



# St Osmund's Catholic Primary School Newsletter

Love for God ~ Love for Each Other ~ Love for Learning

## Safer Internet Day

On Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February, our school marked Safer Internet Day (SID), an important annual event that promotes online safety for children and young people. We all know about the wealth of useful information there is out there on the internet, but we also need to be very clear about the risks and challenges it poses. This week, all classes participated in various activities and discussions to raise awareness about these in the digital world, as well as to develop the necessary skills for staying safe online.

On Safer Internet Day, our children showcased their commitment to online safety through their engagement with different aspects of the theme. Each class had the opportunity to reflect upon the areas that directly affect them and explore topics of interest.

The children's creativity truly shone as they produced an array of eye-catching posters, thought-provoking writing, and impressive artwork. Some of the children's work will be displayed around the school to not only celebrate their achievements but also to serve as a reminder of the importance of online safety.

As school and parents, it is our collective responsibility to cultivate a safe and positive online environment for our children. Safer Internet Day provides the perfect opportunity for us to come together and reinforce the importance of online safety. Through the engagement of all classes and the production of inspiring work, our students have taken another step towards becoming confident, responsible and resilient digital citizens.

## Healthy Eating Course

Spurgeon's are running a FREE healthy eating course at Five Rivers on Wednesdays at 10am – 11.30am from 28<sup>th</sup> February weekly until 20<sup>th</sup> March. You will learn about healthy eating and be given ingredients to cook a healthy family meal.

For more information or to book a place ring the children's centres central line on 0800 9704669 or go to [www.wiltshireschildrenscentres.org.uk](http://www.wiltshireschildrenscentres.org.uk)

## PE Kits

Please ensure your child has the full, correct PE Kit in school. This should include:

PE T-shirt, Navy shorts, Navy jogging bottoms or leggings, trainers, spare socks if your child wears tights.

Please remember to ensure your child can remove their stud earrings, or have tape to cover them up with.

PE Kits should stay in school where possible.

## Start Time 8:40am

Please remember that school starts officially at 8:40am on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February. Phonics starts promptly every day in KS1 as soon as school starts, and reading lessons begin in KS2 at the same time. It is therefore vital that your children are in on time at 8:40am for this start of the new term.

Bright eyed and bushy tailed!

## Lunches

Thank you for pre-ordering your child's lunches on schoolgrid. It has helped us create a relaxed and prompt start to the day's learning.

Please remember to cancel your child's lunch if they are going to be absent, otherwise you may be charged for the meal they didn't eat.

## Ash Wednesday

On Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2pm, we will have our Ash Wednesday Mass in Church. You are welcome to join us as we start our preparations for Lent.

## Star of the Week Awards

**Rec:** Josephine and Harry

**Year 1:** Aiden

**Year 2:** Hector and Evania

**Year 3:** Heart and Josie

**Year 4:** Octavia and A-J

**Year 5:** Melissa S and Don

**Year 6:** Adrian and Rosalia



# Dates for your diary...

[www.twitter.com](https://www.twitter.com/@St_OsmundsCP)  
@St\_OsmundsCP

19.02.24 ~ School reopens for start of Term 4 ~ **08:40am**  
20.02.24 ~ Whole school Mass (distribution of ashes) ~ St Osmund's Church ~ 2pm  
20.02.24 ~ Yr 4 Swimming Lessons commence  
21-26.02.24 ~ Parents evening sign up available  
04.03.24 ~ Parents Evening  
05.03.24 ~ Parents Evening  
07.03.24 ~ World Book Day  
13.03.24 ~ Reconciliation Service ~ in school  
14.03.24 ~ Class Photographs  
20.03.24 ~ Modern Foreign Languages day  
21.03.24 ~ Stations of the Cross – school hall  
26.03.24 ~ Life Education Visits (PSHE)  
28.03.24 ~ Break up end of Term 4 ~ 1:30pm

Mr R Sanderson  
Headteacher

God our Father,

You guide and direct us on our journey  
through life.

Be with us as next week we begin our  
Lenten journey of faith and love.

Help us to grow closer to you during this  
special holy season.

Help us to do your will each day during  
Lent.

Amen

## Safeguarding Team

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety,  
please speak to a member of the school safeguarding team:

Mr Sanderson – Designated Safeguarding Lead  
Mrs Chapman – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead  
Mrs Sambrook – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead  
Mrs Windsor – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

## Spotlight on... The PREVENT Strategy

(source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>)

### What is PREVENT?

Prevent is a government strategy designed to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorist or extremist causes.

### How does the PREVENT strategy apply to schools and parents?

From July 2015 all schools have a duty to safeguard children from radicalisation and extremism. This means we have a responsibility to protect children from extremism and violent views the same way we protect them from drugs or gang violence.

The PREVENT strategy is not just about discussing extremism itself, which may not be appropriate for younger children. It is also about teaching children the British Values: the Rule of Law, Democracy, Individual Liberty, Tolerance and Mutual respect.

We cover many age appropriate things in school to help students become positive, happy members of society, which also contributes to the Prevent Strategy.

For more information, see the link [here](#) to the Wiltshire PREVENT – Safeguarding page.

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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about MONKEY

Also known as Monkey Cool, this platform aims to fill the gap left by Omegle (which has now shut down) by placing users in random video chats with strangers. Participants use their mobile number and Snapchat username to connect to the service, where they can make matches, message other people and join group chats. The mobile version has been removed from the App Store due to safety concerns, but iPhone owners can still access the site via their web browser. The app remains available on Google Play, where its listing claims that Monkey has more than 30 million users worldwide.

**AGE RESTRICTION**  
**17+**

(although the lack of age verification means that someone younger could easily log in with a false date of birth)

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

The app claims to use AI to detect sexual content or activity that violates its policies, along with having a 24/7 moderation team. However, reports in the media continue to indicate that explicit content remains commonplace on Monkey (including sexually graphic or violent material) and is therefore accessible to anybody who uses the app – including those aged under 18.

UNDER 18

### CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

The obvious risk in accepting random video chat partners is that users cannot know what or who they will see on their next connection. Talking to strangers is, of course, potentially dangerous – especially for children who might be persuaded to meet up with these people offline. The app lets users find each other by location, increasing the chances of a child being matched with a stranger from their local area.

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### IN-APP SPENDING

While Monkey is free to download, it nevertheless offers in-app purchases promising to unlock access to premium features. For example, users who wish to make use of 'Knock Knock chat' (Monkey's text-based messaging option), rather than the app's Chatroulette-style random video calling feature, will need to pay to be able to do so.

### INTRUSIONS ON PRIVACY

According to Monkey's privacy policy, personal information (such as name, profile picture and date of birth), user-contributed content (any photos, texts, videos and screenshots shared) and each user's browser and IP address are collected. That is a considerable amount of data for Monkey to gather on its users – and all of this information is shared with third parties.



## Advice for Parents & Carers

### DISCUSS THE DANGERS

Even if you're comfortable with your child using Monkey, it's still important to talk about the potential dangers. It's crucial, for instance, that young people recognise the risks that stem from video chatting with strangers; that they understand not to share identifying information (like their street or school name); and that they know what to do if they are exposed to inappropriate content.



### RESTRICT IN-APP PURCHASING

If your child is accessing Monkey via an Android device, you can prevent them from making in-app purchases through the device's settings. If you do allow your child to use the site, we'd recommend that you enable this feature: young people have been known to spend significant amounts of money in their desire to unlock more features in apps such as this.



### REPORT INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Monkey states in the safety section of its site that "people are given the power" and that, to a large extent, Monkey is "self-governing." If a user is exposed to sexually explicit or inappropriate content on the platform, they can select the 'police' emoji in the top right corner of their screen to submit a report for Monkey's moderation team to review.



### SPOT THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that your child is spending too much time on Monkey – or that they may have been exposed to inappropriate or distressing content – it's important to watch for potential indications that they've been affected emotionally. They could be unusually irritable or unable to concentrate, for example, or failing to complete their homework or even to eat regular meals.



## 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.



The National College



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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about DISCORD

AGE RATING

13+

Servers and channels marked as 'NSFW' require users to be 18 or older to join.

Discord is a free app which allows users to communicate in real time via text, video or voice chat. Available on desktop and mobile devices, it was originally designed to help gamers cooperate – but has evolved into a more general networking platform for a range of online communities, discussing topics like TV series, music, Web3 and more. Discord is organised around closed groups, referred to as 'servers'. To join a server, users must be invited or provided with a unique link. It's a space for users to interact with friends, meet others with shared interests and collaborate privately online – but it's also a place where young people can be exposed to risks if the right precautions aren't taken.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### CYBERBULLYING

Discord's easy accessibility and connectivity, unfortunately, makes it an ideal place for cyberbullying to occur – especially as audio and video streams disappear once they've ended, meaning that bullying could take place without leaving any evidence. Closed groups can also be created, giving young people the opportunity to exclude their peers or send cruel messages without adult oversight.

### DIFFICULT TO MODERATE

Like many private communication apps, Discord's real-time messaging can be difficult to control. The system enables content moderation through each individual server – so different groups can set their own rules for what's acceptable, and some groups may not monitor for unsuitable content. Anything that happens in an audio or video stream is also virtually untraceable once the stream has concluded.

### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Discord mainly hosts private groups, making it easier for unsuitable or explicit content to be shared on channels. Pornography, racism and inappropriate language can be found in some groups. Server owners are required to add an age-restriction gate to channels where 18+ content is being shared – but this solution isn't foolproof, as the platform doesn't always verify users' ages when they sign up.

### ACCESSIBLE TO PREDATORS

On many chat platforms, users can lie about their age or true identity – and Discord is no exception. Predators have attempted to abuse the platform by using it to contact and communicate with underage users – by initially chatting with a child on an age-appropriate channel, for example. While Discord has improved its safety settings, some users will still try to bypass them for malicious reasons.

### CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Discord does have strict Terms of Service and Community Guidelines to protect its users – but, sadly, not everyone adheres to them. Criminal activity including grooming, hate speech, harassment, exploitative content, doxing and extremist or violent material have all been found on Discord servers over the last two years. In 2020, Discord received almost 27,000 reports of illegal activity on the platform.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### REVIEW SAFETY SETTINGS

Discord has a series of safety settings, enabling users to choose who can direct message them or send them friend requests. Your child's experience on Discord will be much safer if the app's privacy and safety settings are configured to only allow messages or friend requests from server members. This will minimise the chances of potential predators from outside the group contacting them.

### EXPLAIN AGE FILTERING

While Discord requires users to be at least 13 to sign up, many servers geared towards older users are flagged as NSFW (not safe for work), which indicates they probably contain material that's inappropriate for children. It can be easy to click through settings without properly reviewing them, so ensure your child understands why age filtering is important and that it's there to protect them.

### SCREEN OUT EXPLICIT CONTENT

In the privacy and safety settings, Discord users are offered the ability to filter direct messages for inappropriate content: a setting that should be enabled if your child uses the platform. Discord automatically tries to flag images that are explicit, but the setting must be manually enabled for text. If a young user is sent explicit content in a direct message, Discord will scan and (if necessary) delete it.

### MONITOR ONLINE ACTIVITY

It's wise to regularly review your child's activity on Discord. This can include checking their safety settings to ensure they're correctly enabled, talking about which servers they've joined and reviewing some of their friends and direct messages. Ask if anything has made them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Things can change quickly online, so plan routine check-ins and follow up frequently.

### DISCUSS GOOD ONLINE BEHAVIOUR

The anonymity offered by the internet often leads people to communicate more openly online and behave differently than they would at school or home. It's crucial to bear in mind, though, that every internet user is still a real person. Talk to your child about the severe and lasting consequences that cyberbullying or exchanging inappropriate material online can have in the real world.

### HAVE CANDID CONVERSATIONS

It can sometimes be awkward to discuss topics like grooming, pornography, racism or explicit content with your child – but it's important to ensure they're aware of the harms these things can pose. Talking openly about these subjects is a great way to help your child feel more comfortable about coming to you if they experience an unwanted encounter on Discord (or anywhere else online).

## Meet Our Expert

Coral Cripps is a Canadian-born, London-based tech journalist at [gmw3.com](http://gmw3.com): a website specialising in all things Web3, gaming and XR (extended reality). With a focus on brands and culture, she researches and writes about the ways that our current innovations – including the metaverse and Web3 – are impacting people, places and things.



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Sources: <https://www.defendyoungminds.com/post/dangers-of-discord-6-steps-ensuring-teen-on-popular-chat-app/> <https://support.discord.com/hc/en-us/articles/360000000000> <https://index.coeplatform.org/critiques/discord-is-a-haven-for-gamers-and-sexual-exploitation/> <https://today.com/discord-deleted-thousands-of-violent-extreme-and-prim-1646223266>



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