

BUMPED HEAD AND BEHAVIOUR INCIDENT TEXT MESSAGES

Sometimes, you might get a text message to inform you that your child has had a reflection time following a behaviour incident. When this happens, we ask that you talk to your child about this, but there is no need to get in touch with us. If the incident is serious in nature, or if there is a pattern of behaviour concerning us, we will get in touch with you and have a conversation about it.

Similarly, if you get a bumped head text message, please don't be alarmed. Again, if there is a concern, we will call you. The text message is simply to inform you that it has happened so that you have some context in the unlikely event your child feels any effects later in the day. A text message means that your child has received first aid, we are monitoring their condition but we are not concerned and do not feel any further treatment or attention is needed.

A text message is the most efficient way for us to get the information to you. In all cases, if we think there is a major concern, we will call you, so please make sure your contact details are up-to-date; you can do that on the parent portal on Arbor. Thank you for your understanding.

PARENTS' EVENINGS

Our parents' evenings take place on Tuesday 24th and Wednesday 25th October. We have moved to an online booking system and we have published on ClassDojo details of how to book an appointment. We hope to see you all there - it is very important that we work in partnership and keep you up-to-date about your child's progress.

PARKRUN

Tomorrow (Saturday 14th), some of us are heading to Perry Hall Parkrun and we hope to see some of you there! Parkrun is a 5km run/walk that you can take at your own pace, and some of our staff, children and parents are regulars on our visits there. It starts at 9.00am sharp, so please get there a few minutes early, and please note that your child must stay with you at all times unless they are 11-years-old (a Parkrun rule, not our rule). You can find more information and sign up here, free of charge: <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/perryhall/>

SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

A reminder for Year 6 parents and carers that the deadline for applying for a secondary school place is 31st October 2023. If you would like any assistance with this, please get in touch with us via the school office. Everything you need to know about the admissions process can be found here: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20119/school_admissions/1778/secondary_school_year_7_admissions/1

LOST PROPERTY

We have accumulated lots of lost property over the last few weeks and most of the items are unnamed, making it difficult to determine who the items belong to. Please have a look through the lost property over the next week to collect any items belonging to your child. After this, we will be recycling items that are in good condition. We also request that your child's name is written in their belongings to help identify items should they become lost.

ATTENDANCE

On the next page, you will see some key information about school attendance. We will not let up on this: the better your child's attendance, the better their chances of success in school and in life. Please work with us to ensure your child's attendance level is high. Thank you.

"AMONG US"

We recently shared information with you about the potential dangers associated with "WhatsApp". Your child may also be playing a game called "Among Us". Please see the attached flier for more information about this and how you can keep your child safe.

HARVEST COLLECTION

Our Harvest collection is still open for donations for another week. Please send items in before next Friday.

CONDOVER

Year 5 children are today bringing home a letter about the residential visit to Condoover in Year 6. Details will also be put on ClassDojo.

DIARY DATES

Sat 14 Oct	Beeches does Parkrun!
Mon 23 - Fri 27 Oct	Book fair in school
Tue 24 & Wed 25 Oct	Parents' evenings
Fri 27 Oct	Break up for half term
Mon 6 Nov	School reopens
Tue 7 Nov	Professor McGinty visiting Year 4
Tue 7 Nov, 4.30pm	"A Christmas Carol" pantomime
Wed 8 Nov	Professor McGinty visiting Year 5
Thu 9 Nov	Photographer in school
Fri 17 Nov	Flu immunisations
Tue 21 Nov	Year 5 cinema visit

PUPIL OF THE WEEK

3C: Tammy-Leigh	4B: Anastasia	5A: Gracie	6IS: Finn
3L: Thierry	4F: Lana	5P: Jessica	6MS: Solange
3P: Alice	4L: Poppy	5W: Fletcher	6SM: Holly
3W: Israel			

BEECHES BRILLIANT READERS

Year 3: Thierry (3L)
Year 4: Neha (4B)
Year 5: Dhanvi (5A)
Year 6: Kyra (6MS)

TEAM POINTS

1.	Team Zephaniah	936
2.	Team Malala	895
3.	Team Cadbury	790
4.	Team Lewis	752

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Attendance Matters



At Beeches Junior School we believe that good attendance is crucial to children attaining well and making better progress, both socially and academically, which enables them to reach their full potential. Children with good attendance find school routines and school work easier to cope with. The vast majority of parents/carers send their children to school regularly, and on time, for which we thank you. The Government's expectation is that all children should have an attendance figure of 96% and above, and we are committed to working with our families to achieve this.

Attendance during a school year	Equal to number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed.
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons

Did you know parents are legally responsible to ensure their child receives a full-time education?

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 states:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

Courts can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs, impose a victim surcharge and/or make a Parenting Order when parents are believed to be denying their child of their right to an education.

Reporting Absences:

We understand that children can become ill and are better kept at home to rest. When this is the case, parents should contact school and leave a message stating their child's name, class and the reason for absence. Please note, stating 'unwell' is not sufficient information as the information is used to identify patterns of illness in school and it helps us to identify the most accurate registration code for your child. If you have left a message with this information, there is no need to call into the office.

When a child is absent due to frequent illnesses and attendance becomes a concern, our aim is to work with parents to find the best solution. However, in some cases, parents will be asked to provide medical evidence to enable absences to be authorised.

Leave in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time has a detrimental effect on your child's progress as they miss valuable learning. Leave in term time is rarely authorised and all holidays should be taken out of term time. Parents can be issued with a penalty notice for unauthorised leave. In fact, we issued **26** penalty notices during the last academic year. Where term time leave is taken, parents are required to inform us as taking children on leave without applying for authorisation may mean we have to report your child as 'missing' to the local authority. Forms to request term time leave are available from the office.

Punctuality

Lateness not only affects the learning of your child, but it affects the learning of the other children too, so being on time is also important. The school opens at 8.45am and lessons start promptly at 8.55am, so all children should be settled and in their classrooms ready for their lessons to start on time.

Contact information

If you would like to discuss your child's attendance, have any questions about attendance or are having difficulties getting your child to school, please contact Mrs Liddington, our Attendance Officer, at c.liddington@beechesjnr.bham.sch.uk and we will do what we can to help.

Medical Appointments

Where possible, appointments of any kind should be made out of school hours. However, we do understand that sometimes this is unavoidable. Where appointments are taken during the school day, your child will be expected to attend before and/or after the appointment and proof of the appointment will need to be shared with the office.

Education Legal Intervention Team (ELIT)

We work in partnership with the ELIT to ensure pupils regularly attend. Legal action may be taken if your child is not attending regularly, or there are frequent unauthorised absences.

The last week/day of term isn't important—the children only play games and watch films.

Lessons take place throughout the whole of the last week so attending during the last week is still important.

The odd day off doesn't make much difference. Topics are taught over many lessons and by missing just part of a lesson prevents them from gaining the information necessary to be successful in that topic.

There's more to life than education. A good education will enable your child to be successful in life but school also offers social opportunities and structure and routine, all of which are good for a child's mental health.

Myth Buster

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.

