

Newsletter



MEADOW PARK
SCHOOL

Message from the Headteacher

Dear parents and carers

Happy New Year! I hope you had a lovely break. Staff returned to school on Monday where they took part in the annual Finham Park MAT Conference. This gave staff the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from across the Trust; receive personalised CPD and training; and learn about Trust wide priorities. On Tuesday we had our Meadow Park training day where staff received training linked to specific areas of teaching and learning and subject specialism. We were all very pleased to welcome back students on Wednesday. Students have settled well into the school routines once again and their focus in learning has been impressive. In our weekly whole school Headteacher Assembly, I spoke to students about setting challenges for themselves and not giving up. I recounted how I had climbed a volcano in Iceland over the holidays with my family. It took me a bit longer than the rest of them and I needed some additional support and encouragement, but I did it. The view from the top looking down into the crater as well as across the landscape was well worth the sore back and legs! Part of our training day looked at scaffolding support for students so that all can succeed; so some students might need extra time or support but they can achieve the same outcome as others. Resilience is a key quality in life and it is very

pleasing when students demonstrate these values. I encouraged students to keep trying, ask for support and see just how much they are capable of.

Wednesday was our highest day for attendance, with some Tutor groups achieving 100% this week. Every school day counts and it is vitally important that students attend school unless they are very unwell. The DFE guidance encourages students to attend even if they have a cold. Please can you support your child in attending school.

Year 11 students have returned strong and have enjoyed the English and maths morning sessions that we are running for them. We also offer a range of after school intervention and revision sessions that students are able to attend. Year 11 will have their mocks in March and it is important that they revise in advance. Next Thursday is our Year 11 Progress Evening where families can make appointments with staff between 4-7pm. The event will be held in the theatre. Appointment slots will open on Monday, so please check your emails and messages for details of how to book. We look forward to seeing families that evening.

I hope that you have a lovely weekend.

Mrs Pettman, Headteacher

Nurturing Excellence, Growing Aspiration, Thriving Together



FINHAM PARK
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

Issue: 10 January 2025

Starting from Monday 13th January

Lakeside Diner will be offering homemade soup at lunchtimes

Bowl of Soup—£1.50

Add Pasta— £1.90

Add Crusty Roll - £2.20



News from the Library!

It's been great to have so many people in the Library already this week and we've got loads planned for next week too ...

Chillout Monday:

Chess Club

Mrs Dearden's Book Club (F17)

Rowdy Tuesday:

Sprawlopolis - a new co-operative card game where you plan a city hoping to gain maximum points

Geeky Wednesday:

Funkoverse strategy game: DC comics

Sporty Thursday:

Top Trumps tournament

Creative Friday:

Play Doh building challenges

We hope to see you soon. Happy reading!

Mr Spencer and Mrs Dearden
Librarians

Enrichment Clubs - Spring Term

	Break	Lunch	After School
Monday	Basketball Sports Hall	Chillout Monday Library Book Club F17	KS3 Basketball Sports Hall Girls Basketball Small Gym Student Dungeons and Dragons LRC Fashion and Textiles T04 (10 spaces!) MPTC Rehearsals G16
Tuesday	Basketball Sports Hall	Rowdy Tuesday Library Chess Club F05 Y11 Girls Netball Sports Hall	Netball Small Gym Rugby Club Field KS3 Badminton Sports Hall Drop in Free and Easy LRC MPTC Rehearsals G16
Wednesday	Basketball Sports Hall	Geeky Wednesday Library	(STAFF TRAINING)
Thursday	Basketball Sports Hall	Sporty Thursday Library Year 8/9 Girls Basketball Sports Hall	Badminton Sports Hall Trampoline Small Gym Robotics Club F18 (10 spaces!) Music Practice G16 Craft Club F23 Drop in Free and Easy LRC
Friday	Basketball Sports Hall	Creative Friday Library Crochet Club Wk1 G04 wk2 G08	KS4 Basketball Sports Hall KS3 Trampoline Small Gym

New Parent App and School Communication

Please sign up to our new parent portal MyChildAtSchool (MCAS).



DON'T FORGET to enable push notifications for the MyChildAtSchool app on your phone so you can see all emails and letters the school sends you.

All schools in the Trust are using Bromcom and MCAS so for Meadow Park School, it means MCAS replaces School Synergy.

MCAS is now live, so as soon as you sign up you will be able to see your child's information. As School Synergy is linked to our old MIS it is no longer updating, therefore in order to view your child's timetable, see their attendance and behaviour points you will need to sign up to MCAS.

You have access to all the same information as you had in School Synergy. MCAS allows us to securely share your child's/children's achievement points, attendance, school reports, letters and school diary whenever you wish. The portal also provides general useful information about the school such as flash announcements. This will be our **primary means of communication** with you, from now on. Please make sure you enable notifications for MCAS as this is the way we will send you emails and letters.

To login to the MCAS Parent Portal, we have enabled you to 'self-sign on'. All you will need for this is your email address that the school has on record for you. Enter the school postcode CV34BD (without a space) or use our identifier 15028. Search for Meadow Park School.

School Communication

All communication from school is now via Bromcom and if you sign up to the parent portal MCAS then you will receive notifications from the school via the app. You can view all letters and emails, past and present, in MCAS. If you don't have the app then you will receive a normal email. Please add '15028@bromcomcloud.com' to your address book in order to prevent messages being blocked by your spam/junk filters.

How to Self-Sign Up for Parents

Parents and carers can access the MCAS Parent Login screen in two ways:

1. From within your web browser type **www.mychildatschool.com**
2. Download the free **MyChildAtSchool** parent app from either the Apple App Store or Google Play.

When you use the parent portal for the first time you will need to Sign-Up. Full instructions have been emailed home or they can be found on our website.

If you require any assistance logging in for the first time, please contact the School Office by emailing admin@meadowparkschool.com or telephone 02476 302580.

Uniform



Green school blazer



Grey school sweater



Tie



Skirt



Trousers

School shoes guidance

Plain black with no logos
No high heels, 'sliders', boots, sling back or open-toed shoes
Black leather or leather effect

TRAINERS AND CANVAS SHOES (VANS/CONVERSE) ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE



Spring Term 2025

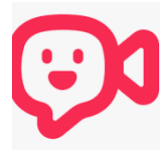
Teacher Inset Days	Monday 6th January & Tuesday 7th January
Term Starts	Wednesday 8th January
Half Term	Saturday 15th February – Sunday 23rd February
Last Day of Term	Friday 11th April
Easter Holiday	Saturday 12th April – Sunday 27th April

Summer Term 2025

Term Starts	Monday 28th April
May Day Bank Holiday	Monday 5th May
Half Term	Saturday 24th May – June 1st June
Last Day of Term	Friday 18th July
Summer Holiday Starts	Saturday 19th July

Safeguarding – What Parents and Carers Need to know about JusTalk Kids and Supporting student's return to routine.

JusTalk Kids: JusTalk Kids is an alternative version of the JusTalk app, aimed at an audience aged 13 and under. As that upper age limit suggests, this social networking platform is intended to be suitable for youngsters, providing them with a space of their own to interact with a community their own age. Unfortunately, there are still risks associated with JusTalk Kids, so it's vitally important for parents and educators to understand the potential dangers for those who use the app. The below guide delves into the most prominent online safety concerns of JusTalk Kids, while also letting you know how to ensure that children can be protected, should they wish to create an account.



Return to Routine: For this guide suggests some ways in which you can assist your child to return to school following the holiday and back into routine – we understand a return from a break can be a difficult time for a variety of reasons. The start of the new term comes with plenty of challenges, from social worries to the stress of ensuring they're entirely ready for upcoming lessons and learning. Of course, these youngsters don't have to deal with these concerns alone and as parents and staff at school are here to help. As always, if you have concerns that you wish to discuss with your child's Deputy Head of House – please get in touch!

Stay Safe!

**Paul Rule
Child Protection Officer &
Senior Pastoral Support Manager**

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about JUSTALK KIDS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

JustTalk Kids is a child's version of the JustTalk app – a highly popular social networking platform – designed for users up to 12 years of age, allowing them to video call, message and participate in group chats. While adults can link their own JustTalk account to their child's and make use of parental controls, it's important to understand the risks associated with the app.

SUBSCRIPTION FOR PREMIUM ACCESS

While JustTalk Kids is free, there's the option to subscribe to a kids' premium account or a premium family account. At a cost, this feature allows children to have access to more fun features such as games they can play with others in a chat, exclusive stickers, a badge denoting them as a premium subscriber and exclusive digital items and themes.

RESISTANCE TO CONTROLS

JustTalk Kids endeavours to allow children the same of having a chat-based app while allowing parents to set controls within the app or from their own adult JustTalk account. The issue behind this is positive, however, some children are challenging their parents by refusing to use JustTalk Kids, preferring to use the adult version without any restrictions in place.

KNOWING THE PARENT PASSCODE

After downloading JustTalk Kids, parents can set a passcode which means most enter to add members. The parental controls help to manage which content can be shared and who children can add as a friend. This does allow children to chat with friends in a controlled environment. However, prospective contacts don't have to know a specific username. In theory, someone could type in a username name and then add them as a friend.

POTENTIAL DATA LEAKS

JustTalk and JustTalk Kids claim to be secure and encrypted, going as far as to state that even the developers themselves won't access your data. However, a security issue in 2022 highlighted that messages were not fully encrypted – leading to concerns around the security of the app and the transparency of the development team.

CYBERBULLYING

Online chats can provide a sense of anonymity, leading some users to post things which they wouldn't otherwise say in person. Combined with the option of group chats, there's a risk that young people might join in with this kind of behaviour, escalating it further and potentially turning what should be a fun experience into something deeply negative.

TOO MUCH SCREENTIME

A report by the UK Parliament Education Committee highlighted a 12% increase in children's screen time between 2020 and 2022 – as well as finding that 25% of children used their smartphones in a manner consistent with screen addiction. Introducing children to social networking apps when they're too young can lead to bad digital habits and a reliance on technology from an early age.

Advice for Parents & Educators

JUSTIFY THE CONTROLS

If parents allow their child to use JustTalk Kids, they should explain that they're putting parental controls in place to make the app safer. Make sure the child knows not to put their full name on the account and doesn't use aspects of themselves as their profile picture. This type of open discussion will help to ensure that a child is aware of the app's potential risks and knows how to reduce them.

TALK ABOUT ONLINE FRIENDSHIPS

Young children could be excited to use this app. However, highlight that they must do so in a positive, respectful and responsible manner. While it can be easy to get caught up in a group chat, it's important to talk to others politely and call out any unpleasant behaviour. Discuss the importance of limiting their contacts to people they know in real life and use parental controls to achieve this.

DOS AND DON'TS OF SHARING

Some children might not understand the potential dangers of oversharing online. Set clear guidelines around what to and not to share on the internet, and discuss the concept of a digital footprint. Children need to understand that the things they say and share online can remain completely online. Even if they delete it themselves, it can be saved and distributed by others.

ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

Apps like JustTalk can sometimes lend themselves to bullying behaviour. Parents should monitor what their child is sending and receiving, check in with them regularly and encourage them to share their feelings (both positive and negative) at home. Remind them that they can block a contact if someone is treating them disrespectfully.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire is a qualified 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 concerning internet use and online behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at <https://nationalcollege.com/policies/just-talk-kids>

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10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO RETURN TO ROUTINE

Most of us look forward to the school holidays as an opportunity to slow down and relax, stay up later, sleep in and generally approach life in a more leisurely fashion. However, this does mean that returning to normal school-day routines can feel like an uphill battle. Here are some practical tips to ease that transition, reduce stress and set children up for success.

1 START SMALL AND EARLY

Begin reintroducing elements of the school routine a week before term starts. Gradually adjust bedtimes, wake-up times and routines to be more in line with school-day rhythms. Small changes can make a big difference in avoiding last-minute panic and helping children to readjust smoothly.

2 REVISIT THE SCHEDULE

Involve your child in mapping out their daily routine so they understand what's going to change. Visual tools like charts or calendars can help keeping to that schedule feel more engaging. When children understand and anticipate their personal timetable, they feel more secure and in control.

3 CREATE A SLEEP PLAN

Sleep can present one of the biggest challenges, as children can sometimes become night owls, prone to staying up late during the holidays. Limit screen time before bed and encourage winding-down activities like reading or listening to calming music. A regular night's sleep improves focus, mood and overall wellbeing, making mornings much smoother.

4 ENCOURAGE FRIENDSHIPS

Help your child to reconnect with school friends by organising playdates, catch-ups or arranging to go to after-school clubs. Re-establishing social bonds can reduce the return to school stress and less intimidating, allowing youngsters to focus on the positive aspects of the new term.

5 GRANT RESPONSIBILITY

Give children control over some aspects of the morning routine. Maybe they could be in charge of making everyone up, setting breakfast or choosing the radio station that everyone listens to while getting ready. Something that gives them a sense of ownership over their morning schedule can help them view the task as one they've chosen to do, rather than being told to do it.

6 FOCUS ON NUTRITION

Make sure children are eating healthy balanced meals (with regular healthy snacks to boost energy and concentration), putting them in the best possible state to return to education. A nutritious breakfast is particularly crucial for a positive start to the day. Involve children in meal planning to make it enjoyable and collaborative.

7 COMMUNICATE OPENLY

Talk with your child about how they're feeling about returning to school, whether they're excited, anxious or a mix of both. Validating their emotions helps them feel supported and understood. Try asking them about the things they're looking forward to at school, such as seeing their friends again. Fostering the positives can be useful for children struggling with change.

8 RECONNECT WITH LEARNING

Get children back into a learning mindset by incorporating fun, educational activities into their home life. Reading a narrative book, playing games that involve maths or discussing an interesting topic can gently reawaken their focus and prime their minds to learn, which can have helpful impacts on their classroom performance.

9 PREP TOGETHER

Turn preparation into a shared activity, to shoulder the responsibility together and provide support where needed. Pack school bags, lay out uniforms and plan lunch the night before. This not only reduces early morning stress but also gives children a sense of ownership over being ready for school.

10 BE PATIENT AND FLEXIBLE

Transitions take time, and every child adjusts differently; it's important to stay calm and supportive, especially if they're meeting someone new in their daily life. Be ready to meet routines as needed, and work with the child to make the return to education easier possible for them. Patience can go a long way to setting a positive tone for the new school year.

Meet Our Expert

Becy Bennett is an education expert with a focus on mental health and wellbeing. Passionate about empowering adults who spend time with and care for young people, Becy specialises in creating practical strategies that promote wellbeing and resilience in children during life's transitions.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College



MEADOW PARK SCHOOL

THRIVING TOGETHER