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OAKFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL
& NURSERY UNIT
www.oakfieldprimaryschool.com

Monday 11 December 2023

Open Morning Thank-You

May we take this opportunity to thank our visiting parents and children who joined us on **Saturday 9 December 2023** for **Open Morning 2023**. It was wonderful to welcome everyone into our warm and inclusive school environment. Special thanks go to staff and Governors for their efforts in making the event such a success. Any parents with prospective Nursery or Primary 1 children for September 2024 who were unable to join us for Open Morning 2023, are encouraged to contact the school directly to arrange a personal tour.

Staffing Changes At Oakfield

It is with mixed emotions that we bid farewell to two of our valued lunch-time supervisors who are due to retire at Christmas 2023. Mrs Creighton has worked in our school for 35 years and Mrs Jeavons for 15 years. Both ladies have been conscientious and dedicated to the welfare of Oakfield pupils. We wish them health and happiness for the future.

We also bid farewell to Mrs Debra Morgan who has been our Primary 1 assistant for this term. We are indebted to her for her warmth, caring and nurturing approach during this time.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Miss Lauren Keep who has joined our team of learning support assistants.

KS2 Christmas Carol Service



We are looking forward to our Key Stage 2 Christmas Carol Service in Oakfield Primary School Assembly Hall on **Thursday 14 December 2023 at 7.00pm**.

This is always a lovely occasion to reflect on the real meaning of Christmas amidst the busyness of the season. There will be a retiring collection towards Oakfield school funds. We look forward to seeing you and your family.

School Christmas Dinner

Our school Christmas dinner will be served on **Wednesday 13 December 2023**. Children are welcome to wear their Christmas jumper or Christmas hat or both, to Christmas dinner! Mr McCluskey will be wearing both!

ROAST TURKEY, STUFFING, COCKTAIL SAUSAGES, PEAS, BATON CARROTS,
MASHED & OVEN BAKED ROAST POTATOES & TURKEY GRAVY
(SPECIAL DIETS WILL BE CATERED FOR)
CHRISTMAS CHOC ICE & SHORTBREAD
ORANGE JUICE



Festive Fun

We are planning a few Christmas Festive Fun events during our last days of Term 1.

Tuesday 19 December 2023- our School Council have organised a 'Movie & Munch' day where everyone can attend school in their pyjamas for a movie and popcorn event.

Wednesday 20 December 2023 - it's Christmas disco day. All children may come to school in their party clothes today.

The first disco will be for P1-P4 pupils from 1.00 – 1.50pm.

The second disco will be for our P5-P7 pupils from 2.00pm – 2.50pm.

Thursday 21 December 2023 – Christmas Jumper Day! This will be our last day of term 1 with all our pupils finishing at 12 noon.



The cost for our 3 Festive Fun days is **£5 per child or £10 per family**.

All monies and permissions slips should have been returned by **Friday 8 December 2023**. Any outstanding money should be forwarded as soon as possible.

The cash collected from these festive fun days will be donated to two charities. Firstly to support our sponsor child called Chala through 'Stand by Me' charity and secondly to help to transport shoeboxes to Eastern Europe through Blythswood Christmas Shoebox Appeal.

Nursery & Primary One Applications for 2024

As we consider the future, may we advise you that the application process will again be online for children wishing to start at our **Nursery Unit or Primary One in September 2024**. A parental portal on the Education Authority website of www.eani.org.uk/admissions will be available from **Tuesday 9 January 2024 @ 12 Noon to Friday 26 January 2024 @ 12 Noon**. Please do not hesitate in asking us for assistance if you have any further queries.

Season's Greetings

May we take this opportunity to wish all our Oakfield pupils, staff and families a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year. We look forward to welcoming all our pupils back to school on **Thursday 4 January 2024** at normal times.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

School Information for Parents : Oakfield Safeguarding & Child Protection Team



Miss L Gilmour
Designated
Teacher



Mrs J Barrow
Deputy
Designated
Teacher (Primary)



Mrs K Wylie
Deputy
Designated
Teacher (Nursery)



Mr G McCluskey
Co-Principal



Mrs Y Moore
Co-Principal



Mr P Jones
Board of
Governors
Chairperson



Mrs L Soeters
Designated
Governor

Safer Schools NI App

For our final focus in Term 1 fortnight we are focusing on 'Among Us' and on 'Call of Duty'.

At the end of this newsletter, please find attached an 'Among Us Safety Card for Parents' and a 'Call of Duty Safety Card for Parents'.

You can find more information about Among Us and Call of Duty by accessing the Safer Schools NI App as detailed below.

Among Us

- Login to the App
- Select 'Online Safety Centre.'
- Select 'Among Us'



What parents & carers need to know about ...

AMONG US PEGI 7

Among Us is one of the most popular games of 2020. A space-themed 'social deduction game' where 4-10 players take on the guise of Crewmates, who must complete various tasks around their spaceship, while randomly selected Imposters must try their hardest to sabotage the others' efforts. The Imposters have to remain undetected through rounds of voting to win. While Among Us is a largely safe game, it's still prudent to be aware of any potential risks young ones might encounter when playing.

- Inappropriate chat:** While Among Us can be enjoyed locally via Wi-Fi, it is commonly played together between friends, or even in public spaces, with a text chat, and it's here where children will come into contact with others. There is a profanity filter on the game's in-game chat, but it can very easily be disabled and (like any unmoderated chat group) children can be exposed to inappropriate, sexual or explicit language.
- In-game purchases:** Among Us is currently available on both PC and PS4. The game costs £4.99 on the PC, but there are some in-game purchases, whereas the mobile version is free to play but contains adverts and in-game purchases. You can opt to remove the ads, but this is an in-game cosmetic item. While these in-game items are relatively few, there is the possibility that young ones could accidentally spend lots of money on the game without realising it, as the process is completely seamless and is not connected to your store account.
- Mild violence:** The art style of Among Us is cartoonish but does contain some mild violence. Imposters must kill off Crewmates one by one and can do this in a number of different ways. Some players claim that it's not as scary as it looks, but it's still important to be aware of the potential for violence, especially if they are an Impostor and are forced to kill. An age rating of PEGI 7 should help guide you in deciding if the game is appropriate or not.
- Risk of hacking:** Among Us has been the target of hacking activity, including the security of the game's developer account being hacked, which could allow players to hijack game servers or inject malicious code into the game. It's important to be aware of this risk, especially if you are a parent of a child who is playing the game.
- Use of external apps:** Many players use external apps to help them play. These apps can be used to communicate with other players while they are playing. The problem with this is that it is unregulated by the game, so players will only talk to other people they know in private chats, but a stranger could add a child to an external app, pretending to be interested in playing. Among Us will warn you when it realises they could be attempting to bully, groom or sext.

Safety tips

- Play with your children:** Playing with your kids is one of the best ways to understand the game, and what makes it so popular. Among Us is free to play, and it's incredibly easy to pick up and play. It's also a great way to bond with your young ones - parents of course you're the Impostor or you're out of the spaceship! You can do this by picking 'local' on the main menu then 'Create Game'.
- Use private lobbies:** Among Us uses private lobbies to let players keep track of who they're gaming with. Using a unique generated code that can be given to friends prior to a game starting, it gives parents peace of mind knowing who their kids are playing with. To get a game code, simply select 'Host', choose the game settings press 'Confirm', then send the six-digit code at the bottom of the screen to friends to invite them.
- Deactivate credit cards:** Having your credit card automatically paired with any online accounts that can be accessed by children's gaming accounts is a big no-no. It could be linking them up with other accounts with credit card attached. They can still use you when they want to make a purchase, but it's totally up to you as to when that transaction happens.
- Use an alias:** By default, your name in Among Us will be set to whatever name your device recognises you as. If it's your child's real name, you'll want to ensure they change it before hopping into a game. This is really easy to do by clicking 'Online' on the main menu, then simply typing in a new name at the top of the screen.
- Talk about the risks:** It's a good idea to talk to your child about the risks associated with online gaming, especially when there are chat options and an ability to communicate with others. It's important to have an open dialogue with your child about their experiences of the game and who they're playing with. This will help you to stay on top of how they're feeling and ensure they know they can come to you if ever they feel upset or uncomfortable about anything they've experienced.
- Meet our expert:** Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for five years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor at one of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, IGN. He has a passion for understanding how games and tech work - but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.

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Call of Duty

- Login to the App
- Select 'Online Safety Guidance'
- Select 'Gaming'
- Select 'PlayStation 5' or 'Xbox series X or S'



What parents need to know about

CALL OF DUTY: WARZONE PEGI 18+

Call of Duty: Warzone is the latest and possibly biggest battle royale game on the market. Following in the footsteps of titles like Fortnite, Apex Legends and PUBG, in Warzone, up to 150 players will drop onto a huge map in teams of three battling it out in an ever-shrinking radius, in a bid to become the last team standing. Because this is a Call of Duty game, you already know what you're getting: fast-paced action that includes depictions of violence and coarse language - and that's before you even consider players from across the globe adding their own voices to the mix.

ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOUR: Battle royale games can be addictive. The rush of evading the foe in a frantic firefight or reaching the final moments of a game to come out on top can be a massively fun experience, but also one that some will struggle to walk away from. While many studies have been done into video game addiction, it's never a bad idea for children to stop before they get carried away, behaviours to watch for include irritability, increased levels of frustration or anger, and constant thoughts about playing when engaging in other activities.

IN-GAME SPENDING: Warzone can be downloaded for free on PS4, Xbox One and PC. However, this doesn't mean the game is totally free. Players will be able to find one regularly encouraged to spend real money in-game for custom logos, skins and skins to make them look cool on the battlefield. While these will be marketed as enhancing gameplay, the reality is that they can be purchased with real money and could contribute towards a hefty bill.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS: If kids aren't playing with friends in a 3-man team, it's possible that they can join a group with other players who may be keen to talk to them via the in-game voice chat. For the most part these strangers have been found to be interested in playing the game and having fun, but with only online games, there's always a chance they could be looking for young children to talk to and potential groom.

ADULT THEMES AND VIOLENCE: It will come as little surprise to anybody familiar with Call of Duty to hear that the game carries a Mature Rating (M) and is packed with things like shooting, profanity, violence, blood and bad language. However, this may be distressing to younger children. The game is specifically made to attract adult war game scenarios and should be treated with care, especially when it comes to allowing children to play.

Safety tips for parents

- ENCOURAGE BREAKS:** The great thing about battle royale games, is that there is always a natural stopping point when you're either eliminated from the game, or win. Because play sessions can range anywhere from ten minutes to twenty minutes, allowing for one more game gives a clear and decisive cut-off point, which also allows some degree of breathing time. Getting a break from the screen can also help kids disengage from the fun when they might get too involved in the game, making screen time a necessary step.
- PLAY WITH FRIENDS:** The beauty of battle royale games is that they encourage cooperative team play. This means that if kids play ahead and group up together, they will be much safer and happier interacting among themselves and not with strangers. It always helps to coordinate with other parents on clear times of the day to play are outlined, and so that friendship groups can be online at the same time.
- LIMIT ABILITY TO SPEND:** It can be extremely easy to make purchases online for things like COD points. These online shops are designed to be easily accessible to the point where some children might not realise they're buying with real money. Be sure that credit cards are not connected to any online accounts to minimise the risk of accidental spending or large amounts building up.
- IN-GAME SAFETY OPTIONS:** While Warzone doesn't have any parental settings as such, you can still take steps to prevent strangers from talking to children in the game. In-game chat can be turned off in the settings menu, which enhances safety while playing, but anybody persistent enough could add another person's account and communicate through text chat. Any incoming friend requests and party invites can also be hidden. People will be able to send them, but the notifications for them will not appear.
- DISABLE GORE EFFECTS:** There are options to disable profanity, dismemberment and gore effects in the game's options menu under the 'game' tab. Be aware that these are not turned off as a standard, so children playing unaccompanied may well be exposed to these things straight away. While this does go some way to lessening the like-like scenes in the game, parents should still think hard about whether they want their children exposed to them.
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