



A Note from our Deputy Headteacher

Well, it has certainly been a busy first week back after half term! We hope you all had a lovely half term break and were able to enjoy some of the sunshine and Jubilee celebrations.

Our KS4 and 5 students have certainly hit the ground running this week and are straight back into sitting their exams. This week we have had the following exams take place: GCSE Psychology, GCSE History, both GCSE and A Level Maths, BTEC Music, GCSE English Literature, GCSE History and GCSE Physics - quite a selection and a very busy first week back!

We have a very exciting half term ahead of us and we are really looking forward to welcoming as many of you as possible to join us in school on Wednesday 6th July for our Sports Day and Jubilee event. The team are currently working very hard to make this event a special one! I am sure that you will also be blown away with our 'Grufts' exhibition which our students have been working very hard on during their art lessons and will be on display during the event.

Our KS4 students will experience the world of work this half term as they embark on work experience, we are looking forward to hearing all about their work placements. In July, our year 11's will be doing the expedition part of their Duke of Edinburgh award and were seen just before the half term putting up two large tents in the Rectory gardens - I was very impressed by their team work and determination!

You will see below that this week Mrs Elkins and Mr Lee went on a very exciting adventure - I think they are both still smiling after the experience! All I will say is that tennis was involved!

I wish you all a sunny week ahead and I look forward to hopefully seeing you in person in July.



Victoria Howe
Deputy Headteacher

Please Note:

You may need to click *View Entire Message* at the end of the email to enjoy this newsletter in full! You may also need to click to *display images* to appreciate the images in this newsletter.



Friday 24th June

Year 11 students not required in school

Monday 27th June - Friday 8th July

- Year 11 Work Experience

- Year 10 Mock Exams



Wednesday 6th July

Sports Day

Summer Jubilee Event

more details to follow



Monday 11th July - Tuesday 12th July

Year 11 Duke of Edinburgh Expedition

Monday 11th July - Friday 15th July

Year 10 Work Experience

Monday 11th July - Wednesday 20th July

- Transition Weeks

- Year 11 leavers not required in school

- Year 11 going into 6th Form on part time timetables

- Year 12-14 leavers not required in school

- Current 6th Form on part time timetable to accommodate upcoming Year 12s

- Year 11 6th Form Prom will be held during this week, details and arrangements TBC

Wednesday 20th July

- Leavers Assembly

- Staff & students finish for summer break

Monday 17th October - Moon Week!

Monday 17th October: Visit from Dr Bothwell - An Astronomer from the Institute of Astronomy. He will deliver 3 tailored presentations across the day for KS2, KS3 and KS4/5.

Wednesday 19th October: Visit from a Planetarium. Inflatable planetarium will be set up in the PE hall for the day with 6 x 40 minute sessions for the students.

This will be followed by a chance for parents to come in for a Coffee afternoon from 3.30-4.30pm

Platty Joobs

We hope you all had a wonderful half term break and enjoyed all the Platinum

Jubilee celebrations in your local areas over our 4 day weekend.

We had a bit of a party at the end of last half term on Friday, with scones jam and cream and even a staff v students game of rounders over at the Rectory. The sun was shining and lots of fun was had by all!



Mr Lee & Mrs Elkin's Big Day Out

On Tuesday 7th June, Mrs Elkins and Mr Lee travelled up to Nottingham to attend the Rothesay Nottingham Open. They had been invited as guests of the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) after the school won the Regional **School of the Year** trophy in recognition of services to Tennis in Britain and being selected as Central & East Regional Winner at the 2022 LTA Tennis Awards.

Whilst there, they got to enjoy seeing Emma Raducanu in action on the court and even stand on the Centre Court themselves where they were presented with the school's award in front of the crowd! You can catch this on BBC iplayer if you search Sports - Nottingham Open - Day 2 and watch the footage just after the first match ended and before Emma Raducanu made her [sadly very brief] appearance.

As Mrs Elkins said to the Chairman of the Lawn Tennis Association: "We were so thrilled to receive this [trophy]; not only has Gretton School won the regional award, but we get to come and watch some *fantastic* tennis, in beautiful sunshine AND we get to work with some of the most wonderful children ever. I think I might be the luckiest Headteacher in the country!"

On the back of this, the school was then entered for the National Awards and came second! So Mrs Elkins and Mr Lee will be getting dressed up again, this time to attend Centre Court at Wimbledon, on 28th June, having attended the awards ceremony at the Roehampton Tennis Club in the morning on the same day. We don't think they'll be allowed on the court itself this time, but watching the tennis will be enough of an award! Look out for more photos in due course, but here are some from Tuesday...





Artwork

An opportunity to see what our talented students have been working on with Mrs Easton in their art sessions.

Laura's dog:



Elliot's dog:



Alex's dog:



My name is Dr. Aloka Rudra and I am a postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of Psychology, Durham University.

Together with Prof. Deborah Riby and Dr. Mary Hanley, I am doing research on sensory processing in neurodevelopmental conditions to try to understand impact on everyday functioning.

For more information please see below;

For neurodivergent participants please visit-

https://durhampsychoLOGY.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bpvAllaNmqold9I

For neurotypical participants please visit-

https://durhampsychoLOGY.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5zFTogsKn3OyDJQ

All participants will receive a gift voucher. We hope this research can help us learn more about different sensory environments and experiences in neurodivergent groups and to understand deeply the sensory differences in neurodivergent adolescent in their own words.

Dr. Alokanda Rudra. Email- alokananda.rudra@durham.ac.uk Phone number- +44 7423280098

PARTICIPATE AND TELL US ABOUT YOUR SENSORY EXPERIENCES (FOR NEUROTYPICALS)

Who can participate?
11-17 year old neurotypical young people with no learning difficulties and their parents

What do you need to do?
1. Parents complete a brief demographic questionnaire online
2. Adolescents complete two brief questionnaires online

What do you get?
Adolescents get £5 for their participation.

For more information visit:
https://durhampsychology.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5eF7ogkx3Q7026
Or contact alokanandarudra@durham.ac.uk



PARTICIPATE AND TELL US ABOUT YOUR SENSORY EXPERIENCES

Who can participate?
11-17 year old young people with autism, ADHD and autism +ADHD and their parents

What do you need to do?
1. Parents complete a brief demographic questionnaire online
2. Adolescents complete two brief questionnaires online
3. Interested Adolescents participate in an interview to chat about sensory experiences online

What do you get?
Adolescents get £10 for their participation.

For more information visit:
https://durhampsychology.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bqvAlatmqold34
Or contact alokanandarudra@durham.ac.uk



pinpoint
for parents by parents

Our FREE online events and groups



Sessions are currently all online and booking is easy via our [events page](#). Our upcoming events for June:

13th June, 10am-12pm: Sleep Workshop: Part 2. Book [here](#).

14th June, 10am-12pm: Introduction to Dyslexia. Book [here](#).

15th June, 12pm-2pm: Yvonne Newbold: Why Sensory Processing Difficulties can Impact Behaviour. Book [here](#).

17th June, 10am-12pm: Pinpoint Parent Carer Tii Hub. Book [here](#).

23rd June, 8pm-9:30pm: Yvonne Newbold: Common Communication

Issues in SEND Children and How to Help Them - Recording. Book [here](#).

24th June, 10am-12pm: Pinpoint Parent Carer Tii Hub. Book [here](#).

27th June, 10am-12pm: Neurodiversity - What is Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia and Dysgraphia. Book [here](#).

29th June, 10am-12pm: Neurodiverse Parent versus the Neurotypical Child and Vice Versa. Book [here](#).

All of these sessions will be held online. Zoom links to join will be sent from Eventbrite 2 days before and again 2 hours before the start of each session. Please do check your junk mail as they sometimes end up there! Thank you.

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 of many issues which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, tips and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about VIRTUAL REALITY

Virtual reality (VR for short) has existed for decades, but it's only in the last 10 years that the technology has really become publicly available. With VR's rapid rise as a gaming and educational medium, there are plenty of unknowns regarding its use – for adults and children alike. Is it safe? How long should someone use VR for? How expensive is it? What's clear is that VR is becoming ever more ubiquitous in everyday life: from companies using it for training to at-home fitness. Knowing what the technology is capable of is more useful than ever.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

PREMATURE EXPOSURE

While VR has already found its way into schools worldwide – allowing teachers to take their class on digital field trips – most manufacturers advise an age restriction of 13. This safeguard is based on the idea that children's brains, eyes and bodies are still developing. With the technology still in its infancy, not enough research has been conducted as to how VR affects children in the longer term.

EYE STRAIN

One of the main worries about VR is that essentially having TV screens so close to your eyes could harm them with prolonged use. Lenses inside each headset have been specifically designed to trick the human eye into focusing to infinity (just as they would in the real world) to mitigate possible eye strain. Even so, longer VR sessions should be limited to adults only.

PHYSICAL ACCIDENTS

When used correctly, VR isn't dangerous as there are safety features built in. A common concern is that a child wearing a headset could bump into real-world objects while playing – so creating a headset also comes with 'guardian' or digital barrier systems that can be set up beforehand, indicating where walls and furniture are located so nobody trips over and hurts themselves.

SOCIAL VR

VR is more immersive than normal gaming and makes players feel very present in the moment. There are additional online safety fears, therefore, relating to trolling and abusive comments as players engage with each other in social VR spaces. Personal information shouldn't be given out and privacy and safety controls (who can see your real name, for example) need to be activated where possible.

MOTION SICKNESS

Children who are prone to travel sickness might encounter what's known as 'simulator sickness'. This is nausea caused by the eyes seeing images which tell the brain that the person is moving, while the rest of the body knows it is stationary. Most apps have features to reduce this discomfort, while some games simply don't feature locomotion to make for a more comfortable experience.

VIOLENT CONTENT

Among the growing range of VR games and apps, not all of them are appropriate for young players. Violent content can be far more visceral and disturbing in VR, so it's important to consider the age and maturity of your child before giving them access to this type of gameplay. As the majority of VR content is digital, online store access is easy – so careful curation is advised.

Advice for Parents & Carers

START OFF SLOWLY

Just like regular video games, if your child wants to try VR the best way to reduce risks is moderation. Keep their VR sessions to short stints – and for young adults new to the technology, build up their usage time gradually to let them get acquainted with it. If they feel any discomfort, remove the headset and try again at a later point.

NO SURPRISES

It's easy to get lost in the moment in VR – and possibly forget where you might be standing in the real world. A minimum 2m x 2m play area is recommended, with no plant pots or other delicate objects within reach of falling arms. Take pets into account, too: don't let the cat or dog walk into the room, for example, because a VR player won't see them and could certainly trip. A child is far more likely to get over-enthusiastic in VR, posing a risk to themselves and anything in their path.

KEEP A WATCHING BRIEF

It may seem that a VR player is in their own world, but all VR headsets allow external viewing via a linked monitor or mobile phone. This is the best way to ensure whatever a child is playing is appropriate. More VR supervision tools are on the way, such as securing specific apps behind unlock patterns or sending an approval notification to the parent if their child wants to purchase a game.

ANTI-NAUSEA OPTIONS

It's wise to get used to VR while comfortably seated and progress to standing or 'room-scale' VR (where players physically walk around an area) later. Look at the in-app options first: switching between seated and standing adjusts the player's height, while a vignette or 'tunnel' darkens the peripheral vision to reduce nausea. Teleportation Mode and Snap Turning are also important options for enhancing comfort.

RESEARCH CONTENT

There will be information online about most games and apps, explaining what type of experience they provide. They'll list age ratings indicating how violent the gameplay might be, comfort, so you'll know the intensity of the experience, and how much access the game requires to personal information or features like the built-in microphone.

Meet Our Expert

Peter Graham is the editor of XR (extended reality) and Web3 specialist site game3.com and has been writing about VR, augmented reality and the immersive tech industry for more than seven years. He's served as a panel speaker and a judge at awards events and game hackathons.

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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about THE METAVERSE

AGE RATING
Varies per metaverse platform

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

UNSAFE AREAS
Many metaverse platforms feature little to no moderation. This is due to the decentralised nature of the metaverse - as there is no one company overseeing the platform, users can create and build with freedom. This can be a minefield for younger users as adult material or sensitive topics can feature on a parcel of land seen by everyone.

VOICE COMMUNICATION
The freedom found within creation is also found in communication. Most metaverses use proximity VOIP communication (Voice Over Internet Protocol) and users can approach any other user to start a conversation. It is necessary for avatars to be quite close to another in order to talk and once they are, anything can be said. While a chat box can be moderated, voice chat cannot.

ANONYMITY
As with almost every other form of online interactions, anonymity features heavily within the metaverse. The concept for the metaverse is to live any type of life digitally. This could mean that 'bad actors' (those with malicious intent) can take advantage of others with ease. Reporting and monitoring these users is becoming easier on the more popular platforms, but others are struggling to police these situations.

VIRTUAL REALITY
Not all metaverse platforms are VR enabled, in fact less than 10% feature VR interactivity. However, it's always worth monitoring the amount of time younger users spend in virtual reality. A VR metaverse creates greatly to VR gaming in user interaction. Approaching each other in a VR metaverse attempts to represent 'reality' and can result in a greater impact if experiences are negative.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT
Whether in virtual reality or not, interactions and experiences in the metaverse can often carry more weight because they mimic 'real life'. Oftentimes, due to the freedom in avatar creation, younger users may open themselves up to bullying, prejudice or an unrealistic idea of reality. For instance, female-orientated avatars may find themselves targeted by bullies or inappropriate users.

Advice for Parents & Carers

TRY IT OUT FIRST
This may sound like an obvious tip, but by entering the metaverse and exploring on your own, you'll be able to see what your child might. You can explore the busier areas and even the quiet sections to see what users are building or advertising. You'll also learn first-hand how users communicate with each other. Many metaverse platforms will feature an entry area which showcases the busiest areas. Check them all out and see what's happening.

CREATE AN AVATAR TOGETHER
If you decide on allowing your child into the metaverse, set up their initial avatar together. This way you can ensure the avatar is age-appropriate and keeps their identity private. You can also advise on aspects which may result in attracting bullies or unwanted attention. It will also allow you to see which avatar items cost money, and talk to your child about in-game spending.

LEARN ABOUT NFTS, WALLETS AND CRYPTO
With the metaverse comes Web3 technologies such as NFTs, cryptocurrency and wallets in which to store them. If you have a crypto wallet, do not connect it to your child's metaverse. One simple click could result in loss of cryptocurrency, if you are unsure what these technologies are, try to research them as these terms will appear in the metaverse.

START WITH THE FAMILIAR
There are already metaverse experiences with children in mind: explain to your child what a metaverse is and have them recognise similarities between those and games like Roblox, Fortnite and Minecraft. Unfortunately, there is no 'child safe' metaverse option as yet, though Epic Games and LEGO are currently developing a family safe metaverse.

Meet Our Expert
Daniel Upcombe is a father to two girls, aged 14 and 12. Before Dan began his Web3 metaverse journey, he worked as a videogame journalist and author for a decade, reviewing games, talking to creators and writing about videogame trends. Dan has also written fifteen guide books about Fortnite, Minecraft, Roblox, Apex Legends and Valorant for HarperCollins and Bannier Books.

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