previously watched clips. Most of these videos will probably be inoffensive, but the app could potentially show something unsuitable. If children then engage with this content, more like it will follow. TikTok's guidelines prohibit the sharing of illegal or inappropriate content, but the huge number of uploads means that a small amount inevitably slips through.

BODY IMAGE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

According to Ofcom, most online harms for teens are body image related for girls (promoting unhealthy eating, body shaming and so on) and dangerous stunts for boys. Both are prevalent on TikTok. One extreme example of the latter was the 'blackout' trend, which encouraged users to hold their breath until they passed out from a lack of oxygen. This led to two families filing lawsuits against TikTok over the tragic deaths of their children.

IN-APP SPENDING



TikTok is free, but users have the option to buy TikTok coins, which can be used to purchase gifts for content creators. Coin bundles range from £9.99 to an eye-watering £89; while that may not sound appealing, the app still generated £7.9 billion in user spending in 2023. TikTok's policy is that under-18s can't make in-app purchases, but it's possible to bypass this with a fake birth date.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS



With more than 1.5 billion users globally, the potential for contact from strangers on TikTok is high – especially as accounts created by over-18s (or young people using a fake date of birth) are set to public by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and enables anyone to download or comment on them.

MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION

Although the short videos on TikTok tend to be more frivolous than the longer ones on YouTube, clips can still influence impressionable minds in a negative way. Not only is there plenty of dangerous misinformation on TikTok, but Ofcom reports that nearly a third of 12 to 15-year-olds use TikTok as a news source – so you should be wary of misogynistic, racist or conspiracy-themed material shaping how they see the world.

ADDICTIVE DESIGN

With its constant stream of eye-catching videos, TikTok can be addictive to young brains. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 127 minutes per day on the app: that's twice as much as in 2020. Excessive use can interfere with young people's sleep patterns – often leading to irritability – and distract them from other, healthier activities. The instantly skippable nature of bite-size videos may also impact children's ability to maintain focus.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING



Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's, and control settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen-time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages – and if they can, to whom. Children can't alter these settings without parental approval.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS



If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure that they don't share any identifying personal information, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's also worth talking about misinformation and propaganda, and how to identify it.

BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING

If a child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can alter their settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We'd recommend enabling this feature, as it can be quite easy for a young person to spend a significant amount of real money buying TikTok coins to unlock more features of the app – sometimes without even realising.

READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



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