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## **MARSH HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER**

**October 4<sup>th</sup> 2024**

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you have had a good week.

### **Pantomime Visit**

Our annual visit to the Sutton Town Hall theatre will be on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December during the normal school day. This year's pantomime is 'Robin Hood' and we cannot wait! The trip is for any children in Year 1 to 6, as Reception will attend their own exciting theatre visit!

A letter will be sent out to provide more details during the week beginning 7<sup>th</sup> October. The trip will go live on Teachers2Parents on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October. Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis and we have limited places available. Tickets will cost £10 per pupil.

### **Flu Vaccinations**

On Monday of this week (30<sup>th</sup> September) your child brought home a flu vaccination form for you to complete and return to school. Vaccinations will take place in school on the 14<sup>th</sup> November for all children in school. Please return your completed form asap.

### **Individual photographs**

The school photographers will be in school on Monday October 14<sup>th</sup>. Please ensure your child comes in correct school uniform on this day. If your child's year group has PE on this day, please send them in wearing their school uniform and send their PE kit in with them to get changed into.

### **Fundraising for the MacMillan Cancer Trust**

Thank you to all parents and carers who donated cakes and biscuits to our fundraising event in support of the MacMillan Cancer Trust. As a result of your generosity we raised £323.96 for this very worthy cause.

### **EYFS Phonics Workshop**

Thank you to all parents and carers who attended the EYFS Phonics workshop this week. We were very pleased to see more than thirty parents and carers turn up and take part.

## Spotlight on Safeguarding

### Collecting children from school at the end of the Day

In the event of you asking another parent to collect your children and bring them home at the end of the school day, you **MUST INFORM** the school office who will pass the information onto the class teacher. If this procedure is not followed we will not allow the child to leave the premises until we have had received confirmation from the child's parent or carer.

### What Parents & Educators Need to Know about IN-GAME CHAT

Video games are continuing to grow in popularity – including, of course, among children and young people – and the emergence of gaming communities has been accelerated by the inclusion of chat functionality across many different titles. While in-game chat isn't inherently a bad thing, it can create some concerns about online safety and the people that children might be interacting with.

#### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

#### DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHAT

There are a number of ways that gamers communicate with one another online. As the name would suggest, in-game chat happens within the game itself. There's also party chat: a group voice conversation that console users can have with anyone on the same platform. This tends to be more commonly used by players who already know each other. Finally, many gamers – especially on PC – will chat using third-party apps such as Discord.

#### CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Whether it's text- or voice-based, in-game chat is frequently open to all players to use. Many games default to making it an opt-in function, but some don't: meaning a child could start seeing messages within the game from people they're playing with, regardless of whether they know those individuals or not. While most strangers won't necessarily have ill intent, there are some who may behave inappropriately when chatting to a child – intentionally or otherwise.

#### DANGER OF GROOMING

It's been reported that some young gamers have encountered older players online who pretend to be their age to manipulate them. Children, sending gifts in exchange for chatting and sending photos. Just as on any messaging platform, it's good to advise young people to avoid opening to strangers, emphasising that they shouldn't accept gifts from anyone online that they don't know.

#### BULLYING AND ABUSE

While some in-game chat can turn toxic because of how a match plays out, others turn that way because of people who engage in teasing – in essence, behaving in an offensive and abusive way simply to cause pain or get a rise out of whoever they're talking to. These trolls often lean on racial slurs, sexist, LGBT sentiment and other hateful rhetoric; they normally had most confident preying on younger, more impressionable gamers.

#### POTENTIAL FOR PRIVATE CHAT

If a player would like a re-match with a stranger after meeting them in the game, they can send a friend request, or use the party chat together in the future. For the most part, this is harmless – but it might lead to messages being exchanged in private. This could then escalate to the sharing of private information, or possibly attempts to manipulate or scam younger players.

#### COMPETITIVE ATMOSPHERE

Certain games are very competitive, and players can sometimes get upset if they feel a teammate is underperforming, an opponent won't actually, or they're just a bad team. This can lead to unpleasant messages that stray away from playful 'trash talk' and wander into the territory of bullying. Some players have been known to get incredibly abusive in situations like this, and the impact of this on young gamers' emotional wellbeing could be severe.

### Advice for Parents & Educators

#### LOCK-DOWN IN-GAME CHAT

In-game chat can often be disabled in the game's settings. This allows children to play without risk of contact from strangers – but it will need to be done in each individual game. Text chat appears in the corner of the screen in many titles, so it's extremely easy to turn it back on and see what's being said. With voice chat, explain to children what behaviour is inappropriate, so they can spot the danger themselves.

#### REPORT POTENTIAL OFFENDERS

Most games offer a robust means of reporting other players, so you can flag an incident as potentially harmful. This normally leads to the account not being matched with yours in the future and, if third-party conduct breaks any of the game's rules, they may be banned from playing entirely. This is done within the game itself, so each title has a slightly different process, but these tend to be designed for simplicity.

#### CONSIDER OTHER CHAT OPTIONS

If a child wants to play with people they know, consider using party chat or a third-party service like Discord. This allows everyone involved to chat on a private server and even enjoy each other's company while playing different games. It's also far more secure, as anyone looking to join will need to request and be granted access – normally by whoever is hosting the chat.

#### COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Make sure children understand the differences between being competitive and being abusive. Talk about what constitutes offensive or inappropriate behaviour from strangers online, so they know that if anything ever concerns or worries them, they should tell a trusted adult as soon as possible. Empower children to identify the rules of in-game chat for themselves and reassure them they won't get in trouble for seeking help if anything goes wrong.

#### Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is the Editor in Chief of GGPlanet and has been working in the games media industry for five years. He's also a parent and therefore understands the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his work has been published at sites including iGK, TechRadar, and plenty more.

**Wake Up Wednesday**  
**The National College**

If you are concerned for a child's wellbeing, then please contact our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Cathy Lomas through the school office. In the event of Cathy being unavailable – please ask to speak with another DSL in school.

Alternatively, you may ring The Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS) on 0121 303 1888.

## Marvellous Me

Just a reminder to sign up to Marvellous Me. Please ask your child's class teacher if you need your login details again. Staff use Marvellous Me to share news, important information and celebrate your child's successes.

### **Ks2 End of the Day Arrangments**

Please make a note of the position for your child's class at home time. 3C will now leave via the main KS2 door. These arrangements will be in place from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October onward.



### **STARS of the Week**



Very well done to all our Merit Award Winners for this week. We are all proud of you:

Year 1 – Zoyah, Muhammad

Year 2 – William, Ariana, Freddie, Scarlett

Year 3 – Eddie, Wictor, Ellis, Phoebe

Year 4 – Falak, Vanessa, Lily, Jayden

Year 5 – Serena, Fahad, Ranae, Aarohi

Year 6 – Teleah, CJ, Safa, Idrees, Adeire, Aleema

## **The Value of the Month for October is FREEDOM**

Freedom is linked to the British Value of Individual Liberty. In school through assemblies, PSHE lessons and the wider curriculum, we teach children that each of us has the freedom to make our own choices and do what we want – within reason. As long as we respect the established British values and the rights of others, then we are free to pursue our ambitions, and follow our own will.

### **Year 6 Secondary School Information**

If you have a child in the current Year 6, applications for Secondary School Preference opened on 1<sup>st</sup> September and close on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2024. Find out more information about the application process on the council's website at [www.birmingham.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/schooladmissions).

### **Attendance**

The classes with the best attendance this week were 2D and 3C with 99.33%. Congratulations and very well done to both classes.

The whole school attendance figure was 95.2%.

<b>Class</b>	<b>Attendance Percentage</b>
Rainbows	94.33
Sunshines	90.67
1G	90.67
1H	94.33
<b>2D</b>	<b>99.33</b>
2P	91.33
<b>3C</b>	<b>99.33</b>
3D	98.0
4H	93.33
4M	97.67
5C	96.21
5U	93.33
6C	94.0
6M	99.0
6W	96.0
<b>Whole School</b>	<b>95.2</b>

### **Diary Dates**

<b>OCTOBER</b>	
Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup>	Y2 Trip: Black Country Living Museum
Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Year 5 Maths Workshop: 9.10 – 10.10

Monday 14 <sup>th</sup>	School Photographies
Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Year 4 Maths Workshop: 9.10 – 10.10
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	
13 <sup>th</sup>	Year 5 Trip: Santorini Greek Restaurant p.m.
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Year 4 Maths Workshop: 9.10 – 10.10
Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Parents' Evening: 3.30 – 6.00
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Parents' Evening: 3.30 – 6.00
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Conservatoire Music Performance in the school hall for Years 1 – 6: 1.45 – 2.45
<b>DECEMBER</b>	
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup>	Year 1 & Year 2 Carol Concert: 9.15 and 2.15
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Pantomime Trip for Years 1 – 6: a.m.
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup>	Year 3 & Year 4 Carol Concert: 9.15 and 2.15
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup>	Year 5 & Year 6 Carol Concert: 9.15 and 2.15
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Reception Nativity: 9.15 and 2.00
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup>	Children's Christmas Lunch
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Parties p.m.
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup>	School Closes at 1.00 for the Christmas Holidays

**This section will be updated once new dates are known and confirmed.**

I wish you all a happy, safe and peaceful weekend.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. J. Cusack  
Head Teacher