



# Friday Flyer

20th January 2023

## Head of School Update



Belsay School has been transformed this week into a ski resort! It was an absolute joy on Monday to see the children sledding on the field and playing in the snow. They were so kind in sharing their sledges with those who didn't have their own to make sure that no one missed out on the fun - a great time was had by all. Sadly the powdery snow didn't stay around for long so we're all hoping for a fresh downpour so we can hit the slopes again!

This week our new SENDCo (Special Needs Co-ordinator), Mrs Brown, has been in school getting to know the children and staff. Mrs Brown replaces Mrs Bushell and will work closely with teachers to support pupils with additional needs. She comes with a wealth of experience as SENDCo and also works as a SEND Adviser for the local authority. She works closely with Mrs Wright, who is our Behaviour and Family Support Adviser.

Sunday 22nd January marks Lunar New Year and we would like to say kung hei fat choi to everyone who is celebrating this weekend. 2023 is the year of the rabbit and we will be learning a little about this in assembly on Monday. Interestingly, the rabbit encapsulates our January school value of positivity:

*"To outsiders, the Rabbit's kindness may make them seem soft and weak. In truth, the Rabbit's quiet personality hides their confidence and strength. They are steadily moving towards their goal, no matter what negativity the others give them."*



Reception started their Lunar New Year celebrations early and celebrated with a visit from Mr Bell who is the Pele Trust Catering Manager. He taught them the skills to prepare a Chinese stir fry which they then all sampled! Thank you so much to Mr Bell for giving us the opportunity to cook with a real chef.

Best wishes, Claire Johnson



## Attendance Matters



### Every Day Counts....

We would like to remind you of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

#### **ATTENDANCE**

Frequent absences inevitably affect your child's learning and well-being. It is very important that your child attends school every day unless of course they are ill or there is another very good reason for them not doing so. If your child has a medical appointment, we do ask for proof where possible so that we can authorise the absence from school. This can take the form of an email, letter or appointment card. If your child is ill, or there is any other reason why they cannot attend school, please contact the school office on the morning of the first day of absence. If you do not inform the school office then we are legally obliged to contact you. If we are unable to contact you (or the other contacts on your list) to establish the reason for your child's non-attendance then it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. We do require daily notice of absence, unless specified, until your child returns to school.

Since September 2015 any pupil with less than 90% school attendance is regarded as a Persistent Absentee. This is a national threshold set by the Government. Belsay School is following Government guidance and implementing a scheme to prevent pupils becoming Persistent Absentees (any pupil with less than 90% school attendance). Mrs Johnson monitors whole school attendance on a weekly basis and will make contact with families where persistent absence is becoming an issue. She, with the help of Mrs Wright, will then work with families to improve attendance.

#### **PUNCTUALITY**

Children are registered every morning at 8.55 am. The gates open at 8.45am so the children can go independently into their classrooms for a soft start. Those 10 minutes each day allow your child to practise key skills to warm up for the day's learning. It is very important that unless there are exceptional circumstances your child should be at school by 8.55am.

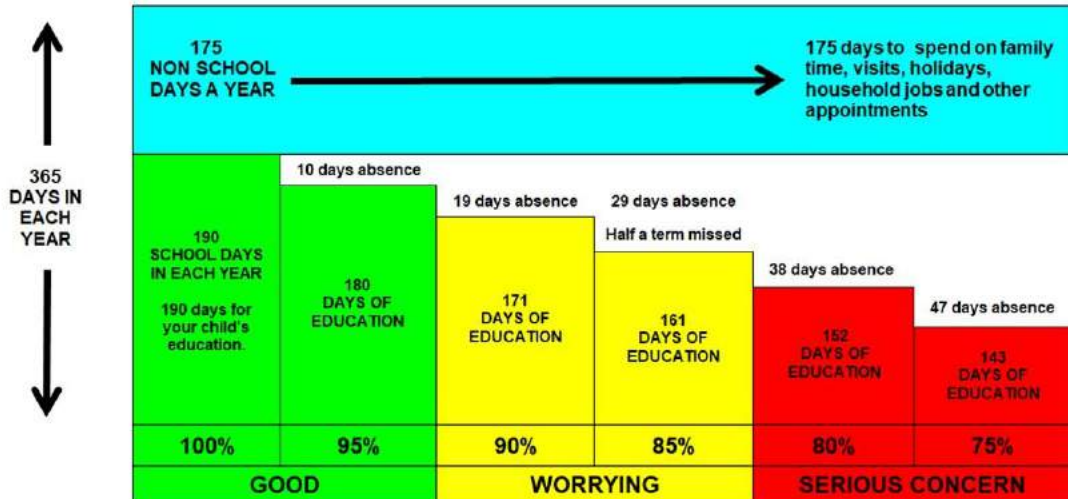
Research tells us that attendance matters.

"pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school." DfE May 2022



Thank you for your support in ensuring that your children have good attendance.

Days off School add up to lost learning!



### Class by class Attendance

Class	Attendance
Reception	92.95%
Y1/2	94.52%
Y3/4	95.48%
Y5/6	94.41%

Please refer to the graphic which shows the significant impact of absence over time.



### Upcoming events:

22nd January	Lunar New Year
Friday 3 February	NSPCC Number Day - come to school dressed as a rock star.
6th February	Children's Mental Health Week
7th February	Safer Internet Day
17th February	Last day of the half term
27th February	Teacher training day (school closed to pupils)
28th February	Return to school
March TBC	Parent / carer consultations
Week beginning 27 March	Made In The North East Week Each class will study an aspect of local history/geography including a visit.
Friday 31 March	End of term
Monday 17 April	Summer term begins
Monday 1 May	Bank Holiday
Monday 8 May	Bank Holiday (King's Coronation)
Tuesday 9 May - Friday 12 May	Y6 Sats
Friday 26 May	End of summer 1
Monday 5 June	Summer 2 begins
Week beginning 12 June	Year 1 phonics screening
All dates may be subject to change.	



At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many apps which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# TWITTER



## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Twitter is a social media network which allows users to post short messages (tweets) of up to 280 characters. Tweets can consist of text, photos, videos, audio, links, polls and GIFs – often linked by hashtags if they share a common theme or message. Hashtags receiving high levels of interest are said to be ‘trending’. Twitter users can engage with other people’s posts by liking, retweeting (sharing) or tweeting back (commenting on). Since the entrepreneur Elon Musk acquired Twitter in October 2022 for \$44 billion, he has implemented several major changes to the platform.

## INTERACTION WITH STRANGERS

Tweets are public by default, meaning that anyone can view and interact with posts, follow someone and send direct messages. The concern here is that young people may therefore connect and communicate with strangers. Some individuals may follow a young person’s Twitter account simply because they have similar interests; however, others may turn out to have more sinister intentions.

## FIXATION ON VIEW COUNT

Twitter has recently introduced a ‘view count’ feature – telling users how many people have seen their tweet (even if they haven’t reacted to it). Previous research has found that unfavourable comparisons with other social media users can cause young people to experience feelings of insecurity, jealousy and low self-esteem – leading to an obsession with increasing their numbers.

## TROLLS AND BULLYING

The anonymity offered by fake profiles encourages some users to send tweets designed to provoke a reaction; to disrupt conversations; to spark an argument; or to harass the recipient. Such trolling and bullying can impact the mental wellbeing of both the target and anyone who witnesses it. Encourage your child to come to you if they experience such behaviour on Twitter, or if they see it taking place.

## PAID-FOR VERIFICATION

Previously, if a Twitter profile displayed a blue tick icon, it meant that the owner – usually a celebrity or a major organisation – had been verified as genuine. Now, however, anyone can pay for a Twitter blue subscription to receive the tick, with the platform carrying out limited checks on the account’s authenticity. This could easily lead to more fake accounts impersonating real people or companies.

## CONTENT MODERATION CHANGES

In late 2022, Twitter stated that their ‘policy enforcement will rely more heavily on de-amplification of violative content: freedom of speech, but not freedom of reach’. No policies have changed yet, but this wording suggests they may limit who can see posts rather than removing them. While supporting free speech, this could encourage an environment where some toxic content remains online.

## HIJACKED HASHTAGS

The hashtag (#) is one of Twitter’s most recognisable facets, allowing users to find specific trends or topics. But the sheer volume of tweets each hour can rapidly distort a hashtag’s meaning: an initially innocent search term can quickly and up returning inappropriate results. This is common with ‘trending’ hashtags, as people know that using them will get their tweet seen by a larger audience.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### SET ACCOUNTS TO PRIVATE

To reduce some of the fear of your child’s tweets being seen and shared by anyone, you can always make their account protected. This means that your child has to give approval for another user to view their posts. You can change Twitter’s privacy settings so that your child can’t be messaged directly by other people on the platform and their geographical location won’t be shared.

### FOSTER CRITICAL THINKING

It can be difficult for anyone to ascertain if something online is real or false, but particularly for young people. Encourage your child to check several reputable sources to determine if a story they’ve seen is true; remind them to watch out for scams and think about the message’s possible motive. Emphasise that it’s not a good idea to retweet something if they aren’t sure it’s correct.

### ENGAGE SAFETY MODE

When Safety Mode is activated, Twitter checks for abusive or spammy behaviour such as hurtful language or repeated negative replies. The platform then flags these suspect accounts and blocks them from responding to your child’s tweets. The autoblock function then prevents these accounts from interacting with your child’s again for seven days.

### EXPLORE THE NEW SETTINGS

Previously, any user could reply to anyone else’s tweets. However, the new conversation settings let your child determine who can reply to their posts – either by selecting everyone (the default option), people they follow or only people they mention (using the @ symbol). This improvement has given users extra control, providing them with more protection from trolls and online abuse.

### PAUSE BEFORE POSTING

It’s important that young people think about what they’re about to post and whether they might regret it later. Twitter has developed ‘nudges’: little prompts which appear if someone is about to tweet using harmful or offensive language. These nudges promote more positive online behaviour by giving users an opportunity to pause and consider their words before they post something.

### BLOCK, REPORT OR MUTE

If someone is upsetting your child on Twitter, you can block and report them. Blocking stops them from messaging or following your child, while reporting an account alerts Twitter to investigate possible misuse. The ‘mute’ feature, meanwhile, keeps tweets from a specific account (or which include certain words) out of your child’s timeline. The other user won’t know that they’ve been muted.

### Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Butterland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



### BE CAREFUL WHO TO FOLLOW

As accounts are no longer being as rigorously verified under the ‘blue tick’ system, it’s essential that young Twitter users understand what this means, in terms of people not necessarily being who they claim. Anyone who your child only knows online is still a stranger, regardless of how long they’ve been communicating for. Remind your child never to disclose personal information on social media.

Source: <https://blog.twitter.com/common/thread/en/topics/stories/2022/how-twitter-is-rudging-users-healthier-conversations> | [https://blog.twitter.com/en\\_us/topics/product/2022/twitter-blue-update](https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/topics/product/2022/twitter-blue-update) | [https://blog.twitter.com/en\\_us/topics/company/2022/twitter-2-0-our-continued-commitment-to-the-public-conversation](https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/topics/company/2022/twitter-2-0-our-continued-commitment-to-the-public-conversation) | <https://scholarworks.lib.ualb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=213&context=std>



## The week in Reception

Reception has had a brilliant week and I have been told all about it. They have enjoyed looking at how Chinese New Year is celebrated. They have worked very hard with all of the activities that have focused on naming the animals, identifying the animals, making their own chinese dragon and creating a chinese lantern. The children were magnificent at working with Mr Bell to create a chinese stir fry. He was very impressed with how well they listened and followed his instructions when chopping the vegetables.



Miss Houghton & Mrs Moffat



## The week in Key Stage 1

Year 1 and 2 have had a fantastic week both playing and learning in the snow! We had lots of fun going for a wild winter walk in Science and were very excited by another surprise snow shower along the way!

In Art Club we made beautiful, red paper lanterns to celebrate Chinese Lunar New Year. We learnt that red is considered the colour of good luck in Chinese culture.

In Geography we have been learning what it is like to live in Australia. We enjoyed learning about the climate, culture and what amazing creatures live there! We used our new knowledge to make interesting fact posters.

Miss Dixon





## The week in Year 3 and 4

In Year 3 and 4 we have been super busy immersing ourselves in our learning. We started the week off learning about zones of regulation and identifying how, when and why we might feel certain emotions and how we can support ourselves and others through this. We have loved exploring more of the 'One and Only Ivan' by Katherine Applegate during English and learning more about Ivan and his experience as well as learning about apostrophes for possession. We started to explore why climate is different across the UK in Geography as well as exploring how we see in science. As a class we have loved experimenting with how we can raise awareness for Gorillas in captivity through art and created our sketches using different materials. We have also been exploring Lunar New Year and Grace was so kind to teach us even more about this celebration and tell us about her experiences as well as sharing all our prior knowledge. Well done for an amazing week Year 3 and 4.



Miss Cruse





## The week in Year 5 and 6

Another great week in Year 5 and 6. We have continued our book, Wonder, exploring the interesting life of the main character, August. He certainly faces many challenges on his journey through childhood. We have written some amazing diary entries, using lots of our wonderful English writing techniques, that we have been studying over the past few weeks. Here are some snippets of our work that we typed up on the laptops:

*When I woke up, I realised that mum signed me into school. I was as angry as a bull about to charge, when I was eating my breakfast mum was telling me about the good times and the friends I will make. Sam C*

*Today I am feeling nervous but excited at the same time because I am going to have a tour around my first ever school. When I got there Mr Tushman was standing at the door waiting for me. When he introduced himself I couldn't help it but I laughed - I mean who would want to be called Mr Tushman? As I walked closer I noticed he had my favourite pair of trainers on. Ralph*

*Hello my name is August I'm so frightened to go to a new school. What happens if they are big scary lions? I felt petrified. I felt so annoyed at mum making me go to school: I know that I will get bullied. It was so embarrassing: I really tried to avoid them but they wouldn't stop. Primrose*



Through this term's global theme of *Identity and Diversity*, during art we have been studying iconography and pattern using aboriginal art as a stimulus. We have been producing some amazing pieces of artwork. We have also been carrying out our own research on aboriginal art examples.

Belsay School

