

W E E K L Y

# NEWSLETTER

**MAGDALEN**  
COURT SCHOOL



## SUMMER TERM 1 – WEEK 4

### Exams

Exam season has begun! **Please note - after learners have completed their exams, they must stay in school for the rest of the day.** We wish all learners completing exams the very best of luck!

### Outdoor Education

Despite the weather, it's been another great week for the Outdoor Education team! Oak class in particular had a great day - as the photo above shows!

Next week, learners will be returning to the forest school site where they will be focusing on river crossings. The forecast is looking much brighter next week, so hopefully the site will start to dry up! However, please ensure your learner has spare, waterproof clothing - as well as a water bottle.

## Headteacher's Award



This week's Headteacher's Award is given to Arthur for displaying a very mature attitude all week.

### School Snake

In a previous newsletter, we discussed the possibility of getting a snake as a new school pet. If anyone has any concerns regarding this, please contact Amy (Post 16) on [ahenson@magdalencourt.org](mailto:ahenson@magdalencourt.org) by **Friday 19th May**.

## Stars of the Week!



Oak - Sophie  
Larch - Arthur  
Beech - Harrison  
Holly - Ruby  
Elm - Grace  
Hazel & Ash - Callan  
Post 16 - Reuben

## Beech Writing

It's time for another mystery story from Beech class and this week, we've got Part One of Izak's story 'Cowboys' (working title). Check back next week for the exhilarating conclusion!

*It was a hot, sweltering New Mexico morning, and Herbert Eadstone was dead. Lying face-up outside Sunny's Saloon 500 yards away from the town of Wyatt; cigarette in hand and with a crimson wound sprouting from his chest. It was an undignified death for the young wagon maker, but that didn't matter now, all that did matter was why he had that crimson hole drilled into him, and that was why I was here. Soaked with sweat on this prairie morning, hired to investigate why this one wagon maker died in a lonely corner of the forgotten west. I gently hooked my finger around the trigger of his finely-polished revolver, slid it into my empty holster, and entered the Saloon to search for clues.*

*When I entered the bar, I was immediately hit with the smell of beer and ash mixing with the scorching heat, creating an aroma only felt in the west; and the saloon's patrons matched this idea perfectly: There was a proud, respectable soldier smoking cigarette after cigarette, a bandit type hiding behind his newspaper, a young woman drinking far more than I would have expected of anyone of her appearance, and a crotchety old man with a leg missing. And behind the bar, there stood a barman, cleaning glasses while whistling a chipper tune. Seeking the full picture, I decided to ask the soldier first: he was a tall, squarish fellow with a well-groomed moustache and many finely-polished medals firmly attached to his coat, I asked him what he knew about Herbert Eadstone, and he responded:*

*"Ah saw the whole affair, a man in a dahk poncho wearing a cowboy hat comes round the back o'the bah, he has a strange pack a' powdah' with him, which he unties and pours into his thermahs. Then, Mistah Eadstone comes round lookin' all scuffed up. The poncho man puts his hand on Mistah Eadstone's shouldah and offers him a drink. Mistah Eadstone drinks it, and alluva sudden he gets spasms and starts limpin'. And, get this, the poncho man just walks off. Now, I fought in the civil wah, and I know a dead man when I see one, you get the poncho man, and that's case closed parthnah'."*

*I noted the soldier's observations and thanked him for his contribution. I then wandered over to ask the bandit what he thought of the situation. He was a relatively young, thin man with a messy haircut and an undignified air about him. I didn't trust him much, but he was a possible witness and thus needed to be questioned. I asked him what he knew about Herbert Eadstone, and he responded:*

*"Oh yeah, I saw it all, The dead guy is wandering along the road, holding a cigarette in his hand, classic idiot. When suddenly, a guy in a blue shirt who looks a little like the barman jumps out from nowhere and stabs him in the heart like, 5 times, blood's spurtin' everywhere but the killer covers the deado's mouth so he can't scream. Deado pulls out his gun but it ain't loaded so he can't fight back. And once it's over, the dead guy falls to the ground holdin' his gun and the killer runs off into the sunset. He's probably cashin' in the deed to Deado's wagon store by now."*

**Part Two coming next week!**



## Food Tech

In food tech this week, Larch made a Thai style sweet and sour chicken dish using pineapple, tomato and oyster sauce. Holly and Elm learners made a sticky ginger beef or tofu dish with a sensational dressing using lime juice & zest, oil, red wine vinegar and chilli jam, mixed into some salad and vermicelli noodles! Hazel made a very simple dahl recipe, using turmeric and fried cumin seed with onion, complemented with some quick home made flatbreads, mango chutney and yogurt. Post 16 and Ash class have continued with practicing their chosen recipes in preparation for their practical assessments. I am so pleased with the progress these learners are making and demonstrating more confidence and independence in the lessons. Oak class made a speedy prawn soup and egg fried rice this week, which was very yummy! Next week, Beech class will be making chicken fried rice, Larch will make a spicy cauliflower and chickpea curry and Holly & Elm learners will make a roasted cauliflower with aromatic spices. Hazel class will be making a tropical fruit salad with toasted oats and Oak class will be making homemade vegetable samosas. Post 16 learners will continue practicing and adapting their recipes, whilst learners in Ash will begin to complete practical assessments where they invite a member of staff to share the recipe with, during their practical task.



## Coronation Celebration!

A big thank you again to PAFOM for arranging the brilliant Coronation Celebration last Friday! The learners enjoyed a lucky dip, delicious cakes and cream teas and even a chance to score a goal against our very own Dean! It was especially lovely to see so many family members join us for the event.



The winner of the  
'Design a Crown' competition!  
Well done Arran!



## Safeguarding Display

This week saw our new Safeguarding display go up, in the top corridor - right outside the safeguarding office! The display features useful information for any of our learners who might want a bit of extra support, including details of the National Autistic Society, the OCD Helpline and Victim Support. We hope the learners find this display helpful and informative! Please do remind your learners that if they ever want to speak to a member of staff, to find Jane in the Safeguarding Office or Grace in Willow.






## Next Week



Please find the schedule for next week below - featuring Outdoor Ed, Food Tech, Swimming and Exams.

# THE WEEK AHEAD



<b>MONDAY</b> <b>Food</b> Beech (Thai chicken fried rice)	<b>TUESDAY</b> <b>KS4/5 Biology Exam</b> <b>Outdoor Ed</b> Holly & Elm (Forest school) <b>Food</b> Larch (Cauliflower & chickpea curry) Post 16 (BTEC practice) Hazel (Toasted oats with fruit)	<b>WEDNESDAY</b> <b>Outdoor Ed -</b> Oak (Forest school) <b>Food:</b> Holly & Elm (Indian roasted cauliflower) Ash (BTEC practice) <b>Swimming -</b> Larch, Beech, Holly
<b>THURSDAY</b> <b>Outdoor Ed</b> Larch & Beech (Forest school) <b>Swimming</b> Oak & Elm	<b>FRIDAY</b> <b>KS4/5 Maths Exam</b> <b>Outdoor Ed</b> Hazel, Ash & Post 16 (Forest school) <b>Food</b> Oak (samosas)	

**NOTE**  
Forest School site is still very muddy - please ensure learners are sent in with waterproof and spare clothing for Outdoor Ed days!

## Safeguarding

This week our safeguarding focus is the impact of Social Media on Mental Health. Next week is Mental Health week in the UK, and we are encouraging the whole Magdalen Court community to start conversations at home about how we use social media and especially focusing on how our learners may be experiencing it. It's so important for young people to be able to have open, non-judgemental conversations about their internet use, and how to cope if they may be finding it difficult to manage.



# 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 entralls 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 what 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 email 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-55245495>  
<https://iprousocial.com/insights/social-media-algorithms/>

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