



Pear Tree School

Achieving the Best We Can in Everything We Do

Newsletter

Autumn 2 - 2022

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Introduction

Here we are at Christmas and I have just enjoyed watching the first performance of our Lower School's Nativity. What an absolute joy it was to see each and every pupil shine! Have a look at some of the photographs in this newsletter to see the happiness on each child's face.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff in school. Their positivity and dedication ensures that all children get the best education and support possible. They all support me in my school improvement initiatives, and are amazing advocates for our children and young people.

Christmas can be a tricky time for many of our children, but we have tried to keep our usual routines in place whilst still sprinkling a bit of Christmas magic into this final week.

Please can I also thank all of our families for your continued support and collaboration, and I look forward to working with you in the New Year.

With the warmest of wishes,

Kate



Nativity Photos



Pear Tree are changing how we will
communicate with you

We will soon be using



Please keep your eyes peeled
for more information on how
to access the Website and the
Parent App.

SchoolSpider will help to keep
you updated on events
happening in school and will
be an accessible way to receive
and return information
directly.



SchoolSpider will allow
you direct access to:

Class Bloggs

Facebook

Newsletters

Dates for Diaries

And much more.....



SchoolSpider

Preparing for Adulthood

With a focus on employment and future options all upper school pupils have taken part in work experience activities. This has not only inspired our pupils to strive for employment or supported employment options as part of their future but also helped to raise awareness within the local community of how amazing our students are and the value that they can add to local businesses and community projects.



At a local holiday let, some of our older students have applied skills learnt in independent living lessons to help strip and make the beds in preparation for new arrivals.

A group of students embarked on a litter picking task after raising their awareness of the importance of looking after our own school environment. They applied their skills of focus and concentration to search for litter and used their motor



Whilst working in local shops our pupils have practised communication skills to greet and serve customers as well as applying numeracy skills to work on the tills.

On behalf of everyone at Pear Tree, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the local businesses and volunteers who have supported our pupils to experience real world of work activities. Without you the week couldn't have been the success it was and we look forward to continuing to work with you to offer employment tasters in the future.

Creative Curriculum

The Creative Curriculum theme this half term has been Our Diverse Planet and classes have taken part in some exciting and engaging activities throughout the half term.



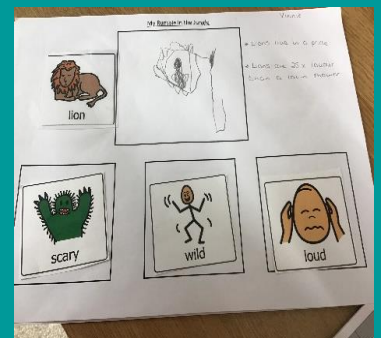
For the first week, pupils were learning about being scientists by taking part in lots of fun experiments and investigations. We have been using microscopes to observe lots of different things including materials and mini beasts. We have also been predicting what we thought would happen when exploring materials and resources from the science cupboard.



The week was rounded off by Chris leading a science assembly where all the predicting and observing skills they had practised were put to the test.



All classes have been reading books linked to the theme and they have worked really hard to produce fact files about animals and famous scientists.



Online Safety

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many apps which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

(certain features are restricted to over-18s only)

TikTok is a free social media platform that lets users create, share and watch short videos ranging anywhere from 15 seconds to 10 minutes in duration. The app gained notoriety for its viral dances, trends and celebrity cameos and can be a creative, fun platform for teens to enjoy. Now available in 75 languages, it has more than a billion active users worldwide (as of spring 2022) and is most popular with the under-16 age bracket. In fact, a 2022 Ofcom report found TikTok to be the most-used social media platform for posting content, particularly among young people aged 12 to 17.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

While TikTok's "Following" feed only displays videos from users someone follows, "For You" is a stream of clips based on their previously watched content. Most videos on a child's "For You" feed will therefore be light-hearted and amusing, but it could potentially surface something unsuitable. TikTok's guidelines prohibit the sharing of illegal or inappropriate content, but the sheer volume of uploads mean they aren't manually monitored and vetted.

18
CENSORED

DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

Due to TikTok's immense popularity, some young people have unfortunately been influenced by videos challenging them to perform harmful, criminal or even deadly acts. One extreme example was the 'blackout' trend, which encouraged users to hold their breath until they passed out from a lack of oxygen. It led to two families filing lawsuits against TikTok over the tragic deaths of their children.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

With around 1.1 billion users globally, the potential for contact from strangers on TikTok is high – especially as accounts created by over-16s (or youngsters using a false date of birth) are set to public by default. This not only means that someone's profile is visible to everyone else on the app; it also lets their videos be suggested to others and enables anyone to comment on them or download them.

IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but users have the option to buy TikTok coins, which can be used to purchase emojis in the app. These emojis are then sent as rewards (retaining their monetary value) to other users for videos they've created. Coin bundles range from £9.99 to an eye-watering £99; TikTok's policy is that they can't be bought by under-18s, but it's possible to bypass this with a fake birthdate.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

Like all social networking platforms, TikTok can be addictive: figures show that young people are investing increasing amounts of time in it. In the UK, children with TikTok spend an average of 102 minutes per day on the app, versus 53 minutes on YouTube. This compulsive repeated use can interfere with their sleep patterns – leading to irritability – and distract them from other activities.

TIKTOK NOW

Introduced in late 2022, the 'TikTok Now' feature lets users post a daily video or photo at the exact same time as their friends. Users receive a synchronised notification at a random time of day, giving them three minutes to take a video or real-time photo. This addition can not only be a distraction to young people but could lead to them inadvertently sharing private content such as their location.

Advice for Parents & Carers

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account with their child's and control their settings remotely. Parents can then, for example, turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content); set screen time limits; and manage their child's ability to send messages (and to whom). Children can't alter these settings without parental approval.

MAKE ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Although under-16s will have their TikTok account set to private by default, bypassing this setting is relatively easy. However, parents have the ability to manually set their child's account to private – meaning that their videos won't be visible to strangers and they won't be able to exchange messages with people who aren't on their friends list.

LIMIT IN-APP SPENDING

If your child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can alter the settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We'd recommend that you enable this feature, as it's quite easy for a young person – without realising what they're doing – to spend a significant amount of real money buying TikTok coins so they can unlock more features of the app.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If your child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's crucial to talk about the potential risks in this type of app. For example, ensure they understand not to share any identifying personal information – and that they realise they could be exposed to inappropriate content. Thinking critically about what they see on TikTok can help children become generally more social media savvy.

READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that your child might be spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something inappropriate or upsetting that they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the possible signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as are failing to complete homework or regularly not eating meals.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid *The Inquirer*, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



National
Online
Safety

#WakeUpWednesday



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Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 23.11.2021

Goodbye and Good Luck

Anne Wallis (Transition Support Advisor) has decided to take early retirement. Anne has been a member of staff at Pear Tree School for over 36 years and has supported hundreds of children in her time. As the Transition Support Advisor she has effectively supported young people and their families through a very sensitive time and her wealth of knowledge and positive attitude will be greatly missed by us all at Pear Tree. We wish her so much love and luck as she moves on and I know she already has lots of holidays planned to fill her time.

Other staff who are sadly leaving Pear Tree at the end of the year are: Sue Sharples, Kim Pattison (Compass Centre), Mel Wong (Bay Tree), Lauren Gillespie (Elm Tree). We wish all those staff leaving a very happy future and hope that they all take a bit of Pear Tree magic away with them.



Dates for diaries

Friday 16th December

School closes for Christmas

Tuesday 3rd January

School re-opens

Friday 27th January

Elm Tree Class Assembly

Friday 10th February

Break up for Half Term

