

Newlaithe's Newsletter



7th March 2025

Diary Dates:

March

17th/18th/19th Book Fair
18th Parents' Evening 1
21st March Comic Relief
27th March Parents' Evening 2
28th Non-uniform Choc bingo

April

1st Y5 Edinburgh
Y3 Easter Performance
2nd Chocolate Bingo
4th Finish at 1:20pm

Parents Evening

Get the dates above in your diaries and keep an eye out for the booking information. We expect 100% attendance at parents' evenings this way we can work together to get the best for your children.

World Book Day

World book day was a resounding success with everyone getting into the spirit. Thank you to Miss Prosser for organising the book sale and parents for their donations. We raised a brilliant £76.

Lots of great costumes but it really didn't matter. Everyone enjoyed the extra reading themed activities from live online sessions with famous people to bookmark making.



Dear Parents,

Spring is definitely in the air as I gaze out of my window at the blue sky and daffodils blooming in the orchard. Then the screech of the school bell sounds and I am rudely awoken from my dreams with something like this....



I tell a lie, I love it when the children come to my office for the speakers, to show their work or to just come for a chat. It makes my day.

Much has been happening the last couple of weeks but there is also much to come. Assessment week for the whole school will give us valuable information on how children are progressing. Teachers will relay this back to you at parents' evening in a couple of weeks. Having parents' meetings at this time of year gives us not only a chance to celebrate but also consider areas to improve for the second half of the year. This includes parents' ensuring homework, reading, times tables etc. are all supported! As a dad of two boys I know how things can slip. Looking forward to seeing you all on the evening.

Head Teacher's Awards

Head Teacher Award winners this week.



Bikeability

It was great to see so many of the year four's having a go at bikeability. This will hopefully set them up for the sessions to come in future years. Knowing how to control bikes and knowing about the rules of the road is so important as the roads get busier and busier.

Year three swimming.

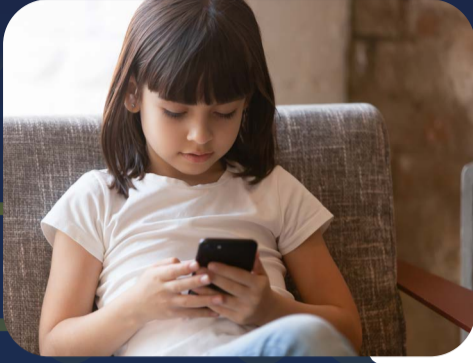
Class two have been having their swimming lessons the past fortnight and I believe they are going brilliantly. It's interesting that there seems to be less and less children each year who can swim at this age. I always believed it was a right of passage to learn to swim especially with the deaths we have had on the River Eden in the last couple of years. I wonder why there is such a decline? Is it cost, time, availability of sessions. I would be interested to know your views. Even though we provide very costly swimming lessons it really is just a starting point for children, I would strongly advocate that you added extra time in the pool where possible.

SEND

Mrs Rollings has now found a comfortable spot in school and is wading through the paperwork involved in special educational needs. Unfortunately there is no magic wand, however can I assure you that Mrs Rollings with her vast knowledge on the subject will do all she can to support children and parents. Should you require any information please contact her in school and she will return your call as soon as possible.



Online Grooming is when someone befriends and builds an emotional relationship with a child and communicates with them through the internet with the intent to commit a sexual offence. This type of victimisation can take place across any platform; from social media and messaging apps to online gaming and live streaming. Often it involves young people being tricked, forced or pressured into doing something they wouldn't normally do (coercion) and often the groomer's goal is to meet the victim in a controlled setting to sexually or physically abuse them. In some cases children may be abducted or have long-lasting psychological damage.



What parents need to know about

ONLINE GROOMING



CHILDREN ARE MOST VULNERABLE

Unsurprisingly children are often most at risk as they are easy to target and unlikely to question the person who is engaging in conversation with them. Groomers will use psychological tricks and methods to try and isolate them from their families and friends and will often choose to target more vulnerable children who may be easier to manipulate. Predators will stalk apps and websites that are popular with young people and will use a 'scattergun' approach to find victims, contacting hundreds online to increase their chances of success.



LIVE STREAMING CONCERNS

Predators may use live video to target children in real-time using tricks, dares or built-in gifts to manipulate them. Grooming often takes the form of a game where children receive 'likes' or even money for performing sexual acts. Social media channels, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, all have live streaming capabilities, but there are many apps which children can use to live stream, including Omegle, Live.me, BIGO Live, YouNow and many more



ANYONE CAN BE A PREDATOR

The internet has made the ability to interact with strangers online easy. Many sites and apps are reliant on individual users entering their own information when signing up. However individuals can remain anonymous if they choose to enter inaccurate information and many online predator cases are due to groomers using impersonation techniques. However, often the greater threat comes from adults who 'hide in plain sight', choosing to befriend young children without hiding their real identity.



CAN BE DIFFICULT TO DETECT

Unfortunately, most children find the 'grooming' process (before any meeting) an enjoyable one as the predator will compliment, encourage, and flatter them to gain their trust, friendship and curiosity – 'a wolf in sheep's clothing' scenario. This often means children fail to disclose or report what is happening. If the groomer is also previously known to the child, their family and their friends, then this can make detection even harder.



FROM OPEN TO CLOSED MESSAGING

Online predators may contact their victims using any number of ways including social media, forums, chat rooms, gaming communities or live streaming apps. Sometimes there is little need to develop a 'friendship /rapport stage', as the victim has already shared personal information online and is communicating openly with others. Children may also be prepared to add other online users they don't know so well to gain 'online credibility' through increasing their friends list. Predators will often seize this opportunity to slowly build a relationship and then move their conversation with the child to a more secure and private area, such as through direct messaging.

EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS

Online predators will use emotive language and aim to form close, trusted bonds with their victims through showering them with compliments and making them feel good about themselves. Often victims will refer to them as their 'boyfriends' or 'girlfriends' and it can be difficult to convince some young people that they have been groomed, often leading to lasting psychological effects.

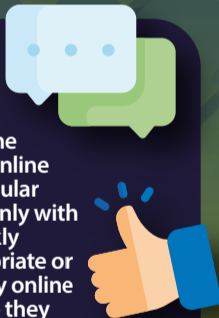


Safety Tips for Parents & Carers



IT'S GOOD TO TALK

It's unlikely that you can stop your child using the internet, nor can you constantly monitor their online activities, but you can talk to your child on a regular basis about what they do online. By talking openly with them about online relationships, they can quickly ascertain the kind of behaviour which is appropriate or inappropriate. Ask them whether they have any online friends or if they play online games with people they haven't met. This could then open up conversations about the subject of grooming.



CHECK PRIVACY SETTINGS

In order to give your child a safer online experience, it is important to check privacy settings or parental controls on the networks, devices, apps, and websites they use. Disable location sharing if you can. If you use location-sharing apps to check where your child is, remember that these could always be used by strangers to follow your child without their knowledge. Ensure that you check options so that location information is never shared with anyone except those they have permission to share with.



MONITOR SOCIAL MEDIA & LIVE-STREAMING USE

It's important to be aware of what your child is sharing on social media and with whom. Create your own profile and become "friends" with them or follow them so that you can monitor their activity. Similarly, always check on them if they are live streaming and implement privacy controls. Choose a generic screen name and profile picture that hides their identity. You may also feel more comfortable being present each time they live stream.



STICK TO 'TRUE FRIENDS'

Make it clear to your child that they should not accept friend requests from people they don't know and to verify friend requests with people who they do know. Encourage them to only interact and engage with 'true friends' i.e. those friends who don't ask personal questions such as close family and friends. Remind them to never agree to chat privately with a stranger or someone they don't really know and to never divulge personal information, such as mobile phone numbers, addresses, passwords or the name of their school.



DISCUSS HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Talk to your child about what a healthy relationship looks like and how to detect someone who might not be who they claim to be. Explain that groomers will pay your child compliments and engage in conversations about personal information, such as hobbies and relationships. They may admire how well they play an online game or how they look in a photo. Groomers will also try and isolate a child from people close to them, such as parents and friends, in order to make their relationship feel special and unique.

BE SUPPORTIVE

Show your child that you will support them and make sure they understand they can come to you with any concerns they may have. They need to know they can talk to you if someone does something they are uncomfortable with, whether that is inappropriate comments, images, requests or sexual comments.



Meet our expert

Jonathan Taylor is an online safety expert and former Covert Internet Investigator for the Metropolitan Police. He is a specialist in online grooming and exploitation and has worked extensively with both UK and international schools in delivering training and guidance around the latest online dangers, social media apps and platforms.



LOOK OUT FOR WARNING SIGNS

Child safety experts have identified key grooming patterns and advise parents to look out for:

- Secretive online behaviour.
- Late night internet or smartphone usage.
- Meeting new friends in unusual places.
- Becoming clingy, develop sleeping or eating problems or even bedwetting.
- Lack of interest in extra-curricular activities.
- Having new items, such as clothes or phones, unexplainably.
- Seem withdrawn, anxious, depressed or aggressive.
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends.

