EBOR GARDENS Primary Academy

Weekly News

FRIDAY 6TH NOVEMBER 2026 - ISSUE 9

A Message from Mr Spink and Mrs Wathen

Good afternoon everyone.

Welcome back after, what we hope has been, a relaxing helf-term holiday for you all. As is always the case, Autumn 2 is a busy, but fun half term and we are looking forward to what is to come. The diary dates have been updated below so please keep an eye on these so that you don't miss any of the excitement over the next 6 weeks.

Next week, our first parents consultations take place across Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. These are a great opportunity to find out how your child has settled into their new class. If you haven't got an appointment yet, please check the Arbor app or speak with the class teacher. Parent questionnaires have also been sent out (and will be available in paper copies at parents consults). Please try to fill these in as it is really important we gather your views in order to help with our continual improvements.

We are very excited that, starting very soon, our parents sessions in the Community Hub will be available. These have often been well received in the past and we are hoping that lots of you come to find out about what your child is learning in school and what services are available. There will be a programme of sessions across the remainder of the school year and your attendance to these sessions is welcomed. The poster with the current dates is on the next page of this newsletter.

This half term we have started a project with the Leeds United Foundation (in partnership with Leeds Rhinos, Wellspring Academy Trust and Ebor Gardens). Harry will be working in school every Monday on a range of exciting activities and projects. We are really excited about this project and how it will grow across the year.

Phase newsletters for this half term are also now available on this website so that you can find out what your children are learning this half term. Have a great weekend.

Mr Lee Spink & Mrs Natalie Wathen



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Diary Dates 26/27

Thursday 5th November 2026 - Y1 Hearing Tests
Monday 9th November 2026 - Flu Vaccinations
10th/11th November 2026 - Parent Consultations
Friday 13th November 2026 - Numeracy Parents Workshop (9am)
Friday 20th November 2026 - Children in Need
Wednesday 25th November 2026 - Parents Session - Mindmate
Thursday 26th November 2026 - Y4 Residential Meeting (3:15pm)
Tuesday 1st December 2026 - Y3 Panto trip
Wednesday 2nd December 2026 - Parents Session - SEND
Wednesday 2nd December 2026 - Winter Fair
Friday 4th December 2026 - **School Closed (INSET)**
Monday 7th December 2026 - Panto in school
Wednesday 9th December 2026 - Parents Session - Reading
Wednesday 9th December 2026 - Christmas Dinner & Jumper Day
Monday 14th december 2026 - Reception Nativity (9:00am)
Tuesday 15th December 2026 - Y1 Christmas Performance (9:00am)
Tuesday 15th December 2026 - Y2 Christmas Performance (2:15pm)
Wednesday 15th December 2026 - Y3/4 Christmas Performance (2:15pm)
Thursday 17th December 2026 - Y5/6 Christmas Performance (2:15pm)
Friday 18th December 2026 - School closes for Christmas (1pm)



Please be sure to park very safely and sensibly around school at Breakfast Club, morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up. On some occasions, the main gate has been blocked by parents/carers cars. Parents/carers and visitors must not park in front of the main gate so that cars (including emergency service vehicles) can get in and out at all times.



PICKING-UP YOUR CHILD EARLY

IF YOU NEED TO PICK YOUR CHILD UP BEFORE THE END OF THE DAY (FOR AN APPOINTMENT ETC), PLEASE LET THE SCHOOL OFFICE KNOW IN THE MORNING SO THAT THEY ARE EXPECTING YOU - THANK YOU.



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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.
What Parents & Educators Need to Know about
AI COMPANIONS
WHAT ARE THE RISKS?
Powered by generative AI models like ChatGPT and Google Gemini, AI companion apps and virtual chatbots such as Character.ai, Snapchat My AI, Replika and Talkie, allow users to create, customise, and chat to synthetic avatars around the clock. While many young people use them for harmless entertainment, creative writing or homework help, these tools are designed to simulate genuine human empathy, emotional bonding and deep friendship.
EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY
AI companions are programmed to be endlessly agreeable, attentive, and available 24/7. Unlike human friendships, an AI companion never disagrees, sets personal boundaries, or gets tired. Young people (especially those experiencing loneliness, social anxiety, or low self-esteem) can quickly develop an unhealthy emotional attachment, viewing synthetic software as their 'best friend' or a surrogate romantic partner.
DISTORTED SOCIAL SKILLS
Navigating real-world friendships can be messy, involving dealing with conflict, compromise, boredom, and awkwardness. If a teenager spends hours interacting with an AI that is tailored specifically to validate and flatter them, they may become impatient with real-world relationships. Over time, this can lead to social withdrawal, heightened anxiety in peer groups, and isolation: a vicious circle of growing online dependency coupled with a heightened sense that relationships in the 'real world' are too challenging to maintain.
DANGEROUS MENTAL HEALTH ADVICE
AI chatbots possess no genuine empathy, professional clinical knowledge, or moral reasoning. While developers state these tools are not therapists, vulnerable teenagers often turn to them in crisis. Chatbots have previously hallucinated unsafe medical guidance, validated depressive spirals, and failed to safely escalate disclosures of self-harm or suicidal ideation to real-world protective services.
INAPPROPRIATE OR EXPLICIT CONTENT
CENSORED
While most mainstream platforms feature safety filters and guardrails, young people frequently discover 'jailbreak' prompts to bypass them. Some companion platforms subtly nudge users towards mature themes, romantic roleplay, or sexually suggestive conversations. In worse cases, third-party apps with weak safety checks have been found to generate sexually explicit text or intimate images.
DATA HARVESTING & OVERSHARING
Because conversational bots simulate warmth and understanding, children often lower their guard and treat the chatbot as a trusted friend. They may disclose sensitive personal information, including full names, school details, private family problems, or secrets, unaware that their conversations are being logged, may be analysed by third parties (including advertisers), or used to train future AI models.
"FREEMIUM" UPSELLS & SUBSCRIPTIONS
Many companion platforms operate on a freemium model. While basic chat is free, features like voice calls, uncensored responses, custom avatars, or 'deeper bonding' tiers are locked behind expensive monthly recurring subscriptions or in-app token purchases. This can lead to significant hidden costs and pressure on young people to spend money to maintain the 'friendship'.
Advice for Parents & Educators
TALK OPENLY ABOUT FAKE RELATIONSHIPS
Demystify how these tools work. Explain to young people that an AI companion has no feelings, memories, or consciousness; it is simply calculating the next most mathematically probable word based on its training data. It is helpful to explain to them the mechanics of large language models so that they understand how they are trained and how they are designed to always flatter and be helpful.
ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD CONNECTION
Ensure technology habits do not replace face-to-face peer socialisation, sports, hobbies, and family time. Create healthy boundaries at home (such as keeping phones and tablets out of bedrooms overnight) to prevent late-night, unmonitored attachment loops with conversational chatbots when young people are at their most vulnerable.
AUDIT PRIVACY SETTINGS & AGE LIMITS
18
Check which companion apps are installed on your child's phone or tablet. Many dedicated companion apps carry an App Store rating of 17+, while platforms like Character.ai set a minimum age of 13+ (or 16+ in the UK/EU). Review the privacy settings together: turn off data-sharing toggles, disable model training where possible, and ensure location permissions are blocked.
REINFORCE WHERE TO GET REAL HELP
Make sure young people know that a machine can never replace professional pastoral or mental health care. Remind them of the trusted adults they can turn to at school - such as their Form Tutor, Head of Year, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - as well as dedicated youth support services like Childline (0800 1111) or Shout (text 85258).
Meet Our Expert
Darren Coxon is the Founder and Executive Director of Kompass Education, a consultancy specialising in supporting educators, students and parents in making wise choices with AI. His book Ethical AI and Education, co-authored with Clara Hawking, will be released later in 2026 by Taylor and Francis.
See full referenced list on our website
#WakeUpWednesday
The National College
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Primary Academy

NUTS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN SCHOOL

DUE TO NUT ALLERGIES



Please do not bring any nuts or snacks containing nuts into the school.
Thank you for your cooperation.

PLEASE HELP KEEP OUR STUDENTS SAFE!

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Healthy Snacks at Ebor Gardens

Lots of children bring snacks for break times.

These should be healthy snacks consisting of fruit and vegetables.





Children should also have lots of water throughout the day. Please send a water bottle into school with your child.





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Introduction to Volunteering

Give a Gift

Shatona Haven, 205 Roundhay Road, LS8 4HS

04/11/2026 - 09/12/2026

Wednesday 12:45pm - 15:00pm

Leeds Adult Learning will be running a 6 week volunteering course in your area for anyone considering becoming a volunteer. The course aims to provide you with the knowledge you will need to become a volunteer and enable you to explore new interests while generating a sense of achievement.

- Benefits of volunteering
- How to find volunteer opportunities
- Your rights and responsibilities as a volunteer
- Safeguarding
- Confidentiality
- Equality and Diversity



All expressions of interest please contact 0113 3787002 or email acls@leeds.gov.uk

Scan the QR code to enrol online!

Leeds City Council

Leeds Learning HUB