

As we approach the end of a bustling term, we want to take a moment to reflect on the wonderful performances and events that have brought our school community together. From our enchanting Christmas performances to the delightful grotto experience created by our dedicated "Phoenix Elves," the joy and excitement have been wonderful to see. These events not only showcase our children's talents but also foster a sense of belonging and community spirit that is so vital for their emotional and social development.

Santa made a special visit for party day today, spreading festive cheer and creating unforgettable memories for our children. Santa told the children he had parked his sleigh in the car park and Mrs Harper went out to check - see below! 🎄



A huge thank you to Anne-Marie and Kerry for their incredible efforts in preparing a delicious Christmas dinner. The festive crackers added a lovely touch of fun and laughter, making it even more special. We appreciate the entire team of play leads too for their hard work and dedication in creating such a memorable lunch.



Chaplin's Panto performed *Little Red Riding Hood*! Oh yes, they did! The children were in great spirits as they joined in the fun, cheering and laughing throughout the performance. It was wonderful to see their enthusiasm and engagement, making the experience even more magical. Phew! What a busy day!





At our school, we are working really hard with our families to ensure our children achieve the very best they can, and alongside this, attendance plays a crucial role. We understand that regular attendance is key to academic success, and we are thrilled to share some fantastic news regarding attendance. We have proudly awarded forty-two certificates for 100% attendance and another forty for attendance over 97%. We ensure these certificates are given out termly, as this acknowledges that each term is a fresh start. With this in mind, let's set our sights on achieving even higher attendance rates in the Spring Term! Our goal is to see if we can increase the number of children achieving 97% attendance or more as well as ensuring that attendance for children below 90% is significantly reduced. Remember, everyday counts! By ensuring our children are present every day we are setting them up for success in their future. Together, we can make a significant impact on their learning journey



As we enter the holiday season, it's essential to address the topic of online safety for our young learners. With increased screen time during this festive period, we want to ensure that our families are equipped with the knowledge to navigate the digital world safely.

Scroll down for informative leaflets that outline key points on online safety, and we encourage parents to review them with their children.

By working together, we can create a safe online environment for our children

Kindness

In the spirit of the season, our KS1 choir has been busy spreading Christmas cheer by visiting two local care homes. This initiative not only allowed our children to share their beautiful songs but also taught them the invaluable lessons of kindness and empathy. Engaging with the residents has helped foster intergenerational relationships, enriching both the children's and the residents' experiences.

This week in assembly, I shared the delightful story 'I'm (almost) Always Kind' and discussed the wonderful ways we can show kindness to one another. Kindness not only brightens someone else's day but also makes us feel good inside! To continue our exploration of this important theme, I invite you to watch this lovely clip: [Life Vest Inside - Kindness Boomerang - "One Day" Acts of Kindness](#). As you watch, see how many acts of kindness you can spot. Let's keep spreading kindness in our school community and make a positive difference together!



Have a Wonderful Break

As we close this term, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to all families for your support and involvement in our school community. Your contributions have made a significant difference, and we appreciate the strong relationships that have developed between staff, children, and families.

We wish you all a joyful and restful break, filled with special moments with loved ones.

Mrs Harper and the Phoenix Team

When parents and carers finally have the chance to spend some quality time with their child over Christmas, many face a familiar struggle to prise their young one's attention away from their phone, console, tablet or computer. Fun family bonding over the festive period, however, doesn't have to exclude devices. There are sackfuls of Christmas activities and ideas online which grown-ups and children can enjoy together. We've compiled our own 'nice list' of seasonal suggestions for how to ...

MAKE THE MOST OF THE ONLINE WORLD THIS CHRISTMAS

1 EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY

Budding bakers will relish helping out in the kitchen with some tasty festive treats. Spend some time together researching child-friendly Christmas recipes online (the BBC Good Food site is an excellent place to start), and then you and your little elves can rustle up gingerbread santos, marshmallow snowmen or reindeer shortbread. The only thing that's more fun is eating your creations afterwards!

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WHEN THE SNOWMAN BRINGS THE SNOW...

4 A WORLD OUTSIDE YOUR WINDOW

From turkey on the beach in Australia to roller-skating to church in Venezuela, Christmas is celebrated in a variety of ways worldwide – curious youngsters might enjoy discovering other nations' festive traditions online. Google's Santa Tracker is a brilliant (and free) starting point, with games, activities and animations to help children enjoy learning as they count down to the big day!

4

2 THE OLD SONGS ARE THE BEST?

We've all had that Christmas compilation CD that was almost perfect, if it wasn't inexplicably missing one of your best-loved tracks. In this era of music streaming, however, your little helpers can assist you in compiling a definitive playlist of all your favourite seasonal songs – no more pining for The Pretenders or wishing for Wizard.

2

5 THE NEAR AND THE DEAR ONES

Between time constraints, distance, the weather and Covid precautions (or a combination of all four) for many families it just won't be possible to physically spend time with everyone they'd ideally like to this Christmas. Video calling technology, of course, takes some of the sting out of the disappointment by virtually transporting loved ones into your living room.

5

3 DECK THE HALLS

There's no such thing as 'too many' Christmas trimmings! Let your child channel their excitement into some creative crafting, and you'll make memories as well as your own DIY decorations. There are loads of step-by-step guides online (including video walkthroughs on YouTube) for seasonal showpieces like paper plate angels, handprint wreaths and cupcake wrapper Christmas trees.

3

6 KIDS FROM ONE TO 92

If Santa's brought your young ones a console this year (or they already had one), it's a perfect excuse for some quality time while they gleefully trounce you at FIFA or Mario Kart. Digital versions of traditional board games like Monopoly and Cluedo are available on most platforms, too; get the whole household together for a modern take on some old-school family fun.

6

7 A WINTER'S TALE

Everyone enjoys a story at this time of year; after all, the whole celebration is based on an engrossing yarn. Sites such as Audible are an excellent way of entertaining excited young ones, with classics like Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and seasonal short stories by Enid Blyton alongside more contemporary Christmas tales by the likes of Tom Fletcher, JK Rowling and Ben Miller.

7

8 CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THOSE FACES

People used to express their gratitude for a thoughtful Christmas gift with a thank you card or a dutiful phone call. Not in the digital age; now your relations can see first-hand on video calls how delighted the children are with their presents – and even how they look in that slightly questionable hand-knitted pullover.

8

9 BROUGHT ME SOME CORN FOR POPPIN'

Snuggling up against the winter weather with the family (and a generous helping of chocolates) to enjoy a well-loved movie is a delightful Christmas tradition. The usual streaming services have some classic candidates on offer: *Home Alone* and *The Santa Clause* are on Disney+, while Amazon Prime has *Elf* and *The Grinch*, and Netflix goes with *The Princess Switch* and *The Christmas Chronicles*.

9

10 GUESS WHAT I FORGOT?

Friends and family pitting their wits against each other on Zoom, Teams or Skype really took off during lockdown, so why not revive the tradition over the holidays? Your questions could be on the biggest news, sport and showbiz stories of 2021, or be Christmas themed, or you could stick to classic general knowledge. Ideal for those days between Christmas and New Year.

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ONLINE SAFETY FOR UNDER 5s

10 Top Tips for Parents and Carers

According to Ofcom's most recent research, a significant proportion of children are already online by the time they start school, with 17% of 5-year-olds owning their own mobile phone and 50% using messaging platforms. As becoming familiar with technology is generally encouraged in younger children – and has been essential for education during the pandemic – it is crucial that trusted adults recognise both the benefits and the risks of infants and toddlers using digital devices. We've compiled our top tips to help the under-5s start their online safety journey.

1 USE DEVICES TOGETHER

This lets you monitor and control what your child is using the device for. It also provides the interaction that supports children's understanding of what they're seeing – allowing them to ask you questions, and so on.

PARENT CODE:

6 BLOCK IN-APP PURCHASES

If your child uses a device that's linked to a payment method (such as a bank card), use the parental controls to block buys from app stores, as well as in-app purchases. That will prevent your child from accidentally spending money while on your device.

2 ACTIVATE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Most digital devices have built-in parental controls that can limit the type of content children have access to. If your little one uses any device (even borrowing yours), it's a good idea to explore what controls the device has and enable them whenever they have access to it.

7 CHOOSE SAFE APPS AND SITES

There are some fantastic apps and platforms that are specifically designed to be safer for children. Always check the PEGI age rating before downloading an app, and test it yourself before allowing your child to use it.

3 MANAGE SCREEN TIME

This can be tricky, especially if your child is interested in a certain video, app or game. Try to agree on some ground rules and get your child into a routine which includes certain times of the day when they go without devices.

8 INVOLVE THE FAMILY

If your toddler has older siblings, it's likely that their rules for device use will be different – and that they'll access content that isn't appropriate for younger ones (a particular worry if they share devices). Encourage the whole family to be good role models and help little ones stay safe online.

4 TALK ABOUT BEING SAFE ONLINE

Just like we teach children about being safe in the real world, we need to educate them about how to stay safe online. Use age-appropriate language to help them understand, and plenty of hand gestures can reinforce what you're telling them.

9 IF IN DOUBT, ASK

The easiest way to find out what your child is doing online is usually just to talk about it with them. Developing an open dialogue at an early age helps them grow up feeling able to talk to you about their digital life – providing opportunities to intervene if you're concerned.

5 SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

Children often learn by watching and copying those around them, and using digital devices is no exception. When you're around your child, try to follow the same rules that you've set for them. Let them see you balancing your time online with interacting with people in real life, too.

10 SUPPORT CREATIVE & ACTIVE PLAY

Physical and creative activities are important for a child's wellbeing, and there are plenty of ways to incorporate technology into that. For example, you could encourage games that require physical movement; dance and sing along to songs your child loves; and follow step-by-step crafting videos.

Meet Our Expert

Konstantina Moustaka is a professional development and EYFS coordinator at an 'outstanding' nursery school in London. She has been working as a nursery and early years practitioner, both in the UK and internationally, for the past 16 years.



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Sources: https://www.ofcom.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/234850/children-media-use-and-attitude-report-2022.pdf



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Diary dates

Spring Term

- **Back to School: Monday, 5th January 2026**
- **Safer Internet Day - Tuesday, 10th February 2026**
- **Half Term - Monday, 16th February 2026 to Friday, 20th February 2026**
- **First Day of Term - Monday, 23rd February 2026**
- **World Book Day - Thursday, 5th March 2026**
- **Easter Disco - Friday, 20th March 2026**
- **F2 Parents' Evenings (Puffins and Finches) - Monday, 23rd March and Wednesday, 25th March 2026**
- **KS1 Parents' Evenings (Hummingbirds, Kingfishers, and Woodpeckers) - Tuesday, 24th March and Thursday, 26th March 2026**
- **Last Day of Term - Friday, 27th March 2026**

Summer Term

- **First Day of Summer Term - Monday, 13th April 2026**
- **Half Term - Monday, 25th May 2026 to Friday, 29th May 2026**
- **Year 1 Phonics Screening - Week commencing 8th June 2026**
- **Year 2 Residential Trip to Gulliver's Valley - details to follow - Thursday, 11th June 2026**
- **KS1 Sports Day (Hummingbirds, Kingfishers/Woodpeckers) - Wednesday, 17th June 2026 - 9:30 AM**
- **F1/F2 Sports Day (Nursery, Finches, and Puffins) - Wednesday, 24th June 2026 (times: 9:30 AM and 10:30 AM)**
- **Carnival (after school fundraiser for children) - Thursday, 2nd July 2026**
- **INSET Day - Friday, 3rd July 2026**
- **Year 2 Leavers Assembly - Thursday, 23rd July 2026 at 2:00 PM**
- **Last Day of Term - Friday, 24th July 2026 - End of Academic Year**

