Marldon C of E Primary School

'Within the love of God, working together, growing together, for all to flourish.'

Dates for the diary:

Thursday 12th December:

PTFA Christmas Disco

Friday 13th December:

Dance Club show case

Wednesday 18th December:

School Christmas dinner and jumper day

7:00pm Marldon Church Carol service with school choir

Friday 20th December:

School Christmas service at Marldon church

Last day of Autumn Term

Tuesday 7th January:

1st day of Spring Term

What a jam packed six weeks we have had. It is hard to believe we have nearly reached our Christmas break. Starting the 1/2 term with OFSTED visiting, our Nativity at the Princess Theatre and plenty going on in between there is so much to celebrate in this newsletter.

OFSTED:

I am hoping that by now you will have had the opportunity to read through the report from our recent inspection. As a school, we are proud of the report and all that it shares about what we strive to achieve at Marldon. If you have yet to read the report you can find it on the OFSTED website or please ask in the school office, but I just wanted to share the opening sentence with you as it encapsulates all that we try to achieve as a school and therefore is what we are most proud of:

'Pupils at Marldon Church of England Primary School flourish because they are valued and motivated to learn.'

Nativity:

What can I say, other than WOW! What an amazing performance and afternoon this was. The children shone; singing, dancing and speaking with confidence and more importantly joy. Watching children overcome their nerves, support and encourage one another and share in their achievements really was a pleasure to see.

I want to thank you for your support in this event, without your help with costumes and fundraising, the children could not have had this amazing experience. An extra special thank you must also go to our PTFA who worked tirelessly to allow it to happen.

Mrs Gustar:

Mrs. Gustar, who works in Venus class, will be leaving us at Christmas to pursue a new career in silver smithing.

Mrs. Gustar has worked at Marldon across 2 and a bit years and I would like to thank her for all her hard work and dedication. She will be missed by the staff, children and parents.

We are excited to share that Mrs. Vandenbrouck will be replacing Mrs. Gustar and from January will be working along side Mrs. Bailey within Venus Class.

Christmas Events:

With our Nativity complete there are only a couple of seasonal events to remind you about:

- Wednesday 18th - Christmas Dinner Day

With Christmas dinner already ordered, the only reminder is that we would love children to wear their Christmas Jumpers and accessories on this day, just to help us all get into the festive spirit.

- Friday 20th - School Christmas Service

Year 6, supported by year 5, will be leading us in our annual Christmas Service at Marldon Church. We will be walking to church for a 9:30 start and return by break time.

Online Safety:

With a special time of year approaching, when you may be thinking about your child having their own phone, computer or other device, it's vitally important that we know how to keep young people protected while using them.

Between targeted adverts, age-inappropriate content, and other online safety concerns, it can sometimes feel overwhelming to keep on top of.

Parental controls, present on most devices and several apps, can make this job significantly easier – but a certain amount of knowledge is required to use them effectively.

This free online safety guide will provide you with the information you need to activate and maintain parental controls on children and young people's devices.

Trips and Visitors:

Year 6 enjoyed a visit to The Box, in Plymouth, where they explored our Elizabethan past. This brought to life the topic they have been exploring 'Why should we never forget gun powder, treason and plot.'

Year 4 enhanced their learning with a Roman Day, they were joined by 'Blast from the past' who brought to life what it would have been like to be a Roman soldier. Watching the children form a Testudo, throw javelins and march in formation was impressive.

Year 4 and 5 have had a great 1/2 term working alongside the Torbay Tigers Basketball outreach program. They have had 6 weeks of working alongside the coaches developing their skills and understanding of the game.

As we enter the festive season, it's wise to be mindful of how this time of year can impact our mental health, especially through sensory overload.

Christmas brings a host of stimuli—bright lights, loud music, crowded gatherings, and strong scents—that can overwhelm our senses.

For many, this can lead to feelings of anxiety, stress, or even burnout, making it difficult to truly enjoy the festivities. Learning to manage sensory input is key to preserving your mental well-being during this busy season.

To explore more about sensory overload and its effects, check out this helpful video: Managing Sensory Overload During the Festive Season.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=8Gw_3BOKoRU

Remember, it's okay to step back, take breaks, and create a calmer environment for yourself when needed.

Lost Property:
With the onset of the cold weather, we seem to have been inundated with lost property. We will be placing this outside the front of school, when the weather allows. Please keep an eye out for this and collect anything that may be yours.

Can I also remind you that if you are able to add a name to items of clothing we can more easily ensure items are returned.

Planned Absence:
Please remember that you must notify school of any period of planned absence. This needs to be done through collecting and completing an S2 request form from the school office. At this time, can I also remind you that we are only able to authorise requests if there are 'exceptional circumstances.' Devon County Council's advice is that we must be extremely cautious about approving any requests if a pupil's education is likely to be significantly impacted upon.

It is important that these forms are handed in with adequate time to respond as any unauthorised absence will likely result in a penalty notice or court summons being issued to each parent for each pupil affected.

As always, I end my newsletter by reminding you that if you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to catch me at the school gate.

Kind regards,
Jon Arnold
Head of School

ARTICLE 28 - Every child has the right to an education

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.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

USING AND REVIEWING PARENTAL CONTROLS

Phones and computers are essential parts of children's lives, but with unfettered internet access comes a multitude of risks. While not foolproof, parental controls can help with this; filtering out inappropriate content, limiting the ability to spend real money, capping screen time and generally making devices safer for young people.

1 KNOW THE TYPES

While parental control software can apply to an entire device, it also pays to know about options on individual apps and websites. TikTok, for example, has Restricted Mode for limiting unsuitable videos, while Snapchat lets you keep an eye on who a child has been talking to. Check the settings of any new app young users want and review your options.

2 COVER ALL DEVICES

Knowing what parental controls cover is crucial, as remaining unaware can run the risk of 'blind spots' in the device's safety measures. Controls on a phone will apply whenever a child's on that device, for instance – but you'll want to ensure that parental controls are set up across any laptops, tablets and potentially other phones, too. Remember, buying a new device may require you to set everything up again.

3 DON'T NEGLECT SHARED TECH

While children often have their own devices, if you have a shared family computer or tablet, for example, you'll need to make sure that's not a weak point in your safety measures. Parental controls for your router, that cover everything connected to your Wi-Fi, are one option – or you can just be thorough with each device and online account. Just ensure that unprotected laptops, phones and tablets are password locked.

4 CONSIDER TIME CONTROLS

Even safe internet content can be harmful if it's viewed in excess. Not only are certain apps addictive enough to distract from other duties, but late-night usage can badly disrupt sleep, which is vital for adolescent brain development. Most parental controls offer some kind of time limit – either blocking access at certain hours or capping the number of minutes it can be used per day – so be sure to consider these.

5 BLOCK APP SPENDING

Seemingly free apps can sometimes include microtransactions: purchases that can be made using real money. While plenty of developers implement these fairly, some companies attempt to manipulate children into paying for additional features or content, which can soon add up to hundreds of pounds if a child gets carried away. Thankfully, iOS and Android's settings allow you to block in-app purchases, preventing any huge bills.

6 NO CONTROLS ARE PERFECT

Parental controls can be very useful, but they're far from infallible. Some unpleasant content can and unfortunately *will* slip through the net, so remember that setting up these measures isn't a substitute for taking an active interest in young people's digital lives. Talk to them, and make sure they're aware of the risks of the internet as well as its benefits.

7 MIND THE GAPS

There'll undoubtedly be *some* gaps in parental controls, no matter how thorough you intend to be. For example, if you use router-level parental controls, bear in mind that these won't cover WiFi outside the home. For that reason, it's important to keep an open dialogue with children about the many unpalatable aspects of social media and the web.

8 KEEP THINGS SECURE

Some children can react poorly to parental controls and feel tempted to circumvent them. It's important to ensure that the passwords to these settings remain unknown to children, otherwise they can easily modify the restrictions without you knowing. Similarly, make sure your phone isn't left unlocked and unattended.

9 REVIEW CONTROLS REGULARLY

Parental controls shouldn't be a 'set and forget' deal. Not only can parental summaries provide you with a frequent overview of a child's digital life – to let you spot any warning signs – but companies often add new features, and some of these may be useful to enable (or disable). Regularly checking in ensures that if a child *has* found a way to wiggle out of the controls, you'll be the first to know.

10 KNOW WHEN TO LET UP

The parental controls you install on a computer for a seven-year-old probably wouldn't be appropriate for a child of 16 – and as young people approach adulthood, bubble wrapping the internet can do more harm than good. Consider relaxing parental controls as children get older, so they can learn to manage the risks of the internet themselves, without so many training wheels.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist and the former deputy editor of technology and internet culture website Alphr. Now freelance, he has contributed articles to publications including the New Statesman, CNET, the Evening Standard, Wired, Rock Paper Shotgun, Gizmodo, Pocket Gamer, Stuff, T3, PC Pro, Macworld, TechRadar and Trusted Reviews.

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ARTICLE 28 - Every child has the right to an education