



Dear Parents and Carers,

We have had another exciting and busy week here at Willow Bank!

Jeans for Genes Day

Today, we all enjoyed wearing our jeans to school to support **Jeans for Genes Day**, raising money for a very worthwhile cause. Thank you to everyone who donated – your generosity helps fund vital support for children with genetic disorders. It was fantastic to see the whole school community coming together in support of this important charity.



National Coding Week



We also celebrated **National Coding Week** across the school. Miss Stewart led a special assembly to kick off the week, inspiring all of us with the power of programming and problem-solving. Pupils in Years 1–6 had the opportunity to explore the world of coding through the Scratch programme in their computing lessons – it was brilliant to see such creativity and engagement across the school!

Visitors from Dulverton Primary School



This week, we were delighted to welcome the Headteacher and Display Leader from Dulverton Primary School for a tour of Willow Bank, with a particular focus on our learning environment. We were so proud to receive such positive feedback – our visitors were incredibly impressed by the high-quality learning and beautifully presented work on display throughout the school.

After School Clubs & Outdoor Fun

Our after school clubs launched this week and have been a great success! With the return of some warmer weather, many of the children have made the most of our field, enjoying outdoor activities and games as we embrace the start of autumn.

KS1 Parent Reading Morning

We were also pleased to welcome families back for our weekly KS1 Parent Reading Morning. This takes place every **Thursday from 8:40–9:10am**, and we warmly invite all KS1 parents and carers to join us to share a new or favourite book with your child at the start of the day. EYFS families – your turn will come after the half-term break!



Year 2 Trip to Crossness Pumping Station

Year 2 enjoyed a fascinating trip to **Crossness Pumping Station** this week, where they learned all about **Victorian engineering** and even took a ride on a **steam engine**! This visit ties in perfectly with their Big Question: *How has Thamesmead Changed Over Time?* – well done to all of Year 2 for representing our school so brilliantly during the visit.

Reminders

As we move swiftly into Week 4 of the term, a gentle reminder to ensure that your child wears the **correct PE kit on their PE days** so they can take part safely and comfortably in all activities.

Key Dates for Your Diary

- Tuesday 23rd September** – Year 4 Trip to Museum of London Docklands
- Friday 26th September** – Year 6 Trip to The Clink Museum
- Wednesday 1st October** – Year 3 Trip to Lesnes Abbey
- Wednesday 8th & Thursday 9th October** – Parents' Evenings
- Tuesday 14th October at 5:00pm** – Year 6 PGL Residential Trip Parent Meeting
- Friday 17th October** – Last day of Autumn Term 1 (2 week half term)
- Monday 3rd November** – Children return to school

Thank you for your continued support. Have a lovely weekend!

Warm wishes,

Mrs Oldfield and The Willow Bank Team



Magnolia

In Magnolia Class, the children have been working hard learning their new phonics sounds: s, a, t, and p. They have been developing their independence by practising how to write each sound with increasing confidence. Alongside this, the children have been introduced to the skills of segmenting and blending, which are helping them to begin building and reading simple words. It has been wonderful to see their enthusiasm and growing confidence as they apply their new phonics knowledge in different activities.



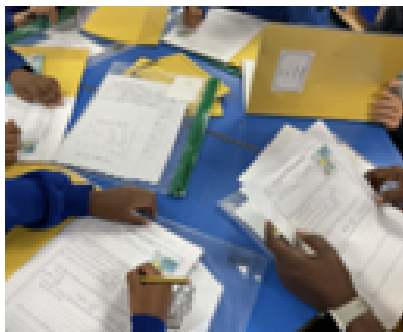
Year 1

In Year 1, our reading sessions are focussed on refining our skills of decoding, prosody (reading with expression) and comprehension. We are using our phonics knowledge to segment and blend our words, as well as discussing the story and answering questions about what has happened!



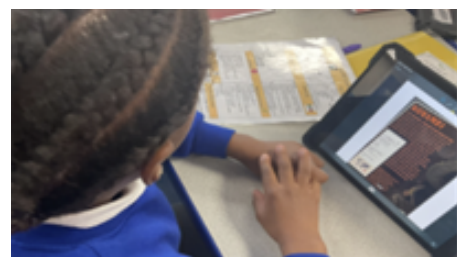
Year 2

In Year 2, we are reading Yokki and the Parno Gry. As we explore this story together, we are practising our reading skills by sounding out new words using our phonics knowledge and building our fluency.



Year 3

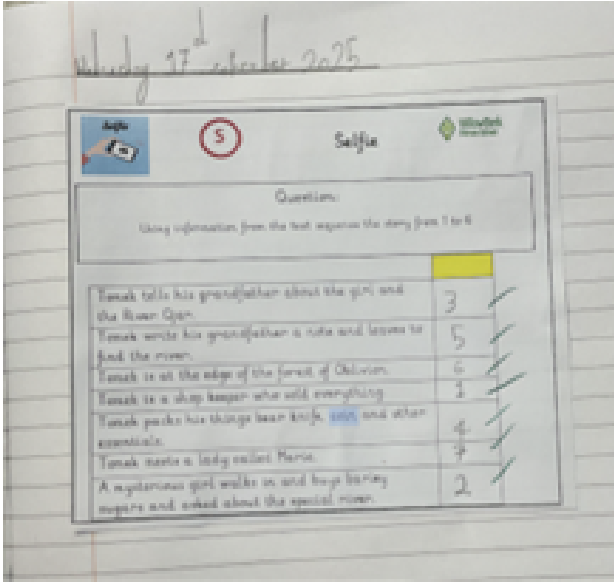
In Year 3, we are currently reading **Stone Age Beast**. Through this text, we have been learning about a variety of Stone Age animals and discussing their features as a class. We are also continuing to develop key reading skills, including vocabulary building, inference, and comprehension.





Year 4

In reading, we are exploring *The Upside-Down River: Tomek's Journey*, an adventurous tale full of mystery, friendship, and courage. Students are engaging deeply with the story and its themes.



Year 5

In Year 5, we have been showing fantastic commitment to Reading Plus. Our increased engagement is really paying off—children are reading more often, exploring a wider range of texts and expanding their vocabulary every week. We are proud of the effort everyone is putting in to become confident, fluent readers.



Year 6

In year 6 we have been reading *"Holes"* by Louis Sachar. So far in the story we know he is being sent to Camp Green Lake instead of going to a juvenile detention centre, and there, in the middle of the desert, he will have to dig one six foot by six foot hole every single day. What we don't yet know is... why?



OUR CORE VALUE FOR AUTUMN TERM 1 IS RESPECT

"Show respect even to people who don't deserve it; not as a reflection of their character, but as a reflection of yours."

Dave Willis



KS1 Parent Reading Morning

Every Thursday from 8:40-9:10am

All parents and carers welcome!



We are looking for Read with Me volunteers at Willow Bank! These volunteers will visit our Yr 1 & 2 classrooms and listen to our children read.

If you are interested in volunteering with us for 30 minutes or an hour each week, then please pop into the office to express your interest and pick up our application pack.



	Our target is over 96%
Magnolia - 98 % ★	Yew - 95%
Hornbeam - 99% ★	Redwood - 98% ★
Almond- 99% ★	Hazel-100% ★
Larch- 99% ★	
	★ ★

School Reminder

Children should not arrive earlier than 8.20am, for Bagel Breakfast club from 8.25am - 8.35am
School gates close at precisely 8:50am. After this time, entrance is via the school office and parents will need to sign your child/children in using the screen.

A reminder that we have our Chance To Chat.

As a school we provide ongoing support for the children's wellbeing and mental health to which one of the methods is they can fill out a form while in school to express their worries. The form then gets placed in the 'Chance to chat' box where it will be addressed by the wellbeing team.

We also have an online form which is located on the school website named 'Chance to chat'.

The children can complete the form if they are worried about something or need some advice? A member of staff will get back to the child at school.

Please copy the link below and paste in the search bar and it will direct you straight to the form.

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=MvrWB2Z-r0qnuEuN-giOI1CAPQc0X4RFje43giTliLNUOE5BWUFISE40VjBXODZYRVFITLNXVzZYNCQLQCN0PWcu>



Willow Bank
Primary School



Tuesday 30th September 2025
Tuesday 4th November 2025
Tuesday 9th December 2025
Tuesday 20th January 2026

09:30 - 10:00 am

Please confirm your attendance by
calling or emailing the school office

0208 320 1900
wbpoffice@watschools.org.uk

We look forward to welcoming
you on a tour of our school
and meeting members of the
Willow Bank team



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. Formally 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 SNAPCHAT

SNAP STREAK 97 DAYS **AGE RESTRICTION 13+**

Snapchat is a messaging app which allows users to send images, videos and texts to others. Its best-known feature is that anything sent 'disappears' 24 hours after it's been viewed; however, users are known to take screenshots or use another device to obtain a photo of their screen. In 2023, Snapchat added a chatbot function called 'My AI'.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

My AI is Snapchat's new chatbot, which replies to questions in a human-like manner. However, the software is still in its infancy and has significant drawbacks, such as biased, incorrect or misleading responses. There have already been numerous reports of young users turning to AI for medical help and diagnoses, which could be inaccurate and therefore potentially dangerous.

PREDATORS AND SCAMS

Predators can exploit Snapchat's disappearing messages by, for example, telling a user they have noticed photos of them and will post them unless they're paid. Snapchat's own research found that 85% of teenagers had experienced this – on this app or others. This likely isn't helped by 'SnapMaps' – a feature which highlights your exact position in real-time. This is meant to help friends keep track of each other, but could be used for more sinister reasons.

MY EYES ONLY

Snapchat has a hidden photo vault called 'My Eyes Only'. Teens can conceal sensitive photos and videos from parents and carers in this folder, which is protected by a PIN. You can check for this by clicking on the icon which looks like two playing cards. This takes you to the 'Memories' folder which stores photos, stories and the My Eyes Only folder.

SCREEN TIME ADDICTION

Snapchat prioritises user engagement, with features like streaks (messaging the same person every day to build up a high score). The app also has sections called 'Discover' and 'Spotlight', which show tailored content to each user. However, this could also be seen as an attempt to hook users into watching videos endlessly. Furthermore, constant notifications can lure people into using the app.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some content on Snapchat simply isn't suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so even an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's 'disappearing messages' feature also makes it easy for young people to share explicit images on impulse – so sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat.

ONLINE PRESSURES

Although many of Snapchat's filters are designed to entertain or amuse, the 'beauty' effects on photos can set unrealistic body image expectations – creating feelings of inadequacy in younger users. Snapchat now also has 'priority' notifications (which still get displayed even if a device is in 'do not disturb' mode), increasing the pressure on users to log back in and interact.

Advice for Parents & Educators

UTILISE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Snapchat's 'Family Centre' lets you view the details of the child's account, their friends list and who they've spoken to in the last week – and report any concerns. You must invite a child to the Family Centre for them to join. To keep the child's location hidden on the app, go into settings and turn on 'Ghost Mode' and 'Hide Live Location', and ensure they know not to share their location with anyone.

BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger does connect with a child on Snapchat and begins to make them feel uncomfortable through bullying, pressure to send explicit images or by sending sexual images to them, the child can tap the three dots on that person's profile and report or block them. There are options to state why they're reporting that user – such as harassing or abusive messages, spam or masquerading as someone else.

FAMILIARISE YOURSELF

Before you allow a child to download Snapchat, download it yourself and familiarise yourself with the app. Snapchat has produced a parents' guide to the app to help you understand how it works and any protections they have in place. A link for this can be found in the sources below.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSIONS

Snapchat's risks can be easier to handle if you nurture an open dialogue. For example, discuss My AI's responses to questions and how reliable they are. Talk about scams and blackmail before setting children sign up. If they're faced into a scam, encourage them to tell you immediately. Talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting, emphasising its inherent risks. Furthermore, explain how popular 'challenges' on the platform can have harmful consequences.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/snapchat-2021>

[@wake_up_weds](https://www.wake-up.weds) [/www.thenationalcollege](https://www.thenationalcollege) [@wake.up.wednesday](https://www.wake-up.wednesday) [@wake.up.weds](https://www.wake-up.weds)

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 27.11.2024

#WakeUpWednesday **The National College**