

Friday 23rd October 2026

Autumn 1 Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

We've had an exciting and busy start to the school year, and I'm incredibly proud of how well our children have returned - focused, enthusiastic and ready to learn. With the support of our dedicated staff, the first half of the autumn term has been packed with enriching experiences.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the incredibly warm welcome you have given me. It has been lovely meeting families on the gate each morning and afternoon, and I am slowly but surely starting to remember everyone's names! Thank you also for your fantastic support of our Parents' Evenings. It was wonderful to see so many parents and carers attending and working in partnership with us to support their children's learning.



As we begin the second half of the autumn term, please ensure your child arrives on time each morning, dressed in the correct school uniform and ready to learn. Good attendance is key to their progress, so if your child is unwell and unable to attend, do let the school office know as soon as possible. We also kindly ask that you book school lunches, breakfast club, and after-school care in advance to help us plan effectively.

A quick reminder, if you are a parent of a child in Year 6, don't forget that the closing date for secondary school applications is **Saturday 31st October 2026**. Click on the following link to take you to the council's webpage. <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/applying-for-school/starting-at-a-secondary-or-upper-school-in-september/>

Finally, I would like to wish you all a very safe and healthy half-term and I look forward to seeing everyone back in school on Monday 2nd November 2026.

With best wishes,



Mr Dan Glentworth (Headteacher)



Cross Country Running

Unfortunately, the local schools' cross-country event at Holyrood was cancelled this week due to the wet weather. However, Manor Court pupils are made of tough stuff, and we were determined not to miss out! Instead, we quickly organised our own cross-country event on the school field. Conditions were certainly wet, with plenty of rain, mud and more than a few soggy shoes, but that didn't stop our pupils from giving it their all. The children showed fantastic determination, resilience and enthusiasm as they tackled the course, encouraging one another every step of the way. A huge thank you to Mr Johnson for organising the event at such short notice and ensuring that our pupils still had the opportunity to enjoy a memorable afternoon of sporting success.



Year 1 Manor Court 48 - Make and fly a paper plane

Year 1 have completed their latest Manor Court 48 activity: making and flying their own paper planes. The children followed the folding instructions carefully, listened well and worked through each step one at a time. Some of the folds were tricky at first, but they showed determination, kept trying and supported each other along the way. Once their planes were ready, it was time to put them to the test! Manor Court 48 is all about learning new skills and trying new experiences. Year 1 showed fantastic patience, creativity and resilience throughout the challenge.



Making Chocolate Mousse

Year 1 had a fantastic time making chocolate mousse this term. The children followed a recipe carefully and enjoyed creating their own delicious treat. They then used this experience in English, writing a set of instructions explaining how to make the mousse. It was a fun way to combine practical learning with writing skills.



A Portrait of Chard

Many of our pupils featured in Richard Tomlinson's *A Portrait of Chard* exhibition at Chard Guildhall, which celebrated the people who help shape our town. As part of the project, Manor Court pupils took part in portrait-focused art workshops and produced some fantastic artwork of their own.



Here are some of our pupils with their portraits taken by Richard Tomlinson.



Bikeability

Year 5 pupils recently took part in Bikeability training, developing the skills and confidence needed to ride safely and responsibly on our roads. Throughout the programme, children learned essential cycling techniques, including how to carry out safety checks, control their bikes effectively and make safe decisions in different road situations. A huge thank you to the Bikeability instructors for delivering such engaging and informative sessions, and to families for ensuring children came prepared each day.



World Mental Health Day 2026

Manor Court turned yellow in support of World Mental Health Day, with the whole school coming together to raise awareness of mental wellbeing. Pupils and staff embraced the occasion through a variety of thoughtful activities and creative expressions. The day began with a powerful assembly led by Mrs Baker, who spoke about the importance of looking after our mental health, how it connects to physical wellbeing, and what we can do when we're struggling. Here are some of our Foundation Stage children dressed in yellow.



Year 6 – MC48 Roll-over

After having to postpone their cinema trip in the summer due to the extreme heat, Year 6 finally got to enjoy their much-anticipated visit to see *Toy Story 5*! Everyone had a fantastic time, and it was lovely to see the children enjoying a well-deserved treat together.



Year 2 PCSO visit



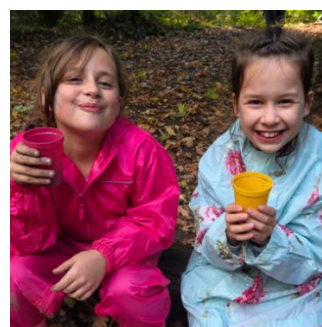
The children were delighted to welcome our local PCSOs into their classrooms for a special visit. After their reading on our new class text, *The Invisible*, the children explored the important roles people play in our community. They prepared thoughtful questions to interview our visitors to learn more about their jobs. It was wonderful to see the children communicating so confidently and effectively, showing great curiosity and enthusiasm throughout the visit.

Year 5 Residential

Our Year 5 pupils recently enjoyed an exciting overnight residential visit to Magdalen Farm. During their two-day adventure, the children embraced the great outdoors, taking part in activities such as den building, farm duties and an evening campfire. The visit provided a fantastic opportunity for pupils to learn more about the natural environment, wildlife, sustainability and life on a working farm. Throughout the residential, children demonstrated excellent teamwork, enthusiasm and determination as they tackled new experiences and challenges.



Most importantly, the trip helped pupils develop their independence, resilience and confidence away from home. It was a truly memorable experience for all involved, even if there wasn't much sleep for some of the staff! A huge thank you to our wonderful team of staff who gave up their time to accompany the trip and make it possible. Their support, care and encouragement helped ensure that every child had a safe, enjoyable and rewarding experience.



Chard Children's Carnival

As part of their Manor Court 48 Experience this half-term, our Year 4 pupils proudly took part in the Chard Children's Carnival. This year's theme was inspired by the new *Zootropolis* film, and the children threw themselves into the event with enthusiasm, creativity and energy.



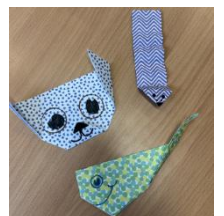
Dressed as a fantastic range of animal characters, pupils worked hard to learn an exciting dance routine before taking to the streets of Chard and performing in front of the crowds. Their hard work and dedication were rewarded with an incredible three awards: 2nd Place in the Schools Category, the Mayor's Choice Award and the Chair's Choice Award.



We are immensely proud of all the children for representing Manor Court so brilliantly. A huge thank you must also go to our dedicated Year 4 team, led by Mrs James, Miss Stewart and Miss Huxter, whose hard work, creativity and commitment made this achievement possible. It was a true team effort and a wonderful experience for everyone involved.

Year 2 - Manor Court 48

Year 2 have been getting creative in their MC48 session this term, exploring the wonderful art of origami. The children were challenged to create their own paper animals, including dogs, cats, whales and snakes! Everyone showed fantastic determination as they carefully followed the steps to transform pieces of paper into their own masterpieces.



Harvest Festival

On the first Monday of October, we held our annual Harvest Celebration at St Mary's Church alongside Rev. Nick and Rev. John. The generosity shown by our families was truly remarkable, with hundreds of items donated to The Lord's Larder. Their team were incredibly grateful for the support provided by our school community.



Each Year 5 class shared a thoughtful poem, while the church was filled with enthusiastic harvest singing from all year groups, including a beautiful performance from our choir. Harvest time offers an important opportunity for children to reflect on the many things we are thankful for and often take for granted. During the service, we considered the vital contributions made by farmers, delivery drivers, shop workers and many others who help bring food to our tables each day. A huge thank you to everyone who donated. Your kindness will make a real difference to local families in our community.



Unexpected visitors

Last week, we had some very unexpected visitors when the Devon Air Ambulance landed on our school field while responding to an emergency in the local area. Although the circumstances were unexpected, the crew were incredibly generous with their time once their duties allowed. The pilot, doctor and paramedic spoke with several classes, answered pupils' thoughtful questions and explained the important work they do to help people in need.

The visit created a real sense of excitement across the school and provided a fascinating learning opportunity for our children. We would like to thank the crew for taking the time to meet our pupils and for the vital service they provide to communities across Devon and beyond.



Rock Up and Read

Our Rock Up and Read sessions have been a huge success this term, with families from Foundation Stage through to Year 6 joining us in school to share a love of reading. It has been wonderful to see so many parents and carers taking the time to read alongside their children and enjoy books together.



Rugby taster sessions

It was great to have Chard RFC into school earlier this term to offer rugby sessions to all year groups. It was a great opportunity for our pupils to get involved and try something new. Chard RFC has a fantastic youth set-up for children aged 5 to 18, with many of our pupils already attending. To find out more, visit their website: <https://chardrugby.co.uk/youth>

Here are our Y6 pupils enjoying their taster session.



MC48 Mud Creatures in EYC

As part of their Manor Court 48 Experience, children in the Early Years Centre had great fun creating mud creatures outdoors. Using mud and natural materials, they made all sorts of imaginative creations, including hedgehogs, funny faces and even unicorns! The children loved getting messy, being creative and exploring the outdoors with their friends.



Year 6 History visit

Year 6 visited Chard Museum to learn about the life and achievements of Margaret Bondfield, the first woman to become a government minister in Britain. The children engaged enthusiastically with the activities and asked some excellent questions. They are now using what they discovered to write biographies, and we are delighted that some of these will be displayed at the museum later this year. What a fantastic opportunity to share our learning with the wider community.



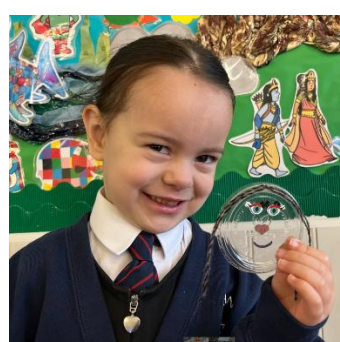
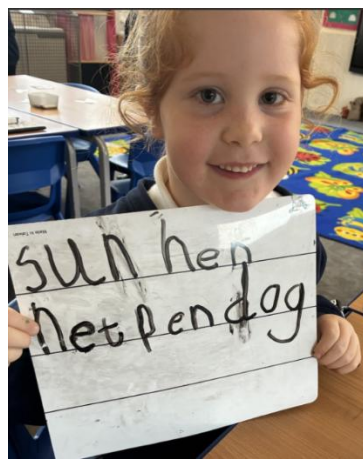
Chatterbooks at Chard Library

Our Chatterbooks group has enjoyed its first two sessions of the half term! The first session took place in school, followed by a fantastic visit to Chard Library earlier this week. The children enjoyed listening to spooky stories read by librarian Katy Chick and getting creative by making their own bookmarks. Through these fun and engaging activities, we are continuing to nurture a love of books and develop a lifelong passion for reading for pleasure.



And finally...

It has been a real joy to see our newest members of the Manor Court community settle into school life so quickly. Foundation Stage children have already formed new friendships and shown great enthusiasm for learning. They've made a brilliant start to their school journey, and we're incredibly proud of the confidence, curiosity and kindness they bring to each day.



Some key reminders



Following my letter at the end of our first week, can I say a big thank you for your effort with promoting attendance with your child. Our attendance this half-term is **95.3%**, which is a great start. As a school we are targeting 96%+ by the end of this academic year. Punctuality also remains a focus after half-term.



Something which has become apparent in the last couple of weeks is an increasing number of pupils not coming to school in the correct PE kit. It is essential that all pupils have the correct kit and shoes for PE, especially now the weather is changing. It is also important for children to have a spare pair of socks in their bags on PE days, so if their socks get wet due to a downpour, they have dry socks for the rest of the day.



Roblox is a hugely popular platform that can be a fun and creative way for children to play, learn and connect with others. However, parents should be aware that Roblox contains user-generated content and online communication features that can expose children to significant risks if parental settings are not in place. Children may encounter inappropriate language, distressing content or contact from people they do not know. Following the excellent advice below will help you to set up Roblox Parental Controls.

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/gaming-consoles/roblox-parental-controls/>

Parents' Evenings

Thank you to all the parents who attended their child's parents' evening this half term; it was great to see so many of you in school. It was lovely hearing the positive comments from parents about the wonderful artwork on display and how happy parents are regarding their child's progress in school.



Nut Free School



An important reminder that nuts and nut products should not be brought into school because we have a number of children who suffer from serious allergies related to nuts and nut products; this includes hazelnut products such as Nutella. Please look carefully at snacks and packed lunches to ensure that nut ingredients are not present. Your co-operation in this matter is greatly appreciated as anaphylaxis is a serious and a life-threatening issue.

Name your Uniform & Property

Please can I request that anything that your child brings into school is clearly labelled with their name. This includes coats, PE kits, jumpers, any uniform, drinks bottles and lunchboxes. Thank you

Diary Dates – Autumn Term 2



Friday 23rd October

Sunday 25th October

Monday 26th – Friday 30th October

Monday 2nd November

Wednesday 4th November

Thursday 5th November

Monday 9th November

Tuesday 10th November

Tuesday 10th November

Wednesday 11th November

Wednesday 11th November

Friday 13th November

Friday 13th November

Monday 16th November

Tuesday 1st December

Tuesday 1st December

Thursday 3rd December

Thursday 3rd December

Monday 7th December

Tuesday 8th December

Wednesday 9th December

Thursday 10th December

Thursday 10th December

Friday 11th December

Monday 14th December

Tuesday 15th December

Wednesday 16th December

Friday 18th December

Monday 21st Dec – Friday 1st January

Monday 4th January

Tuesday 5th January

Last Day of Term

Last day for booking lunches on ParentPay

Half-term

First day back at school

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra Workshop Year 2

Year 4 Swimming begins (6 weeks)

Diwali Dance Workshop for FS and Y3

World Science Day

Kingfisher Class visit to Chard Museum

Remembrance Day

Owl Class visit to Chard Museum

Children in Need – Non-uniform day

Year 2 visit to Chard Museum

Anti-Bullying Week

FS Nativity to Parents 2.15pm

Badger Class visit Chard Museum

FS Nativity to Parents 9.15am

Foxes Class visit Chard Museum

KS2 Carol Services at St Mary's Church

Y2 Nativity to Parents 2.15pm

Y2 Nativity to Parents 2.15pm

Christmas Jumper Day (Uniform plus a Christmas jumper)

Y1 Nativity to Parents 2.15pm

Y1 Nativity to Parents 2.15pm

Y1 trip to the Pantomime at Westlands

FS and KS1 Christmas Lunch

KS2 Christmas Lunch

Non-uniform day – Christmas Parties

Christmas Holiday

Teacher Training Day – School closed

First day back for pupils

Support for our families this half-term



Holiday Breakfast Scheme.



Holiday Breakfast Bags are back For the Half Term Holiday

Do you think it may help you and your family to start the day with a good solid breakfast?

We will give you a free, no questions asked bag/s, to last a week, which will contain everything that is needed, regardless of your family size.

**Just turn up at the St. Mary's Centre on
Monday 26th October 2026
8am to 10am**

Anyone from the family can pick them up. Stay and join us if you would like for coffee and toast while you are here.



Supporting our Community

CHARD CHRISTMAS PRESENT APPEAL 2026

Providing presents for children who might otherwise go without.



How You Can Help

Donate new, sealed, **toys or presents for children age 0-18** to
Forefront Community Centre or The Community Hub before 27th
November

For More info: a.chardslordslarder@gmail.com



Things to do in our Community

MF DANCE
— SOUTH WEST —

STREET DANCE CLASSES IN CHARD

Fun, welcoming classes for
children aged 3–12

-  **FREE FIRST CLASS**
-  Fridays at St Mary's Church,
Holyrood Street, Chard
-  Beginners welcome
-  Build confidence, make
friends and get active
-  Inclusive and supportive
classes

WHY CHOOSE MF DANCE?

-  Fun, energetic classes
-  Confidence, teamwork and life skills
-  Great for making friends
-  No previous dance experience needed

CLASSES

Mini Streetz | Ages 3–6

Junior Streetz | Ages 7–12



BOOK A FREE TRIAL

www.mf-dancesw.co.uk



Things to do in our Community

**St Mary's Church
Chard**

JOIN US FOR OUR

**CHRISTMAS
FAIR**

**SATURDAY
28TH NOVEMBER**

10am to 1pm


Visit Father Christmas


Children's Activities


Refreshments

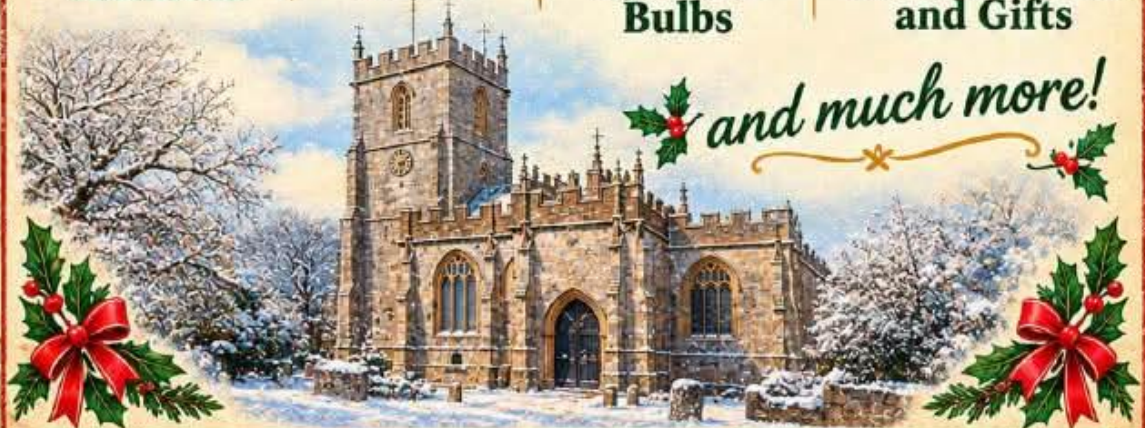

Tombola


Raffle


**Hyacinth
Bulbs**


**Christmas Crafts
and Gifts**

and much more!



Things to do in our Community



HALLOWEEN GARDEN ADVENTURE

24th Oct - 1st Nov

www.fordeabbey.co.uk

Supporting your child to self-regulate

We regularly get asked to help parents whose child struggles to self-regulate at home. Below is an excellent guide with top tips from the National College.



10 Top Tips on Supporting Children with SELF-REGULATION

Children need to learn to understand and recognise their emotions, while finding healthy ways to process them. Emotional self-regulation, however, depends heavily on age and development. While very young ones or children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may find it particularly challenging to self-regulate, nurturing these important skills can be hugely beneficial. Here are ten top tips for supporting children with their self-regulation.

- 1. DESIGNATE A TRUSTED ADULT**
It's vital that children feel safe and know that there's someone they can always go to for help if they need it. Schedule consistent times for the child to develop a relationship with this person – ideally through play and games – allowing trust to grow and ensuring that the child is more likely to come forward if anything is wrong, rather than hiding their emotions.
- 2. MEET CHILDREN HALFWAY**
Unless you know where a child is developmentally and tailor your approach to their needs, you're less likely to have an impact. In particular, younger ones and children with SEND can struggle to self-regulate and instead rely on others to help them. We call this 'co-regulation'. Rather than offering strategies for self-regulation, it could be better to start co-regulating with a trusted adult first.
- 3. FACTOR IN THEIR BASIC NEEDS**
Remember that for a child to develop emotional regulation skills, their basic needs must be met first. Children who are hungry, tired, cold and so on – as well as those who have experienced adverse childhood experiences – may struggle to self-regulate. Before you develop strategies with any child, make sure they feel safe, secure and comfortable in themselves.
- 4. REMAIN PATIENT**
If a child is struggling with their emotions, it can often become difficult to stay calm. Remember that dysregulation is beyond their control, so a display of frustration or anger could negatively impact the situation. Instead, children need to be met with comfort and understanding to help them manage these problematic feelings.
- 5. BE 'A DYSREGULATION DETECTIVE'**
While some children can tell you why they become dysregulated, many others can't. You could investigate potential triggers by observing the child and talking to their family. When the child becomes dysregulated, note down details like the time, what they're doing and who they're with – the trigger may be someone they sit near, an unmet sensory need or something else entirely. Once we identify some triggers, we can help to avoid or overcome them.
- 6. USE SUITABLE LITERATURE**
There are some wonderful books that can help you teach self-regulation to children. Reading these with a child can be especially powerful. Take time to discuss the content: ask questions about what feelings the characters had, why they felt that way and what strategies helped them. It can also be useful to refer back to snippets of these books at appropriate moments.
- 7. TRY SENSORY RESOURCES**
An overlap between sensory needs and emotional regulation is possible. Children may struggle to self-regulate if they're experiencing sensory overload (a noisy classroom, for example). Positive sensory input can help calm them down. Use resources such as weighted blankets and fibre-optic lights. Of course, what works for one child might not work for another – so it's important to offer a choice of resources to discover which they prefer.
- 8. NURTURE INDEPENDENCE**
If you feel it's appropriate, let children try out these strategies alone. Always offer them a choice: they could listen to music when they're feeling stressed, for example, or they could write down their worries or draw something to represent how they feel. This may take time for the child to get used to, so be patient. Encourage them to share any helpful strategies with a trusted adult.
- 9. MODEL GENUINE FEELINGS**
Children learn a lot just from watching grown-ups. Don't be afraid to show your own emotions and self-regulation strategies. While you'll obviously want to avoid sharing anything too personal with children, they should still see us experiencing and handling our own feelings. Tell them how you are feeling, then show them how to respond in a healthy manner.
- 10. FORMULATE A PLAN**
As much as we try to prevent children from experiencing dysregulation, it's always wise to have an appropriate plan for when it does happen. Discuss this strategy with the child (if appropriate) and their family. The best approach for an individual child is often a bespoke one; it's hugely important to know in advance what might help and what could worsen the situation.

Meet Our Expert
Georgina Durrant is an author, former teacher, Special Educational Needs Coordinator and the founder of the award-winning SEN Resources Blog, where she shares activities, advice and recommendations for parents and teachers of children with SEND.

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Essential online safety information for parents

In-Game chat

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about IN-GAME CHAT

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Video games are continuing to grow in popularity – including, of course, among children and young people – and the emergence of gaming communities has been accelerated by the inclusion of chat functionality across many different titles. While in-game chat isn't inherently a bad thing, it can create some concerns about online safety and the people that children might be interacting with.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHAT

There are a number of ways that gamers commonly chat with one another online. As the name would suggest, in-game chat happens within the game itself. There's also party chat: a group voice conversation that console users can have with anyone on the same platform. This tends to be more commonly used by players who already know each other. Finally, many gamers – especially on PC – will chat via a third-party app such as Discord.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Whether it's text- or voice-based, in-game chat is frequently open to all players to use. Many games default to making it an opt-in function, but some don't: meaning a child could start seeing messages within the game from people they're playing with, regardless of whether they know those individuals or not. While most strangers won't necessarily have ill intent, there are some who may behave inappropriately when chatting to a child – intentionally or otherwise.

DANGER OF GROOMING

It's been reported that some young gamers have encountered older players online who pretend to be a lower age to manipulate children, sending gifts in exchange for chatting and sending photos. Just as on any messaging platform, it's good to advise young people to avoid speaking to strangers; emphasise that they shouldn't accept gifts from anyone online that they don't know.

BULLYING AND ABUSE

While some in-game chat can turn toxic because of how a match plays out, others turn that way because of people who engage in trolling – in essence, behaving in an offensive and abusive way simply to cause pain or get a rise out of whoever they're talking to. These 'trolls' often lean on racial slurs, anti-LGBT sentiment and other hateful rhetoric; they normally feel most confident preying on younger, more impressionable gamers.

POTENTIAL FOR PRIVATE CHAT

If a player would like a re-match with a stranger after meeting them in the game, they can send a friend request, or use the party chat together in the future. For the most part, this is harmless – but it might lead to messages being exchanged in private. This could then escalate to the sharing of private information, and potentially attempts to manipulate or scam younger players.

COMPETITIVE ATMOSPHERE

Certain games are very competitive, and players can sometimes get upset if they feel a teammate is underperforming, an opponent won unfairly, or they're just a bad loser. This can lead to unpleasant messages that stray away from playful 'trash talk' and wander into the territory of bullying. Some players have been known to get incredibly abusive in situations like this, and the impact of this on a young gamer's emotional wellbeing could be severe.

Advice for Parents & Educators

LOCK-DOWN IN-GAME CHAT

In-game chat can often be disabled in the game's settings. This allows children to play without risk of contact from strangers – but it will need to be done in each individual game. Text chat appears in the corner of the screen in many titles, so it's normally easy to take a quick glance and see what's being said. With voice chat, explain to children what behaviour is inappropriate, so they can spot the dangers themselves.

REPORT POTENTIAL OFFENDERS

Most games offer a robust means of reporting other players, so you can flag an account as potentially harmful. This normally leads to the account not being matched with yours in the future and, if that person's conduct breaks any of the game's rules, they may be banned from playing entirely. This is done within the game itself, so each title has a slightly different process, but these tend to be designed for simplicity.

CONSIDER OTHER CHAT OPTIONS

If a child wants to play with people they know, consider using party chat or a third-party service like Discord. This allows everyone involved to chat on a private server and even enjoy each other's company while playing different games. It's also far more secure, as anyone looking to join will need to request and be granted access – normally by whoever is hosting the chat.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Make sure children understand the differences between being competitive and being abusive. Talk about what constitutes unusual or inappropriate behaviour from strangers online. Be clear that if anything ever concerns or worries them, they should tell a trusted adult as soon as possible. Empower children to identify the risks of in-game chat for themselves and reassure them they won't get in trouble for seeking help if anything goes wrong.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is the Editor in Chief of GGRcon and has been working in the games media industry for five years. He's also a parent and therefore understands the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his work has been published at sites including IGN, TechRadar, and plenty more.



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