

# High Oaks Newsletter

## Dates for the Diary

Half term—11th February—21st February

24th February—students return

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families are well. I can't believe it is already the end of January, we have been very busy in school since returning from the Christmas break.

This week students really enjoyed our Chinese New Year celebrations. Each class took part in a variety of activities relating to Chinese New Year and then enjoyed a disco in the afternoon.

This morning it was lovely to see so many families attending our RSE parent workshop. We hope that we explained the content of the RSE curriculum and how important it is that we equip our young people with the skills they need to keep themselves safe.

The presentation will be on our website and there will be links to the resources Elena spoke about. If any parents have any questions about the RSE curriculum, or would like some advice or support about a specific issue please do email [RSE@oaklands.uk.net](mailto:RSE@oaklands.uk.net) and we will get back to you.

Please do take a look at the other parents events that are coming up soon on our website.

Best wishes

Mairead



# Richmond 1

Hello,

Richmond 1 have been floating in space with musical instruments! We have been learning about space and making guitars with tin foil. We have been investigating space aliens and went on a space food shop to Tesco! We have also been working on physio and swimming.



# KEW 1

Kew 1 have been going to Tesco's for our community trip to get ingredients for food tech. We have been doing fine motor skills by practicing buttering bread and adding Jam, exploring taste touch and smell making yogurt and Berries, as well as following visual instructions, using choice boards to make choices and enjoying tasty food!



# Syon 1

Hello,

Syon 1 has been celebrating Chinese New Year this week. They have been practicing and learning new Makaton signs and have enjoyed making fortune cookies and exchanging red envelopes.



新年好  
Xīn nián hǎo  
HAPPY NEW YEAR



# Jack Petchey Award

## Spring Term



A huge congratulations to Kameron, our Jack Petchey award winner for the Spring term. Kameron was chosen by Sixth Form staff to be one of our nominees this term and voted for overwhelmingly by his peers.

Kameron is polite, kind and hardworking—He has been an asset to Oaklands since joining us in the Sixth Form and as this is his last year here we will really miss him when he moves on.

Kameron has been making excellent progress in life skills and vocational lessons alongside getting ready to sit his NOCN exams in the summer.

# Oaklands School Therapy Team

We hope you've all had a lovely start to the new year! We have a few exciting updates to share with you about the team, as well as some upcoming events here at Oaklands.

## Welcome to Our New Speech and Language Therapist

We are thrilled to welcome a new Speech and Language Therapist, Tammy Creecy, to our team! She'll be working closely with our students to support their communication needs. We're excited to see the positive impact she will have, and we're sure the students will enjoy getting to know her!

## Sensory Circuits Coming to the Kew Department

We are launching Sensory Circuits in our Kew department. These will be fun, interactive sessions designed to help identified students regulate their sensory needs and get them ready to focus for the day ahead. Staff across the Kew department have received training from our school Occupational Therapists to ensure these circuits are carried out accurately and to ensure the best impact for our students. We believe these circuits will be a great addition to our students' daily routines, and we're looking forward to seeing the benefits they bring.

## Toilet Training Workshop

Mark your calendars! On **19th February 2025**, we'll be hosting a toilet training workshop, discussing how we can support toilet training with our students at High Oaks. Led by our fantastic Occupational Therapist, Keziah Freimond, this workshop is aimed at providing helpful strategies and support for parents. Be sure to keep an eye out for a letter with more details that will be sent home closer to the event. We hope this will be a valuable resource for families navigating this important milestone.

## Just a Reminder

If you ever need to get in touch with your child's class Occupational Therapist (OT) or Speech and Language Therapist (SALT), you can always contact them at the following email addresses:

- **OT (Occupational Therapy):** [ot@oaklands.uk.net](mailto:ot@oaklands.uk.net)
- **SALT (Speech and Language Therapy):** [salt.oaklands.uk.net](mailto:salt.oaklands.uk.net)

We're here to support you and your child, so please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns.



# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators USING AND REVIEWING PARENTAL CONTROLS

Phones and computers are essential parts of children's lives, but with unfettered internet access comes a multitude of risks. While not foolproof, parental controls can help with this; filtering out inappropriate content, limiting the ability to spend real money, capping screen time and generally making devices safer for young people.

## 1 KNOW THE TYPES

While parental control software can apply to an entire device, it also pays to know about options on individual apps and websites. TikTok, for example, has Restricted Mode for limiting unsuitable videos, while Snapchat lets you keep an eye on who a child has been talking to. Check the settings of any new app young users want and review your options.

## 2 COVER ALL DEVICES

Knowing what parental controls cover is crucial, as remaining unaware can run the risk of 'blind spots' in the device's safety measures. Controls on a phone will apply whenever a child's on that device, for instance – but you'll want to ensure that parental controls are set up across any laptops, tablets and potentially other phones, too. Remember, buying a new device may require you to set everything up again.

## 3 DON'T NEGLECT SHARED TECH

While children often have their own devices, if you have a shared family computer or tablet, for example, you'll need to make sure that's not a weak point in your safety measures. Parental controls for your router, that cover everything connected to your Wi-Fi, are one option – or you can just be thorough with each device and online account. Just ensure that unprotected laptops, phones and tablets are password locked.

## 4 CONSIDER TIME CONTROLS

Even safe internet content can be harmful if it's viewed in excess. Not only are certain apps addictive enough to distract from other duties, but late-night usage can badly disrupt sleep, which is vital for adolescent brain development. Most parental controls offer some kind of time limit – either blocking access at certain hours or capping the number of minutes it can be used per day – so be sure to consider these.

## 5 BLOCK APP SPENDING

Seemingly free apps can sometimes include microtransactions: purchases that can be made using real money. While plenty of developers implement these fairly, some companies attempt to manipulate children into paying for additional features or content, which can soon add up to hundreds of pounds if a child gets carried away. Thankfully, iOS and Android's settings allow you to block in-app purchases, preventing any huge bills.

## 6 NO CONTROLS ARE PERFECT

Parental controls can be very useful, but they're far from infallible. Some unwanted content can and unfortunately will slip through the net, so remember that setting up these measures isn't a substitute for having an active interest in young people's digital lives. Talk to them, and make sure they're aware of the risks of the internet as well as its benefits.

## 7 MIND THE GAPS

There'll undoubtedly be some gaps in parental controls, no matter how thorough you intend to be. For example, if you use router-level parental controls, bear in mind that these won't cover Wi-Fi outside the home. For that reason, it's important to keep an open dialogue with children about the many unpredictable aspects of social media and the web.

## 8 KEEP THINGS SECURE

Some children can react poorly to parental controls and feel tempted to circumvent them. It's important to ensure that the passwords to these settings remain unknown to children, otherwise they can easily modify the restrictions without you knowing. Similarly, make sure your phone isn't left unlocked and unattended.

## 9 REVIEW CONTROLS REGULARLY

Parental controls shouldn't be a 'set and forget' deal. Not only can parental circumstances provide you with a frequent overview of a child's digital life – to let you spot any warning signs – but companies often add new features, and some of these may be useful to enable (or disable). Regularly checking in ensures that if a child has found a way to wiggle out of the controls, you'll be the first to know.

## 10 KNOW WHEN TO LET UP

The parental controls you install on a computer for a seven-year-old probably wouldn't be appropriate for a child of 16 – and as young people approach adulthood, bubble-wrapping the internet can do more harm than good. Consider relaxing parental controls as children get older, so they can learn to manage the risks of the internet themselves, without so many training wheels.

## Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist and the former deputy editor of technology and internet culture website Alpha. Now freelance, he has contributed articles to publications including the *New Statesman*, *CBBC*, the *Evening Standard*, *Wired*, *Rock Paper Shotgun*, *GamesRadar*, *Parent Carer*, *BBC*, *IT*, *PC Pro*, *Macworld*, *Teacher* and *Trustpilot* reviews.



#WakeUpWednesday

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