

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our weekly newsletter.

### Curriculum

“Year 4 had an amazing Egyptian day – we did some crafts and a museum to show Year 3. We mummified a tomato and it was so gross!” – *Ella*

“I really felt that we were back in time, apart from the weather!” – *Oliver M*

“I liked dressing up for Ancient Egyptian day” - *Jaafar*



Year 3 enjoyed an Ancient Greek day complete with some lovely costumes and many activities connected with their learning, such as clay modelling, artwork and a Greek feast.



Year 2 learning about time and enjoying a time bingo game



Year 6 pupils cooked up a storm with their fantastic vegetable tray bakes which looked, smelt and tasted amazing



Year 1 and Year 4 pupils got together for some partner reading



## Staffing

Mrs Latham, Woodpeckers class teacher, will be leaving the Holbrook team at the end of the summer term. Mrs Latham has been a part of the Holbrook staff team for over 17 years, teaching a variety of year groups and playing a full part in the life of the school. She is leaving to spend more time with her family and pursuing other adventures.

We are pleased to welcome two new teachers to Holbrook. Miss Michael-Howard and Mr Fiveash will join in September, with both knowing the school already having worked here previously. Both will also be in school before that, as part of our transition events.



## Safeguarding – online safety

Minecraft remains hugely popular with young players, offering creative freedom and social interaction. This guide explores how features like public servers, in-game chat and multiplayer modes can introduce risks, including contact with strangers, exposure to inappropriate behaviour and privacy concerns linked to independent server hosting.

It also highlights issues such as griefing, in-game spending and potentially addictive gameplay loops. With clear, actionable advice, the guide helps parents set boundaries, choose safer settings and support children in enjoying Minecraft responsibly while staying protected online. Click on the poster for more information.

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](http://nationalcollege.com).

### What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MINECRAFT

As the best-selling game in history, Minecraft has made a name for itself by empowering audiences of all ages to harness their creativity. Originally an indie hit, it's become a cultural phenomenon with merchandise, spin-off titles, and wider media adaptations. Even if you don't know your Creepers from your Endermen, this guide will explore the risks of Minecraft in 2025 and explain how to support a safe gaming experience for the children in your care.

#### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

##### PUBLIC SERVER COMMUNICATION

Many players enjoy Minecraft with others, including friends and unknown players online. In-game text chat is commonly used to coordinate building projects and gameplay, and this can extend to adding friends outside chat. While often harmless, this creates risks around contact with strangers, and in some cases server hosts may expose IP addresses (if hosting independently), which raises privacy and security concerns.

##### GRIEFING BEHAVIOUR

Some players deliberately damage or destroy other players' creations. This behaviour, known as griefing, is a form of bullying that can undo hours of effort and cause frustration or distress to affected players. Although many servers treat griefing as a serious offence, enforcement varies. Children who prefer to build independently may feel safer working on private worlds or controlled servers.

##### ADDICTIVE GAMEPLAY LOOPS

Minecraft's creative focus can make it easy for players to lose track of time. The cycle of gathering resources and building projects can be highly engaging, which may challenge digital screen-time limits if not managed effectively, this can impact children's sleep, schoolwork, and real-world social interaction.

##### SCARY GAME ELEMENTS

Although often compared to digital construction toys, some gameplay modes include hostile creatures with unsettling sounds and sudden encounters. While there is no graphic violence, younger players may still find zombies, spiders, or dark environments frightening. These experiences can lead to anxiety or reluctance to play, depending on the child's age and sensitivity.

##### IN-GAME SPENDING

Minecraft requires a one-off purchase of a free trial, usually around £16, but additional spending is possible. Players can buy cosmetic content or subscribe to Minecraft: Realms for private servers. Without supervision, children may make unintended purchases. Subscription services and add-ons can also increase overall costs over time if not monitored.

##### ONLINE INTERACTIONS

Playing with others can introduce broader online safety concerns, including exposure to inappropriate language or behaviour. Some players may attempt to move conversations beyond the game, which increases risk to children's safety and welfare. Children may not always recognise these situations, meaning guidance and ongoing conversations about safe interactions are essential.

### Advice for Parents & Educators

#### CHOOSE SUITABLE GAME MODES

Creative or Peaceful modes remove hostile creatures and reduce the pressure during gameplay. These options allow children to focus on building and exploration without fear or attack. They are also ideal for shared play between adults and children, creating a calmer environment to learn the game and enjoy collaborative projects.

#### USE PRIVATE SERVERS

Setting up a private server helps control who can join a child's game. Access can be limited to trusted friends through passwords or invitations. This reduces the likelihood of unwanted interactions and gives adults greater oversight, while some options involve a subscription fee, they offer a safer and more controlled multiplayer experience.

#### DISCUSS ONLINE STRANGERS

Children should understand that not everyone they meet online is who they claim to be. Clear guidance about not sharing personal information is essential. Encourage children to report any worrying or uncomfortable interactions and reassure them that they can seek help without fear of punishment. Open, ongoing conversations help build their confidence and awareness of these issues.

#### SET SPENDING BOUNDARIES

Agree on clear rules around purchases before letting children play, and use device settings or platform controls to restrict spending within agreed limits. Explaining that in-game currency uses real-world money can help children make informed decisions. Regularly reviewing purchases together can also prevent unexpected costs and encourage responsible behaviour.

#### Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes spent 7 years in games media, before moving into the games industry via PR and marketing. A parent himself to a Minecraft-loving son, he understands why it's so important to play safe online.

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## HAODS' Juniors

Several of our Year 6 pupils along with other local children will be performing in this year's HAODS Juniors production of We Will Rock You on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> July. It promises to be a great event and the group would really appreciate your support.

## PSHE curriculum

Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) is a wide overarching curriculum subject, which includes Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). Here, the focus in primary school is to teach children the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships with particular reference to family, friends and relationships, including an understanding of what friendship and family means and how to show respect for others. It also includes the building of healthy online relationships and teaches the children how to ensure relationships are safe.

Our PSHE/RSHE curriculum [here](#) is adopted from the model PSHE Association document and was developed with parents several years ago. Recent changes to RSHE from the DfE encourage schools to review their curriculum and we would like to invite any interested parents into school for a meeting where we will explain the changes (which are minimal) and also, to share some of the resources (including 'No Outsiders' books) we use with each year group. The meeting will be held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 8:45-9:30am in the studio.

### Chartwells Hot Meal Ordering

CUT OFF DATE Thursday 23:59	FOR WEEK COMMENCING
28 <sup>th</sup> May	8 <sup>th</sup> June
4 <sup>th</sup> June	15 <sup>th</sup> June
11 <sup>th</sup> June	22 <sup>nd</sup> June
18 <sup>th</sup> June	29 <sup>th</sup> June
25 <sup>th</sup> June	6 <sup>th</sup> July
2 <sup>nd</sup> July	13 <sup>th</sup> July
9 <sup>th</sup> July	20 <sup>th</sup> July

Diary Dates (new additions in bold)	
w/c 25 <sup>th</sup> May	Half term- school closed
Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> June	Happy Holbrook session
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> June	Y5/6 mixed cricket at Horsham CC
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> June	Y3 Striking & Fielding Festival at The Bridge
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> June	YR trip to Washbrooks Farm
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> June	Y5 Footgolf at Rookwood Golf Club
Wed 17 <sup>th</sup> June	Sports Day
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> June	Y5/Y6 girls cricket at Horsham CC
Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> June	Y2 trip to Drusillas
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> July	Y6 Production
Mon 13 <sup>th</sup> July	Y6 Leaver's Assembly
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> July	Y6 Production

Have a safe, relaxing and enjoyable half-term.

Kind regards,



Ian Holmes  
Headteacher