

Principals Newsletter



BOWER PARK

ACADEMY

Friday 5th July 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

Pre-loved Uniform

It is normal at this time of year for school trousers to be a little short and jumpers to be a bit tighter as students have had yet another growth spurt. So as the end of the Academic year draws to a close, we are asking parents/carers to donate any good quality uniform you may have to the school. This can be dropped off to reception and will then be sold at a discount by the PTA to ensure that all families can afford good quality uniform.

Geography Trip

The second group of Year 10 Geographers had a great time completing their field work at Walton-on-the-Naze on Tuesday, despite the bad weather. Students' behaviour was impeccable. My thanks to the Geography Department for coordinating the event.

Poetry workshop

On Wednesday, Year 10 girls were involved in a Poetry workshop with Poet Red Medusa. Her workshops utilise non-traditional ways of creating poetry, such as freewriting, to encourage students to express their emotions, experiences and identities. Our Year 10 girls really engaged with the workshop and they showed real maturity and respect to the poet and her work.

West Ham

Congratulations to Kyle in Year 9 who has been selected to play for West Ham United at the Bermuda Triangle Cup at the end of July. We are incredibly proud of you and this massive sporting achievement. Wishing you the best of luck for the tournament.

Station Year 11 Students

This week, we said goodbye to the Year 11 students in The Station with a celebratory afternoon tea. We are incredibly proud of all that you have achieved during your time at BPA and wish you lots of luck for the future.



Maths Challenge

This week BPA winners of the Junior Maths Challenge were awarded their certificates. Congratulations to all students for this outstanding achievement and hard work! A special mention to Alfie.F in Year 8 for achieving Gold! I am very proud of each of you and your dedication and success. Keep up the excellent work!



Sports Day

On Monday, Sports Day will be taking place at BPA. Students should come to school in their PE Kit on this day. Students will be dismissed at approx. 1:40pm after all of the sports activities have been completed. The PTA will be onsite in the afternoon selling soft drinks and snacks, so please ensure your child brings cash with them if they wish to purchase anything.

Community Hub Coffee Morning

Next Tuesday, The Hub at The Ardleigh Green Family Centre will be holding their monthly drop-in session for Parents/ Carers to attend. The doors will be open and the kettle will be on from 9:45am-11am. Come along or bring a friend and meet a wide variety of services. Please see leaflet attached for further details.

Debt Free London

We are delighted to inform you that our Trust is now partnering with Debt Free London. Debt Free London is a partnership of charities who offer free confidential, independent debt advice to families. The vision of Debt Free London is to 'Make getting out of debt no more complicated than getting into debt'/ We currently have three Debt Advice Booths located across our ELAT community which can be accessed at anytime throughout the week. For more information please click on the video link below;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nwMrr3gmsg>

Yours faithfully,



Mr E Aylett
Principal

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about ONLINE TROLLING

The term "Trolling" refers to sending hurtful or provocative comments – often done anonymously online – to provoke a reaction or cause emotional distress. Anonymity can embolden people into saying things they wouldn't dare say in person. Euro 2024 and other tournaments tend to put an emphasis on this, with the abuse of both players and fans often increasing during such events.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ESCALATION

Many trolls begin with silly, banal comments before moving on to a broader pattern of offensive messages and posts. They can also turn their attention very quickly to a new target if they grow bored with an existing one, which makes engaging with one fruitless at best – and potentially dangerous at worst.

HIDING BEHIND A SCREEN

Because trolls tend to use anonymous profiles, they enjoy a lack of accountability. This also means they'll often have multiple profiles, potentially switching between them regularly or posting across several of them at the same time, making a target feel as though there's no escape. After all, once you block one account, what's to stop them reappearing elsewhere?

24/7 CONTACT

The internet has given us the ability to remain in contact at any time, from almost anywhere in the world. A troll having the ability to reach you whenever they want can leave you feeling like their abuse is unavoidable. While they don't see you in real life, they can message you at any time, reach out to your peers online and even try to discover your personal information to scare you.

HATE SPEECH

Sadly, many trolls resort to spewing racial slurs, homophobic attacks and awful stereotypes, as these often stand the best chance of causing emotional harm. This can add a hefty degree of weight to their attacks, moving from what might charitably be described as "teasing" into a genuine hate crime. After Euro 2020, three England footballers were racially abused, resulting in several prison sentences.

IMPACT ON VICTIMS

It's not uncommon for the victims of trolls to shut down their accounts, disappear from public life, and try to stay out of the crosshairs for a time – with some even leaving social media forever. This can have a severe impact on children and young people's connections to friends and the world at large, and may not even actually stop the troll. The victims' families, for example, may have online profiles that trolls can still access.

NORMALISATION OF TROLLING

It is, regrettably, inevitable that some people will go too far in their criticisms or comments, both online and in the real world. This can lead to many people seeing trolls and their abuse as part and parcel of social media – an inherent risk of interacting with others online. This doesn't mean, however, that it should be considered "normal" or even tolerated.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

While social media platforms (where most trolling tends to happen) aren't always helpful when responding to abusive behaviour, parents can set up screen time limits, so children only get to use certain apps at certain times. There's always the potential for trolling to occur anyway – such as friends showing screenshots to one another – but this would minimise the likelihood of children seeing it.

DON'T ENGAGE WITH ABUSE

A well-known adage on social media is "don't feed the trolls". Fundamentally, if a child identifies a potential troll online, it's best not to engage with that individual directly. Instead, consider setting up a log to gather evidence for reporting them later on, including screenshots and quotes where possible.

ENCOURAGE EMPATHY

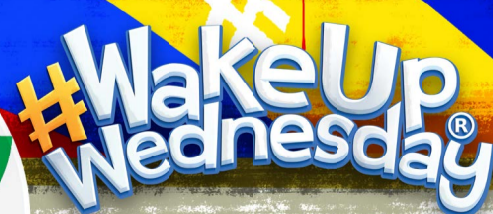
While every professional athlete aspires to maintain high standards, it's important to separate the player from the person. A player's performance doesn't make them worthy of abuse, and that can often be forgotten by younger children who simply see the colour of the shirt without considering the person wearing it. For all the rivalries between teams, it's essential children understand that players are still human beings, with families and lives outside of sport.

BLOCK AND REPORT

While anonymous accounts make it difficult to block trolls permanently – or even for very long – it's still good practice to help children learn to control who can engage with them online. It's not worth "feeding the trolls", and it's more helpful to block them, report them, and try to move on. Blocking and reporting is an anonymous process, too, so there'll be no indication of who specifically blew the whistle.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is the Editor in Chief of GGRecon, and has been working in the gaming and tech industry for five years. A long-time fan of Arsenal, he's a parent who understands the importance of online safety. He's also a tech and fitness writer whose work has been published on sites including IGN, TechRadar and many more.



The National College



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Drop in for a coffee
and a chat and meet
the team...



Ardleigh Green Family
Centre
Monthly Hub

The School Nurse,
Professionals from the
Primary Mental Health Team,
Havering Bereavement Service
and Peabody