

News



Nest

Dear Parents & Carers,

It was a hard start to the term with some very sad news for our community about Mrs Croucher. However, the new week has been no less full of activity – I think as Mrs Croucher would have wanted it. She would have taken great pleasure in smiling faces and positive attitudes. I would personally like to thank the whole staff team for the support, care and professionalism they have shown each other and the children.

A book of condolence will be open in the school foyer for all those members of our community who would like to express their thoughts or send a message to Mrs Croucher's family at this sad time. The book will be open until Friday 14th March.

Class Goldfinch led our first class assembly of the year this morning. They spoke with such confidence and enjoyment about their learning so far. Well done to them all it was a pleasure to be part of the audience.

Sam Jones

House Point Winners:

Due to Class Assemblies this term Celebration Assembly may not take place every week. Children may still bring in certificates and we will share them in the next assembly.

Danbury Park Book Fortnight

Book Fortnight has started successfully this week, thank you to everyone who has joined us for a session to read with their child and usually a few friends. Next week we welcome the parents/grandparents from classes Eider, Cuckoo, Budgerigar and Jay. The children will also have the opportunity to listen to a member of staff's favourite story and share a book with a younger or older child and of course we finish the week with dressing up as a favourite book character on Friday 7th March.

The children and staff have been busy decorating their classroom door to illustrate their chosen book. I will share some pictures of the finished doors next week.

Baloo – Essex Police Welfare Dog

Thank you to Mr Salmon for arranging a visit from Baloo. It was fantastic for all to hear how brave and courageous Baloo is after her accident. The children had some interesting and thoughtful questions to ask her handler Mandy.



Internet and phone safety update:

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about TIKTOK

13+
(Content features are restricted to over-13s only)

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Adults tend to associate online videos with YouTube – but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a stream of short clips tailored to users' interests, based on what they've already watched. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while much of the content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where youngsters "were most likely to encounter a potential harm".

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

While TikTok's following feed only displays videos from familiar creators, for you is a collection based on a user's previously watched clips. Most of these videos will probably be inoffensive, but the app could potentially show something unsuitable. If children then engage with this content, more like it will follow. TikTok's guidelines prohibit the sharing of illegal or inappropriate content, but the huge number of uploads means that a small amount inevitably slips through.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

With more than 1.5 billion users globally, the potential for contact from strangers on TikTok is high – especially as accounts created by over-16s (or young people using a fake date of birth) are set to public by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and enables anyone to download or comment on them.

MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION

Although the short videos on TikTok tend to be more frivolous than the longer ones on YouTube, clips can still influence impressionable minds in a negative way. Not only is there plenty of dangerous misinformation on TikTok, but Ofcom reports that nearly a third of 12 to 16-year-olds use TikTok as a news source – so you should be wary of misogynistic, racist or conspiracy-themed material shaping how they see the world.

ADDICTIVE DESIGN

With its constant stream of eye-catching videos, TikTok can be addictive to young brains. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 127 minutes per day on the app, that's twice as much as in 2020. Excessive use can interfere with young people's sleep patterns – often leading to irritability – and distract them from other, healthier activities. The instantly skippable nature of bite-size videos may also impact children's ability to maintain focus.

BODY IMAGE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

According to Ofcom, most online harms for teens are body image related for girls (promoting unhealthy eating, body shaming and so on) and dangerous stunts for boys. Both are prevalent on TikTok. One extreme example of the latter was the "blackout" trend, which encouraged users to hold their breath until they passed out from a lack of oxygen. This led to two families filing lawsuits against TikTok over the tragic deaths of their children.

IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but users have the option to buy TikTok coins, which can be used to purchase gifts for content creators. Coin bundles range from £0.80 to an eye-watering £92, while that may not sound appealing, the app still generated £7.5 billion in user spending in 2023. TikTok's policy is that under-16s can't make in-app purchases, but it's possible to bypass this with a fake birth date.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's, and control settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen-time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages – and if they can, to whom. Children can't alter these settings without parental approval.

BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING

If a child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can offer their settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We'd recommend enabling this feature, as it can be quite easy for a young person to spend a significant amount of real money buying TikTok coins to unlock more features of the app – sometimes without even realising.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure that they don't share any identifying personal information, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's also worth talking about misinformation and propaganda, and how to identify it.

READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.

#WakeUpWednesday
The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://www.thenationalcollege.com/guides/tiktok-2025>

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Dates for your diary:

07/03 – World Book Day – Dress Up as Favourite Book Character

14/03 9.00am – Class H Assembly

18/03 9.00am – Class J Assembly

25/03 9.00am – Class F Assembly

28/03 Class E Trip - Layer Marney Tower -Vikings

Muddy Weather means muddy clothes:

Do you have old trousers, skirts or jogging bottom please?

Essex County Council hold 'Local Offer Roadshows' where a wide selection of services related to SEND will be present. The next date is 25th March, see link below for more details.

<https://send.essex.gov.uk/local-offer-roadshow-mid-essex#>



Spring Menu

Owl's Barn School Meals

Week 2

Fresh bread and milk available daily

Monday	Homemade Cheesy Pasta Bake or Quorn Dippers	Garlic Bread Sweetcorn Cucumber	Key Stage 2 Only Jacket Potato with a choice of filling	Chocolate Crispy Cake Fresh Fruit Fruit Yoghurt
Tuesday	Home Beef Bolognaise or (V)Vegan Mince Bolognaise	White/Wholegrain Pasta Peas, Cauliflower Green Salad	Jacket Potato with a choice of filling Cheese, Baked Beans	Flapjack Fresh Fruit Fruit Yoghurt
Wednesday	Local Butchers Pork Sausage or (V) Vegan Sausage	Hash Brown Baked Beans Green Salad	Key Stage 2 only Jacket Potato with a choice of filling	Ice Cream Roll Fresh Fruit Fruit Yoghurt
Thursday	Homemade Cheese and Tomato Pizza or (V) Vegetable Nuggets	Crispy Cubed Potatoes Sweetcorn Green Salad	Jacket Potato with a choice of filling Cheese, Baked Beans	Bakewell Crumble Slice and Custard Fresh Fruit Fruit Yoghurt
Friday	Fish Fingers or (V) Cheddar Whirl	Chips Peas Green Salad	Key Stage 2 only Jacket Potato with a choice of filling	Marble Cake Fresh Fruit Fruit Yoghurt