

Friday
15th Dec
2023



HURST HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Newsletter

Honesty, Attitude, Respect, Resilience, Caring

What a fantastic festive week we've had! I am so proud of our KS2 children who performed marvellously at St Mary's church yesterday.

Christmas dinner day was also a great success- thank you to the catering team for working very hard to provide a delicious lunch.

Rocksteady music have performed their Christmas concert to parents this morning. It was wonderful to see the children perform in their rock bands. If your child would like to join, lessons are on Friday mornings. Further details can be found at <https://www.rocksteadymusicschool.com/>

The PTA have organised our Christmas market this evening. We cannot express how grateful we are for their support to make these events happen. In addition, the PTA have provided Christmas gifts for all of the children. Thank you.

Next week, we are looking forward to KS1 and EYFS performing their nativity "Whoops-a-Daisy angel". I have had a sneak peek of the rehearsal and I am confident that you will have a special time.

On Friday, years 5 and 6 will be hosting a mini market during school hours. They have prepared stalls and games. All classes will get a chance to visit and most activities will cost between 50p and £1. If your child would like to take part in these activities, please send monies into school in a named envelope Friday morning.

We sadly say goodbye to Mrs Khalil and Mrs Darrell, who are off to pastures new in January. We wish them both the best for the future and thank them for their contribution to Hurst Hill.

Have a wonderful weekend

Mrs Weaver
Assistant Head of School

DIARY DATES

Thursday 21st December- EYFS/KS1 Nativity 10am and 2pm

Friday 22nd December- School closes at 3.30pm for Christmas

School reopens on Monday 8th January 2024.

Tuesday 8th & Wednesday 9th January- Bikeability year 6

Thursday 11th & Friday 12th January- Bikeability year 5

Friday 12th January- 5 year old dental checks

Monday 15th January- Reception eye examinations

Tuesday 16th January- Year 1 INSPIRE



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Attendance

Attendance at school is mandatory. Whole school attendance should be at least 96%.

The Department of Education has made it clear that schools must be stricter when dealing with families whose children are persistently absent or late for school. A child's absence from school can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example, if they are too poorly to attend or if they have a medical appointment that cannot be made outside school hours. If your child is persistently absent or regularly late for school, whatever the circumstances, a referral may be made to Dudley Education Investigation Service, and this could result in a fine.

If you are having difficulty getting your child to school, or to school on time, please contact the school office so we can offer some support. Please note that school will not authorise holidays during the school term and that our policy is to refer such absences of 5 school days or more to Dudley Education Investigation Service who may issue a fine. If your child is too ill to come to school then you should **contact the school office before 9.30am**, either by telephoning 01384 818845 (option 1) or using the absence reporting feature on ParentMail. Do not use our social media pages to report absences. Please remember that school can administer medication in certain circumstances



Star Pupils of the week

have shown our school values of honesty, positive attitude, resilience, respect and caring.

Reception- Matthew for positive attitude to learning

Year 1- Grayson for positive attitude to learning

Year 2- Liam for positive attitude to learning

Year 3- Reggie-Rae for positive attitude to learning

Year 4— George for resilience in Maths

Year 5- Sofia for positive attitude to learning

Year 6- Lucy for positive attitude in her work

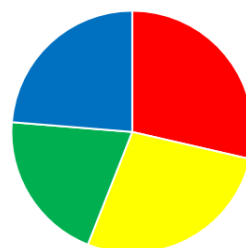


A big well done to Lottie in year 3, who was a runner up for MP Pat MacFadden's Christmas card competition. Lottie went to meet Mr MacFadden today and her design will be on the MP's Christmas card!

We use house points to reward pupils for following our school rules and values.

This week our house points totals are:
Ruby 217, Diamond 208, Emerald 154 & Sapphire 180

Well done Rubies!



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At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

There's a very good chance you've heard of Fortnite, but what exactly is it? And why is it so popular amongst young people? Fortnite is an online multiplayer "battle royale" game developed by Epic Games, and is playable on Playstation 4, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, PC and mobiles. It gained popularity in late 2017 and has since become the biggest game in the world, thanks to its rapid and engaging gameplay. As with most games, Fortnite itself is a highly enjoyable and safe experience, but it pays to be vigilant, as the safety is not water tight.

AGE RECOMMENDATION

13+

What parents need to know about FORTNITE BATTLE ROYALE

BATTLE ROYALE

Battle Royale games have become very popular over the last couple of years, and most tend to follow a very similar setup. Taking Fortnite as an example, 100 players drop into a map, loot buildings for weapons and armour and attempt to beat all the other players to be crowned victor at the end. If you've ever seen the Hunger Games movies, you'll have an idea of what this entails. Each game can take up to 20 minutes (assuming you last to the end) and can be restarted relatively quickly once 100 free players have been found.

IS FORTNITE ADDICTIVE?

Fortnite is at the forefront of gaming addiction discussions because it is so popular with young people. But whether it actually contributes to gaming addiction is up for debate. WHO (World Health Organisation) have classified gaming as a legitimate addiction, but this is not solely a concern with Fortnite. Signs of addiction can include irritability when not playing, lying about the amount of time played and a preoccupation with thoughts of the next gaming session. Realistically, it must be down to parents and carers to recognise these symptoms and act accordingly if they think they are developing.

FREE TO PLAY... OR IS IT?

While Fortnite is technically free to play (in that you can download and play it without paying) it does come with the caveat that spending money on things like skins and emotes in-game is heavily pushed to players. The currency used in-game is called 'V-Bucks' and can be bought with real money through the game's online store. It's worth remembering that these purchases are absolutely not necessary, are cosmetic only and that V-Bucks can be earned in-game with enough play time.

SEASONAL UPDATES

Every 10 weeks or so Fortnite is updated with a new season. This essentially adds new things like skins and emotes to the game, while also sometimes changing up the game map in interesting ways. These seasons are free to everybody and don't require additional money to play, though battle passes for each season can be bought with V-Bucks. A battle pass will typically allow a player to earn experience faster and gain fun in-game items by completing a host of daily challenges.

CROSSPLAY IS AVAILABLE

One of the wonderful things about Fortnite is that it can be played cross-platform. This means that no matter what platform a person plays on (PC, PlayStation 4, Xbox One etc) they can play with friends who own the game on a different platform. To do this, an Epic Games account must first be created online (which is free) and then linked with your platform account. Doing this removes the age-old boundary of not being able to play together because you don't have the same console and opens up a whole new world of playing online with friends.

IS FORTNITE VIOLENT?

Fortnite has been rated by the ESRB (Entertainment Software Ratings Board) as 'Teen', as it contains cartoonish violence and the weapons and acts depicted in the game are some way removed from their real life. Inspirations: Characters don't draw blood when shot and instead of dying, they are simply booted off the map. Naturally, players younger than the recommended age limit will want to play the game and that should be at the discretion of parents and carers.

Top Tips For Parents

BUYING V-BUCKS

As mentioned, Fortnite does contain in-game purchases and microtransactions in the form of V-Bucks which can be bought with real money. If you do decide to let your young one spend money in the game, be sure to delete your card information afterwards as it can be very easy to purchase more items at the press of a few buttons. It's important to set a limit on any purchases (as mentioned they are absolutely not necessary to play the game) and a suggestion would be capping the spending at around £50 - this is the normal retail price of a game.

GAMING WITH STRANGERS

Fortnite Battle Royale is an online game, and as such, there is a chance that young children could come into contact with strangers who are randomly placed into their groups in a game. It's difficult to predict what another person might say or do in a game, so it's a good idea for friends playing together, to be grouped together. The only real countermeasure to interacting with strangers offered by Fortnite is to turn off all mic communications, which can be done in the game's settings. Using outside chat apps, like Skype or Discord while playing, is a great way to make sure you know who you're talking to and that nobody else is listening in.

LIMIT TIME, BUT BE FLEXIBLE

A game of Fortnite can last up to 20 minutes, so be flexible when it's time to put it away. The approach of 'one more game' as opposed to '10 more minutes' will stop any complaints that a match is still ongoing. Better still, play with your child and take it in turns, that way you're helping control the time played and can keep an eye on what they're experiencing.

TALK TO OTHER PARENTS / CARERS

If you're concerned about play time or spending money in the game, talk to other parents and carers of your child's friends. If you approach as a collective, it will be easier to know when their friends are online and you don't have to worry about who they're playing with. It can also help curb expectations on spending money on battle passes and skins if you stick together.

CAN DEVELOP SOME IMPORTANT SKILLS

It's often overlooked just how good gaming can be for young people. Fortnite encourages team play, quick and complex problem solving and communication: that's not to mention the lightning fast reflexes gamers can develop. While taking breaks to do other activities is of course important, there are benefits to screen time which might not be immediately obvious.

PLAY THE GAME YOURSELF

There's no substitute for sitting down and playing the game yourself to learn all about it. Fortnite is available for free on almost anything you can imagine, even your smartphone, so there's never been a better time to get involved and see what all the fuss is about. You never know, you might even be able to impress your children when you show them your impressive Victory Royale tally!

#1 VICTORY ROYALE

Meet our expert

Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGBible. 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.

<https://www.theguardian.com/games/2018/nov/07/fortnite-battle-royale-parents-guide-video-game-mob-psy-heroes>, <https://www.psychguides.com/behavioral-disorders/video-game-addiction/>, <https://www.polygons.com/2018/12/27/1716888/cross-platform-crossplay-got-shoot-what-is-it-on-mobile-usb-cable-friends-crossplay-watchings70876>, <https://www.nerd.org/safety/15848/Fortnite/>