



The John Moore Primary School



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STRIVE



SPARKLE

SPARKLE NEWS

Autumn Term 1: 2023

Friday 6th October 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

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Coming Up:

W/C 9th October—Cheltenham Literacy Festival Trips for Years 1-6.

Wednesday 18th October Harvest assemblies –

EYFS and KS1 @ 9:00am

KS2 @ 10:00 am

Monday 16th October and Tuesday

17th October —Parent’s Evenings

3.30—6.30pm (letter has been emailed and posted on dojo)

Good evening everyone. We have had a great time in school celebrating National Poetry Day. I was really impressed with the quality of the children’s performances and it was lovely to see the children so excited about poetry.

Coming up in the next few weeks we have visits to Cheltenham Literature Festival and our Harvest Assemblies for all of our classes. Further information and reminders will be given on your child’s class page of dojo.

I hope you enjoy seeing some of the highlights from across the school and that you all have an enjoyable weekend in the sunshine.



At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many games which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about AMONG US

A multiplayer 'social deduction' game set in outer space, Among Us enjoyed a surge in popularity in 2020, and has since maintained a dedicated fan-base (globally, around 60 million regular players each month) thanks to its unique nature, simple premise and ease of access across numerous platforms. The game's on-screen action revolves around danger, disguise and deception – and there are certain parallels to be drawn with some of the real-life risks that parents and carers of young Among Us players need to be aware of.



WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

SENSITIVE PREMISE

In Among Us, up to three players are secretly assigned to be alien imposters, tasked with murdering their colleagues while the survivors try to unmask them. While the concept's not far removed from traditional games like Wink Murder or TV shows such as *The Traitors*, some parents may feel uncomfortable about their child playing a video game in which deception and killing are prioritised.

VIRTUAL VIOLENCE

The on-screen death of characters may be fundamental to the gameplay of Among Us, but the majority of the animations depicting this are deliberately cartoonish and only appear very briefly. However, it is worth bearing in mind that the game has a PEGI age rating of 7 – meaning that certain elements (however heavily stylised they may be) could still upset some younger players.

CHAT BETWEEN PLAYERS

With up to 15 people participating in each game online, a large part of Among Us' appeal is speculating with fellow players who the imposters might be and making accusations. This dialogue through the in-game text chat can occasionally become heated – and could, of course, involve your child being put into contact with people (including adults) who they don't know in real life.

GOING OFF PLATFORM

While Among Us provides basic ways to communicate, many gamers prefer to use external services such as Discord, a popular app which offers voice and video chat functions. These undeniably make cooperation easier, but also create a potential route for children to hear inappropriate language – or for strangers to message them privately in an environment which isn't regulated by the game itself.

IN-GAME PURCHASES

Among Us is free to download on mobile devices, and costs less than £5 to obtain on console and PC. A related longer-term pitfall, though, is that the game also includes options to pay for upgrades such as removing ads on the mobile version or adding cosmetic touches to characters (such as different costumes). It's certainly possible that a child could spend a significant sum without realising it.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CONSIDER SOFTER ALTERNATIVES

Although Among Us is hugely popular with young gamers, it's possible that some children might find the murder themes unsettling. If so, plenty of similar social deduction games are available (in both digital and traditional board game formats) which downplay the potentially grislier elements: some centre around undercover spies, for instance, and there's even a Marvel superhero-themed variant.

CHAT ABOUT CHATTING

You might feel it's prudent to talk to your child about the risks associated with voice chat while gaming, explaining in particular that strangers online aren't always who they claim to be. Keeping the conversation relaxed will reinforce your child's confidence that they can always come to you with any online concerns – not just about Among Us, but any potential future issues as well.

DISCUSS DISCORD

In general, Discord is an excellent app for keeping online communities together because of its use of dedicated individual servers, which allow comprehensive control over who can join – and who can't. Once you're familiar with the platform, you could set up a secure server for your child and their friends to communicate during games of Among Us, with no access for people they don't know.

AMONG US, AMONG FRIENDS

When your child and their friends get together, they can enjoy a private game of Among Us by choosing a 'local' lobby – that is, only people connected to the same WiFi (your home network, for example) can enter. This prevents any random online users – who may be total strangers – from joining and removes the need for voice chat, as the players are all physically in the same location.

STOP SURPRISE SPENDING

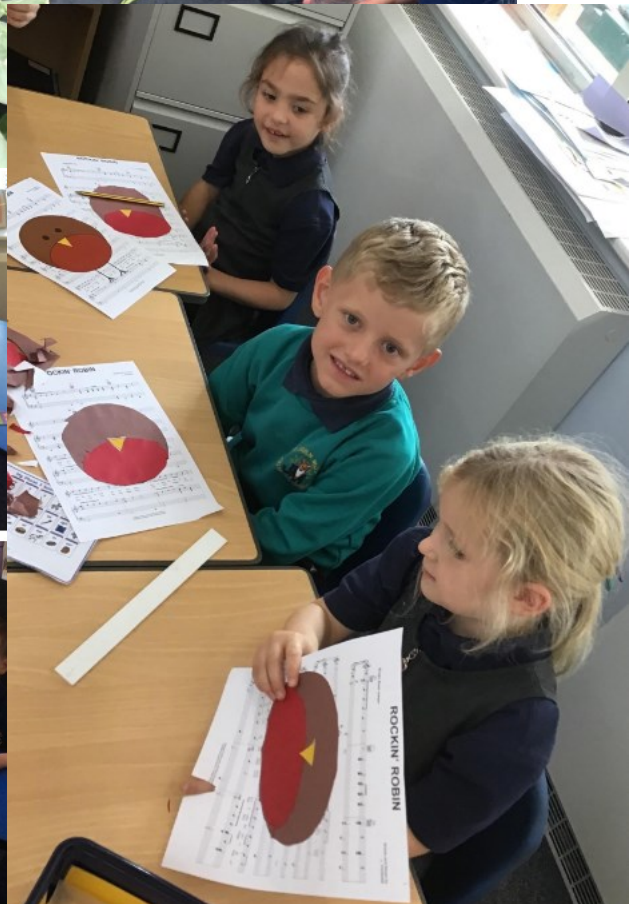
If you're concerned about the possibility of your child racking up an unexpected bill on Among Us' microtransactions, you could consider using a prepaid card with a set limit. Likewise, you could specify in the game's options that adult authorisation is required for every purchase – or you could make sure that no payment methods are enabled on the device that your child plays the game on.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Editor in Chief of gaming and esports site GGRecon and has worked in the gaming media for around four years. A regular visitor to the App Store to try out new tools, he's also a parent who understands the value of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his articles have been published on influential sites including IGN and TechRadar.



A celebration of some of the 'sparkling' moments from this term



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Thursday 5 th October 2023	Cross country race 2 @ 4:00pm at the Vineyards for any children in Y4-Y6 that would like to take part. <i>Parents need to transport their child to the Vineyards and be there to pick up after the race.</i>
Monday 9 th October 2023	Y1/2 trip to the Cheltenham Literature festival
Tuesday 10 th October 2023	Y3/4 trip to the Cheltenham Literature festival
Tuesday 10 th October 2023	World Mental Health Day – the children can wear something yellow in support of this day.
Wednesday 11 th October 2023	Y5/6 trip to the Cheltenham Literature festival
Thursday 12 th October 2023	Cross country race 3 @ 4:00pm at the Vineyards for any children in Y4-Y6 that would like to take part. <i>Parents need to transport their child to the Vineyards and be there to pick up after the race.</i>
Wednesday 18 th October 2023	Harvest assemblies – All families are welcome to join us in the school hall for these celebrations. EYFS and KS1 @ 9:00am KS2 @ 10:00 am
Thursday 19 th October 2023	Cross country race reserve date (in case of any poor weather) @ 4:00pm at the Vineyards for any children in Y4-Y6 that would like to take part. <i>Parents need to transport their child to the Vineyards and be there to pick up after the race.</i>
Friday 27 th October 2023	School closed for INSET training day
Monday 30 th October 2023 – Friday 3 rd November 2023	Half term holiday
Monday 6 th November 2023	Autumn term 2 begins
Monday 6 th November 2023 until Monday 13 th November 2023	Y6 bikeability sessions. The children that sign up for this will work in small groups on their bikeability course across the week.
Friday 17 th November 2023	Children in Need. We will be supporting this national fundraising event with events across the day in school. The children can come into school wearing their own clothes, pyjamas or something spotty.
Tuesday 21 st November 2023	8:30 – 9:00 a.m. – Sparkle spot session – A chance for parents or grandparents to come into school to have a look at and share some of your child/ren's work.
Week beginning 4 th December 2023	EYFS nativity performance – Tuesday @ 9.30am and Thursday @ 2pm
Week beginning 11 th December 2023	Y1/2 Christmas performance – Tuesday @ 2pm and Thursday @6pm
Week beginning 18 th December 2023	KS2 Christmas concert – Monday @ 6pm and Tuesday @ 2pm