

# Newlaithes Newsletter

12th January 2024



## Diary Dates:

**9th February** last day of term  
**Mon 19th Feb** back to school  
**14th March** Parents' Evening 1  
**15th March** Comic Relief  
**19th March** Parents' Evening 2

## 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.

## Attendance

School attendance is slipping a little. Our average attendance since returning to school is 95%. Any class achieving a full week of 100% will achieve their very own non-uniform day and there will be certificates/treat for any child achieving a 100% record through the year. Holidays cannot be authorised unless it is exceptional circumstances. The Government are really pushing high attendance and those whose attendance drops significantly will be in danger of receiving a fine from the Local Authority.

## What's going on

I had a wander around school this morning at 9:10. Even at that time it was great to see all the fantastic activities. Y3 were doing Reading and Science, Y4 were working on French and Perimeter, Y5 were doing History and Long Division and Y6 were doing Art and Money Problems.



Jess Y6—Lowry inspired

## Dear Parents,

The Spring Term is here and from experience it is a term of changeable weather and a lot of hard work for the children. With the excitement of Christmas a distant memory it is now time to ramp up the learning once more.

We have a few families that continue to struggle to arrive at school on time. This has a detrimental effect on the children having to walk into class when all the other children are settled, makes it difficult for the class teacher who then has to go over teaching that has already been covered and puts extra pressure on the admin staff having to take children to classes, often during busy times. Children who are late have to be recorded as such and dependent on how late the child is can be classed as unauthorised absence.

We had a Librarian in to do the yearly audit of books last week. As usual she was very impressed with our library. One thing she did mention was the number of books that needed to be discarded due to water damage, approximately £400 worth. Please can you check with children that their water bottles don't leak or are in a different compartment of their bags. If anyone has any pristine reading books they would like to donate then please send them in to school.

I'm looking forward to another great term, the thought of the days getting longer and lots of outdoor PE.



Arthur Y6—Monet inspired

## Head Teacher's Awards

First HT Awards of the year go to.....



## Governance

We are always looking for new Parent Governors to join our Governing body. We would like to welcome Katie Hall to her first meeting next week. Any parents who are keen to support the strategic development of the school please get in touch with Mrs Rankin in the school office.

## Support

I cannot emphasise enough the importance of your support in your child's learning. We can only do so much in school with the time and resources that we have. Please, please read with your child—every night if possible. Help them complete their homework, give them good routines, keep the screen time to an acceptable level and the likelihood of success is greatly increased.

**We are always on the lookout for parents or grandparents who would like to come into school to listen to readers. I know from experience it is very much a two way thing. Not only do the children get a lot out of the experience but also the listener.**



Ruby Y6—Monet inspired



# 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 enthralls 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 who 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.co.uk/news/technology-63204605>  
<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-algorithms/>

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