Longford Primary Academy Newsletter

1 - Critical Thinkers, Enthusiastic Learners, Responsible Citizens

Dates for your diary:

- 18th Jan - Themed lunch menu
- 19th Jan - Y3/4 Stone Age Day*
- 20th Jan - Census Day themed lunch*
- 1st Feb - Height and Weight checks of Reception and Year 6 children as part of the National Child Measurement Programme
- 17th Feb - Children breakup
- 18th Feb - INSET DAY
- 28th Feb - School open to pupils
- 28th Feb - Y6 Residential Trip

In This Issue - 14th January 2022

- **Revamped newsletter**
- **New appointments**
- **Vision, Values & Curriculum**
- **Themed lunch menus**
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- **Covid guidance update**

New Year = a new look for the newsletter

Happy New Year to you all, may this year be one without home schooling !

We have unfortunately been hit with a small number of cases that have affected staffing and we appreciate your support and understanding in what continues to be a difficult time for schools.

The newsletter has been revamped. We have ditched the old fashioned Microsoft word document in an attempt to keep up with the ever evolving applications of this generation - and the technological skills of our children!

We hope you like it!

New Appointments

Due to the increasing numbers in our pre-school and nursery, we have appointed Mrs Sarah Steele as a teaching and learning support assistant. She has a wealth of experience supporting children in schools and will join Mrs Hulme each afternoon. We are very excited that our nursery is growing and becoming more popular within the local community. Our early years provision is a real strength at Longford and a testament to the hard word and dedication of the team.

Due to the disruption of the pandemic and the gaps created in the curriculum, we have made the decision to appoint an additional teacher who will support years 3 & 4 each morning. Additional funding to school has given us the capacity to teach reading, writing and maths in smaller, single year groups enabling us to more quickly address gaps in learning. Miss Paige Collins has been appointed to this position and she is very much looking forward to working with our children, she has already been in to volunteer and get to know the children she will be working with. Your child's class teacher will remain the same, and the team will continue to work closely together to ensure our children's needs are met and achieve success.

We are looking forward to welcoming both new staff members to our team.

Vision, Values and Curriculum

2 - Critical Thinkers*: Driven by curiosity, we develop our understanding through collaboration, skilfully exploring and reflecting upon new concepts.*

3 - Enthusiastic Learners*: We readily take on challenges with resilience, as we become resourceful, creative life-long learners.*

4 - Responsible Citizens*: We are well-informed and make positive contributions to our communities*

At Longford we are continually reflecting upon our curriculum and continually striving to ensure the provision we have in place for all of our pupils is the very best it can be. Our vision **'Hand in Hand we Learn'** *resonates strongly with us as it represents the strong relationship between our school and it's communities. Our staff are guided by a strong moral purpose and are committed to using each and every day as an opportunity for us to nurture and guide our children through school life as we scaffold*

and challenge their learning, endeavouring to produce lifelong learners who will face life in our rapidly changing world with confidence, courtesy and consideration.

As we have reflected upon our curriculum we have also considered what are the core values and drivers that sit behind our curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all pupils the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. These values underpin every decision that we make in school for our children:

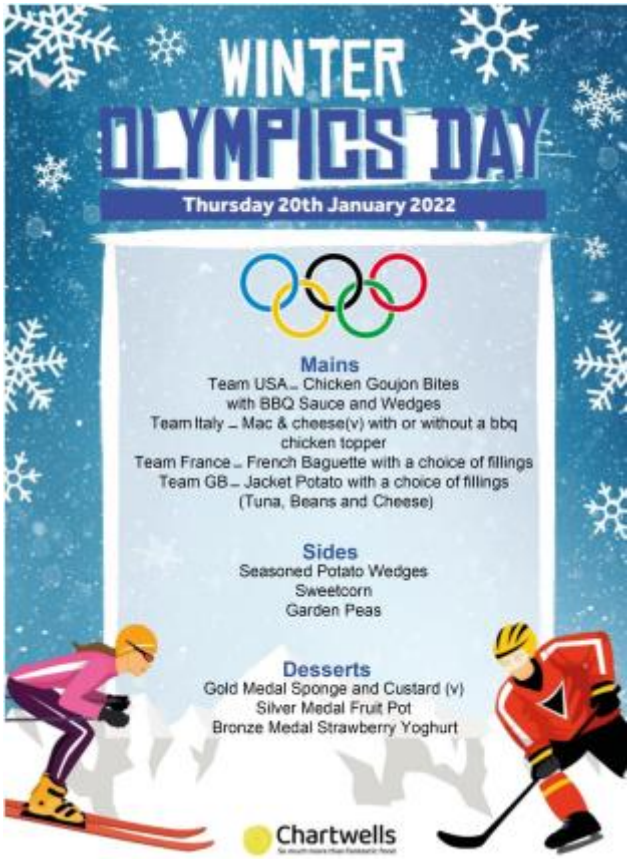
We are critical thinkers: Driven by curiosity, we develop our understanding through collaboration, skilfully exploring and reflecting upon new concepts.

We are enthusiastic learners: We readily take on challenges with resilience, as we become resourceful, creative life-long learners.

We are responsible citizens: We are well-informed and make positive contributions to our communities.

Themed lunch menus

Our pupil led ECO Council is determined to take action against climate change and protect our planet. One of their objectives is to encourage our pupils to try a meat free menu. They have approached the cook and a vote was put out to the classrooms for what food they would like to see available on a Meat Free Theme Day Menu...So our children have spoken...



Census Day this term is Thursday, 20th January and the school will be having a special themed lunch...

We would really like it if all of the children would have a school dinner on 20th January, to ensure that the school gets the full funding we are eligible for form the government. Please support our school on this day.

What are the children doing this term...?

TER RESISTANT

Nursery *have welcomed new children this term and they have settled very well. Our topic is "Into the Woods" and we will be starting 'let's all creep through crocodile creek' soon. This week we have been testing out the strength of straw, sticks and brick houses for the 3 little pigs.*

Reception *are starting their new topic; "All Aboard" and have been delivered a red, double decker London bus… the children have made predictions using the clues and currently think the queen may have sent it to their class as she lives in Buckingham Palace in the middle of London.*

Y3/4 *children are learning about the Stone Age this term as part of their half termly topic on "Digging Up The Past."*

Timezones are coming into school to do a Stone Age day with the children on the 19th January. The children will have the opportunity to see what life was like in the Stone Age by handling artefacts from the time, dressing up in Stone Age costume and many other experiences. The experts from Timezones will be able to give the children lots of information to start their topic off in an inspiring and memorable way.

Follow this link to confirm your child's place here.

Covid Guidance Update

- *Lateral flow tests are taken by people who **DO NOT** have COVID-19 symptoms.*
- *People who receive positive lateral flow device (LFD) test results for coronavirus (COVID-19) will be required to self-isolate immediately and won't be required to take a confirmatory PCR test.*
- *Anyone who develops 1 of the 3 main COVID-19 symptoms should stay at home and self-isolate and **take a PCR test**.*
- *Anyone who tests positive will be able to leave self-isolation 7 days after the date of their initial positive test if they receive 2 negative LFD results, 24 hours apart, on days 6 and 7.*

- **People self-isolating with COVID-19 will have the option to reduce their isolation period after 5 full days if they test negative on both day 5 and day 6 and do not have a temperature, from Monday, 17 January.**
- *Pupils over the age of 5 who reside with, or have been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID, are still expected to attend school under government guidelines. They are required to take a lateral flow test every day for 7 days and, if symptoms develop have a PCR test and self isolate until a negative result is received.*
- *Children under the age of 5 are not required to do a daily test or self isolate and should attend school unless they receive a positive PCR test result.*

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Reporting Student Absence

If your child is unable to attend school please contact the office on 01543 227410 or email the office on **longfordoffice2@sbmat.org**

...wishing you all a fabulous weekend, see you Monday...

THE ST. BART'S ACADEMY TRUST

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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 apps that we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

REPLIKA

AGE RATING 17+ UK & EUROPE: RATED 'MATURE'

Replika is an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot companion that its developers claim users can form an actual emotional connection with. Once users have created an account and chosen a 3D avatar, they select the type of relationship they want with the chatbot: friend, mentor or romantic partner. Using a neural network to hold an ongoing one-on-one conversation, Replika gradually becomes more like the user as it gathers data from their responses. It isn't the only AI chatbot app available, but Replika pushes the boundaries of the concept to offer a highly realistic conversational experience.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

18 CENSORED

As its age rating suggests, Replika includes content that isn't suitable for children, such as flirtatious messaging and sexual role-play. While the developer has recently updated the app to ensure this can only be accessed by adults who select 'romantic relationship', there are numerous accounts online of sexual content being seen by younger users of the app.

NO SELF-AWARENESS

Replika is designed to seem very human, but it's important to remember that it's a still an AI-powered chatbot that has no self-awareness. This means (as numerous users have highlighted online) that the chatbot sometimes fails to filter out inappropriate content: one user reports, for example, that Replika shared upsetting videos of vicious dogs.

NOT MEDICALLY CERTIFIED

Replika claims to be able to improve users' emotional wellbeing by easing feelings of anxiety and loneliness. However, its disclaimer states "we are not a healthcare or medical device provider ... nor should our services be considered medical care, mental health services or other professional help services." There is no guarantee that Replika can help with mental health issues – it could, in fact, have the opposite effect.

POTENTIAL ADDICTION

Like many apps, Replika is addictive by nature. It encourages the user to provide more information so it can learn about them and become better at conversation. Not only does this mean your child could end up spending a long time on an app where they might share sensitive information, but also that they could find themselves forming an emotional attachment to the human-like chatbot.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Replika is free to download, but its developers *do* offer in-app purchases. Users can pay to upgrade to a 'Pro' version of the app, which unlocks extra content such as additional activities, conversation topics and the ability to hold voice calls with their AI 'companion'. Users can also spend real-world money on the 'gems' used to buy new outfits or different personality traits for their avatar.

Advice for Parents & Carers

SET UP PARENTAL CONTROLS

Replika doesn't feature its own in-game parental controls, but most mobile devices come with these controls built in. On iOS devices, for instances, you can set content and privacy restrictions – so if you don't want your child to be using 17+ rated apps like Replika, you can adjust the settings to prevent these from being downloaded.

TALK ABOUT THE DANGERS

If your child is determined to use Replika and you're happy for them to download it, then it's vital you talk to them first about the possible dangers of this type of app. For example, it's key that they understand not to give out any information which is personal or could be used to identify them – and it would be prudent to warn them about the potential of being exposed to mature content on the app.

WATCH FOR WARNING SIGNS

If you're concerned that your child is spending too much time on Replika and might be forming an unhealthy emotional connection with their chatbot, it's important to look out for the warning signs. They may be giving increasing priority to the app ahead of more important everyday activities (such as doing homework or eating meals) or could be showing signs of irritability and a lack of concentration.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

If your child is suggesting that they should use Replika for mental health reasons – because they're lonely or having feelings of anxiety, for example – it would be sensible to recommend other options to them. Replika's developers freely admit that they are not a certified mental health service, so if your child needs help it would unquestionably be best to consult a qualified professional instead.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid The Inquirer, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.

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