



Great Horwood CE School

NEWSLETTER

Updates



The Stationery Shop

We now have an online shop for Key Stage 2 where you can top up on any missing stationery needs. You'll find it in your MCAS app under products. Items are 50p each with a minimum £1 spend required.



Maples Class –
Keep your eyes peeled for information about your upcoming swimming sessions. Please check emails for payment details.



Hawthorns Class –
We are already sharing exciting details about your Summer residential trip to Rock UK. Please check emails for further details and payment plan.

Highlights this week

Our first full week back at school has been a hive of activity across every classroom, the forest area and our outdoor learning spaces. It has been wonderful to see pupils so engaged in their learning and settling back into school life with such enthusiasm.

On Thursday morning, we were delighted to welcome Reverend Steve, together with his visitors, Brother Samuel and Sister Sophia Rose. It was a pleasure to have them spend time with us and share in the life of our school community.

We also welcomed members of our Trust, who visited Great Horwood School for a tour. They were incredibly impressed by the warm and enthusiastic welcome they received from our pupils and by the positive attitudes and focus demonstrated in classrooms throughout the school.

This week, many of our Year 6 pupils showed tremendous resilience as they completed their Secondary Transfer Tests. We wish them every success as they await their results. Whatever the outcome, they should be immensely proud of the mature and determined attitude they displayed throughout the process, as well as the kindness, encouragement and reassurance they offered one another before and after the tests.

We have also begun learning new songs for this year's Harvest Festival (details attached). As part of our commitment to serving our local community, we would love to collect donations of non-perishable food items for the local food bank. Thank you in advance for your support and generosity.

Please see the attached schedule for details of all the activities we have planned for the Autumn term. We hope you will be able to take the opportunity to spend some time with us.

Settling in parents' meeting



There is an opportunity to have a settling parents' meeting with the class teacher in October. These will be a short verbal report on how the first term has started. We will have a longer meeting in Spring term to talk in more detail about progress and targets. If you feel you need a longer appointment this term, please let your class teacher know.



Autumn term diary dates. Please speak to your child's class teacher if you need clarity on any of these events.

Date	Event
Friday 25th September	PTFA Colour Run 2pm on the school field
Thursday 1st October	Harvest Festival 2pm
Thursday 1st October	A cuppa with Mrs Carson & PTFA AGM - 6pm
Tuesday 6th October	Parents' Evening - 3.30 - 5.30pm
Thursday 8th October	Parents' Evening - 4-5pm
Friday October 16th	PTFA Non - Uniform Day
Friday 16th October	End of half term
Monday 2nd November	Autumn 2 Term begins
Wednesday 11th November	Remembrance Worship 10.40am



Date	Event
3rd December	Dressing of the tree, 2pm School Hall
4th December	School Christmas Fete
8th December	Acorns & Conkers Nativity Performance 10am
9th December	Acorns & Conkers Nativity Performance 2pm
11th December	PTFA: Elfridges!
17th December	Christmas Carols 2pm, School Hall
Friday 18th December	Last day of term

Still to be confirmed...

School Christmas Dinner





SUPPORTING CHILDREN WHO WORRY



Feeling worried or anxious is a perfectly normal part of growing up.

Children may experience anxiety for many reasons, including changes in routine, friendships, schoolwork, or trying something new. While we cannot always remove their worries, we can help them develop the confidence and skills they need to manage them.

This week we are sharing a poster with practical ideas for supporting an anxious child. Simple strategies such as listening calmly, acknowledging feelings, maintaining routines, and encouraging small steps towards challenges can make a big difference. By showing children that their feelings are understood and accepted, we help them build resilience and learn that worries can be managed.

Together, as parents, carers, and school staff, we can provide the reassurance and support children need to thrive.

TRYING TO HELP YOUR ANXIOUS CHILD?

8 THINGS THAT CAN KEEP ANXIETY GOING

www.SocialWorkersToolbox.com

1. REASSURING THEM OVER AND OVER

When a child keeps asking, "Are you sure I'll be okay?" reassurance can bring quick relief. But if they need reassurance every time anxiety appears, they can start to feel they can't cope without it.

INSTEAD: Acknowledge the worry, then bring the focus back to their ability to cope.

"I know you're worried. I also know you can handle feeling unsure."

2. HELPING THEM AVOID WHAT MAKES THEM ANXIOUS

Avoiding something scary can make anxiety drop quickly. The problem is that the child misses the chance to discover that they can face the situation and cope with the anxiety.

INSTEAD: When the situation is safe, help them move towards it in small, manageable steps rather than avoiding it completely.

3. PROMISING THAT NOTHING BAD WILL HAPPEN

"You definitely won't be sick." "Nobody will laugh at you." "Everything will be fine." We say these things to comfort children, but we can't give certainty about everything they fear.

INSTEAD: Offer confidence in their ability to cope rather than a guarantee about what will happen.

"I can't promise exactly what will happen, but we'll work out what to do if something is difficult."

4. DOING THINGS FOR THEM BECAUSE ANXIETY SAYS THEY CAN'T

Speaking for them, checking things for them or taking over a task may help in the moment. But if it happens repeatedly, the child can start to believe they need that help in order to cope.

INSTEAD: Give enough support for them to take the next manageable step themselves, then gradually step back as they become more able.

5. TRYING TO TALK THEM OUT OF EVERY WORRY

An anxious "What if...?" can quickly find another "What if...?" No amount of explaining can give complete certainty about everything that might happen.

INSTEAD: You don't have to solve every worried thought. Help them notice the worry without letting it decide what happens next.

"That's a worried thought. What can you do even while the worry is there?"

6. TREATING ANXIETY AS A SIGN THEY SHOULD STOP

Feeling anxious can seem like proof that something's too difficult or dangerous. But anxiety and danger aren't the same thing.

INSTEAD: When the situation is safe, help them learn that they can feel nervous and still move forward.

"You don't have to wait until you feel completely calm. Let's take one small step."

7. MAKING THE NEXT STEP TOO BIG

Helping a child face anxiety doesn't mean pushing them straight into the situation they fear most. A step that feels impossible can leave them even more reluctant to try again.

INSTEAD: Break the challenge into smaller steps. Start with something difficult enough to build confidence, but manageable enough for them to try.

8. MAKING "NOT FEELING ANXIOUS" THE GOAL

If success means having no anxiety, children can start treating the feeling itself as something dangerous that must disappear.

INSTEAD: Measure progress by what they're learning to do even when anxiety shows up.

"You felt nervous and you still did something that was hard for you."



The goal isn't to remove every anxious feeling. It's to help children learn that anxiety can be uncomfortable without always deciding what they can and can't do.



ONLINE SAFETY



Artificial intelligence chatbots, including Character AI tools, are becoming increasingly popular with children and teenagers. These platforms allow users to chat with AI-generated characters that can act like celebrities, fictional characters, historical figures, or entirely new personalities.

While these tools can be fun, creative, and even educational, parents should be aware of a few important considerations. AI characters can sometimes provide inaccurate information, appear more human-like than they really are.

Used thoughtfully, Character AI tools can support creativity, storytelling, and learning. Open conversations and active parental guidance can help children enjoy these technologies safely and responsibly.

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.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

AI TOYS

This festive season, the newest toys on the shelves do not just blink or make noise; they listen. Many now come with artificial intelligence (AI), allowing them to talk, learn, and even respond to a child's emotions. These toys can be educational and engaging, but they also collect, store, and process information. This guide explains what that means for families and why it matters.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

TOYS THAT LISTEN AND LEARN

When a toy uses AI, it collects data such as voice recordings, interactions, and background sounds. This information is sent to remote servers, where it is analysed to improve responses. Your child's voice becomes training data, which may be stored indefinitely or shared with third parties.

WEAK SECURITY PROTECTIONS

Some AI toys have poor password protection or open network connections. Others may have microphones or cameras that stay on, even when the toy appears to be off. This can lead to recordings being made without your knowledge, including conversations unrelated to play.

ARTIFICIAL VOICES, REAL INFLUENCE

For very young children, an AI companion may become one of the first voices they interact with regularly. How that voice shows humour, empathy, or authority can shape how a child learns to communicate. If the model is artificial, then part of what is learned is artificial as well.

PRESSURE TO KEEP ENGAGING

Some toys reward repeated use or track engagement, encouraging children to interact more. When children compare how their toys perform, it creates pressure to play more often. This increases the amount of data collected and can make learning feel like competition.

MARKETING THROUGH PLAY

Toys that learn a child's preferences may feed that data into future advertising. A toy that knows a child's favourite colour or hobby could help a company design more targeted marketing to that child and their family.

PLAYTIME AS DATA TRAINING

The information collected from children helps train AI systems. Their voice, emotional responses, and behaviour shape how machines "understand" people. They become part of a much larger system that influences how future technologies behave.

Advice for Parents & Educators

START WITH A CONVERSATION

Talk to young people. Explain that some toys learn from what they say and do. Help them understand that even friendly technology should have boundaries, and to ask questions about it. Curiosity is healthy; blind trust is not.

SET LIMITS ON USE

Turn off Wi-Fi or Bluetooth when the toy is not in use. Check for updates regularly, as they can change privacy or safety settings. Treat connected toys like any smart device: they should be monitored, updated, and switched off when not in use.

MODEL DIGITAL AWARENESS

Children learn from adults. If they see you checking privacy settings, reading terms, and talking openly about online safety, they are more likely to do the same. Show them how to question technology in a healthy way.

RESEARCH BEFORE YOU BUY

Look for toys that work offline or store data locally. Check for a free or demo version to test how it behaves. Read privacy policies to understand what data is collected, where it goes, and what it is shared with others.

REVIEW PRIVACY SETTINGS

Find out where the data is stored and who has access to it. Some companies sell or share data with advertisers. If the toy connects through an app, check what it requests access to and limit these permissions wherever possible.

BALANCE AI WITH REAL PLAY

AI toys can be fun and creative, but they are not replacements for real human interaction. Encourage time away from technology with activities that foster emotional and social development. Use AI toys to support learning, not define it.

