



Important information

We are aware that we are in the middle of a particularly difficult period and that some families are under enormous financial strain.

If you are struggling financially and are finding it difficult to feed your family at the moment, please contact me at head@alverton.cornwall.sch.uk and we will do our best to offer you support.

Please note that all requests and support will be treated in the strictest confidence.

With best wishes,

Martin Higgs

Children and Social Media Platforms

Over the past few years, we have provided a great deal of advice and information regarding children's use of social media and internet safety in general. Despite this, as a school we are still having to respond to problems arising from children accessing social media sites and inappropriate content on a regular basis.

The most frequent issues are linked to ill-judged comments being made between children who are using social media sites where disagreements can escalate quickly and regularly involve a number of other children who are also part of the group. These lead to a great deal of upset and anxiety for all involved, resulting in the issues being brought into school.

Perhaps even more worryingly, we have also had to become involved in situations where access to various social media sites has led to children talking to, and even sharing images with, online 'friends'.

We would urge parents to make themselves aware of the sites that children are accessing through their phones, tablets and other devices to ensure that they are age appropriate.

Almost all social media sites have conditions of use that specify an age limit for use. These are rarely, if ever, less than 12 years of age which excludes all primary aged children.

Traffic in Toltuff Crescent

We are again seeing an increase in the number of vehicles driving to the school gates or parking in the cul-de-sac below school at drop off and pick up time. This has led to frustration for our neighbours who are on occasions unable to access their own driveways etc and two more near misses involving our parents and children. Please don't drive into Toltuff Crescent at the peak times unless you are a Blue Badge holder, are dropping off at the nursery or there are exceptional circumstances. Thank you.

Admission Arrangements for 2022/23

You should have already received an email about our Admissions Arrangements for 2022/2023. As you know Alverton School is a member of Truro and Penwith Academy Trust (TPAT), which is the admissions authority for the school.

The School Admissions Code (2014) requires all admission authorities to formally consult on any proposed changes to their Admission Arrangements every 7 years. The Admission Arrangements for the year 2022-23 can be found on our website: www.alverton.org.uk

We are proposing a change to our oversubscription criteria as detailed in the attached Admission Arrangements for 2022-2023.

The consultation process is open from **Tuesday 24th November 2020 to 19th January 2021** and will be open to;

- parents of children between the ages of 2 and 18
- other persons in the area who in the opinion of the Admission Authority have an interest in the proposal
- all other admission authorities in the local area
- Cornwall Council

Please send any responses to this consultation to the school secretary, Mrs Veryan Gill, by email to secretary@alverton.cornwall.sch.uk

At the end of the consultation Alverton School and TPAT will consider all responses to the proposal and will determine its admission arrangements for 2022/23 by the 26th January 2021, after which the arrangements will be published on our website.

FOAS fundraising

FOAS have recently set up a Just Giving page to help us raise funds towards a new music room. If you would like to make a donation you can do so by following the link below:

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/alvertonmusic>

Thank you very much for your support.



Christmas lunch and non uniform day - Friday 11th December

Letters about arrangements for Christmas lunch have come home. If your child would like a school lunch on 11th December you must return a slip to us, (with the money if your meals are not free) by **Friday 4th December**. If you do not return a slip, you must send your child in with a packed lunch from home as there will not be any spare meals available on the day.

Friday 11th December is also a non uniform day to raise funds for FOAS (Friends of Alverton School). If your child wishes to wear something Christmassy or their own clothes they can and either bring in a donation (suggested amount £1) or you can donate via the FOAS Just Giving page (please see details on the previous page). This is so that money can be raised this year as FOAS are unable to hold a Christmas Fair.

Christmas tree decorations

Our Christmas tree arrived this week and is looking rather bare. Please could your child make a decoration this weekend so that they can be hung on the tree on Monday.

Our grateful thanks to Mole Valley Farmers at Ludgvan for their generous donation of the tree.

Competition success

We recently entered a competition to win some sports goodies and we were thrilled to hear that we had won! A giant kit bag arrived this week filled with all sorts of tennis and other equipment.

Here is Mrs Dennison and Mr Timmons with some of the children and the winnings!



Coronavirus symptoms

The main symptoms are:

A high temperature (hot to the touch on chest or back)

OR

A new, continuous cough (coughing a lot for more than an hour or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours)

OR

A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste (you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything or things smell or taste different to normal)

If you or your child have any **ONE** or more of these you must get a COVID-19 test as soon as possible and stay at home and do not have visitors— only leave home to get the test. Anyone you live with, and anyone in your support bubble, must also stay at home until you get your result. **Please ring or email the school office as soon as possible to let us know.**

You can book at test online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

Reminder

School finishes for the Christmas holidays on **Friday 18th December at 3.15pm** (normal time). The Spring term starts on **Wednesday 6th January 2021 at 9am.**

Tuck shop - KS1

A reminder that, as per the letter that came home this week, the tuck shop will no longer be available for Year 1 and 2 children. A piece of fruit or vegetables will be provided free of charge under the Government's School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme. We know that some children are very unwilling to eat fruit or vegetables; if this applies to your child you can send in a healthy snack such as plain crackers, rice cakes or breadsticks if you wish.

Sweet biscuits, crisps, cake and chocolate are not allowed as a snack at breaktime.

Coats

Please ensure that your child has a warm, waterproof coat in school every day now that the weather is getting colder and wetter. They also need a pair of named wellies in school at all times so that they can use the field and woods at times during the school day.

After school childcare provision

This is now only being offered to Year 3-6.

Please contact Mr Timmons for details and to book by emailing alvertonkidsclub@outlook.com or by phoning 07843 126 833.



Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

The Trust has its own Out of Hours telephone support provided by Support Matters Cornwall. This service operates from 5pm to 9am on weekdays and 24 hours a day at weekends and bank holidays. The service is open to all patients (aged 16+) under the care of the Trust's mental health services. Support can be delivered over the telephone, via text, email or web chat. Call free on **0800 001 4330**.



Family
Line

0808 802 6666



0800 1111



0300 123 3393

www.mind.org.uk

for better mental health

NSPCC

Help for children worried about COVID

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/depression-anxiety-mental-health>

Download this image onto your phone for **when you might need help**

Samaritans: 24h
Emotional support to anyone in distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide.

116 123

Shout: 24h
Text service, free on all major networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere.

- If you're over 18, text the word SHOUT
- Under 18s, text YM

Text: 85258

Cornwall's 24/7 NHS mental health support 24h

Call for free, any time day or night if you are worried about your own or someone else's mental health. The team behind the 24/7 open access telephone service will listen to you and determine how best to help

0800 038 5300

Valued Lives:

Supports people who are experiencing mental or emotional distress in Cornwall. Every day, 5.30pm - midnight.

01209 901438

If you, or someone else, is in immediate danger call 999

www.cornwall.gov.uk/mentalhealth

Penzance CTIPA Foodbank

The CTIPA Foodbank in Penzance has let us know that, at the moment, it is not necessary to obtain a voucher to receive food from them. If their support would be helpful to you, just phone Veryan or Adele in the office in confidence on 01736 364087 and they can phone the Foodbank for you who will be able to help.

The Foodbank are extremely busy at the moment and are very grateful for any donations.

**ON YOUR SIDE
NO MATTER WHAT**

0800 58 58 58 | THECALMZONE.NET/WEBCHAT

5PM-MIDNIGHT | FREE | CONFIDENTIAL | ANONYMOUS

CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIVING MISERABLY CALM

**citizens
advice**

0344 411 1444

"It's alright to ask for help"

SAMARITANS

116 123

COVID-19 isolation may cause tensions to rise and domestic abuse to increase. Help is available.

Who can help me?
We can

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE

0808 2000 247

24/7 CONFIDENTIAL FREEPHONE

WCWAid

West Cornwall Women's Aid

01736 367539

<https://www.wcwid.co.uk/helpline>

AT HOME SHOULDN'T MEAN AT RISK

#YOUARENOTALONE

FIND SUPPORT AT: gov.uk/domestic-abuse

SafeToNet is an app for parents to help them safeguard their children from online risks like cyberbullying and sexting, whilst respecting their child's rights to privacy.

Online Safety

The BBC have a website and app called Own It. The website has a lot of content for children to help them navigate their online lives, and the free smartphone app comes with a special keyboard which can intervene with help and support in the moments that children need it the most.

Whilst there are huge benefits to being online in order to stay connected to family and friends, many parents may feel concerned about the activities and content their children are accessing. This guidance outlines resources to help keep children safe from different risks online and where to go to receive support and advice. This information is updated as needed (it's recently added new information on apps) so it's worth another look.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online>

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



TikTok is a video-sharing social media app available on iOS and Android which lets users create, share, and view user created videos in a similar manner to Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. Its main draw, however, is that users can record and upload bite-sized looping videos of themselves lip-syncing and dancing to popular music or soundbites, often for comedic effect, which can then be further enhanced with filters, emojis and stickers. TikTok has been designed with the young user in mind and has a very addictive appeal. At the beginning of 2019 it skyrocketed in popularity and has featured near the top of download charts ever since. Estimates suggest that it now has anything between 500 million and over 1 billion monthly active users worldwide.



What parents need to know about

TIKTOK



AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

On the iOS store, TikTok is listed as 12+. On the Google Play Store it is rated as 'Parental guidance recommended'. When signing up to the app, it's possible to lie about your age without any form of verification. As children scroll through their feed, most of the videos they're likely to come across are light-hearted or designed to make people laugh. However there have been a number of videos reported for featuring drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm and young teens engaging in sexually suggestive content. More recently, suicide-themed related videos have been widely circulated. Given the deluge of material uploaded to TikTok every day, it's impossible to moderate everything and it can be common to come across explicit and age-inappropriate content on the 'for you' feed when logging into the platform.

INAPPROPRIATE MUSIC

TikTok revolves around creating music videos through lip-syncing and dancing. Inevitably, some of the music featured by users will contain explicit or suggestive lyrics. Given the undeniably young user base, there is a risk that children may look to imitate the explicit language they hear or the suggestive actions they see when viewing others user's videos on the app.

TIKTOK FAME

TikTok is very image focused and there is a notable preoccupation with appearing cool and attractive. Many teenagers now attempt to go viral and become what's known in-app as 'TikTok famous'. TikTok (and its predecessor musical.ly) has spawned its own celebrities - social media stars Loren Gray and Jacob Sartorius have been catapulted to fame through their initial exposure on the app. Obviously, most budding influencers looking to become the next big thing will be disappointed, but this may have the knock-on effect of making them go to more and more drastic lengths to get noticed.

ONLINE PREDATORS

As a social network, TikTok makes it easy to connect with other users. This includes the ability to comment on and react to other user's videos, follow their profile and download their content. Be aware that by default, any user can comment on your child's video if their account is set to public. Most interactions are harmless enough but as an app, TikTok is prone to predators because of the abundance of younger users.



ADDICTIVE NATURE

Social media is designed to be addictive and TikTok is no different. It can be fun and hugely entertaining. However, it is also because of this that it can be hard to put down. In addition to the short, punchy nature of the looping video format, the app's ability to keep you guessing what will come on screen next makes it easy to turn a five-minute visit into 45-minute visit.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Aside from the content, there's also the option to purchase in-app extras called 'TikTok coins'. Prices range from £0.99 for 100 coins to an eye-watering £93.99 for 10,000 coins. TikTok coins are used to purchase different emojis to reward content creators that a user finds funny or entertaining. In the iOS version of the app you can disable the option to buy TikTok coins but this sadly doesn't seem to be a feature in the Android version.



Safety Tips For Parents

TALK ABOUT ONLINE CONTENT

Assuming your child is above the age limit to use TikTok, make sure you take the time to talk to them about what they are seeing on the app. Have an open dialogue, get them to give you their opinion on what is appropriate and model the correct behaviour. Go over why they shouldn't give out private information or identifiable photos and be positive and understanding. In the long run, getting them to think critically about what they're seeing goes a long way to keeping them social media savvy.



USE PRIVACY SETTINGS

Undoubtedly, the easiest way to safeguard your child on TikTok is to make sure their account is set to private. This means only those users your child approves can view, like, and follow their content. Setting the account to private may clash with your child's goal of social media stardom, but it will keep their account secure from strangers. This setting can be enabled under the privacy and safety menu by pressing the ellipsis in the 'me' tab of the app. To be extra safe, there are additional controls available to toggle such as who can send comments and messages, among other options.



ENABLE RESTRICTED MODE

In the digital wellbeing section there's the ability to turn on restricted mode using a PIN. Restricted mode filters out content that is not age appropriate although it should be noted that this isn't always 100% fool proof. When enabling restricted mode, parents should still be vigilant to what their child is watching and take note that the algorithm moderating content is not infallible.



MONITOR VIEWING HABITS

Even if it doesn't make you popular, keep a close eye on what your child is viewing and sharing on TikTok. Whilst the app has moderation tools, videos can still slip through the net so it's important to regularly check in on what they're watching. Understanding and learning the app yourself is a great way to get to grips with it. You could then even watch some videos with your child, turning it into a bonding opportunity also.



LEARN HOW TO REPORT AND BLOCK INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

With the proper privacy settings in place, TikTok can be a relatively safe space for your child to express themselves. However, in case something does manage to slip through, make sure your child knows how to recognise and report content that isn't appropriate and get them to come to you about what they have seen. TikTok allows users to report offenders and comments within the app. You can also block individual users by going on their profile.



MODERATE SCREEN TIME

As entertaining as TikTok is, you can help your child moderate their time on the app by making use of the digital wellbeing section. Under the screen time management option, you can limit the daily allotted time allowed on the app in increments ranging from 40 to 120 minutes. You can also lock this preference behind a PIN number which has to be inputted in order to then exceed the daily time limit. This way your child can get their daily dose of memes without wasting away the day.



Meet our expert

Pete Badh is a writer with over 10+ years in research and analysis. Working within a specialist area for West Yorkshire Police, Pete has contributed work which has been pivotal in successfully winning high profile cases in court as well as writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.



FAMILY SAFETY MODE

TikTok Family Safety Mode allows parents to link their own TikTok account to their child's. It's a great way to oversee your child's digital wellbeing by giving you direct control over their safety settings and being able to remotely turn features on and off. This includes managing screen time, the ability to send and receive direct messages (and with whom) and the ability to restrict the appearance of content that might not be age appropriate.



SOURCES: www.tiktok.com

www.nationalonlinesafety.com Twitter - @natonlinesafety Facebook - /NationalOnlineSafety Instagram - @NationalOnlineSafety

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 09.09.2020

STARS OF THE WEEK

Choughs	Kea	for always being a superstar!
Robins	Jensen	for being an all round superstar!
Puffins	Jackson	for always listening well, working hard and doing his very best
Owls	Sofia B	for being such a polite & cheerful member of our class
Kingfishers	Jacob H	for his super attitude to all his learning & amazing progress
Trencrom	Kai	for really hard work clearing the field with Daisy
Lanyon	Mason	for working really hard during English. Keep up the good work!
Kerris	Arthur	for writing a fantastic newspaper report about Stonehenge
Bodrifty	Kezia	for a fantastic witches spell in English & a great attitude to her work
Bosigran	Logan H	for producing a beautifully stitched robin
Kenidjack	Gabriele	for an amazing witches spell & for being utterly fantastic in every way
Dinnertime	Jai	for impeccable manners



Applying for a school place for September 2021

If you have a child born between 1st September 2016 and 31st August 2017 you need to apply for a school place in a Reception class for starting in September 2021. The deadline for applications is **15th January 2021**. The easiest way is to apply online at www.cornwall.gov.uk/admissions. For more information call the Admissions team on 0300 1234 101 or visit the website.

LOST

Dylan in Kingfishers has lost two red school sweatshirts. They are named. Please check at home and hand in if found.

Twitter

Don't forget to follow us on Twitter @alvertonschool to keep up-to-date with all the exciting things that are going on.



Need a chat?

If you're finding this latest lockdown a challenge then trust me when I say I know exactly how you feel. Suddenly I can't do any of the lovely things I was beginning to enjoy again and it makes me really quite sad at times. If you want to come and chat, about how you are feeling, or anything at all really, I promise I am a very good listener and sometimes that's all it takes to make you feel better. I will always make time for you and I promise that whatever you say will be kept in confidence unless you would like me to share it and specifically ask me to. I know where all the best biscuits are kept and I always head to the staffroom to make tea at the end of each day anyway; you are welcome to join me. You can ask the ladies in the office or just come and find me.

Thinking of you,

Mrs D



Welcome to the winter issue of BlackbirdPie online magazine!

Despite everything there are festive things to see and do this year, from glittering gardens lit with myriad lights to light-hearted theatre shows. Everyone has gone to great lengths to make things as Covid-safe as possible.

We have searched out quite a lot of free activities and events too including sparkling yuletide markets with entertainers, free entry at PK Porthcurno and The Box Plymouth, stories, videos and art activities to download, interesting winter walks and historic sites to explore.

As well as the new online format we will be doing more on facebook and Instagram, so please seek us out for regular activities, ideas and updates in between issues.

Please subscribe so we can send you a link to the next issue.

Vanessa, Simon and the Blackbird

<https://blackbirdreads.turtl.co/story/cornwallchristmas2020/>

Christmas 2020 and New Year
BlackbirdPie
Cornwall's what's-on for families

The Mousehole Cat
by Antonia Barber, adapted by Alan M Kent
performed by Cousin Jack's Theatre Company

What's on:
Christmas and the
New Year
Theatre shows
Festive events
Book reviews
Videos to watch and
stories to hear
Offers and
free events

During this event, taking place from 12pm for 1 hour, children will be able to meet Santa, as well as real reindeer and watch a Christmas craft by blogger Georgia Coote. Tickets cost £2 per household so a family can all sit at one laptop for that cost. This small donation will go towards helping us as a charity to provide vital pastoral, financial and emotional care to fishermen all around the UK who may be struggling with bereavement among other difficulties.

<https://fishmishmarket.org.uk/shop/fishmish-meet-santa/>

SAT 5TH DEC,
12PM:
Meet Santa!
and his festive friends...
Fish Mish Santa
Zoom

MEET REAL
Reindeer!

THE FISHERMEN'S
MISSION

Free School Meals

At this time, many families may find themselves eligible for Free School Meals and Pupil Premium who previously did not meet the criteria. Please read this page carefully to find out if you are now eligible. Our Pupil Premium Parent Guide is being sent home alongside today's newsletter to provide you with more information.

Cornwall Council are continuing to process new applications for Free School Meals. **Please ensure that you read the eligibility criteria before applying** and complete the online application form if you are eligible.

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges/school-meals/application-for-free-school-meals-and-pupil-premium/>

Postal applications are currently not being accepted but, if you are unable to apply online, you can call the Free School Meals team on 01872 323298 and a member of the team will call you back to complete the application over the phone. Please make sure that your phone will accept calls from a private number.

NB All Key Stage 1 (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) pupils are entitled to receive a free school meal as part of the Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) initiative, regardless of what benefits are being claimed. Whilst schools are closed to most pupils during the current Covid-19 pandemic, schools are not required to provide meals or vouchers to Key Stage 1 children who usually receive free meals under the Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme but are not currently attending school.

However, some children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and receiving Universal Infant Free School Meals (as well as all Key Stage 2 children) may have an underlying entitlement to benefits-related Free School Meals. Schools will make arrangements for these children to receive free meals through food parcels or supermarket vouchers.

Your child may be eligible for benefits-related free school meals if you, or the child themselves in their own right, receives any of the following benefits:

- Income Support (IS)
- Job Seekers' Allowance (Income-Based) and equal based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA-IR) and equal based Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (CTC) with an annual income of less than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Guarantee Element of Pension Credit (GPC)
- Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (IAA) Support
- Universal Credit - Your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get) as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods

If you are claiming the benefits listed below you are **NOT** eligible for free school meals, regardless of what other benefits/credits are being claimed:

- Working Tax Credit
- Contribution-Based Job Seeker's Allowance and/or Contribution-Based Employment and Support Allowance

However, you will be temporarily eligible to claim free school meals if you receive a **Working Tax Credit run-on**, which is the payment you may receive for a further four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.

If you think that your child is eligible for Free School Meals, we strongly recommend that you contact Cornwall Council as detailed above.