



Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy New Year to you all!

It's been an interesting first week back in school for us all following the uncertainty around school opening during last weekend and the first part of the week.

As always, I am really proud of our whole school team and the wider community, which of course includes you as parents, for responding so quickly and positively to the last-minute changes which were announced late on Monday evening by Boris Johnson.

Within 24 hours of the announcement, we had collectively managed to distribute 170+ iPads to families, get the home learning programme up and running in all phases, organise Key Worker provision, food and staff rotas in school for the remainder of the half-term, re-write our term's plans and risk assessments and even make *some* sense of the ever-changing daily DfE guidance emails.

Despite a few inevitable IT glitches with the school website (our website host eSchools struggled to cope with the volume of activity from parents around the country on Wednesday morning), the remote learning offer seems to have been generally well received by pupils and parents across our community. We know that home learning can be a challenge especially if you are trying to balance work, other children and the demands of life in general. Please remember that the teachers are there to support you and that you can contact them via the class email addresses sent out in the packs on Tuesday (e.g. puffins@alverton.cornwall.sch.uk etc).

With regard to school opening for children of Key Workers, we have taken a stronger line in following the DfE definition of the roles covered than was previously the case in the first national lockdown. The reasons for this are linked directly to the rise in local infection rates and a desire to protect our families, the local community and our staff.

The Prime Minister told the nation on Sunday that he believed that schools were 'safe places'; this was a claim he reiterated on Wednesday, two days after announcing the national lockdown, claiming that,

"All the evidence shows that school is the best place for our children and indeed all the evidence shows that schools are safe and that the risk posed to children by coronavirus is vanishingly small."

I would therefore like to put forward a few points which I believe offer a different perspective on this issue.

- Firstly, whilst I do not have the scientific evidence to either support or counter the Prime Minister's claims regarding the risk of the virus to children in school, it seems fair to assume that schools are far from safe places for staff, particularly given the absence of PPE, social distancing and the Covid-19 vaccine for those working in schools. Similarly, children picking up the virus from one another are likely to quickly transmit this to their own immediate and extended families which could clearly have devastating consequences within our extended school community.
- Secondly, many of the children who are attending school as part of the Key Worker provision inevitably have parents who work in frontline roles. I therefore think that it is fair to assume that the risk of the virus being brought into school unwittingly by asymptomatic children is significantly increased. It follows that the fewer children we have in school, the greater our chances of limiting the impact of any outbreak.
- And finally, each day we have approximately 15 staff in school running the Key Worker provision; this includes at least one teacher in each phase. These are the same teachers who are also running the home learning provision between 9am and 1pm each day. As I'm sure you can appreciate, this presents the basic logistical challenge of having to be in two places at once, responding to home learning questions and supporting pupils' remote learning whilst also running a key worker class.

The risks of the virus spreading to our families and our staff are too great for our Key Worker provision to be anything but a last resort for parents who work in front line jobs and have no alternative but to send children into school whilst they are at work. **Please don't ask to use it unless you absolutely have to.**

I would like to thank our excellent staff team for their rapid and tireless efforts in responding to the current circumstances.

I would also like to thank you for your continued support for the school, our staff and for your children with their home learning. We are here to help in any way we can and look forward to working with you, albeit remotely, during the next few weeks.

Best wishes

Martin Higgs

Contacting School

Please be aware that whilst school remains open for some children, there will be no admittance to the building or grounds for any parents, visitors or children not currently at school. If you need to contact us, please do so by email (secretary@alverton.cornwall.sch.uk) or by calling the office between 9am- 1pm, Monday to Friday on 01736 364087.

Remember – safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility

If you have a safeguarding concern, please contact Martin Higgs (Designated Safeguarding Lead) at head@alverton.cornwall.sch.uk or, if it is out of school hours, please contact the Multi Agency Referral Agency on 0300 1231 116;

E-mail: multiagencyreferralunit@cornwall.gov.uk

Equality Information

Every year we write to all parents about the Single Equality Scheme. This addresses our statutory duties in relation to race, disability, gender and promoting community cohesion and covers staff, pupils and people using the services of the school such as parents. It also addresses the legislation relating to religion or belief, age and sexual orientation and includes our priorities and actions to eliminate discrimination and harassment for these equality areas.

The scheme requires us to produce an annual report on our progress, looking at the impact of our actions. Please click on the link below to find out more about this, including our Parent Guide which can be downloaded from this page and which includes the report on our progress towards our key objectives this year. The guide also asks anyone interested in being part of our ongoing consultation to get in touch with one of the Senior Leadership Team – if you are interested, we would be delighted to hear from you.

https://alverton.eschools.co.uk/website/equality_information/85312

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 if your child is currently attending school.

You can book at test online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or phone the NHS test line 119.



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

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 provides food for anyone in need. 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.



NATIONAL DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE HELPLINE
0808 2000 247
24/7 CONFIDENTIAL
FREEPHONE

WCWAid

West Cornwall Women's Aid

01736 367539

<https://www.wcwaaid.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 to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one game of many 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 **CYBERPUNK 2077** PEGI 18

Cyberpunk 2077 is a first-person action RPG (role-playing game) with multiple storylines. It's set in a dystopian future where the line between humans and machines has blurred, with cybernetic implants commonplace. Eight years in the making by Polish developers CD Projekt RED, the game has already garnered quite a reputation – partly because of its adult themes and graphic content.

Adult Themes

18+

Violence, sexual content, profanity and drug use are all present from the opening moments of the game. We cannot emphasise enough that this game is for adults. It has a PEGI rating of 18+ for good reason. The gritty, grimy atmosphere is akin to movies like Blade Runner, and characters face many unsettling, adult situations.

Extreme Violence

Violence is a key component of the game. Players frequently engage in shootouts with enemies, causing dismemberment, gore, blood-splatter effects and characters screaming in agony. Cyberpunk 2077 also allows for stealth-based or peaceful resolutions, so you can avoid these situations – but as in the Grand Theft Auto series, for example, the violence is synonymous with the game's reputation.

Drug Abuse

Throughout the game, characters are seen to take futuristic versions of drugs. The player character is also able to take stimulants that affect their in-game abilities for a time. On top of this, the player is able to drink alcohol in bars and then drive their vehicle while under the influence.

Online Multiplayer

Cyberpunk 2077 was released as a single-player game. There are plans to add a multiplayer option, but currently nobody playing the game can interact with one another. It's unclear what a multiplayer extension of the game might look like – but it's a likely assumption that when it's added, players (both friends and strangers) will be able to game together and chat.

Sex and Body Representation

This is a first-person game: all actions are viewed through the eyes of the player's character, including full-frontal nudity and graphic sex. It's possible to hire sex workers, and there's the now-infamous 'genital customisation' – with options to choose from a variety of reproductive organs. The game has also come under fire for its approach to trans rights and concepts of 'improving' your natural body with cybernetic implants.



Advice for Parents & Carers

Parental Controls

Parental controls let you monitor what children are playing and what they can access. On PlayStation, find 'Account Management'; go to the account you want to create rules for, and follow the menus. On Xbox, set up a family group (via 'Settings') to filter out adult-rated games. On PC, Steam's parental controls are accessed through 'Steam Support', and on Epic Games Store, they're under 'Account Settings'.

Switch Off Nudity

Cyberpunk 2077 has a built-in nudity censor. From the main title menu, go into 'Options', scroll down to 'Nudity Censor' and enable it. You can't do this while the game is in play – so make sure you find it before a session is started. It's worth noting that if you've already set up parental controls on a console, the game may detect that and switch the nudity censor on automatically.

Disable Card Purchases

This prevents young ones from buying games or game add-ons without permission. If you have cards or other payment methods linked to shared accounts or children's accounts, remove them. You can still buy games or add-ons occasionally as a gift or part of an allowance, but disabling card purchases from shared accounts gives you peace of mind when children are gaming unsupervised.

Talk it through

Cyberpunk 2077 is extremely popular right now; many children (especially teens) will be playing it and talking about it with each other. Use this as an opportunity to open a dialogue about the game, find out what your children's thoughts on it are and discuss why it might not be appropriate for them to play it themselves.

Research the Game

The best piece of advice is to research Cyberpunk 2077 yourself. There are lots of videos of people playing it on YouTube and Twitch that give a good indication of what to expect. If you're still unsure whether the game is suitable for your children, avoid it – and be clear with them as to why.

Meet our expert

Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for five years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMI Noble. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.



SOURCES: <https://www.gameevolution.com/guides/8693-99-cyberpunk-2077-parents-guide-is-it-safe-for-kids-children>, <https://www.tamimgaming.com/game/Cyberpunk+2077>, <https://safebecausefamily.org/cyberpunk-2077-a-parents-guide/#~:text=This%20video%20game%20is%20rated%20for%2018%20years%20old,https://www.xbox.com/en-gb/community/for-everyone/responsible-gaming>, <https://gamejournalist.com/how-to-change-nudity-settings-in-cyberpunk-2077/>, <https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/support/account/ps4-parental-controls-and-spending-limits/>, https://support.steamowered.com/kb_article.php?ref=3448-re-epc-9918



ACTION CALENDAR: HAPPIER JANUARY 2021



MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY



"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony" - Gandhi

4 Write a list of things you feel grateful for in life and why

5 Look for the good in others and notice their strengths

6 Take five minutes to sit still and just breathe

7 Learn something new and share it with others

1 Find three good things to look forward to this year

2 Make time today to do something kind for yourself

3 Do a kind act for someone else to help to brighten their day

11 Switch off all your tech 2 hours before bedtime

12 Connect with someone near you - share a smile or chat

13 Be gentle with yourself when you make mistakes

14 Take a different route today and see what you notice

15 Eat healthy food which really nourishes you today

16 Get outside and notice five things that are beautiful

17 Contribute positively to a good cause or your community

18 Focus on what's good, even if today feels tough

19 Get back in contact with an old friend you miss

20 Go to bed in good time and give yourself time to recharge

21 Take a small step towards an important goal

22 Try out something new to get out of your comfort zone

23 Plan something fun and invite others to join you

24 Put away digital devices and focus on being in the moment

25 Decide to lift people up rather than put them down

26 Say hello to a neighbour and get to know them better

27 Challenge your negative thoughts and look for the upside

28 Ask other people about things they've enjoyed recently

29 Use one of your personal strengths in a new way

30 Count how many people you can smile at today

31 Write down your hopes or plans for the future

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS



www.actionforhappiness.org

Learn more about this month's theme at www.actionforhappiness.org/happier-january

Happier · Kinder · Together

YOUTUBE.COM/BLUEPETER



SUBSCRIBE



SUBSCRIBE NOW!



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.

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 / withheld number.

NB All 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.

However, some children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 may also have an underlying entitlement to benefits-related Free School Meals. Please ensure that you check this and apply if appropriate, even if your child is in one of these year groups, because of the additional benefits (eg food vouchers during holiday times where these are given by the Government).

Your child may be eligible for benefits-related free school meals if their parent / carer (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.