

Meadowhead Community Junior School Newsletter



Spring Term: Newsletter 5

Break the Rules Day

A huge thank you to those of you who participated in Break the Rules Day. We have raised a fantastic £181.15 which will all go towards supporting your children in school!

Young Voices

On Monday, our choir performed at the annual Young Voices concert in Manchester to an audience of over 20,000 people! The day was very long and tiring but ultimately, a fantastic experience for our children. Mrs Livesey tells me that the children's behaviour was exemplary and that they were a credit to themselves and MJS – well done everybody!

School Dinners – Important

Parents and carers of those children currently receiving a school dinner have been messaged today to say that, unfortunately, the funding 'Schools Food Grant' that has allowed us to provide free meals to all children in school has come to an end. This means that if you are not entitled to free school meals, you will have to start paying for school dinners from 20th, February 2024; the meals are still great value for money at £2 per day.

If you haven't applied but think you may be entitled, please visit [School meals | Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council](#) to apply - you will still need to pay for meals until the application has been approved; if approved and backdated then we will refund any money paid.

Booking meals is the same for all children on free school meals or for those who pay - these must be booked using the Weduc app by the Wednesday prior to the week needed, so dinners for the week beginning 19th February will need to be booked by Wednesday, 14th February. Many thanks for your support.

Half Term

Just a reminder to all parents and carers that we will be returning to school on Tuesday, 20th February; this is due to there being an INSET day for staff in school on the Monday. I do hope that you all enjoy some precious family time with your children over the half-term break and look forward to welcoming the children back into school at 8:40am on the 20th February – Breakfast Club will be open as usual.

Ms R Blackledge
(Acting Headteacher)

Class Attendance for this week

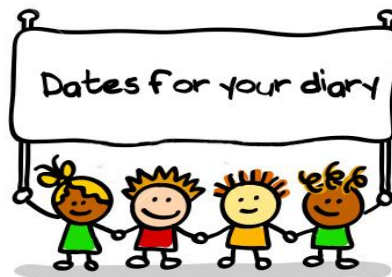
Congratulations this week to class 3FP!

Green: 97%+

Amber: 95 – 97%

Red: Below 95%

3M	3FP	4B	4CW	5A	5C	6L	6LV
87%	93.4%	85%	85.8%	88.9%	92.4%	93.3%	93.3%



Monday, 19th February – INSET Day, school closed

Tuesday, 20th February – school re-opens

Friday, 1st March – 6L class assembly

Wednesday, 20th March – Parents' Evening

Thursday, 28th March – break up for the Easter holidays

Wake Up Wednesdays

Welcome to your weekly bitesize information sheet on online safety – this week's theme is Smartphone Safety!

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about MONKEY

Also known as Monkey Cool, this platform aims to fill the gap left by Omegle (which has now shut down) by placing users in random video chats with strangers. Participants use their mobile number and Snapchat username to connect to the service, where they can make matches, message other people and join group chats. The mobile version has been removed from the App Store due to safety concerns, but iPhone owners can still access the site via their web browser. The app remains available on Google Play, where its listing claims that Monkey has more than 30 million users worldwide.

AGE RESTRICTION
17+

(although the lack of age verification means that someone younger could easily log in with a fake date of birth)

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

The app claims to use AI to detect sexual content or activity that violates its policies, along with having a 24/7 moderation team. However, reports in the media continue to indicate that explicit content remains commonplace on Monkey (including sexually graphic or violent material) and is therefore accessible to anybody who uses the app – including those aged under 18.

UNDER 18

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

The obvious risk in accepting random video chat partners is that users cannot know what or who they will see on their next connection. Talking to strangers is, of course, potentially dangerous – especially for children who might be persuaded to meet up with these people offline. The app lets users find each other by location, increasing the chances of a child being matched with a stranger from their local area.



IN-APP SPENDING

While Monkey is free to download, it nevertheless offers in-app purchases promising to unlock access to premium features. For example, users who wish to make use of 'Knock Knock chat' (Monkey's text-based messaging option), rather than the app's Chatroulette-style random video calling feature, will need to pay to be able to do so.



INTRUSIONS ON PRIVACY

According to Monkey's privacy policy, personal information (such as name, profile picture and date of birth), user-contributed content (any photos, texts, videos and screenshots shared) and each user's browser and IP address are collected. That is a considerable amount of data for Monkey to gather on its users – and all of this information is shared with third parties.



Advice for Parents & Carers

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

Even if you're comfortable with your child using Monkey, it's still important to talk about the potential dangers. It's crucial, for instance, that young people recognise the risks that stem from video chatting with strangers; that they understand not to share identifying information (like their street or school name); and that they know what to do if they are exposed to inappropriate content.



RESTRICT IN-APP PURCHASING

If your child is accessing Monkey via an Android device, you can prevent them from making in-app purchases through the device's settings. If you do allow your child to use the site, we'd recommend that you enable this feature: young people have been known to spend significant amounts of money in their desire to unlock more features in apps such as this.



REPORT INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Monkey states in the safety section of its site that "people are given the power" and that, to a large extent, Monkey is "self-governing." If a user is exposed to sexually explicit or inappropriate content on the platform, they can select the 'police' emoji in the top right corner of their screen to submit a report for Monkey's moderation team to review.



SPOT THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that your child is spending too much time on Monkey – or that they may have been exposed to inappropriate or distressing content – it's important to watch for potential indications that they've been affected emotionally. They could be unusually irritable or unable to concentrate, for example, or failing to complete their homework or even to eat regular meals.

