



"Staff share high aspirations for all" - GFAPS, Ofsted 2022

"Highly skilled specialist teachers help pupils to re-engage with learning" – SCAPS, Ofsted 2019

Parent & Carer Newsletter

December 2024

Welcome from the Director of Alternative Provision

It has been a busy two terms since we came back in September. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our fantastic staff team who work so hard to support our young people and provide them with a positive experience of school. We appreciate the many messages of thanks that we receive from parents/carers - it really does make a difference to the team to hear how we are helping your child.

We say a sad goodbye to Lewis Skyers, a teacher at St George's, who is leaving us to take up a promoted post in a new school. Lewis has long been involved with the alternative provision in a number of different roles. He is a valued colleague and will be greatly missed at St George's where he has taught KS3, delivered a cross curricular creative curriculum, developed nurture provision and more recently taught KS4 Maths. I know that you will join me in saying thank you for his commitment to our students and in wishing him all the best in the next steps of his career.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our parents and carers for your support as we have settled into our new centres. We look forward to seeing you at the start of next term during the RESET day on 6th January. Staff across the school really value these opportunities to meet with you and plan how best to support your child moving forward. It's an important chance to catch up and start our work as a team to explore the next best steps for your young person.

This newsletter is a celebration of all that our young people have achieved this year so far, meeting and often exceeding our 'ready, respectful and safe' expectations.

The whole team join me in wishing you a restful holiday and all the very best for 2025.



Emma Gundry

What's been happening across the school?



Rutherford House – KS1 & 2



Centre Manager: Mr. B Simms

SLT link: Mr. C Ellyatt



Oak Class have been busy settling into new routines this term and learning about their emotions. In topic lessons, we have focused on superheroes. The children loved Supertato and even made their own figures to make their own adventures. Everyone loved learning about Rosa Parks too and all worked together to act out what they had learned. They have been having lots of fun in the build up to Christmas, it's been a super busy term.



In **Maple Class** new students who need support with transition into Altus are welcomed into their new school. They have time to get to know new staff and students before moving into their main class.

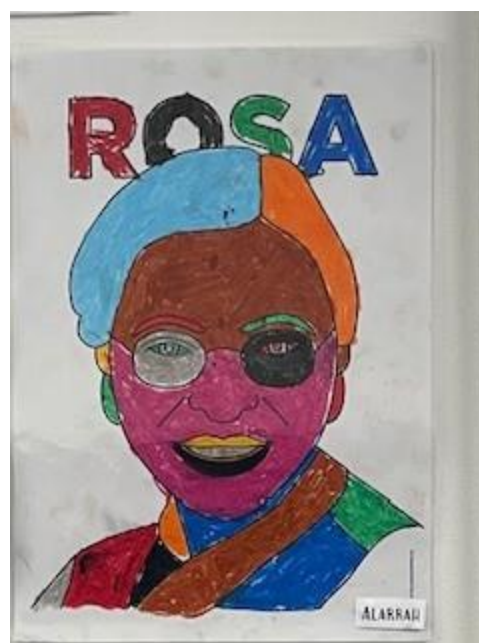
In **Birch Class** this term, several new pupils have joined us as they settle into life at Rutherford House. The pupils in Birch have been progressing with their individual learning plans, covering areas such as number bonds to 10, subtracting past 10, sentence structure, 'This is Me' and Superheroes.



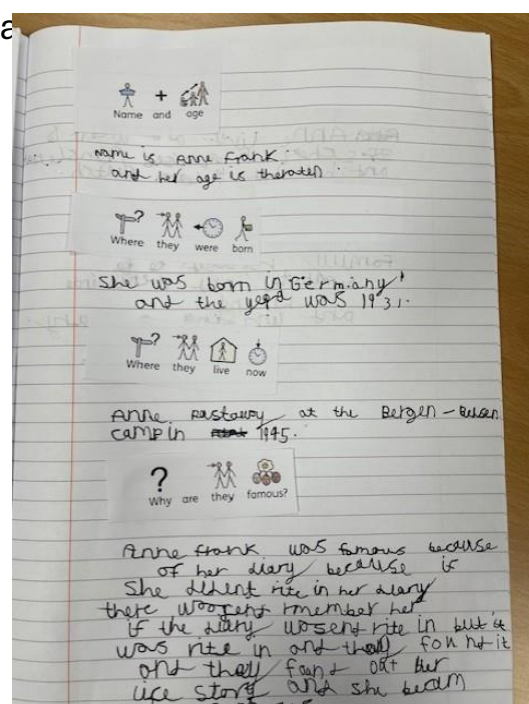


Willow Class have also been learning about superheroes this term.

Their focus has been on heroes throughout history, and we looked at Rosa Parks' contribution towards the Civil Rights Movement in America. This prompted interesting and respectful discussions surrounding race, racism and how much difference one person can make. They also created some Pop Art inspired portraits of Rosa Park. Alongside this, each student chose a hero within history, researched their life as well as their impact on history to write a biography of that person. The heroes that they chose were Anne Frank, David Bowie, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jnr and Mahatma Ghandi. Some fantastic work in Willow class this term!



Students enjoying their PE lessons at Hartpury College



In **Beech Class**, the children have written some really exciting stories based around their own made-up Superheroes. Jack's two characters - Catverine and Mighty Sammy certainly got up to some eventful adventures! The children published these stories using Microsoft Word. In Maths they have been looking at place value up to 10 million, and using this knowledge to inform their calculations.



Weekly Forest School provides students with the chance to work together outdoors – come rain or shine!

In science they've been carrying out investigations around forces. The Pop Art paintings and images the children have produced have been bright and bold.

Christmas at Rutherford House



Children at Rutherford House visited Gloucester cathedral and took part in the 'Once Upon a Star' nativity trail which told the Christmas story. The children were filled with awe and wonder at the beautifully decorated cathedral. They loved following the trail and finding the stars to find Jesus in the manger. They were very respectful and reflective during the visit . It was a lovely atmosphere and everyone left feeling happy and 'Christmassy'!



Both pupils and staff enjoyed a brilliant performance of "Cinderella" at the Tewkesbury Roses Theatre for their annual pantomime trip. Everyone loved listening to the songs and joining in with the call and response from the actors - oh no they didn't! Students also had tasty ice-cream in the interval. A great day out for us all to get into the festive spirit.



KS3 – Active Learning at Ryeleaze

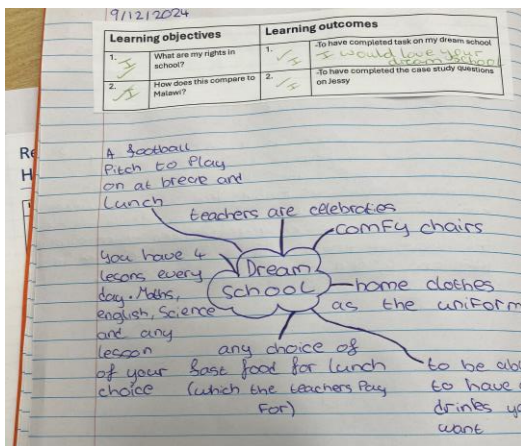


At Ryeleaze, the Selsley group went out on active learning. The children have built a secret den over a number of weeks; you can see from the photos the progress from start to finish and the hard work they have put in. Great team work, creative thinking and problem solving skills on show!



Subject Lead: Mr. B Curwen

In transition, students started the year by completing a scheme of work on what makes up a community, looking at key aspects such as amenities, diversity, barriers to access, and what makes an inclusive community. Students took a particular interest in researching communities relevant to their lives and exploring what is on offer on their own doorstep.



We then moved on to a scheme of work exploring the overarching question, "Why are rights important?" In this scheme, students took both a global perspective by studying the history of human rights and researching the state of human rights in a country of their choice. They also examined the state of rights in education by looking at schools in different parts of the world before focusing on the UK.

KS3 & 4 Maths

Subject Lead: Mrs K Cross

In KS3 Maths this term we have been learning all about proportion. Students have been working hard studying fractions, decimals, percentages, and ratios.

Many KS3 students are engaging in and feeling successful in Maths for the first time. Their Maths folders are bursting at the seams with all their achievements, and we are very proud of the engagement and effort of every student.

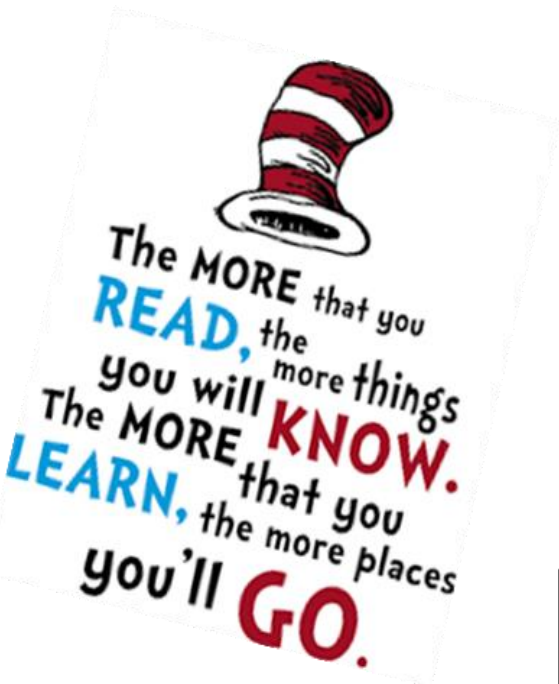
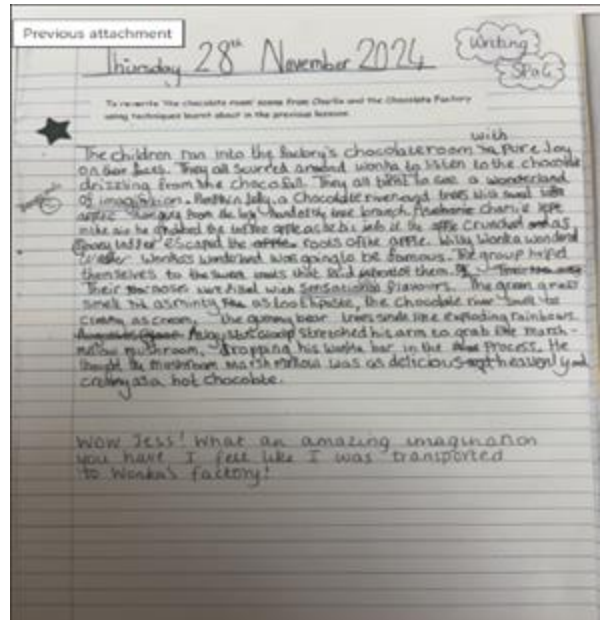


In KS4 students began the term working on measures including perimeter, area, volume and telling the time. KS4 students then moved on to fractions and percentages. Some students found this topic tricky, but they have impressed us all term with their perseverance and resilience.



Subject Lead: Ms Paula Le Marechal

KS3 students have been sampling and tasting chocolate and learning all about the origins of this delicious treat! Engagement with our chocolate topic has been great this half term. The children have learnt about different descriptive writing techniques and then re-written extracts from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. They have then designed their own chocolate bars, have written instructions on how to make them and will be making these over the next week.



Coming soon...

Thanks to 'Read for Good', we will have some brand new books to our KS3 centres coming soon!!



At KS4 students been preparing for their functional skills exams (some fantastic we have had too this term!)

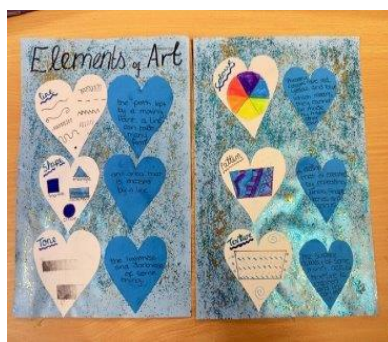
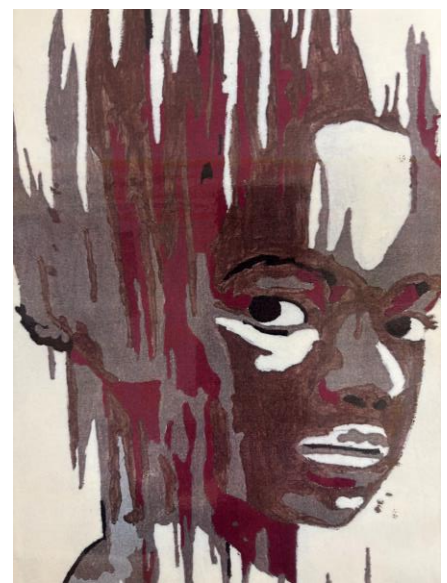
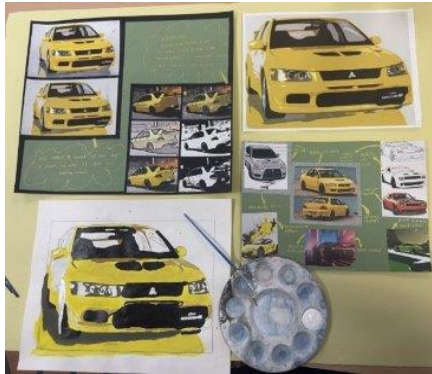
Council complaint form
 Dear Sir/Madam,

 I am writing to complain about an awful situation with my new neighbours at 91 Sappaton road, Gloucester.

 For the last 2 weeks I have had to knock on their door many times as they have started to leave their rubbish everywhere including my garden this unexcepted behaviour lead to me having to clear many times however last time they did this I had been unaware of it until my niece had step on a piece of glass, which led to her having an infection. Isn't it scandalous and against all morals?

 However, sadly this is not the only thing they have been doing as ever since they move in the have been parting every night which has led to me only having 4 hours of sleep every night which reduces my own my workload efficiency as well as makes a detrimental damage on my company I hope that this will be resolved
 very soon, I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon
 Your sincerely, James

KS4 – Amazing Art Work!



Students have the opportunity to take GCSE Art and Design or the Gateway Creative Industries pathway. Their work is of a brilliant standard and shows off great skill.



KS4 Science

Subject Lead: Mr R Clemow



Year 10 have been investigating the properties of materials and how each element is built out of subatomic particles. They researched the different types of cells in plants/animals and have seen how water moves throughout a plant. Students then learnt about theoretical wave properties and the full use of the electromagnetic spectrum in everyday life. They finish term 2 by understanding the way forces act on objects and how energy is transferred throughout the Universe.

Year 11 students started the year by looking into healthy lifestyles, they learnt about the dangers of smoking and how the lack of exercise can cause damage to the body. They investigated pathogen forms and grew bacteria in a petri dish. Some students dissected a heart and a brave few tested 'Altus-urine' for diabetes. They all learnt about Nuclear Physics and the types of radiation that they may come across in their working lives.

Students finish term 2 by looking into the Earth's ecosystem and atmosphere.

AQA Past Paper Question- Energy Needs

2. Scientists measured the amount of energy used by four people, A, B, C and D. The scientists also measured the amount of energy taken in as food by each person. The chart shows the scientists' results.

Mean energy in kJ per day

Used by body (left axis): 10000, 7500, 5000, 2500, 0

Taken in as food (right axis): 0, 2500, 5000, 7500, 10000

Person A: Used by body ~4000, Taken in as food ~6000

Person B: Used by body ~3000, Taken in as food ~4000

Person C: Used by body ~4000, Taken in as food ~6000

Person D: Used by body ~1500, Taken in as food ~4000

a) (i) What was the mean energy used by D?
 1500 kJ per day (1 mark)

(ii) The amount of energy used by D is different from the amounts of energy used by A, B and C. Suggest two reasons why.
 every persons intake is different this affects what is absorbed plus amount used by each person in by the body is also different (2 marks)

(b) The data in the bar chart was collected over twelve months. Which person, A, B, C or D, would gain body mass over the twelve months? Give a reason for your answer.
 person A as they are eating more than what is used by the body (2 marks)

(c) In the UK many people are obese. Doctors advise obese people to lose mass. Suggest two different ways an obese person could lose mass.
 more energy out less than what body's intake = get more active and exercise more. (2 marks)

14

TIME taken to eat an apple

NAME

Apple & Eye Color

Dark = 60
Light = 9-25

Name	Eye Colour	Time (min:sec)	Time (seconds)
Mac	Dark	1:02	62.0
Yvonne	Light	1:39	99.0
Anwar	Dark	0:44	44.0
James	Light	0:55	55.0
Diana	Dark	0:45	45.0
Archie	Dark	1:37	97.0
Sam	Light	2:04	124.0
Riley	Light	1:23	83.0
Paul	Light	1:07	67.0
Ella	Light	3:59	239.0
Jacron	Dark	1:03	63.0
Josh	Dark	0:53	53.0
Logan	Light	0:46	46.0
Tom	Light	1:05	65.0

Name: Riley Date: _____

Label the Plant Cell

Use the word bank below to label the parts of the plant cell.

Word Bank
nucleus mitochondria cytoplasm cell membrane cell wall chloroplast large central vacuole

cell membrane security

cell wall fence

ribosomes

nucleus DNA

chloroplast makes sugar

mitochondria energy

cytoplasm keep shape

large central vacuole storage

* Take it further! Assign a color to each cell part, and then color in the cell.

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person

ENVIRONMENTAL	INHERITED
HAVING PIERCED EARS	YOUR SKIN COLOUR
YOUR RELIGION	YOUR BLOOD GROUP
YOUR WEIGHT	YOUR EYE COLOUR
HAVING LONG OR SHORT HAIR	YOUR HAIR COLOUR
HAVING A SCAR	HAVING FRECKLES
WHAT LANGUAGE YOU SPEAK	BEING MALE OR FEMALE

BTEC Level 1 Introductory in Hair and Beauty

This term both year 10 and 11 have been working towards achieving their HB9 unit – carrying out a treatment. This unit gives learners the opportunity to develop and practice the practical skills used to carry out a hair and beauty treatment, in a realistic working environment. The girls have been busy demonstrating techniques in creating a range of styles for their 'styling hair' task, before completing their final assessment. Some of the finished looks can be seen below:



Gateway Sport and Active Leisure

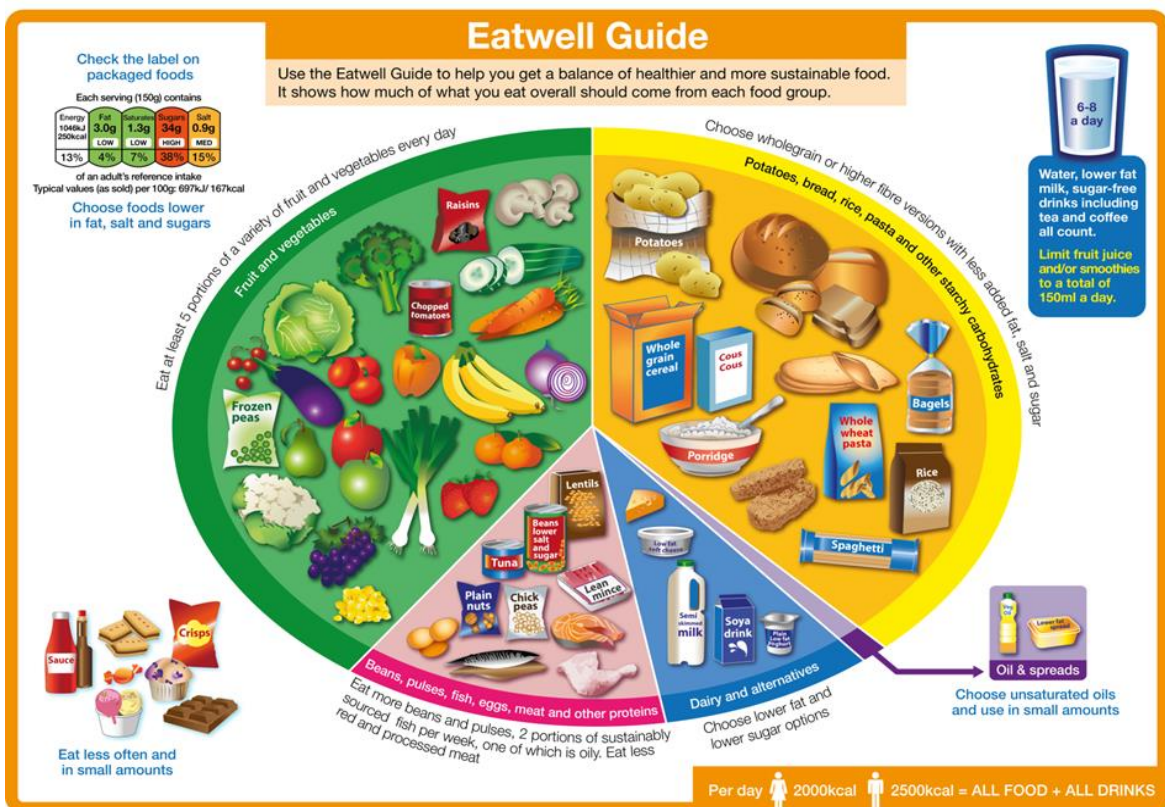
Students have been developing skills, techniques, and tactics for individual and team sports with research taking place in the classroom and performance to improve mentally and physically in practical sessions. They have had the chance to understand rules, scoring systems, and officials' roles that underpin the governing bodies regulations. They will record and analyse performance data, design tools to assess strengths and areas for improvement, and evaluate another individual or team to improve performance of individual skills but also within competitive situations.

WJEC GCSE Hospitality and Catering

In Food Technology students have been studying why food safety and personal hygiene are so important in the food catering business. They have also understood why food commodities are essential for a nutritious and balanced diet that fits in with the 5 a Day and Eatwell Guide.

There has been consideration of safe working practices and why teamwork and cohesion are so important in the kitchen, so the cooking process is a smooth operation and an effective process.

Students have been pushed to the limits with food preparation, culinary skills and what constitutes ideal vs exceptional presentation that the consumer will always desire especially when paying for the service. Chicken Ballotine with Duchess Potatoes and Blistered Tomatoes, Goat Curry with Jamaican Rice and Peas and Fried Dumplings and Homemade Cornish Pasties were some of the favourites.



Community Participation

Ryelease students have been enjoying their visits to Abbey Home farm this term.



At Russet House, students marked Anti Bullying Week, creating posters for display across their Centre.



On Tuesday 17th December, as part of English KS4 at Eastbrook Road, students had a visitor come and talk to Year 10 and 11s about the importance of English qualifications when going into the construction industry.

Jack Taylor, one of the directors from APEX Groundworks spoke; the students were very engaged and asked Jack a variety of questions about construction.



Staff and students at Rutherford House got dressed up to raise money for Children in Need, while in St George's, students baked cakes for the Macmillan Coffee Morning back in September.



Students across the school marked Remembrance Day.



Safeguarding Information



Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Debbie Kirkham. She is supported by a wider safeguarding team. If you have any concerns about your child's safety or wellbeing you can contact Debbie or her team who are there to support.

Online Gaming

Be vigilant about children's online gaming.

Internet Matters said its latest study had found that 42% of parents said they were less strict with their children and their online activity over Christmas.



Online games can be a fun escape, but they're also a space where scammers and predators operate. Here's how you can help keep your child safe:

- Warn about too-good-to-be-true offers: Scammers often promise free in-game currency or items. Teach your child to avoid clicking on external links or sharing login details.
- Set boundaries for in-game communication: Encourage them to only interact with friends they know in real life and to avoid sharing personal information like their age, school, or location.
- Monitor in-app purchases: Discuss with your child why they should avoid making purchases without your consent.
- Stay informed: Regularly check parental controls on games and consoles and use tools that limit communication from strangers.



Understanding changes for Instagram teen accounts

Instagram continues to introduce features to protect teen users, but understanding these changes can help you support your child's online experience:

- **Default privacy settings:** Teen accounts are now private by default. Ensure your child hasn't changed their account to public and discuss why privacy is important.
- **Screen time tools:** Instagram has a dashboard to monitor and limit screen time. Work together with your child to set healthy boundaries.
- **Restricting unwanted interactions:** Instagram actively limits the visibility of teen accounts to adults they don't know. Check your child's followers list and encourage them to block or report suspicious accounts.
- **Encourage healthy content use:** Explore Instagram's features that allow teens to see less sensitive content and discuss the importance of taking breaks from social media.

Getting Help

We want to ensure that you have all the information you need to keep your child safe. If you ever have a safeguarding concern or worry about your child's well-being, or the well-being of any child, here's what you can do:

Contact Our School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

1. Debbie Kirkham – debbie.kirkham@altussschool.org.uk
2. Our DSL is specially trained to handle safeguarding concerns and can offer advice and support.

1. Emergency Situations:

1. If you believe a child is in immediate danger, please contact the emergency services straight away by dialing 999.
2. If a child goes missing and they are under 10 call 999 immediately. If they are a little older, please act immediately to try and find them and contact the police if necessary.

Other useful numbers

Childline (24 hours u18s) 08001111

NSPCC 08008005000

Shout (Immediate help) – Text 85258

Kidscape (Bullying & How to cope) 02077303300

Young Minds (Emotional support) 0800 8025544

Papyrus (Young suicide prevention) 08000884141

COPING AT CHRISTMAS

The Added Pressures of Christmas can be Tough, but it's Important to know there's always Someone you can Talk to...

NHS 111 online

Call 111 & select option 2 to speak to the NHS Mental Health Crisis Response Service 24/7

Nhs.uk/mental-health

PAPYRUS

Under 35s can call 0800 068 4141, Text: 88247 or Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org 24/7

Papyrus-uk.org

SAMARITANS

Call 116 123 to talk to Samaritans, or email: jobs@samaritans.org for a reply within 24 hours

Samaritans.org

mind

Call MIND's Mental Health Helpline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 0800 414 8247

Mind.org.uk

shout 85258

Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the Shout Crisis Text Line, or text "YM" if you're under 19

Giveushout.org

CALM

Mental Health Forum & Chat for Men from 5pm - midnight every day Call or Whatsapp 0800 585858

Thecalmzone.net

Christmas Countdown.uk

ONLINE GROOMING

THE INTENTIONAL USE OF THE INTERNET, SOCIAL MEDIA, GAMING & DATING APPS TO MANIPULATE / COERCE / TRICK A YOUNG PERSON INTO PARTICIPATING IN SEXUALLY EXPLICIT INTERACTIONS OR EXCHANGES

550,000 - 850,000

IN 2021 The UK's National Crime Agency, estimated the number of people who pose a sexual threat to children in the UK.

WHAT'S THE AIM OF THE GROOMER / PREDATOR?
The goal is to sexually abuse a young person. This can happen in two ways:

- ONLINE ABUSE**: Increasingly young people are being coerced or tricked into sending sexual images or sexual activity on webcam.
- PHYSICAL MEETING**: Predators will try to coerce and persuade young people to meet in person, in order to sexually abuse them.

6 PLACES WHERE GROOMING HAPPEN

- Social networking websites
- Instant messaging apps
- Chat rooms
- Dating apps
- Online gaming sites
- Photo sharing apps and sites, like Snapchat and Instagram

70% OF GROOMERS USE Meta Apps: Facebook, Messenger, Snapchat & Instagram. Some of the Apps that PREDATORS use to groom children online:

- WhatsApp
- Snapchat
- Instagram
- Facebook
- Whisper
- Yellow
- Calculator X
- Omegle
- Kik
- Radio
- Skout
- MeetMe
- Talented
- Facebook (Ban Ban)

1 IN 5 Young people who shared nude images were blackmailed, bullied or harassed to send more images.

1 IN 3 Children consider a connection they made online amongst their closest friends.

1 IN 4 Teens interact online with someone they believe is 30 or older.

2 IN 3 9-12 year olds interact with unfamiliar adults online.

2 IN 3 9-12 year olds have shared a nude image with an online only connection.

30 MINUTES It takes just 30 minutes for a sexual predator to convince a young person to meet in person.

252,154 Reports last year of images & videos of children being raped and/or being sexually abused on the internet. (Global reports have risen by 15,000% in last 15 years)

50% OF CHILDREN ADMIT THEY DON'T KNOW MORE THAN 50% OF THEIR CONNECTIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

WARNING SIGNS
There isn't one clear sign of online grooming. A young person who is being groomed may be pressured to keep it secret from you.

YOU MAY NOTICE SOME OF THESE SIGNS

- WITHDRAWN**: mood swings, upset or outraged after using the internet or their mobile phone
- SECRECY**: about who they are talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone, switching screens when you come near them.
- RECEIVES**: or devices you haven't given them in their possession
- DISTRACTED**: we can all get caught up in ourselves if things are worrying us, they may seem unusually preoccupied
- NEW PHONE NUMBERS**: texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, tablet or computer
- 100%** of images had been harvested from their original upload locations.

98% of victims are 13 or younger.

96% of victims were girls, and on their own at home.

40% of the abuse was categorized as Category A or B, which includes rape, sexual torture and serious sexual abuse.

CALL FOR INFORMATION, ADVICE OR IF YOU JUST WANT TO TALK

PreventEd 0800 800 5000

NNECA 0800 1111

WWW.NNECA.ORG.UK

WWW.CHILDABUSEHELP.ORG.UK

POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS APPS

PARENTS / TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

THESE APPS CAN EASILY BE USED AS GROOMING TOOLS BY ONLINE PREDATORS LOOKING TO MEET UP & SEXUALLY ABUSE CHILDREN.

This is not exhaustive, and updated each year to reflect new risks and dangers (updated 2022). New apps are constantly being created, so it's important to monitor what children download.

FACEBOOK Allows you to connect with others and share comments, photos and videos. You can add friends, write on people's pages and posts, join groups and play games.	SNAPCHAT Is one of the most popular apps in recent years. Whilst the app promises that photos, videos and stories disappear, others can take screenshots of private photos.	INSTAGRAM Kids are creating fake accounts to hide content from their parents, according to police. Messages are also deleted once a user leaves a conversation.
WHATSAPP Allows you to send messages, images and videos in 121 and group chats with your contacts. You can choose to share your live location for up to eight hours with one contact or a group.	OMEGLE Is a video chat website where users are matched randomly with strangers.	KIK MESSAGING KIK Is a messaging app that allows content normally filtered on a home computer.
WHISPER Is an anonymous social media app that promotes sharing personal secrets with strangers (new people). It reveals a user's location so people can meet up.	CALCULATOR % Is only one of SEVERAL social media apps disguised as a calculator, the app is actually a secret photo vault to hide photos, videos, files and browser history.	HOT ON NOT Strangers rate a user's attractiveness with the aim of real-world meet ups in your local area.
ASK.FM An app where users can anonymously ask questions and receive answers. The app has been featured in a number of cyber bullying cases.	YUBO Similar to Tinder, the app is designed to allow teens to flirt with each other.	BURN BOOK Anonymous rumors can be posted about people through audio messages, texts and photos.
WISHBONE This app allows users to compare kids and rate them on a scale.	SKOUT Is a location based dating app where users under 17 are unable to share private photos. Children can easily create fake accounts.	MEET ME Is a dating social media app that allows users to connect with people based on geographic proximity. The app encourages people to meet.
TELOLYMN Anonymous messenger app, it calls itself "the most honest place on the internet". Age controls are inconsistent and sexual explicit material can be found.	ZOOMERANG Is a popular app that looks like a harmless messaging app however it allows private anonymous messaging and is location enabled.	TIK TOK Is one of the most popular apps in recent years used for sharing short videos with very limited privacy controls users are vulnerable to explicit material.
FACEBOOK MESSENGER Is one of the most popular message apps in the world. It has already heavily been used by predators and the end-to-end encryption will make it even more unsafe.	BADDO Is a location based dating app where users under 17 are unable to share private photos. Children can easily create fake accounts.	KIDSCHAT Is one of the most popular apps in recent years used for sharing short videos with very limited privacy controls users are vulnerable to explicit material.
VINE Allows users to watch and post six second videos. While many of the videos are harmless, porn videos do pop up into the feed, exposing your device to sexually explicit material.	POOF Hides other apps on your phone. If children have apps that they want to keep hidden from their parents, all they have to do is download this app and "poof", their screen is clear.	DISCORD A gaming app that allows video sharing and video chat. Bullying is a problem on Discord. Some of the bigger problems include suicidal ideation, hate speech and graphic images.
HOOP Hoop is a dating app that connects to Snapchat and allows 12+ teens to swipe on pictures that they like with the purpose of meeting. This leads to issues with fraud and sexual predators.	GALLERYVAULT GalleryVault and other vault apps hide photos and videos. One of the scarier options on it gives the user access to a secret web browser and alerts the user if someone attempts to break into the app.	PSBT Is a chat room app that prides itself on messages being deleted almost immediately from the server. ID tracking and secretive private chat. For parents, these features are worrying.

CALL FOR INFORMATION, ADVICE OR IF YOU JUST WANT TO TALK

PreventEd 0800 800 5000

NNECA 0800 1111

WWW.NNECA.ORG.UK

WWW.CHILDABUSEHELP.ORG.UK



Looking ahead to Term 3

Staff return to school on Monday 6th January when they look forward to meeting with you in the RESET meetings. Staff will have been in touch to arrange a parent/carer meeting. This is an important opportunity to review your child's progress and set targets for their next steps. We look forward to welcoming you into school.

All students start timetables on **Tuesday 7th January.**



Stay connected!

You can find out what's happening in school throughout the year by following us on social media. You can find us on Facebook, Instagram and X/Twitter.



By following us you can easily stay up to date with what staff and students are up to, as well as get more information about school holidays, local support and emergency closures for example.

For more general information about the school you can visit our website www.altusschool.org.uk

Do you want to get more involved in school life? We are looking for volunteers!

The Management Committee oversees the running of the school. It is a volunteer body who work alongside the school's leaders to agree the aims, policies and priorities of the Altus School. We would welcome any parents and carers who would like to join this group.

Our chair of the management committee is Lyn Dance. Lyn has worked in special schools in Gloucestershire for over 30 years and brings a wealth of leadership experience to the role.

You will also work alongside staff members, as well as volunteers from the local community, including our Vice Chair, Philippa Dancey.



Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. See you again in 2025!