

Newsletter

Friday 17th January 2025 Issue 16



Passmores
ACADEMY



Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been a challenging week for us all, but we really appreciate the support we have had from within the community. Ironically, our pastoral curriculum time this week was planned around knife crime, but we made the decision to postpone this until next week. We felt that staff and students needed time to process what happened and for us to provide relevant support to those who needed it.

We have welcomed the response from the police, who we have always had an excellent relationship with. Lots of young people took the time to talk the officers who visited, and their advice is that we, the adults, need to talk about such issues openly. Education is key to support young people to understand and make the right decisions. We cannot shy away from what is sadly the current reality regarding knife crime and young people.

I don't know how many of you are aware of Fearless Anonymous [Fearless: Anonymous Reporting for a Safer Community | Crimestoppers](#). It is a safe place to report any concerns that you have about worrying behaviour in the community. This is already built into our curriculum, and we will be revisiting this with our students.

Wishing you all a wonderful weekend.

Natalie Christie
[Principal of Passmores Academy](#)

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TOP PASSMORES POINTS ACHIEVERS

10th to 16th January 2025

Root, Riley	Year 7	38
Smith, Luke	Year 7	36
Coleman, Maxwell	Year 7	32
Howe, Tate	Year 7	32
McIntosh, Jack	Year 7	31
Denkewicz, Maria	Year 7	30
Ryan, Marnie	Year 7	28
Charles, Kai	Year 7	27
Jablonski, Lucas	Year 7	27
Knox, Blake	Year 7	27
Lefevre-Cobby, Kai	Year 7	27

Bartram, Mason	Year 8	33
Brandle, Aiden	Year 8	31
Kundrotaite, Evita	Year 8	31
Boorman, Isabelle	Year 8	30
Stewart, Isobella	Year 8	30
Clark, Kayden	Year 8	28
Hills, Ella	Year 8	28
Hollis, Lucy	Year 8	28
Jackson, Jermaine	Year 8	28
Wilkinson, Kai	Year 8	28

Saunders, Teddy	Year 9	32
Zuna, Hayden	Year 9	25
Brown, Charlie	Year 9	24
Gunn, Jackson	Year 9	24
Broughton, Marnie	Year 9	23
Potgieter, Demar	Year 9	22
Copas, Joe	Year 9	19
Burch, Megan	Year 9	18
Erikume, David	Year 9	18
Melnyk, Oleh	Year 9	18
Owen, Esme	Year 9	18
Redding, Jack	Year 9	18

Honan, Faraya	Year 10	31
Wheatley, Joshua	Year 10	29
Foster-Gaish, Lily-May	Year 10	27
Ball-Parrish, Maizie	Year 10	25
Wejman, Dawid	Year 10	25
Mennell, Gary	Year 10	24
Zuy, Bogdan	Year 10	24
Dorrington, Ava	Year 10	22
Crutchlow, Jack	Year 10	21
Jay, Ronnie	Year 10	21
Mustata, David	Year 10	21
Raykov, Pavel	Year 10	21

Mustafa, Emin	Year 11	30
Labalpiny, Erin	Year 11	28
Beckett, Emily	Year 11	27
Stringer, Lara	Year 11	27
Bricknell, Evie	Year 11	26
Brandle, Charlie	Year 11	25
Downes, Jaidan	Year 11	24
Gammons, Delilah	Year 11	24
Vetori, Rileigh	Year 11	23
Blake, Ellie	Year 11	22

Year Group Attendance (7 th to 10 th January 2025)	
Year 7	91.27%
Year 8	90.47%
Year 9	87.64%
Year 10	90.01%
Year 11	88.18%
All Students	89.54%

PASTORAL UPDATE

Thought for the Week

This week's Thought for the Week introduced the first of four planned sessions on **knife crime**, but due to recent events in the community, this session was postponed. Instead, students will begin this important work next week.

In the News

Students explored the topic of **budgeting to reach your goals** during this week's *In the News* segment. The key learning points included:

- **Why budgeting matters:** Setting a budget helps us reach financial goals, avoid overspending, and make plans for things like trips, gifts, savings for education, or personal purchases.
- **Making conscious financial decisions:** Understanding budgets, savings, and payment schemes enables us to spend money wisely.
- **Growing savings and managing risks:** Students learned how savings can grow over time and discussed risks associated with certain financial schemes, such as "buy now/pay later." Making informed decisions is key to financial well-being.

These lessons aimed to provide students with vital skills to make smart and conscious financial choices in their current and future lives.

Other News

- **Year 11 Post-16 Interviews:** This week, Year 11 students had their interviews for Harlow College, alongside interviews with several other post-16 providers. In preparation, students participated in **interview skills and preparation sessions** during Pastoral Curriculum Time, ensuring they felt confident and ready to showcase their strengths.
- **Year 7 Mersea Assembly:** Year 7 students attended an exciting assembly about the **Mersea trip**, one of the most memorable experiences of their school journey. The presentation sparked enthusiasm for this adventure.

Looking Ahead to Next Week

- **Thought for the Week:** Students will explore themes of **exclusion versus inclusivity** through the lens of the recent *Wicked* movie. This session will prompt reflection on the importance of acceptance and understanding within our community.

In the News: The first of four sessions on **knife crime** will begin, focusing on statistics, facts, and figures, both nationally and within Harlow. Students will reflect on who is affected by knife crime, including victims, perpetrators, and wider communities, using a recent episode of *Coronation Street* as a discussion tool.

- **Year 11 Prom Assembly:** Year 11 students will have an assembly reminding them about their **Passport to Prom**.

As we move forward into another busy week, we are excited to see students engage in these meaningful and enriching discussions and activities.

Are you a parent, guardian or carer?

Do you work with young people?

**Would you like to make Harlow a safer place for
all young people and the community?**

Trained professionals with lived experience, from St Giles Trust, will deliver a presentation which unpacks and explores the realities and consequences of gang involvement, exploitation and serious youth violence.

This session is aimed at all professionals, parents, guardians, carers and teachers and is **FREE** to attend - booking essential.

Date: 12th February

Time: 4pm - 6pm

Venue: Harlow Playhouse

Topics covered:

- Gangs, glamorisation, Alternative Measures Program and joint enterprise
- Weapon awareness – knife crime
- The reality of prison life



To book please visit [our website](http://ourwebsite) or contact Jason

Tel: 07849 087 793

Email: jason@rainbowservices.org.uk



CAUGHT DOING GOOD...

(Monday 13th to Friday 17th January 2025)







Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Daisy Loader Zachary Penhallow Lily Park Farrell Kwofie Jude Goward-Johnson	Riley Elliff George Bengé Liara Hanks Ellen Clarke Frankie Cairns	Max Warner Henry Rocha Santos Othniel Defor Enzo Rocha Santos Ronel Sowunmi	Hassan Farhan Archie Boyce Ronnie Jay George Howell Oliver Vaux	Wiktorija Jones Evie Bricknell Poppy Hallybone Rhoda Adesina Ben Algar



Chit Chat *and* Chocolate



			
Mitchell O'Callaghan	Jack Crutchlow	Dexter Groves	Leah Cuming
Amelia Pay	Sam Crutchlow	Harvey Hymas	Jennifer Wan
Jack Redding	Jan Denkwicz	Jasmine Rowlett	Layla Clark
Max Warner	Riley Tohill	Dawid Wejman	

SUBJECT/INFORMATION UPDATES

Drama

A warm welcome back from the Drama department, and a happy new year to you all!

As ever, we have returned at full pelt and are busy preparing for two show nights this month...

On 23rd January, our Year 11 GCSE drama students are staging a performance of Gizmo by Alan Ayckbourn. This play is their exam text, and they will be asked questions on the staging of it during their final exam in May.

We have had to change the performance date of our Drama Club showcase night to Wednesday 29th January. Pupils across all years will be performing a variety of short plays throughout the evening. The plays vary from fairytale-based stories to panto style comedy and a farce. This is a wonderful opportunity to see what we've been up to so far this year and see what our fabulous performers can do ahead of the school production in July.

For both performances, doors will open at 6pm and the play will start at 6.15pm. The performances will take place in the Alan Simpson Memorial Hall. We have decided to add a small ticket price of £2 to these shows in order to help cover the cost of props and costumes.

Tickets for Gizmo (23rd Jan) can be bought (using card payments) in advance here: Gizmo at Passmores Academy Memorial Hall event tickets from [TicketSource](#).

Tickets for the Showcase Night (29th Jan) can be bought here: Drama Showcase evening at Passmores Academy Memorial Hall event tickets from [TicketSource](#). Alternatively, £2 cash can be paid on the door. We will be scanning advance tickets as we admit you, so please be sure to bring your phone and ticket QR code or e-ticket on the night.

In other performance news, auditions for this year's school production of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" will take place on Tuesday 4th February, with callbacks happening on Thursday 6th February.

The performance dates are Tuesday 8th July, Wednesday 9th July and Thursday 10th July. As you'd expect, all performers will need to be available for these dates and the dress and technical rehearsals on Sunday 29th June and Sunday 6th July.

We are very excited about the show this year and cannot wait to see what our potential cast members bring to the auditions.

The two songs pupils need to learn for the audition are "Willy Wonka" and "Pure Imagination". These two numbers can be found on the Original Broadway Cast Recording of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory on your chosen music streaming platform. Additionally, Mr Tarling will be offering pupils the chance to learn these songs with him on Wednesday 22nd and Wednesday 29th January in L109, between 3.30 and 4.30pm.



Year 11 Period 5 Schedule - Spring Term

Week 1				
Day	Subject	Focus	Time	Room(s)
Monday				
Tuesday	3D Design	Targeted students	3:15 - 4:15	D002/D003
	Computer Science	Whole cohort	3:15 - 4:15	G105
	English	Whole cohort	3:15 - 4:15	Upstairs Unicorn
	Geography	Whole cohort exam prep	3:15 - 4:00	U005
	Hospitality & Catering	Whole cohort	3:15 - 4:15	D104/D105
	Maths	Grade 1-2	3:15 - 4:15	G005
	Photography	11Y Photography	3:15 - 4:30	D101
	Textiles	11Y Textiles	3:15 - 4:30	D103
Wednesday	3D Design	Whole Cohort	3:15 - 4:15	D002/D003
	Child Development	Whole cohort exam prep	3:15 - 4:00	G106
	English	Poetry focus	3:15 - 4:15	U105
	French	Targeted students	3:15 - 3:45	Heartspace
	History	Whole Cohort	3:15 - 4:00	U007
	Maths	Students aiming for 4	3:15 - 4:00	G104
	Maths	Grade 5+	3:15 - 4:00	G005
	Maths	Grade 6+	3:15 - 4:00	G003
	Spanish	Aiming for up to grade 5	3:15 - 4:00	L103
Thursday	3D Design	Targeted students	3:15 - 4:15	D002/D003
	Art	Whole cohort	3:15 - 4:15	L104/L105
	Computer Science	Creative and Technical Enterprise	3:30 - 5:00	G105
	French	Targeted students	3:15 - 3:45	Heartspace
	Music	Composing coursework	3:15 - 4:00	L110
	Photography	11Y Photography	3:15 - 4:30	D101
	Psychology	Exam practice	3:20 - 4:00	U002
	Textiles	11Y Textiles	3:15 - 4:30	D103
Friday	3D Design	Whole cohort	3:15 - 4:15	D002/D003
	Citizenship	Whole cohort	3:15 - 3:50	U001
	Drama	Whole cohort	3:20 - 4:20	L110
	Psychology	Whole cohort	3:20 - 4:00	U002
	Spanish	Aiming for 5+	3:15 - 4:00	L103
	BTEC Sport	Coursework	3:20 - 4:00	Y005

Year 11 Period 5 Schedule - Spring Term

Week 2

Day	Subject	Focus	Time	Room(s)
Monday				
Tuesday	3D Design	Targeted students	3:15 - 4:15	D002/D003
	Computer Science	Whole cohort	3:15 - 4:15	G105
	English	Whole cohort	3:15 - 4:15	Upstairs Unicorn
	Geography	Whole cohort exam prep	3:15 - 4:00	U005
	Maths	Grade 1-2	3:15 - 4:00	G005
	Photography	11Y Photography	3:15 - 4:30	D101
	Textiles	11Y Textiles	3:15 - 4:30	D103
Wednesday	3D Design	Whole cohort	3:15 - 4:15	D002/D003
	Child Development	Whole cohort exam prep	3:15 - 4:00	G106
	English	Poetry focus	3:15 - 4:15	U105
	French	Targeted students	3:15 - 3:45	Heartspace
	History	Whole cohort	3:15 - 4:00	U007
	Maths	Students aiming for 4	3:15 - 4:00	G104
	Maths	Grade 5+	3:15 - 4:00	G005
	Maths	Grade 6+	3:15 - 4:00	G003
	Spanish	Aiming up to grade 5	3:15 - 4:00	L103
Thursday	3D Design	Targeted students	3:15 - 4:15	D002/D003
	Art	Whole cohort	3:15 - 4:15	L104/L105
	Computer Science	Creative and Technical Enterprise	3:30 - 5:00	G105
	French	Targeted students	3:15 - 3:45	Heartspace
	Music	Composing coursework	3:15 - 4:00	L110
	Photography	11Y Photography	3:15 - 4:30	D101
	Science	Whole cohort	3:15 - 4:00	L003
	Textiles	11Y Textiles	3:15 - 4:30	D103
Friday	3D Design	Whole cohort	3:15 - 4:15	D002/D003
	Citizenship	Whole cohort	3:15 - 3:50	U001
	Drama	Whole cohort	3:20 - 4:20	L110
	Psychology	Targeted 6+	3:20 - 4:00	L006
	Psychology	Whole cohort	3:20 - 4:00	U002
	Spanish	Aiming for grade 5+	3:15 - 4:00	L103
	BTEC Sport	Coursework	3:20 - 4:00	Y005

Science

Year 11 - Extra-Curricular Science Topics:

23 rd January	Biology - Antibiotics OR Physics - Velocity and Acceleration
30 th January	Chemistry - Neutralisation and Concentration OR Physics - Stopping Distances
6 th February	Physics - Kinetic Energy and Energy OR Chemistry - Potable Water
13 th February	Chemistry - Neutralisation Core Practical OR Physics - Waves

Rooms are allocated on the day. Students should make their way to the science corridor on Thursdays after school and they will be directed to the allocated rooms for each session.



SPORTS/PE UPDATES

Second week back and an unusually quiet week for PE, the calm before the storm some might say.

On Thursday 16th our Year 9/10 Girl Futsal players headed over to local rivals St. Mark's to participate in the local district tournament against St. Nick's and St. Mark's. The girls were nothing less than amazing last night and put on some strong performances.

First up the girls played St. Nick's and dominated in a 7-0 win and a result that would highlight our hard work and teamwork - our two main strengths for this group. Second up was the local derby against St. Mark's, a game that always has an extra bit of bite but once again the girls were excellent in everything they did.

A strong performance was needed against tough opposition, and that's what we got! A hard-fought victory came in the way of a 6-4 scoreline and a result that the girls very much deserved. Well done!

PE EXTRA-CURRICULAR TIMETABLE				
	BREAK	STAFF	AFTER SCHOOL 3:30PM – 4:15PM	STAFF
MONDAY	BASKETBALL / NETBALL SHOOTING (SPORTS HALL)	BREAK 1 – ARY BREAK 2 – OWY		
TUESDAY	BASKETBALL / NETBALL SHOOTING (SPORTS HALL)	BREAK 1 – AMN BREAK 2 – MGD	FITNESS (GYM)	SBS
			BADMINTON (ALL YEARS)	AMN/JKG
			GIRLS FOOTBALL (ALL YEARS)	OWY/BPE
WEDNESDAY	BASKETBALL / NETBALL SHOOTING (SPORTS HALL)	BREAK 1 – JKG BREAK 2 – SBS	FITNESS (GYM)	AMN
			GIRLS FUTSAL (ALL YEARS)	OWY/MGD
			DANCE (ALL YEARS)	ARY
			BOYS FOOTBALL (ALL YEARS)	JKG/JWB
THURSDAY	BASKETBALL / NETBALL SHOOTING (SPORTS HALL)	BREAK 1 – JWB BREAK 2 – BPE	FITNESS (GYM)	SBS
			FUTSAL (YEARS 7&8)	MGD
			TABLE TENNIS (ACTIVITY STUDIO)	JWB
FRIDAY			BTEC COURSEWORK CATCH UP & PE DETENTIONS	

Year 11 - Harlow College Interviews

We had 106 students interviewed on Thursday 16th January by Harlow College and all given conditional offers. The Year 11's were fabulous, turning up on time, polite and attentive. For those who were unable to attend, the interviews will be rearranged.



For those that haven't yet applied to a college, this needs to be actioned as soon as possible. Harlow College already have courses with waiting lists.

Well done Year 11's!

NCS Essex Boys & Girls clubs are running two free events for students in Year 11. They will be held in Chelmsford and posters are overleaf...

Saturday 25th January - Social Saturday - A completely free activity session at Harway House in Chelmsford, providing the opportunity for participants to connect with like-minded young people, develop new skills and gain experience by planning and delivering social action projects across the county.

Monday 17th & Tuesday 18th February - My BNK Money Works Workshops - A fully funded opportunity to join us at Harway House in Chelmsford for 2 days of interactive workshops and activities designed to help them get to grips with all things money while working towards a Level 1 Accreditation in Personal Money Management.

Year 11 - Are you interested in getting an apprenticeship?



Join this free online webinar to find out how Essex Apprenticeships Hub can support you:

[Essex Apprenticeship Hub - Introduction to the Apprenticeship Hub - Pathway CTM](#)

Stansted Airport College Open Event – 23rd January 2025



Tickets online at:

[Stansted Airport College Open Event at Stansted Airport College event tickets from TicketSource](#)

Do you want to find out about roles within the NHS?



Date: Thursday 30th January 2025

Venue: iHub, Harlow College, Velizy Avenue, harlow, Essex, CM20 3EZ

This event will be interactive with inspirational activities, information leaflets/booklets and more helping young people visually bridge the gap between what they enjoy doing and what they could potentially do as a career. This event gives the opportunity for students aged 14-22 to come along and speak with staff about the different careers and routes into a clinical and non-clinical career in health and social care.

Clinical career stalls to include...

- AHP
- Ambulance service
- Community & Social care
- Healthcare Science
- Midwifery
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Pharmacy
- Primary Care

The event is not just for students interested in a clinical role, we have also invited colleagues to promote non-clinical roles in...

- Recruitment
- HR, finance
- Admin and business
- PALS and legal
- Health and safety
- Comms
- IT
- Estates and facilities, engineering
- Hospitality – including domestics.
- Apprenticeships, Education and training
- Library services

There is a twilight session (3:30pm - 5:30pm) that parents can bring students to. Please register on the links below:

Twilight session 3:30pm arrival <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hertfordshire-and-west-essex-health-and-social-care-careers-expo-tickets-1104422059109?aff=oddtcreator>

Twilight session 4:00pm arrival - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hertfordshire-and-west-essex-health-and-social-care-careers-expo-tickets-1104427595669?aff=oddtcreator>

Sixth Form & College Open Dates 2024/2025

Colleges & Sixth Forms	Contact No.	Open Date
BMAT STEM Academy www.bmatstemacademy.org	01279 621570	TBA
The College at Braintree (Now part of Colchester Institute) www.colchester.ac.uk	01206 814000	Tues 21 st Jan 5pm-7pm
Cambridge Regional College www.camre.ac.uk	01223 418200	Sat 25 th Jan 10-12.30 Thurs 24 th April 4.30-7.00
Capel Manor College, Enfield www.capel.ac.uk	08456 122122	Thurs 16 th Jan 5.30-7pm Sat 22 nd March 10-3pm
Chelmsford College www.chelmsford-college.ac.uk	01245 265611	Weds 5 th Feb 6-8.30 Weds 21 st May 6pm
New City College (Epping Forest) www.ncclondon.ac.uk	0208 508 8311	Sat 25 th Jan
F2 Academy www.vluk rg/course-location/f2academy	07525 495818	TBA
Fashion Retail Academy www.fashionretailacademy.ac.uk	0207 307 2345	Sat 11 th Jan
Harlow College www.harlow-college.ac.uk	01279 868000	Tues 11 th Feb 5:00 – 8:00 Weds 30 th April 5:00 – 8:00
Hills Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge www.hrsfc.ac.uk	01223 247251	TBA
Hertford Regional College www.hertreg.ac.uk	01992 411400	Tues 4 th Feb 5:30 – 8:00 Thurs 1 st May 5:30 – 8:00
Sir Frederick Gibberd www.sirfrederickgibberdcollege.org	01279 307235 (c/o Burnt Mill Academy)	Sat 16 th Nov 9.30-12.30 Application deadline Fri 31st January
St Marks School, Harlow www.st-marks.essex.sch.uk	01279 421267	Thurs 7 th Nov 7pm-9pm Application deadline Fri 7th February
Stansted Airport College www.harlow-college.ac.uk	01799 513030	Thurs 23 rd Jan Weds 7 th May
Writtle College www.writtle.ac.uk	01245 424200	Sat 1 st March

WHEELCHAIR CROSS COUNTRY CHALLENGE

Since being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2009, I became determined to make the very best of my life. I was a bus driver and due to the difficulties I was suffering and the problems that were occurring, I needed to find a new direction in life.

I had left school with no GCSE's and I had no skills I could fall back on. I decided that I needed to become a teacher so that I could help as many young people as possible become successful so that they could have easier lives.

Having finally achieved this, I settled into teaching mathematics to the young people in school. I wanted to also be able to talk to them about life and enjoy sharing snippets of the world as I teach.

Finally, after having accepted that my legs were at a point that a wheelchair was needed for me to get around in the world, I was given a new lease of life. I have never felt so free and so very alive even though my body is still slowly failing me.

I was talked into taking part in a Parkrun in June this year and even though it took me 1hr 18mins, I caught the bug. After 5 months I have got my time down to 37:44 minutes and also completed the Vitality 10k, Cambridge 10k and Carver Barracks half marathon and will be taking part in others going forward. It was after a couple of Parkruns that I decided to challenge myself by pushing my wheelchair from one side of the country to the other. I will be going from Lowestoft to Lands End. After telling enough people, this challenge is certainly on and to be completed during Summer 2025.



I wish to raise enough money as possible for my two chosen charities and hope that you can help by giving whatever you can. Please follow my instagram to stay updated on my journey @wheelieking2025.

I won't be around forever but I am hoping that the mark I leave will go a little to enriching someone else's life.

Many thanks
Ben

JustGiving
Page



@wheelieking2025

FOPs

On March 28th, FOPs are hosting a Talent Show for the students and staff to be involved in, showing off their amazing hidden talents. We can now confirm there will be CASH prizes for the winners as well as goodie bags for the participants! There is still plenty of time for your young person to get involved, they can pick an application form up from Student Services.

Sometimes opportunities knock very quietly – this time the thuds are booming!



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday 7 th January 2025	Spring Term 1 Begins
Friday 31 st January 2025	INSET DAY (5)
Friday 7 th February	FOPs Event
Monday 17 th February - Friday 21 st February 2025	Half Term
Thursday 6 th March	KS4 Hollywood Night
Thursday 20 th March	KS4 Options Evening
Friday 28 th March 2025	Passmores Got Talent
Thursday 3 rd April	Year 9 Parent/Carer Evening
Friday 4 th April	FOPs Event
Thursday 24 th April	Year 10 Parent/Carer Evening

Moved house? Changed your phone number? Have you let us know?

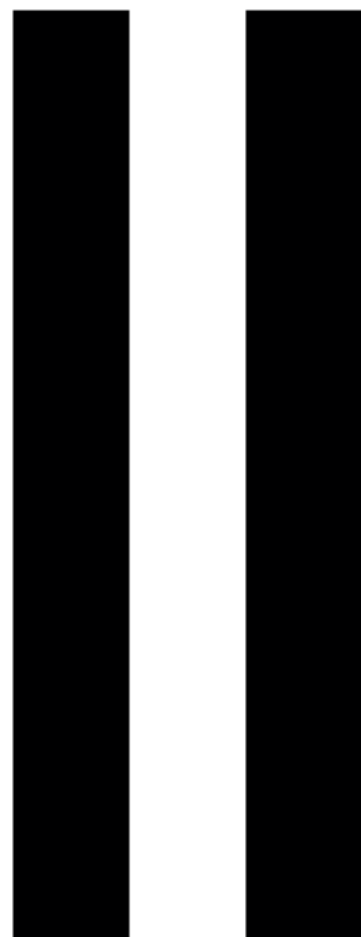


Please can you remember to let us know if any of your contact details have changed, so that so that we can update our records.
You can do this easily by emailing our Data Team:
datateam@passmoresacademy.com or via the Arbor app.



Interested in becoming a primary or secondary teacher?
Contact Gareth Walsh on g.walsh@passmoresacademy.com

**HARLOW
COLLEGE**



OPEN EVENING

Book your tickets at:

www.harlow-college.ac.uk



**11 FEB
5-8 PM**



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West Essex
Health and Care
Partnership

NHS
The Princess Alexandra
Hospital
Barnet Trust

Essex County Council

OPEN EVENT

Thursday 23 January 2025 5pm-8pm
at Stansted Airport College

Book your tickets at:
www.stanstedairportcollege.ac.uk



HARLOW
COLLEGE



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

TIKTOK

13+

Content from this app can be accessed by users 13+ only

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Adults tend to associate online videos with YouTube – but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a stream of short clips tailored to users' interests, based on what they've already watched. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while much of the content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where youngsters "were most likely to encounter a potential harm".

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

While TikTok's following feed only displays videos from familiar creators, for 'For You' is a collection based on a user's previously watched clips. Most of these videos will probably be inoffensive, but the app could potentially show something unsuitable. If children then engage with this content, more like it will follow. TikTok's guidelines prohibit the sharing of illegal or inappropriate content, but the huge number of uploads means that a small amount inevitably slips through.

BODY IMAGE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

According to Ofcom, most online harms for teens are body image related for girls (promoting unhealthy eating, body shaming and so on) and dangerous stunts for boys. Both are prevalent on TikTok. One extreme example of the latter was the 'blackout' trend, which encouraged users to hold their breath until they passed out from a lack of oxygen. This led to two families filing lawsuits against TikTok over the tragic deaths of their children.

IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but users have the option to buy TikTok coins, which can be used to purchase gifts for content creators. Coin bundles range from £9.99 to an eye-watering £59; while that may not sound appealing, the app still generated £7.5 billion in user spending in 2023. TikTok's policy is that under-18s can't make in-app purchases, but it's possible to bypass this with a fake birth date.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

With more than 1.5 billion users globally, the potential for contact from strangers on TikTok is high – especially as accounts created by over-18s (or young people using a false date of birth) are set to public by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and enables anyone to download or comment on them.

MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION

Although the short videos on TikTok tend to be more frivolous than the longer ones on YouTube, clips can still influence impressionable minds in a negative way. Not only is there plenty of dangerous misinformation on TikTok, but Ofcom reports that nearly a third of 12 to 15-year-olds use TikTok as a news source – so you should be wary of misogynistic, racist or conspiracy-themed material shaping how they see the world.

ADDICTIVE DESIGN

With its constant stream of eye-catching videos, TikTok can be addictive to young teens. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 137 minutes per day on the app: that's twice as much as in 2020. Excessive use can interfere with young people's sleep patterns – often leading to irritability – and distract them from other, healthier activities. The instantly scorable nature of bite-size videos may also impact children's ability to maintain focus.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's, and control settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen-time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages – and if they can, to whom. Children can't alter these settings without parental approval.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure that they don't share any identifying personal information, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's also worth talking about misinformation and propaganda, and how to identify it.

BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING

If a child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can alter their settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We'd recommend enabling this feature, as it can be quite easy for a young person to spend a significant amount of real money buying TikTok coins to unlock more features of the app – sometimes without even realising.

READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

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essexfrontline.org.uk



There are many organisations in Harlow working to offer support, but often people don't know what is out there until they are in crisis.

At Harlow Hive, we have worked to produce a way of increasing awareness of the variety of services available and how to access them. Our aim has been to make this as clear and engaging as possible, and we are very proud of how the communitree has come together.

Follow the branches to a specific area of help and click on the organisations' logos to find out more.



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Spotlight on services... FREE Parenting courses

Did you know, **ACL Essex** has a wide range of parenting courses, some are face to face, some are virtual, some are one off and some are a series. They are all FREE.

Subjects include;

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- ☐ Positive Parenting
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For further information

[Community & Family Learning - ACL Essex](#)