

Beechwood Newsletter

Attendance

Throughout Autumn Term 1, we have been delighted to see our children making a positive start, arriving ready to learn and enjoying all the opportunities school life has to offer. It has been lovely to celebrate the progress being made in attendance and punctuality, as well as the many individual achievements that deserve recognition. We are particularly proud of the eight classes that reached or surpassed our school attendance target of 95% – a fantastic reflection of the commitment shown across our school community. A special congratulations goes to Class 1, who went above and beyond by achieving attendance above the school target! We have also enjoyed celebrating our attendance and punctuality superstars, recognising the children and classes who have made such a positive effort to be in school, on time and ready for the day.



Finally, a huge thank you to all our parents, carers and children for the part you play in making these achievements possible. Your continued support, encouragement and positive communication with school make a real difference. Working together, we can ensure that every child has the best possible opportunity to learn, grow and succeed. We are confident that we can build on these achievements and make Autumn term 2 just as successful as Autumn term 1.

Trips, Visits and Experiences

Year 1 Eureka trip

Year one had a fantastic time on their EUREKA trip, visiting our very own gross lab to find out more about how our body works and playing in the 'All About Me' gallery. We also enjoyed playing in the different role play areas such as the supermarket, post office and bank. We are very proud of them for how sensible they all were. Well done Year 1!



Interfaith Week

Over the next couple of weeks, we are delighted to be celebrating Inter Faith Week across school with a range of exciting activities planned for our children. These will include special assemblies, including a Diwali assembly led by Mrs Matharoo, live Zoom experiences for Key Stage 2 and Islam workshops for children in EYFS and Key Stage 1. At our school, we are proud to be an inclusive community where all religions, cultures and beliefs are respected and celebrated. These activities will provide a wonderful opportunity for our children to learn about different faiths, develop their understanding of others and celebrate the rich diversity within our school community.

Climate Day

Wednesday 4th November was our Autumn term Climate Day where each class took part in different activities and thought about what we can do to help care for our planet. We used our Autumn Term Knowledge Mats to help us learn more about

different aspects of climate change and we devised our own pledges. Everyone enjoyed taking part in our sponsored outdoor workout to raise money to help improve our school grounds. We raised an amazing £550! Thank you so much for your support.



Year 4 Ancient Greeks Workshop

Matthew Bellwood came into Year 4 so that we could learn about what theatre was like for the Ancient Greeks. We learned the actors were men and they wore masks. They used the mask and different poses to show emotions which is what we are doing here.



Year 2 Yorkshire Wildlife Park Trip

The most exciting part of this week was our trip to Yorkshire Wildlife Park. We saw lots of different animals even though it was cold! We also enjoyed taking part in a workshop where we learnt about different types of animals, looked at animal fur and feathers and got to touch some live animals.



Year 6 Skelton Grange Trip

It's been a busy week for Year 6. On Wednesday, we travelled to Skelton Grange Conservation Centre to take part in a science workshop about evolution, adaptation and inheritance. We had a great day learning about pond life, how birds'



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beaks have evolved to help them feed, how moths evolved to change colour during the industrial revolution and finally, we looked and fossils, skulls and learnt how a giraffe became so tall.



Year 6 Bugs and Stuff Workshop

On Thursday we took part in a workshop about rainforests and the animals that live there. We recapped our knowledge about where rainforests are based and the different layers within each forest. We were then amazed as our visitor shared his collection of wildlife with us. We got to see stick insects, crickets, cockroaches, dart frogs, a toad, a lizard, tarantula, scorpion and a python. We overcame our fears and touched most of the organisms.



Remembrance Day

This week, the children have been learning about Remembrance Day through class assemblies and took part in two minute's silence on Wednesday.

Thank you to parents for your donations towards the Poppy Appeal in school. We will let you know the total amount raised in the next newsletter.



Children in Need

On Friday 13th November, the children raised money by taking part in a non-uniform day, a colouring competition and cake sale. A huge thank you for your donations to support such an important charity to raise a total of £404. Well done everyone!



Staff News

At the start of this half term, we welcomed Miss Thurtell as a HLTA at our school. We are excited for her to join our team and work with children across school.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

This week's mental health, wellbeing and online safety focus is mobile phones. Mobile phones have become a huge part of young people's everyday lives, but new restrictions on their use in schools



and proposed restrictions on social media are changing how children and young people can use them. Please see the link below for information to support parents and carers to understand what they can do. See below for more information.

Safeguarding

If you are worried about any safeguarding situation or about your child being harmed, then you should contact Miss Roberts (Designated safeguarding lead), Mrs Giles, Miss Magill or Mrs Ticala (Deputy designated safeguarding leads) to share your concerns.

Young Carers

For more information about Young Carers—including events, updates, and news—please visit the school website.

OPAL

OPAL is coming to Beechwood! As part of our Climate Joy Day, we gave children a little taste of the exciting changes coming to lunchtimes at Beechwood in January as we prepare to launch OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning)!

Years 1–6 began with an assembly introducing OPAL, where we watched a video of an OPAL playtime at another school and talked about what this could look like at Beechwood. There was lots of excitement as we shared some of the plans for our new and improved lunchtimes!

Children in Years 2–6 then had the opportunity to experience OPAL for themselves during a special taster session. We opened up our Magic Garden and Community Garden, including the Amphitheatre, created a performance area with music, brought out lots of traditional lunchtime equipment and even opened up our 'mud slide' hill for children who were dressed appropriately!

Although the sun was shining, the rain from the night before meant there was plenty of mud to explore! It was wonderful to see children freely exploring different areas of our school grounds, discovering new opportunities for play and making the most of the freedom to choose how they spent their time outdoors.

The feedback from both children and staff was fantastic, and there is already lots of excitement about getting our wellies on, embracing the weather and exploring all the new opportunities that OPAL will bring.

We can't wait to launch OPAL at Beechwood in January – whatever the weather, let the adventures begin!

Diary Dates

Year 3 Meanwood Valley Farm Trip - 1st December

Nursery Carols & Crafts- 9th December 10.15am OR 2pm (Please only attend one session)

Whole School Christmas Fair 8th December 3.15pm-4.15pm

Year 5 Northern Ballet Trip- 17th December





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Christmas Performances

Reception – Wednesday 16th Dec 9:15am
Year 1 & 2 – Tuesday 15th Dec 2:30pm and Thursday 17th Dec 9:15am (please only attend one performance)
Year 3 & 4 – Wednesday 16th Dec 2:30pm
Year 5 & 6 – Tuesday 15th Dec 9:15am

Nursery Places

We have a small number of 3-year-old nursery places available for both 15 hours & 30-hour places. Please contact the school office for more information and share this with family and friends.



School Grid

Please continue to use School Grid to order your child's meals in advance. It is really great to involve your child in making these choices to ensure they are enjoying their lunches.

School App

Thank you for activating your Arbor account for all communications. If you are having any issues logging in, please contact the school office.

Arbor



Wrap Around- Premier Education

We are pleased to let you know that there are still places available in our Wraparound Care provision run by Premier Education. If you are looking for a flexible, high-quality childcare before or after school, please see information below. To secure a place for your child, please use the booking link here.



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.

MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones have become a huge part of young people's everyday lives, but new restrictions on their use in schools and proposed restrictions on social media are changing how children and young people can use them. This guide explores mobile phones, their use by young people, what the evidence tells us, the current and future legal position, and what parents and educators should do.

What are the risks?

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The relationship between smartphone and social media use and young people's mental health is complex, and evidence does not establish a simple cause-and-effect relationship. Some researchers and commentators, however, including Jonathan Haidt, author of The Anxious Generation, argue that increased smartphone and social media use may be contributing to poorer mental health and wellbeing among young people.

LEARNING AND ATTENTION

Mobile phones can distract pupils from learning and make it harder to maintain attention and concentration. Research suggests that learning and attention have improved in schools that already prohibited mobile phone use, particularly among pupils with lower prior attainment. Now that the DfE's guidance on mobile phones is statutory, schools should ensure that the whole-school community understands and follows their policy, while monitoring how effectively it is implemented.

HARMFUL CONTENT AND BULLYING

Mobile phones can be a means of extending peer conflict from the community into schools and from schools back into the community. They also provide easy access to harmful and inappropriate content, including content that is sexually explicit, promotes self-harm or eating disorders, or is violent in nature. Exposure to this content can negatively affect children's mental health and wellbeing, potentially increasing the support they require from schools, parents, and support services.

EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME

Ofcom research found that 13- to 14-year-olds spend an average of 4 hours 19 minutes online each day across smartphones, tablets, and computers. However, there is considerable variation between children, with some spending significantly more or less time online. Excessive screen time can contribute to disrupted sleep and fragmented attention, both of which can negatively affect children's mental health and wellbeing.

The current and upcoming rules

SCHOOL BANS

As of 1 September 2026, schools are expected to be phone-free environments by default, with any exceptions limited to specific circumstances. Schools can decide how best to implement this. For example, some may provide secure storage or collect phones at the beginning of the school day, while others may prohibit pupils from bringing them onto school premises altogether. Schools can also confiscate mobile phones in line with their behaviour policy, while searches for prohibited phones must follow the relevant legal requirements.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Schools should make reasonable adjustments where necessary for disabled pupils and may allow exceptions in other circumstances, including where mobile phone use is necessary to support a medical condition or an identified need. For example, a pupil with diabetes may use a continuous glucose monitor linked to their mobile phone to monitor their blood sugar levels. Schools may also make adaptations where mobile phone use provides agreed support for pupils with SEND. Any exceptions should be clearly reflected in the school's policies and procedures.

ONLINE SAFETY ACT 2023 AND 2026 PROPOSALS

Platforms are required to protect children from harmful content and use age checks to prevent children from accessing pornography and certain other types of harmful content. In June 2026, the government announced that it intends to stop social media companies offering services to under-16s. These restrictions are expected to be introduced in spring 2027, but the precise scope and rules have not yet been confirmed.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

While there is ongoing debate about the relationship between smartphones, social media and young people's mental health, there are steps that parents and educators can take to help reduce the potential risks associated with their use:

1. Delay smartphones. Consider waiting until a child is 14 before giving them a smartphone. Where a child needs a device to contact family, a basic phone may be an alternative.
2. Delay social media. Consider delaying access to social media until the age of 16.
3. Support phone-free schools. Parents, pupils, and staff should understand and support the school's approach to mobile phones.
4. Encourage screen-free activities. Promote independent and outdoor play, alongside other activities that give children opportunities to socialise and spend time away from screens.

Meet Our Expert

Mark Emmerson OBE, CEO – City of London Academies Trust. With nearly 45 years' experience in inner-city education, including 26 years in senior leadership roles, Mark was an early advocate for tackling the risks of mobile phones in schools, introducing a ban as headteacher in 2000. He has also served as a national DfE adviser and held local authority roles, consistently driving improvements in pupil outcomes and Ofsted judgements, particularly in disadvantaged communities.



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