



Whinstone Weekly

Academic Year 2024/2025 - Spring term

Friday 28th March 2025

Whinstone Wide - General school information

Daisy



Last week, school received some very sad news regarding the passing of one of our pupils. Daisy attended Whinstone's pre-school and was a delightful young girl who had a very bubbly character. Daisy was diagnosed with Mitochondrial Disease just a few months ago and tragically lost her battle against this in a short space of time.

Through conversations with the family, Daisy's parents have expressed how they would like the news to go on the newsletter as a celebration of Daisy's short life. Daisy could regularly be seen with our school guinea-pigs which she adored.

Daisy was also one of the children selected to receive a Time to Shine award. However, Daisy was away when these were presented, and never got to receive it in person. This has been given to her mum and honoured on the board in school.

Despite Daisy having her illness, she never let it get her down. Daisy was always smiling, chatty and a true character who lived life to the full - right up to the end.

There is a charity - Lily's Foundation - that support people and their families with Mitochondrial Disease. If you would like to make a donation to this, in Daisy's memory, please follow the link. The work they do is invaluable and hopefully, with continued funding, a cure will soon be found.

Our thoughts are with Daisy's family at this very difficult time - she will be missed and has certainly left a hole in many of our lives.

Daisy December 2020 - March 2025



Fighting mito,
finding hope.

Link to donate directly to the charity is [here](#).

Packed lunches

From Monday, we are making a slight change which will affect the children who have packed lunches. If your child has a packed lunch, they will be bringing all of their left over food and waste - including packaging - home with them. There have been various reasons for putting this change in place which include:



1. Part of Stockton's new initiative around waste means that from 1st April, we can no longer put any food waste in our general waste collection. We have had to purchase food waste bins and organise at a cost, food waste collections. School has been made aware that we can be fined for putting food waste in with general waste, which is not something we wish to happen. Packed lunch waste is mixed waste - the children do not separate it. As we do not have surplus staff to monitor the waste areas, we have decided to send all waste home.

2. We have noticed, whilst monitoring the excessive amount of waste we are generating at lunchtime, the bins often contain full packed lunches. There have been unopened sandwiches, drinks, packets of crisps, biscuits, snacks, wrapped cereal bars etc all thrown away completely untouched. This is not just a waste of food and money, but means you are thinking your child is having a good lunch when really they may not be at all! By sending home all leftover contents of the packed lunch, you will be able to see exactly what your child is eating and what they are leaving.



So, from Monday, expect your child's lunchboxes to be coming home with their leftover contents and packaging. If you are sending in a yogurt, be mindful that this packaging will be returning to you. Somebody has shared a good idea with me about putting a small, sealable sandwich bag in the lunchbox to place any opened yogurt containers in to prevent unnecessary mess - this may be something you choose to do.

National Pet Month - Bring your pet to school assembly

On Friday, we are holding our special assembly to celebrate National Pet Month. The children who have been selected to bring in their pet to show in assembly will be notified individually by Mrs Burey and the Mental Health Champions. There are a wide variety of animals coming in - furry, feathery and scaly! If this goes well, it may be a new tradition for Whinstone.

Science week competition winners

This week, Mr Ford announced the winners of the Science week competition. The children were presented with a certificate and a bird box. Well done to all of the winners - some excellent pieces of work were produced.



Red Nose Day - money raised

We would like to say a HUGE thank you to everybody who donated to Comic Relief on Red Nose Day. There were some amazing outfits and hairstyles - we certainly turned the school red.

The initial count indicated we had raised £319, but more money has been given since then. We are currently around a total of £330. Fantastic and thank you!

Whinstonbury

The music festival event of the year is almost here. Live in Ingleby Barwick, and putting Glastonbury to shame, we are proud to present Whinstonbury 2025.

On Saturday 21st June, in true festival fashion, we will be showcasing the talented children of Whinstone to a field and playground packed with families. Please save the date - this is not an event to be missed.

Around Whinstone this week.



Well done to those who earned a Headteacher's certificate from Mrs Batty this week.



Year 2 have been making model beach huts linked to their history topic of 'Holidays, now and in the past.' They used templates to design small huts before creating larger model beach huts.



Year 5 had Mr Foggitt from Yarm School in to teach them about Microbits.



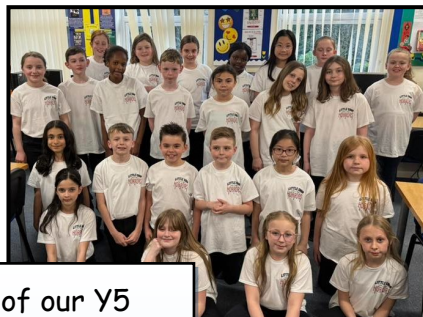
The Y5 Ambassadors visited Whitehouse Primary and took part in some sporting activities.



During their Forest School afternoon, Year 4 have been making thumb pot candles and decorating them.

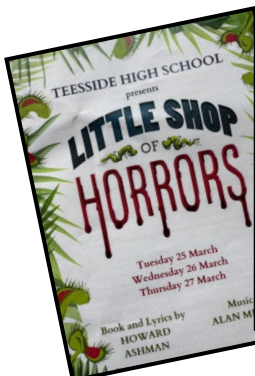
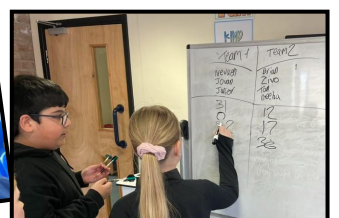
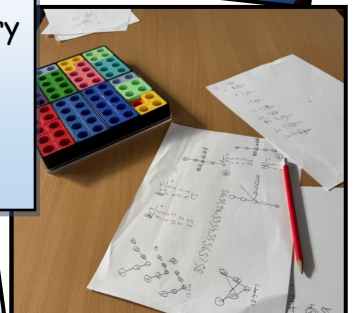


Some of our children went to The Links Primary School for a special maths focus day.



Some of our Y5 children were supporting in the Teesside High performance of Little Shop of Horrors.

We had our darts club organised by the Mental Health Champions.



Whinstone Stars

Alfie was a mascot at a Middlesbrough match.

He got to walk out on the pitch with Luke Ayling and have his photo taken with each of the players.

What an amazing opportunity and how brave to get up in front of all those people - well done, Alfie!



Whinstone next week

Parents' Evenings

Our Parents' Evenings are next week. These are on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The World Book Day plates are also on display in the corridors between Y4 and Y5 and Y6. If you are attending the evenings, pop along to have a look.



Year 5 - Bikeability

Year 5 have Level 1 and Level 2 Bikeability sessions happening over the course of the week. If your child is taking part in these, you will have received information about the days they are doing. Please remember that all children need to wear a cycle helmet for Bikeability.



Year 5 Forest School

Year 5 will have the second of their Forest School sessions on Tuesday.

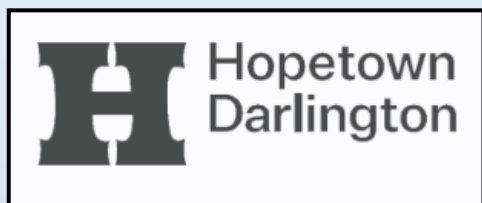
National Pet Month assembly

On Friday, we will be holding our special assemblies to celebrate National Pet Month. Any child who has been selected to bring in their pet to show during assembly, will receive the necessary information about times.



Out and About

Hopetown Darlington



This weekend starts a nine-month international festival taking place across Darlington, County Durham and the Tees Valley to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the first journey on the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR).

In 1825, a railway journey changed the world forever. Locomotion No. 1 became the first steam locomotive to haul a passenger-carrying train on a public railway - the Stockton and Darlington Railway.

Hopetown Darlington is an award-winning 7.5 acre visitor attraction where every building has a unique story to tell.

It is **free to enter** (but a ticket is required). Some exhibitions, events and activities carry a separate charge.

To find out about this local (and free) visitor attraction, visit their website [here](#).



Middlesbrough Brick Festival



The Middlesbrough Brick Festival will take place on Saturday, 12 April 2025 at Middlesbrough Sports Village.

Established in 2018, this celebration of all things LEGO is open to fans of all ages. There is a cost to this event and they recommend that these are booked

early as they can often sell out. There are Early Bird tickets available giving you an hour of extra fun and a FREE LEGO gift on entry too!

To find out more, visit the Brick Festival website [here](#).



Attendance



Whole school attendance (year to date)

95.1%

National average = 94.6%

Safeguarding and Family Support



I CAN... Tots Talking

Eight week programme to support parents with strategies to encourage their children's speech and language.

Who is it best for?

Parents/carers of children aged 2 years who have concerns about their child's speech and language or whose child is at risk of speech delay.

Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Family Hub

Tots Talking

There is availability for the Tots Talking course hosted by the Family Hub. This is an eight week course which helps parents learn how to encourage and promote good oracy in their toddlers. The next course is starting on:

*Monday 28th April 9:30-11:30am at Thornaby Family Hub

To book a place, please speak with a member of the team at your local Family Hub or call 01642 528525



Family Safety

How to child proof your home to reduce accidents

Looking at:

- Most common accidents in the home
- Preventing accidents in your home
- What to do if your child has an accident
- Basic first aid including choking and CPR

Buy safety equipment at a reduced cost
Free to Stockton-on-Tees residents

For more information or to book on contact us on:

01642 528525 familyhubs@stockton.gov.uk @SOTFamilyHubs

Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Family Safety

Find out the most common home accidents for children and what we can do to prevent them, along with basic first aid and resuscitation techniques. Completing this workshop entitles you to access to free and low cost safety equipment.

There are spaces available for our next Family Safety sessions:

*Thursday 10th April 9:30am-12:30pm at Redhill Family Hub

*Friday 11th April 9:30am-12:30pm at Stockton Family Hub

*Monday 28th April 9:30am-12:30pm at Billingham Family Hub

To book your place, please speak with a member of the team at your local Family Hub or call the Family Hub on 01642 528525

Safeguarding :

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the school is **Mrs Hardy**.



Our other safeguarding leads in school are:



Mrs Batty



Mrs Wilson- Dukes



Mr Carlton



Mrs Squires



Mr Ford

If you are worried about a child, please call the Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Children's Hub on **01429 284284 / 01642 130080** or out of office hours call **01642 524552**

In an emergency, please contact the Police on **101** or **999**.

Bluesky social app is a microblogging social media platform that gained popularity after separating from Twitter in 2021. It's more than doubled its user numbers in the past six months alone, from 14.5 million in October 2024 to 32 million at present. Since accounts must be public, this opens the door to potential trolling, cyberbullying and the spread of misinformation.

Please see the information for parents regarding this app.

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. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about BLUESKY SOCIAL APP

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

With an App Store rating of 17+ & Google Play rating Mature

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

While Bluesky has been around since 2019, it's suddenly taken off in a big way thanks to a significant exodus from X (formerly Twitter). Indeed, it looks and behaves a lot like Twitter before Elon Musk bought the platform. Bluesky has been touted in recent months as a safer, more open-minded alternative to X – but like any social media site, it still has its share of risks.

NO PRIVATE ACCOUNTS

While most social networks allow accounts to be private, at the time of writing, all Bluesky accounts must be public. The development team has indicated this might change in the future, but the app is built on a public-first protocol. If private accounts are ever introduced, it may only be in a limited way – such as through the implementation of group chats.

INTERACTIONS WITH STRANGERS

Every account being public means that anyone can be contacted by anyone else. While users don't have to respond and can easily block people and move on, it does mean that youngsters are at particular risk of being conned by scammers, messaged by predatory adults or exposed to others with ill intentions. These hazards can be compounded by the fact that Bluesky doesn't require its users to provide their real name.

TROLLING AND BULLYING

While Bluesky currently feels a lot friendlier than X seems to have become, its lack of private accounts means that there's nothing to stop users from trolling and cyberbullying younger people. While accounts can be blocked and reported, a persistent bully could simply create a new profile, potentially making their victims feel unsafe in continuing to use the app.

DANGEROUS MISINFORMATION

Established news organisations have fact-checking and editing processes, but social networks have no such controls and can often serve as breeding grounds for misinformation and disinformation. Bluesky will possibly be no different once it reaches a certain size, and children may not have the critical thinking skills to tell fact from fiction – or to discern an informative, honest user from a malicious one.

ADULT TARGET AUDIENCE

Bluesky isn't designed with children in mind, and there aren't many parental controls on the platform. In an interview with the BBC, Bluesky's CEO originally said that the app would only allow users aged 18 and above to sign up, but a spokesperson later clarified its age restriction as 13+. This could imply the app was originally meant for an adult audience and suggests that making the platform more child-friendly might not currently be a priority.

RAPID GROWTH

At the time of writing, Bluesky seems calm in comparison with other social networks where moderation is lax and the atmosphere toxic – but that's due at least in part to its smaller community. The app has recently been adding as many as a million users per day, and if that continues, there'll be more unpleasant users to handle, and moderators could struggle to maintain the pleasant environment Bluesky is currently known for.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE THE ADULT CONTENT FILTER

Bluesky doesn't have much in the way of parental controls, but there are content filters which can hide sexual and graphic imagery. These are enabled by default for underage accounts but can be manually turned on in the 'Moderation' section of the app's settings. The 'advanced' Bluesky Moderation Service lets you restrict content even further, hiding – for example – self-harm content, extremist rhetoric, and even rude posts.

ENCOURAGE BLOCKING AND REPORTING

Another tool that Bluesky uses to ensure a decent experience is muting and blocking accounts. The former prevents you from seeing a specific user's content, while the latter stops them from seeing yours. If a child is encountering trolls or bullies on the platform, encourage them to use this function, while also reporting the offenders to help make the platform a nicer place for everyone.

LOOK OUT FOR FAKES

Impersonation is a problem on all social networks. While the consequences are usually benign, imposters sometimes attempt to scam or groom children by pretending to be a popular influencer or online personality. Bluesky is unique in that it can be connected to official domains, with users' handles linking to other sites; while this isn't widely used right now, it could be a reliable way to verify celebrities and public figures in future.

KEEP AN OPEN DIALOGUE

As with all social media platforms, moderation and content filters can only do so much; it's highly likely that a child will eventually face something unsavoury. For that reason, it's important to make sure that young people are aware of the risks and know how to handle the technology if anything they see on the app makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

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, The Guardian and The New Statesman.



#WakeUpWednesday

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