



SPARKLE NEWS

Autumn Term 1: 2023

Friday 17th November 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

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Coming Up:

Tuesday 21st November 2023—
Sparkle Spot (Parents/ carers can pop in to see their children's work)

Regular up-dates and reminders will be posted on dojo

Good evening everyone. We have had a fantastic day today raising money for Children in Need. The children all enjoyed dressing up, going on a Pudsey hunt and playing the games at lunchtime. A huge thank you to Miss Perkins and the School Council for organising such a fantastic day.

Thank you to everyone who has already switched from sending in rucksacks in EYFS and KS1. There was a notable improvement in the tidiness of our corridor areas today. Please can I ask those that have not already done so, to locate the bookbag their child was gifted at the start of their school journey and to use this from Monday.

Finally as we enter the winter season please can I remind you that we have a '48 hour policy' following any episode of sickness or diarrhoea.

Further up-dates will be posted on dojo.



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about MICROTRANSACTIONS

Microtransactions (often abbreviated as "MTX") are digital purchases made within an app or game to unlock extra features or additional content such as new levels. A popular sub-set of these are loot boxes, which contain a selection (usually random) of virtual items: from character skins to game-changing equipment like better weapons. Microtransactions (and loot boxes in particular) are now widespread in apps and games, but concerns persist that they normalise gambling and can foster addictive behaviours – especially among younger players.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

GATEWAY TO GAMBLING?

Microtransactions have been criticised for promoting gambling-adjacent behaviour in children. Research has also suggested that exposure to the loot box system could affect the likelihood of a young person suffering gambling harms later in life: children who purchased or used loot boxes in the last 12 months were found to be more likely to have gambled during the same period, as well.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

Microtransactions (and loot boxes especially) could lead to young people displaying compulsive behaviours. Loot boxes are designed to be addictive, and the sought-after prizes they contain are dispensed at random. This means that young gamers might not get what they want straight away, causing them to spend more money as well as additional time gaming.

PAYING TO WIN

In many popular games (the FIFA series being a notable example), microtransactions make it far easier to succeed – which is a concern because children can often find it difficult to keep track of their spending. Once a child starts making in-game purchases, they may continue buying to keep up with their friends and other players – sometimes without recognising the mounting real-world cost.

EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

DATA COLLECTION

To allow a young person to complete microtransactions, many app and game developers collect personal data such as their name, address, email, geolocation information, photos, payment details and so on. Even if this data remains secure (which is by no means guaranteed), there's always the chance that it will be used – and possibly sold on to third parties – for marketing purposes.

AFFECTING DAILY ROUTINE

Online games tend to revolve around repeated loops of activity that can affect purchasing decisions and potentially influence children's spending patterns. This could lead to your child not only handing over more money but also adjusting their daily routine to match the game's schedule – potentially impacting more important elements of their day, such as homework and family time.

SATELLITE SPENDING

If you've linked a payment method like a debit card or a PayPal account to your child's game or app, it's wise to keep a close eye on their microtransactions to ensure they aren't racking up a large bill. Letting a child have access to your card (if they're still too young to have their own) or other means of payment could also lead to them spending beyond the apps and games they normally use.

Advice for Parents & Carers

DO YOUR RESEARCH

It's important to have a serviceable idea of whether the games your child plays use the loot box system (even if it goes by a different name) or include the option of buying items, equipment and so forth. If so, it's crucial to help your child understand that this costs actual money, and that they shouldn't feel pressured into making any purchases.

CHAT ABOUT 'CHANCE'

It may help to explain to your child that many microtransactions involve an element of chance: they could pay money and still not get what they want in return. Emphasise that – while not usually costing much individually – these in-app and in-game purchases can soon add up. Talk to your child about how spending their money in a game or app means they have less to use in the real world.

(GIFT) CARDS ON THE TABLE

Investing in an in-game currency gift card can be a useful way of helping your child get to grips with budgeting. If you buy, say, a £10 V-bucks Fortnite gift card, monitor how long it takes them to spend it. When they come to you asking for more, you could make it the starting point for a conversation about how quickly that money went and how they could earn their next gift card.

STOP SPENDING AT SOURCE

You might decide that the wisest strategy is to remove the potential for spending money on microtransactions. If so, most games, apps and devices have options in their settings to help you manage what your child can spend – or to disable that function altogether, preventing them from buying additional items for their games or boosted functionality for certain apps.

WATCH FOR THE SIGNS

If you're worried that your child's passion for a particular game or app may tempt them into habitual spending on microtransactions, it's important to remember the indicators of addictive behaviour. Irritability, a lack of concentration and prioritising recreational screen time ahead of homework or mealtimes could all be signs that you need to have a conversation about a more balanced routine.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid The Inquirer, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



#WakeUpWednesday

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



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Tuesday 21 st November 2023	8:30 – 9:00 a.m. – Sparkle spot session – A chance for parents or grand-parents to come into school to have a look at and share some of your child/ ren’s work.
Friday 24th November 2023	Non-school uniform day in return for donations to the Xmas fayre for the chocolate tombola
Tuesday 28th November 2023	Netball Festival 3.55pm @ Tewkesbury Secondary School for the children that attend netball club
Friday 1st December 2023	Christmas Fayre run by The Friends Association 5.00—8.00pm
Monday 4th December 2023	Yr 6 choir members singing at Tewkesbury Day centre at 1.00pm
Tuesday 5th December 2023	EYFS nativity performance – @ 9.30am
KS1 trip to the Pantomime @10am	KS1 trip to the Pantomime @10am
Wednesday 6th December 2023	Year 3 to the Experience Christmas at Holy Trinity (pm)
Thursday 7th December 2023	KS2 trip to the Pantomime @10am
Thursday 7th December 2023	EYFS nativity performance @ 2pm
Saturday 9th December 2023	Choir to perform in the Christmas Concert at the Roses Theatre
Tuesday 12th December 2023	Y1/2 Christmas performance @ 2pm
Thursday 14th December 2023	Little Foxes Nativity @9.15/9.30am
Thursday 14th December 2023	Y1/2 Christmas performance @6pm
Monday 18 th December 2023	KS2 Christmas concert @ 6pm
Tuesday 19th December 2023	KS2 Christmas concert @ 2pm
Wednesday 20th December 2023	Christmas jumper and Christmas Dinner Day
Wednesday 20th December 2023	Leaving celebration for Mrs Laing and Mrs Philcox—All families (past and present) are welcome to pop into the school hall from 3.30pm for a cup of tea and some cake.
Thursday 21st December 2023	Christmas Parties in school time
Thursday 21st December 2023	End of Autumn Term
Friday 22nd December 2023	INSET DAY—SCHOOL CLOSED FOR PUPILS
Monday 8th January 2024	Beginning of Spring Term 2024. School opens at 8.30am