

**Christmas Shop donations please keep them coming in!**



### Achievement Assembly

Our achievement assembly this week celebrated children who have shown great "concentration" this week. Well done to the following children:

**Reception:** Harry K    **Year 1:** Jessica    **Year 2:** Mia  
**Year 3:** Oscar        **Year 4:** Imogen    **Year 5:** Peter    **Year 6:** Hannah

### Celebrating Attendance

Whole school attendance is currently at 96.2%  
Well done to Year 6 for best attendance this week at 99%!

### Dates for Diary

- Mon 9<sup>th</sup> Dec - Y2 A Christmas Journey at Birtley Methodist PM
- Thur 12<sup>th</sup> Dec - Save the Children (Xmas jumper day/non uniform)
- Thur 12<sup>th</sup> Dec - Xmas dinner day (no other options available)
- Mon 16<sup>th</sup> Dec - Pupil Christmas Shop (donations from Monday 25<sup>th</sup> please)
- Tues 17<sup>th</sup> Dec - KS2 Xmas parties
- Wed 18<sup>th</sup> Dec - Reception, Y1 & Y2 Xmas parties
- Thur 19<sup>th</sup> Dec - Christmas Breakfast club (book by Friday 13<sup>th</sup> Dec)
- Thurs 19<sup>th</sup> Dec - Y1 to Y6 Panto Trip AM
- Break up for Xmas Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December!

### Rights Respecting

Article 38 - Children have the right to be protected during war. No child under 15 can join the army or take part in war.



### Upcoming events



2pm Mon: KS2 Christmas Show Y3 to Y6

9.30am Tues: KS2 Christmas Show Y3 to Y6

2pm Tues: REC & KS1 Christmas Show

9.30am Weds: REC & KS1 Christmas Show



Peter Pan Panto (Y1 to Y6) **Consent can be given via Google form: flexible payment available can be paid in instalments of £5 if required/ please pay in full by Wed 18<sup>th</sup> Dec.**

<https://forms.gle/CQPyRvKFB7rejuCh6Panto>

If you do not want your child to attend the Panto, please advise school via email: [portobelloprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:portobelloprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk) or comment using the above google form.



Portobello Primary School  
Weekly Newsletter  
6<sup>th</sup> December 2024



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**Children's Xmas Parties**

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 - if you would like to pick up your child at midday to get them home and changed for their PM party, please let class teacher know on the day - to be back in school for 1pm

Key stage 2 (Year 3 to Year 6) - if you would like to pick up your child at 12.30pm to get them home and changed for their PM party please let class teacher know on the day - to be back in school for 1.30pm

*Lots of children stay in school and cannot be picked up, please send in party clothes and staff will support their change of clothing if required.*

**Northeast Autism Society upcoming webinars coming up in 2025**

***Introduction to Supporting Autistic Children***

28th January 2025

25th March 2025

1pm-3pm

***Supporting the Emotional Wellbeing of Autistic Children***

25th February 2025

29th April 2025

1pm-3pm

*(Please note this course is suitable for parents/carers of children 5 and over who are experiencing low level emotional wellbeing difficulties.)*

*Places are limited and must be pre-booked: [Rebecca.Welch@ne-as.org.uk](mailto:Rebecca.Welch@ne-as.org.uk) 0191 410 9974*



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At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](https://nationalcollege.com).

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING APPS

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

When looking at options for supporting a child's mental health, the sheer volume can be overwhelming. There are many wellbeing apps available, but unfortunately not all are trustworthy. It's important to evaluate which resources are suitable, reliable and effective. This guide lets you know what to consider before installing such an app, to determine just how useful it's going to be.

### QUALITY & RELIABILITY

Mental health apps can be a useful starting point when looking for wellbeing advice and strategies and can be a useful extension to the in-person services available. However, they aren't a substitute. Information on the quality of some of these apps is scarce. They may look cute and child-friendly, but have they been designed by a mental health professional? Furthermore, do they have research to back up their content?

### PLACE RESPONSIBILITY ON CHILDREN

Some apps add the words 'kids' or 'children' to their title or use cartoon icons to make them more appealing to young people. When signing up for some of these apps, some will speak to the parent directly, saying something along the lines of "Your child is good to go. Let them take it from here." It's important to remain involved in the child's mental health journey, so regular check-ins are recommended.

### DISREGARDING APPROPRIATE SUPPORT

Young people who feel anxious and have trouble sleeping may download a mindfulness app to help. While this is a good strategy initially, it's not addressing the root of the problem. A child could simply try managing these symptoms themselves (as opposed to speaking out and seeking professional help), which could potentially worsen their anxiety in the long run.

### LACK OF PERSONALISATION

Mental health or wellbeing apps are useful tools for the short term, teaching users several helpful habits to manage their condition – such as keeping an illness diary, improving nutrition and practising mindfulness exercises. As every person is unique – and children especially will grow and develop in different ways – these apps struggle to tailor themselves to users' individual needs. For example, many apps don't distinguish between the ages of users and can offer extremely generic advice.

### DATA SECURITY

As with any other app – not just those for mental health and wellbeing – it's wise to check out the privacy policy before downloading it. Some of these applications may share data with third parties for numerous reasons (such as targeted advertisements), and if a user is sharing personal and sensitive information within the app, they probably don't want it ending up elsewhere without their consent.

### IN-APP PURCHASES

Many apps will provide their most basic features for free but will require you to pay for other aspects – such as a more tailored experience or access to additional resources. This could be a one-off fee or a regular subscription. Consider whether this is actually required. Is it benefiting the child, or could they receive the same support from a medical professional?

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### CHECK THE CREDIBILITY OF THE APP

Before you download a mental health and wellbeing app, investigate the developers. Have they consulted with qualified mental health professionals to create their resource? Also check whether the app is affiliated with any government or mental health organisations, as these are solid indicators of legitimacy. Reviews can also be a useful signpost to the app's quality. There are many good apps out there, but there are just as many that miss the mark.

### SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Trusted mental health and wellbeing apps designed by qualified, reputable organisations can be used alongside the personalised advice and support of fully trained professionals. These apps should never be considered a substitute for counselling or other tailored medical help. If you have real concerns about a child's mental wellbeing, you should seek appropriate advice from a suitable source, such as their GP – or Childline, who can be contacted by calling 0800 1111.

### READ THE PRIVACY POLICY

Look into the app's terms of service – especially its privacy policy. Do so by yourself first, then go over it with the child who is considering using the app, to ensure they know what data will be collected and how exactly it will be used. Use all of this information to make an educated decision on whether or not to download that particular app.

### ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

Mental health and wellbeing apps can be useful for writing down feelings, tracking your own health and other such activities. These can help if the problem is short-term and temporary – such as a child getting stressed about approaching exams – or if you're currently waiting for professional support. Nonetheless, it is important that children aren't solely reliant on the app and have a safe space to talk about their feelings and experiences in the real world.

### Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/mental-health-apps>

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