

W E E K L Y

# NEWSLETTER

**MAGDALEN**  
COURT SCHOOL



**Our new Forest School site!**

## SUMMER TERM 1 – WEEK 2

### Bank Holiday

Please note - Monday 1st is a Bank Holiday and Tuesday 2nd is an Inset Day. Therefore, next week, the school week will begin on Wednesday 3rd May.

### Excellent role models for our younger students!

Sincere congratulations are due to those who are preparing for examinations in May and June. Our learners are doing brilliantly and the way in which they have used learned strategies to cope with this stressful period of revision does them enormous credit. We wish them every success and hope that they are able to do themselves justice in the 'real thing'.

### Willow Post Box

It's been lovely to see our learners using the Willow Post Box this week. Please remind your learners that if they are struggling with anything and would like to speak to Grace or Olivia, to please post a message in the Post Box!

### Swimming

A big well done to all of our learners who had swimming lessons this week! They all behaved brilliantly, and we were so impressed with our very brave and very able swimmers! Thank you to Emma and Grace for working so hard to organise this.

## Headteacher's Award



This week's Headteacher's Award is given to Rosie for being an excellent role model in her friendships!

## Stars of the Week!



Oak - Rosie  
Larch - Kai  
Beech - Harrison  
Holly - Jasmine  
Elm - Isabel  
Hazel & Ash - James  
Post 16 - Rachel



## **Food Tech**

In food tech this week, Larch & Beech made a very simple yet delicious dhal recipe with homemade flatbreads, served up with yogurt and mango chutney. Oak made curried egg noodles and some sweet treats for Louise's surprise baby shower. Holly & Elm made a spicy prawn noodle stir fry with ginger and garlic, and Hazel cooked up a garlicky black bean beef with rice! Learners in Post 16 and Ash have been selecting recipes which they will begin practicing for part of their BTEC assessments later this term.

## **Outreach Trip to the RAMM Exhibition: Earth Spells - Witches of the Anthropocene**

This week, Olivia took one of our Outreach learners to a fascinating exhibition at the RAMM. The exhibition explored otherworldly connections to nature and was a brilliant trip!

## **Artwork of the week!**

Holly class have been working on landscapes in their Art lessons this term and Oliver has produced a fantastic interpretation of a Cézanne landscape, using oil pastels. This piece of art has now been framed and will be displayed in school - well done Oliver!



## A new friend for Post 16?

We might have a new friend joining us soon! A Western Hognose snake is looking for a new home and we thought the Post 16 room might be a great option, although everyone would be welcome to say hello!

Western Hognose snakes are an incredibly interesting and unique species that many reptile-lovers enjoy. They make great pets and would be a brilliant way to support our learners taking on more responsibility. However, we do appreciate that not everyone is an animal person! If anyone has any concerns, allergies or phobias, and would like to chat about it - please contact Amy in Post 16 ([ahenson@magdalencourt.org](mailto:ahenson@magdalencourt.org)) or speak to your class teacher.



## Social Media

We are incredibly excited to announce that we have now created our very own social media accounts where you can find regular updates and useful information, as well as seeing what the learners have been getting up to!

**Facebook:** Magdalen Court School

**Twitter:** @MagdalenCourtSc

**Instagram:** magdalencourtschool1

## Safeguarding

Following the Easter holidays, we are aware that many of our learners will have been spending more time on their devices than usual. As such, our focus this week is on helping our learners to manage device stress and anxiety. We do appreciate that many of our learners love spending times on their devices, and socialise with friends on various games - however, we would encourage all our families to have open conversations about healthy use of devices, and how to manage any anxiety they may feel.



# Helping children and young people with MANAGING DEVICE STRESS AND ANXIETY

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

The internet and advances in the capability of digital devices have afforded us arguably the fastest period of technological and social evolution in living memory: creating opportunities for us to interact with people anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day. It's also, however, blurred safety boundaries and added new stresses for young people, who are often less aware of the hidden hazards. With almost half of 10-15-year-olds experiencing bullying online and algorithms pushing content in front of our children every day, it's important to know how to address some of these challenges.

## LIVING ONLINE

The internet is awash with sophisticated algorithms that learn from our online behaviour and try to predict our wants and needs. That's very helpful in some respects, but it can make the online world difficult for children and young people to negotiate. Content can be brought to them at any time – it may not always be appropriate, and children may not have the ability or the support to deal with it.

## PUSHY NOTIFICATIONS

Content is also directed at us through notifications from our apps: letting us know we have a new message or social post to read, for example. While that's useful in some circumstances, it conditions us to keep going back online (and is designed to do so) and can be a near-constant demand on your child's attention. As such alerts become more common, are we experiencing an 'attack of the pings'?

## BLURRED BOUNDARIES

There are now so many ways we can communicate online in real time (like instant messaging apps) or with a delay (such as on social media) that it's possible to be constantly in conversation. Young people often prefer quickfire exchanges of text – but using fewer words can cause distressing miscommunications through the lack of non-verbal cues like facial expressions or tone of voice.

## DIGITAL DEPENDENCY

As devices allow access to immediate external help in challenging situations, it's a concern that children may not be developing the inner confidence to work things out for themselves. Likewise, group membership is hugely important to young people – both in digital and 'real' life – and being excluded from online conversations can cause damaging feelings of loneliness and isolation.

## DISGUISED DISTRESS

Children often haven't yet developed the emotional resources to deal with many of the setbacks of everyday life, so identifying when it's specifically something online that's worried them can be tricky. A certain level of stress is a normal response to a problem: it spurs us into action to keep ourselves safe. If the stress is excessive, though, it can feel overwhelming and potentially lead to anxiety or depression.

## ANTI-SOCIAL SOCIALS

Social media can bring people together in hugely positive ways. Sadly, it does also have a darker side, including 'flame war' arguments which can escalate quickly and have hurtful consequences. With so many people looking on, 'group shaming' situations are also common – while there are continual opportunities for young people to compare themselves negatively with other social media users.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### LEARN THE BASICS

It's impossible to keep up with every online change or every new app. The best option is to make yourself aware of the fundamentals of how the internet operates, so you can help your child to grasp how – and why – content reaches them. Devices and the digital world can be confusing, so learning to understand them better will give you the confidence to talk to your child about them.

### TALK IT OUT

If a child mentions a comment that's been directed at them in a text chat or on social media, it may sound minor but can actually have a much bigger effect than we realise. In our evolved brains, any perceived threat can get internalised while our body reacts as if we were in physical danger – raising stress levels. It's always worth encouraging your child to get any concerns out in the open.

### PUSH DISTRACTIONS AWAY

Notifications to our phones and tablets can be helpful, but they sometimes make one wonder who's really in charge: the person or the device? Checking our phone as soon as it goes off is an easy habit to fall into – especially for young people. Try switching off non-essential alerts on your devices and encourage your child to do the same: you should both feel less triggered and more in control.

### LOOK FOR THE SIGNS

This is tricky – and may depend on the child's age – but any sudden change in behaviour is worth looking out for. If your child seems to be checking their phone or tablet more, doesn't want to be parted from them, or appears unusually secretive, anxious or withdrawn, it could be a sign that something is amiss in relation to their device – and, possibly, that they're in need of extra support.

### KEEP CHECKING IN

Healthy emotional regulation balances three systems: threat, drive and grounding. Down the various rabbit holes of the internet, however, that balance can easily slip away – so it's important to help your child manage their emotions when they're online. Check in with them regularly when they're on their device, and remember that 'distraction' and 'relaxation' aren't always the same thing.

### BE KIND: UNWIND

Be kind to yourselves as parents and carers. Remember that we're all in the same boat, trying to safely guide our children through this complex, fast-moving digital environment. Getting into the habit of having natural, relaxed conversations with your child about their online life (and yours) can level the playing field and make it far easier for them to open up to you about any concerns.

## Meet Our Expert

Dr Carole Francis-Smith is an experienced counselling psychologist who specialises in promoting safe and ethical online communications. She consults with and offers bespoke training to businesses and organisations, supporting positive and effective online communications – often by considering some of the more hidden aspects of the various mediums.



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#WakeUpWednesday

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