



# JANUARY NEWSLETTER

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

We hope you all had a wonderful and memorable break. On behalf of all the staff and governors, we would like to wish you a Happy New Year!

This is our new monthly newsletter in a refreshed format. We hope you find it clearer, more informative, and a great way to share all the fantastic things we have done and the exciting plans ahead.

In Nursery, you will notice a change in staff as Mrs Hodgson left at the end of last term. We are delighted that Mrs Bingham will be supporting us until Easter.

## ALWAYS ACTIVE UNIFORM

Since Covid, there has been a shift towards adopting an active uniform. This approach offers many benefits, and I would like to introduce it from September.

It means children will wear more comfortable clothing and will no longer need to change for PE. Please take a look at the website link below, and a poll to gather your views will be available by Friday, 15th January 2026.

<https://www.youthsporttrust.org/school-support/always-active-uniform>

## FUNDRAISING

We raised an amazing total of £2,405 during the autumn term! Thank you so much for your incredible support.

The children thoroughly enjoyed the Afternoon Tea with Santa and the Film Night. We're excited to announce that we will be hosting more Richer Rainbow Fun Evenings soon —further details will follow.



## DATES FOR THE DIARY

15/1/26 - Census

22/1/26 - Year 2 Trip

13/2/26 - School Closes For Half Term

22/2/26 - School Opening

# SAFEGUARDING



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. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](http://nationalcollege.com).

## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about FORTNITE



### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

With over 650 million registered users, Fortnite remains one of the most played and discussed online games globally. Known for its vibrant graphics, fast-paced gameplay, and cultural crossovers with everything from music artists to superhero franchises, the game continues to capture the attention of young people. This guide outlines the risks trusted adults need to know about, including game updates, and offers practical safety tips to help address them.

### ALWAYS ONLINE

There's no single-player, offline mode in Fortnite; it can only be played online. Internet access can sometimes be an issue when you're out and about, both in terms of connectivity and using up data. You may find that dedicated, young Fortnite players are often less enthusiastic about family time or trips away – such as days out and holidays – than you might expect.

### IN-GAME COSTS

Fortnite is free to download and play, but it does offer various additional purchases – limited-time cosmetic 'skins', music tracks, LEGO items, and battle passes. Children can feel pressured to spend money on V-Bucks – the in-game currency – to avoid missing out, particularly as exclusive items rotate frequently. Some items may not return to the store for years, while Battle Pass rewards are often "gone when they're gone".

### VIRTUAL VIOLENCE

There's no avoiding that Fortnite is about shooting other players to eliminate them from the contest. That said, there's no blood or gore. The violence is rendered in a cartoonish style, and there are frequent comical touches to lighten the mood, such as mini-games and emotes. Guns and other weapons often look and behave realistically, so discretion is advised. Past seasons have introduced characters and references from mature franchises like *The Witcher* and *Halo*.



### CROSSPLAY AND PARTY CHAT



Fortnite is popular with many gamers of various ages. Crossplay allows friends to play with each other, regardless of whether they're on an Xbox, PlayStation, Nintendo Switch or PC, while the Party Chat feature allows them to talk to each other during the game. This can put youngsters at risk of exposure to strangers, inappropriate language, and cyberbullying.

### FREQUENT UPDATES

Seasonal releases introduce new map changes, gameplay mechanics, and cosmetics. Ongoing updates can increase screen time and potential for obsession as children try to unlock rewards before the season ends. These regular renewals help to hold players' interest, but also give young gamers plenty of reasons to keep coming back. Seasons often change thematically.

### POP CULTURE REFERENCES

Part of Fortnite's appeal is its ongoing crossovers with other popular franchises, ranging from films and TV shows like *Power Rangers* and *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, to comic book characters including Batman. Other collaborations with series, artists, and influencers may expose children to music, language, or ideas that are more suitable for older audiences.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### DISCUSS SAFE SOCIAL INTERACTION

Talk with children about who they're playing with online. Coordinate play time with the child's friends for socialisation and safety in numbers. Encourage them to avoid private voice chats with strangers and remind them not to share personal information. Use real-life examples to explain potential risks, and remind them that if they see something concerning, they should tell a trusted adult.



### ENJOY FORTNITE TOGETHER

Fortnite also offers split-screen gameplay, meaning that two people can play simultaneously on the same console or computer. This can be a good option for siblings or for when a child's friends visit, but it also offers an opportunity for parents to do something fun with their child, while making sure they're playing the game safely. Who knows? You might even teach them a thing or two!



### SET SPENDING LIMITS

Fortnite's rotating store is a not-so-subtle mechanism for coaxing players into buying sought-after items before they disappear for weeks or months. This could lead to surprise transactions on bank cards if children are tempted into an impulse purchase. Parents could consider getting a prepaid card for the child or ensuring that purchases require adult authorisation. This can be done through parental settings on a console or account settings in the Epic Games app on PC.



### BE WARY OF SCAMS

The immense popularity of Fortnite with younger audiences – that are generally more trusting – means there's no shortage of scammers looking to fraudulently obtain passwords and other personal data through techniques like phishing. As the developers point out on many of Fortnite's loading screens, they never ask for a player's account password outside of the game. Make sure any young player knows this.



### Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is an experienced freelance writer and has been working in the gaming and tech industry for seven years. A regular visitor to the App Store to try out new tools, he's also a parent and therefore understands the importance of online safety. He's also a tech and fitness writer and has been published at sites including IGN, TechRadar, and plenty more.



# ATTENDANCE



With so much illness around last half term, I know how difficult it was to get your child/children to school. Hopefully, the worst of the flu is now behind us and this New Year, it's a great time to set positive goals for the term ahead. Good attendance plays a huge part in your child's progress, wellbeing, and confidence, so aiming to improve attendance - where possible - can make a real difference. Our whole-school attendance is 89.6% (National 93.7%) and every day in school helps your child stay on track with their learning and feel fully involved in class life.

Highest Attending Classes  
Congratulations to the following classes who are the highest attending classes this term.

Foxgloves 92.64%

Iris 92.21%

Snapdragons 92.14%

## 10 Top Tips for a Positive New Year

1. Set a regular bedtime so children get enough sleep for calm, smooth mornings.
2. Prepare the night before by laying out uniforms and packing bags.
3. Keep wake-up times consistent to help children feel settled and ready for school.
4. Plan your journey and leave a little early to avoid delays.
5. Use a family calendar to track school events and deadlines.
6. Book appointments outside school hours to reduce missed learning.
7. Keep school updated about any issues affecting attendance.
8. Encourage independence with dressing, packing bags, and simple routines.
9. Praise good attendance to keep children motivated.
10. Stay positive and consistent - a calm routine helps children feel confident and ready to learn.

# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING



## Mental Health Support Team, what do they do?

Mental Health Support Team (MHST) work in partnership with schools to support the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. The team offers early intervention, prevention, and low-intensity support, helping to identify and address issues before they escalate.

## What MHST offers for pupils at River View?

- Direct support for pupils experiencing mild to moderate mental health needs, such as anxiety, low mood, or behavioural challenges.
- 1:1 and group interventions delivered in school settings, using evidence-based approaches like cognitive behavioural therapy and guided self-help.
- Whole-school support including workshops around wellbeing strategies.

MHST works closely with school staff, parents, and carers to create a supportive environment where mental health is understood, prioritised, and effectively managed.

For one-to-one sessions, which are specifically tailored to each individual, or group sessions, referrals are made to MHST by the school. If you feel that your child would benefit from this support, please speak to Mrs Simpson who can discuss your concerns with you.

