



WESTON NEWS



2020-21 ISSUE 6: 14th December 2020

Website: weston.cheshire.sch.uk
Facebook: [westonvillageprimary](https://www.facebook.com/westonvillageprimary)
Twitter: [@WestonVillagePS](https://twitter.com/WestonVillagePS)

Dates for your diary (**new dates in red**):

15th December – Blue class Forest School

17th December – Red and Purple Christmas crafts

18th December – Break up for Christmas holiday – **children can wear non-uniform/yellow clothes**

4th January – School reopens for Spring term

5th January – Reception vision and hearing checks (school nurse team)

28th January – Orange class assembly (almost certainly recorded and shared remotely)

11th February – Green class assembly (recorded)

11th February – Break up for half term

12th February – INSET day (school is open for staff training only)

22nd February – School reopens

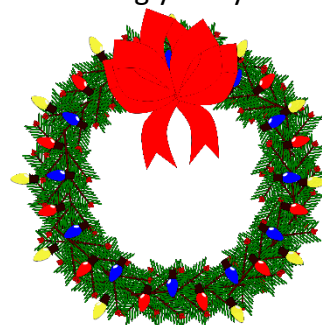
4th March – World Book Day (costumes)

A message from Mr Cutts

As we near the end of 2020, I know we will all reflect on what has been a very strange year. As news started to spread across the world about a new virus, around 12 months ago, not many of us could have imagined the massive impact on everyone's lives. For every aspect of life, things look very different today than they did last year. Places of work, including the education sector, have had to adapt very quickly, our day-to-day activity has been limited and our family and social lives have experienced massive change. Despite the government endorsed relaxation of household mixing over Christmas, the usual festivities will inevitably feel different. Personally, I have family in Newcastle Upon Tyne, Somerset, London and the Lake District and we have chosen not to see any of them this Christmas and to stay at home. My wife works in a school and our daughter is at school and we aren't prepared to drive three schools' worth of potential germs across the country. I know that many of you will have made similar, tricky decisions.

All of that said, there is lots to look forward to and to be thankful for. The changes we have made to different aspects of school have led to some very positive and permanent changes. School still feels really Christmassy for the children, with lots of singing and performing, Christmas themed activities, a (virtual) visit from Santa and Christmas cards. Despite our daily enhanced cleaning and the double-enhanced Christmas holiday clean, I know we'll be finding glitter in the carpet pile in February and that's strangely reassuring

(it gets everywhere!!) Best of all, there is light at the end of the tunnel and it seems increasingly likely that at some point in the not-too-distant future, we will be able to return to normal activity – see those family we've missed and visit those places we have stayed away from. For us at school, we will finally be able to mix properly as a Weston family, play (and beat) other schools at sports, perform at venues like the Crewe Lyceum and the Manchester Arena once more and throw our doors wide open to welcome parents and carers to performances and events in our building. It isn't quite the Christmas present we all wanted, but when it comes it will be welcomed, appreciated and valued by us all and will make those activities all the more special.



If I don't see you before the end of term, I wish you a very happy, peaceful and safe Christmas and look forward to seeing you in 2021!

Bikeability

The children in Year Five enjoyed some very successful Bikeability training last week. The training, which is underpinned by the government-recognised National Standard for cycle training, gave the children practical skills and a real understanding of how to cycle on today's roads. The instructors made a point of telling us how very impressed they were by the children's behaviour and attentiveness. Of course, none of us expect any less than that but it is always lovely when other people recognise these qualities in our children.



Christmas Songs

While we can't welcome you into school to enjoy a conventional nativity play and to the White Lion and Wychwood Village to enjoy a school choir performance, we would still like to share some festive performances with you. All of the classes have recorded something that they would like to share. In order to include as many children as possible, we will be sharing these via email (not ParentMail, which has an attachment size limit). Your child's video will be sent to the email address(es) that we hold for you on ParentMail and will be attached as a OneDrive file due to its size. This is the first time we have shared videos in this way and we have explored lots of options including Class Dojo, but none of them allow for sharing files of the size we would like to share. We are avoiding social media such as Facebook and the website, which is also public, out of respect for the wishes of some parents. As such, and as I say ahead of every live performance in which parents take photos and short videos, please do not share the videos via your own social media. The children will all enjoy watching the older children perform in a specially recorded version of Weston's Got Talent on Friday.



Friends of Weston and a Special Visitor

I have no idea how they manage to do it, but the children at Weston are fortunate because the Friends of Weston seemingly have a hotline to the North Pole. Every year, they manage to secure a very special visit from Santa and this year, despite the covid-challenges, they have done it again! Santa visited us virtually with a special recorded message for all the children and he even managed to provide them all with a festive sweet treat. Thank you to Santa and thank you to the Friends of Weston who continue to work tirelessly in the interests of the school and the children.

Forest School

The children have enjoyed using the Forest School this term and have completed a range of activities that foster the Forest School ethos and related skills, such as collaboration, resilience and problem solving. Blue Class are heading back out this week to complete some festive activities. Hats, gloves and coats are essential!



Online Safety

The children like to tell us what they get up to outside of school and, as a sign of the times (the digital age and a time that we are all a bit more housebound), a lot of them tell us about the many video games and online games that they are playing. Fortnite continues to be popular among some of our children and we are finding it increasingly creeping into their conversations, which can be of a violent nature. This is clearly not appropriate. At school we actively discourage such talk and remind children of its unsuitability, given their age – the game has a PEGI rating of 12+. I have previously sent out this guide, but please do take another look, if necessary, and reinforce the message that we give the children at school about Fortnite. It is not appropriate to talk about it or re-enact its violent aspects at school and staff will always shut down such conversations or impose sanctions for repeatedly ignoring the expectation. Thank you for your support.

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

Fortnite: Chapter 2 has finally landed! With a whole host of new in-game features including a brand-new map, more water-based activities, upgraded character skins and a more streamlined arsenal of weapons, this Fortnite is promising to be the best yet. Almost all of the changes are cosmetic which means the concept of the game remains the same, with players still aiming to be the last man standing. Players will no doubt find the game much more enjoyable with so much more to explore. For parents and carers however, it pays to remain vigilant.

AGE RECOMMENDATION 13+

What parents need to know about FORTNITE CHAPTER 2

BATTLE ROYALE
Battle Royale games have become very popular over the last couple of years, and most tend to follow a very similar setup. Taking Fortnite as an example, 100 players drop into a map, loot buildings for weapons and armour and attempt to beat all the other players to be crowned victor at the end. If you've ever seen the Hunger Games movies, you'll have an idea of what this entails. Each game can take up to 20 minutes (assuming you last to the end) and can be restarted relatively quickly once 100 new players have been found.

IS FORTNITE ADDICTIVE?
Fortnite is at the forefront of gaming addiction discussions because it is so popular with young people. But whether it actually contributes to gaming addiction is up for debate. WHO (World Health Organisation) have classified gaming as a legitimate addiction, but this is not solely a concern with Fortnite. Signs of addiction can include irritability when not playing, lying about the amount of time played and a preoccupation with thoughts of the next gaming session. Realistically, it must be down to parents and carers to recognise these symptoms and act accordingly if they think they are developing.

FREE TO PLAY... OR IS IT?
While Fortnite is technically free to play (in that you can download and play it without paying) it does come with the caveat that spending money on things like skins and emotes in-game is heavily pushed to players. The currency used in-game is called 'V-Bucks' and can be bought with real money through the game's online store. It's worth remembering that these purchases are absolutely not necessary, are cosmetic only and that V-Bucks can be earned in-game with enough play time.

SEASONAL UPDATES
Every 10 weeks or so Fortnite is updated with a new season. This essentially adds new things like skins and emotes to the game, while also sometimes changing up the game map in interesting ways. These seasons are free to everybody and don't require additional money to play, though battle passes for each season can be bought with V-Bucks. A battle pass will typically allow a player to earn experience faster and gain fun in-game items by completing a host of daily challenges.

CROSSPLAY IS AVAILABLE
One of the wonderful things about Fortnite is that it can be played cross platform. This means that no matter what platform a person plays on (PC, PlayStation 4, Xbox One etc) they can play with friends who own the game on a different platform. To do this, an Epic Games account must first be created online (which is free) and then linked with your platform account. Doing this removes the age old boundary of not being able to play together because you don't have the same console and opens up a whole new world of playing online with friends.

IS FORTNITE VIOLENT?
Fortnite has been rated by the ESRB (Entertainment Software Ratings Board) as being 'TEEN' due to cartoonish violence and weapons and acts depicted in the game are some way removed from their real life inspirations. Characters don't draw blood when shot and instead of dying, they are simply beamed up off the map. Naturally, players younger than the recommended age limit will want to play the game and that should be at the discretion of parents and carers.

Top Tips For Parents

BUYING V-BUCKS
As mentioned, Fortnite does require in-game purchases and monetisation in the form of V-Bucks which can be bought with real money. If you do decide to let your young one spend money in the game, be sure to delete your card information afterwards as it can be very easy to purchase more items at the press of a few buttons. It's important to set a limit on any purchases (as mentioned they are absolutely not necessary to play the game) and a suggestion would be capping the spending at around £50 - this is the normal retail price of a game.

GAMING WITH STRANGERS
Fortnite Battle Royale is not a role game, and as such, there is a chance that young children could come into contact with strangers who are randomly placed into their game. It's difficult to predict what another person might say or do in a game, so it's a good idea for friends playing together to be grouped together. The only real counter measure to interacting with strangers offered by Fortnite is to turn off all in-game communications, which can be done in the game's settings. Using outside chat apps like Skype or Discord while playing, is a great way to make sure you know who you're talking to and that nobody else is listening in.

LIMIT TIME, BUT BE FLEXIBLE
A game of Fortnite can last up to 20 minutes, so be flexible when it's time to get it away. The amount of time your game is supposed to be 10 more minutes will stop any complaints that a match is still ongoing. Better still, play with your child and make it better that way, perhaps helping towards the time played and keep an eye on what they're watching/doing.

TALK TO OTHER PARENTS / CARERS
If you're concerned about play time or spending money in the game, talk to other parents and carers of your child's friends. If you approach as a collective, it will be easier to know when their friends are online and you don't have to worry about who they're playing with. It can also help with expectations of spending money on battle passes and skins if you stick together.

CAN DEVELOP SOME IMPORTANT SKILLS
It's often overlooked just how good gaming can be for young people. Fortnite encourages team play, quick and complex problem solving and communication skills that's not to mention the lightning fast reflexes gamers can develop. While taking breaks to do other activities is of course important, there are benefits to screen time which might not be immediately obvious.

PLAY THE GAME YOURSELF
There's no substitute for sitting down and playing the game yourself to learn all about it. Fortnite is available for free on almost anything you can imagine, even your smartphone, so there's never been a better time to get involved and see what all the fuss is about. You never know, you might even be able to impress your child when you show them your impressive Victory Royale tally!

Meet our expert
Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGHUB. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.

<http://www.theguardian.com/games/2017/dec/27/fortnite-battle-royale-parents-guide-video-game-gaminghub-unilad-gaming-hub-features>
<http://www.pewgates.com/2018/05/25/71465485/fortnite-play-potential-what-parents-need-to-know>

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Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 16.10.2019

All Saints' Church Christmas Decoration Gifts

For the last few years, members of the All Saints' and St Mark's church congregation have knitted Christmas tree decorations to give to the community as a gift at Christmas. This year, many of the knitters made it their lockdown project, which was hugely helpful for them but also means that they have a lot of decorations to give away! The knitters are very keen to give all of the staff and children at Weston a knitted tree decoration. This year, they are bells. As you can see from the photo that they are individually wrapped in small plastic bags and they have been 'quarantined' to make sure they are Covid safe. The children will be bringing their decoration home this week. Many thanks to all the knitters involved.



Applications for Reception 2021 Deadline

Please be advised that the deadline to apply for a Reception place for September 2021 for your child is 15th January 2021. Without an application, your child is far less likely be admitted to Weston, even if you have an older child at the school already. With an application, children with older siblings at the school are higher up the criteria list but this is only relevant with an application.

Farewell

Longstanding member of staff Sue Holmes is retiring at the end of the month and her final day is this Friday, 18th December. Sue is one of our longest serving members of staff, having joined the team back in October 2005. Since then she has given the school maximum effort in her role as a midday assistant, for years as a cleaner and also as a regular member of the Kids Aloud/Hive team. We have all benefited from Sue's tireless and fun-filled approach to work and I am personally very sad to see her go. I know I speak on behalf of the whole team when I thank Sue for everything and wish her all the very best for the future.

Stars of the Week

Here are our most recent stars of the week, who have demonstrated a super-high standard of our Secrets of Success. Well done to one and all!



Don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions.

Thomas Cutts