

# Abacus Primary School

## Newsletter 380

### 2/10/2020



As we come to the end of our fourth full week, we say a big well done to the children in Foundation (Blue and Pink class) who have now started full time schooling. They will be attending from 8.55am to 3pm. Thank you to the Year 2 parents for

supporting us by not entering the outdoor classroom until 3.10pm when the foundation children will have left.



The Evening Echo will be producing a first day at School supplement on Tuesday 13th October 2020.



**Polite reminder** To support our risk assessment we have to limit the number of adults on our site at any one time, therefore we can only allow one adult to enter the school premises at drop off and pick up times.



**Next week we will be on WEEK 3 of our new menu**



**NEXT** friday

On Friday 9th October 2020, we will be taking part in the Young Minds #Hello Yellow Day.

We invite children to come to school dressed in as much yellow as possible (this can be their school t-shirt or non school uniform) for a donation to the Young Minds charity.

Thank you for your support.



**SCHOOL  
UNIFORM**

Now that the temperature has dropped, we appreciate that some children are starting to feel the cold inside. We are continu-

ing to follow the government guidance and the HSE in keeping classrooms well ventilated which means that outside doors and windows may be open in classrooms.

To prevent children being cold, we are happy for children to wear layers underneath their polo tops. These must be underneath their uniform and not in place of their normal uniform. We appreciate your support with this matter.

**Hairstyles**—Please can we remind parents that as part of our school uniform expectations we do not allow any extreme hairstyles or coloured hair





# Be smart on the internet



All National Online Safety web believes 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](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

## What parents & carers need to know about...

# AMAZON ALEXA

Alexa is an artificial intelligence (AI) software assistant created by Amazon in 2014 through which smartphone, tablet and smart device users can issue voice commands and ask questions in a range of languages by issuing the 'wake' or activation word Alexa. It can be accessed in several ways and is integrated into a growing number of 'smart' products including speakers, phones and clocks. Once viewed as expensive gimmicks, Alexa is now one of the most used voice assistants in the world.

### Privacy concerns

By their nature, AI voice assistants involve the collection of large amounts of data. How this is stored and the uses to which it is put has aroused growing concern. Experts also worry about who has access to voice recordings, which in 2019 the company admitted sometimes included employees of Amazon and its commercial partners. There is also the more general anxiety that internet voice assistants might record private conversations and not only commands or questions.

### Age-inappropriate content

Using Alexa as a speaker to play your favourite songs is one of the most popular uses for the device. However, without any parental controls in place, Alexa won't filter the lyrics so it's possible that children could hear something they shouldn't. Similarly, Alexa isn't always able to identify who or what age the person is who is issuing a voice command so if children ask a question which might not be age-appropriate, the chances are they're likely to get an age-inappropriate answer.



PRIVATE



### Insecure devices

The devices and their background services are another worry, which can have software vulnerabilities that make them insecure in complex ways. In 2020, for instance, researchers discovered that the services to which Echo products connect were insecure, potentially allowing hackers to access personal information such as voice conversations. In 2017, researchers were able to directly hack an Amazon Echo to send audio to attackers. Amazon has a good record of fixing security problems when they are discovered but it is never possible to find every problem.

### Changing Tech Relationships

In a 2019 report published by the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, concerns were raised on the disruptive effect that voice assistants and smart speakers, such as Alexa, were having on the way that children interact with technology. From building sentiment and forming relationships which could encourage them to overshare personal details, to a fear of consuming content driven by commercial algorithms and an inability to assess reliability, how Alexa operates could considerably change children's relationship with technology in both the short and long term.

## Safety Tips

### Check privacy settings

It's possible to delete Alexa's recordings either entirely, or for a given period, with the instruction 'Alexa, delete everything I said.' Alternatively, set up the Alexa account privacy settings for that account to delete recordings every three or 18 months. Existing recordings made using the Alexa app can be deleted via Settings > Alexa Privacy > Review Voice History. A final tweak is to turn off the setting that allows Amazon to 'use voice recordings to improve Amazon services.'

### Control voice input

If privacy is paramount, one idea is to locate Echo devices in only one room rather than having several throughout the home. In addition, Alexa can be activated only when it is needed by manually turning off the microphone on Echo devices between use. Users can tell when Alexa is in listening mode as an indicator light should appear or an audible tone should sound.

### Set pin code

Amazon account users can order items from the company using a voice command, for example 'Alexa, buy some toilet paper.' To counter accidental use or misuse and avoid rocking up big bills, this can either be disabled or protected with a PIN code (it should be noted that this is an audible PIN however, so is not as secure as a typed code).

### Look out for 'Skills' apps

A big appeal of Alexa is that thousands of companies have created apps, which Amazon calls 'skills', that add useful capabilities, often integrations with other products or services. These are installed by asking Alexa to 'open/play/start' the skill. For example, a travel skill might be installed to check and automate checking train times and hotel bookings. However, it's important to remember that each of these might have a different privacy policy. A cautious approach is to install as few as possible, de-installing ones no longer in use.

### Talk about technology

As more and more homes install voice assistants and smart speakers such as Alexa, it's a good idea to talk to children about safe use of technology. Talk to them about what Alexa can be used for, how useful it can be and how to use it properly. Use it together to begin with and discuss any concerns they might have. Always make sure that children know to never share any personal or sensitive information and that if they need to talk about anything, they should always speak to a trusted adult.

### Meet our expert

John E. Dunn has edited and written for numerous computer and technology magazines since the early 1990s, most recently Which Computing, The Register, Forbes.com, Techworld, Computerworld and Naked Security. He is a specialist in online cybersecurity and cybercrime and their growing effect on education, young people and the public.





## Parents' evening



This term, teachers will be making phone calls in place of 1:1 meetings. Staff will contact you using the school text system to arrange a mutually convenient time.

Please can we ask for your help and support with parking for drop off and pick up. I have received a number of calls from local residents this week regarding

parents parking in Wallace Drive and Anglesey Gardens. Not only have they said that people are not parking safely but also being rude when asked to move their cars. Please can we all ask that you **think before you park** to ensure everyone's safety.



## Times Table Rock Stars 1/10/20

<b>Silver Class</b> 1st: Cameron K 2nd: Ellie H 3rd: Ellie-Mae P	<b>Purple Class</b> 1st: Miley M 2nd: Mia W 3rd: Dollie-Mae W	<b>Gold Class</b> 1st: Michael B 2nd: Isabelle P 3rd: George P
<b>White Class</b> 1st: Ethan L 2nd: Charlotte N 3rd: Rosie W	<b>Black Class</b> 1st: Erin 2nd: Chloe 3rd: Daisy H	<b>Green Class</b> 1st: Nikolay 2nd: Annabella D 3rd: Lena V
<b>Lilac Class</b> 1st: Darcey S 2nd: Henry J 3rd: Jake S	Well done to everyone. The top child in each class will be entered into a draw to win a prize at the end of the term.	

# Star of the Week!

Red Class	James V
Orange Class	Stoyan Z
Yellow Class	Olivia S
Turquoise Class	Grace A
Green Class	Amelie F
Lilac Class	Henry J
Black Class	Benjamin B
White Class	Emilie M
Gold Class	George P
Purple Class	Harvey N
Silver Class	Isabelle H

## Visiting the school office

Now that the weather is changing we will be closing the entrance hall door which leads to the school office, if you need to come to this area, please can we ask that you wear a mask to keep everyone safe.

