

Term 2

Firstly may all the staff at The Peak Academy take this opportunity to wish all our Children and their Families a restful and very Merry Christmas.



Here we have Charlie and Levi getting in the Christmas spirit on Christmas Jumper day.



As always the weeks have flown by here at The Peak Academy and it's been a brilliant Term. We have seen our pupils attend Hartpury Collage, Springfields Academy, Local shops and local walks.

As well as our Key Stage 4 pupils having started their mock exams.

Staff were disappointed to have been unable to celebrate Christmas with the Children in "The Peak" way however we have been really impressed with the online engagement through teams and particularly enjoyed Mr Sprosen's Quiz's. We will look to re arrange the reward trip for the new year.

Did you Watch Mr Vinton's Nativity play?

On Thursday 15/12/22, when we were all meant to be having our Christmas celebrations together Mr Vinton put on his own play.

Mr Vinton brought a smile and a real giggle to staff, students and a few parents who watched from home via a Teams call.

Mr Vinton presented the Christmas Nativity story in his office using all sorts of props made by himself. Here you can see him riding his version of a Donkey.

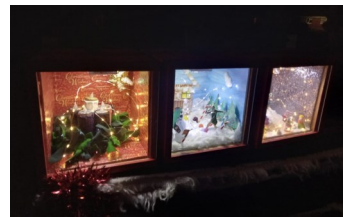


We now have our new website up and running, please do take the time to have a look, it's a great way to meet the team and see what the children have been up to.

<https://www.thepeakacademy.org/>



The Quarry Chapel invited The Peak Academy to take part in designing an Advent box for their 3D community Advent calendar. Our school's design was day one. Below is Donard Class carefully designing and putting together their piece.



Students and Staff walk up the Peak to mark Anti- Bullying week.

KS3 and KS4 took part in a local walk to mark anti bullying week, during the walks staff witnessed resilience from many pupils with some offering their fellow pupils a helping hand and some kinds words of encouragement to get to the top of The Peak.



Hartpury Collage

On Tuesday the 6th of December, 9 students went to Hartpury Collage to experience a day with HorsebackUK.

HorsebackUK run school development programmes for students with varying needs and past Trauma.

This was a taster day for The Peak. It went really well for all 9 pupils, with them all engaging with the horse they choose. HorsebackUK aim to improve self- awareness of how pupils engage with others, help them gain a better understanding of themselves, support pupils to work with peers and adults more positively, guild pupils in understanding body language positively in a non verbal way, improve self esteem and work on Patience.



Football Fixture with Springfield's Academy

On the morning of the 8th December The Peak Academy football team headed to Calne in Wiltshire to play Springfield's Academy. It was minus four degrees when we left Dursley and had a lovely drive through icy countryside. The team were all dressed in Peak green and not long after arriving the whistle blew to start the game. It was clear from early on that Springfield's were a very well practiced team who had clearly played together on many occasions. Throughout the game there were many players who continued to work despite going down several goals quite early on. Mason Parker never stopped running and showed true sportsmanship offering a hand to an opponent who had fallen over.

Richie Slee was committed to trying to challenge the opposition and showed excellent resilience. Jake Walworth was in goal and had to work relentlessly.

However he made some dramatic saves tipping the ball over the bar and diving to save balls, with encouragement from the side-line he kept his head up. The game did end in defeat but it was a great experience.



To those who have not had the pleasure of meeting Bootz you will often find him based in Art with Miss Gay.

Bootz joins a number of other lessons throughout the week and often finds himself booked up for afternoon tutor time.

At present, Bootz comes in to school on a Tuesday and Wednesday and is a valued member of The Peak Academy Team.



Here Baystones and Skiddaw visited Dursley town and found themselves in a traditional sweet shop.

They then went to the local recreational ground to enjoy the equipment before returning to school.

Meet Mrs Owen, who has transitioned from being one of our teaching assistants



to now the Peak's First Family Support Worker. Mrs Owen has already visited a number of families in their homes and on site over the last term and is looking forward to building strong relationships with all of our Peak families offering a range of support.

Dates for your Diary

Inset Day	03/01/23
Pupils return	04/01/23
Btec Public Services Exam	13/01/23
School Photos	16/01/23
Btec Science Exam	03/02/23



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SETTING UP APPS, GAMES AND SOFTWARE

Millions of new phones, tablets, laptops and games consoles will be nestling under Christmas trees this year. However, even if parents and carers have gone to the trouble of setting up these new devices and enabling the safety features, there are still potential hazards in the apps, games and software that children will want to install and use. Knowing what to look for and discussing those risks with your child may help avoid any nasty surprises this Christmas. Here are our top tips for ensuring that unwrapping this year's presents doesn't unleash any unexpected dangers.

TAKE NOTE OF AGE RATINGS

Back when most games were bought in shops, checking the age rating was easy: it was on the front of the box. Now that most games are downloaded, it's tougher – but not impossible. All reputable download stores show a game's age rating at the point of purchase, and you can check the suitability of a specific title your child wants to play at videostandards.org.uk/RatingBoard/games.

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'FREE' ISN'T ALWAYS FREE

The games market has changed radically in recent years. Many titles are free to download, but then tempt players to pay for cosmetic items (as in Fortnite) or to unlock additional content. There can be huge peer pressure for children to pay for these items. Agree a budget for in-game purchases before the game is downloaded, and make sure children can't authorise in-game purchases by themselves.

DISABLE IN-APP PURCHASING

It's not wise to leave children with devices that can make in-app purchases without your permission. Ideally, set up computers, consoles and phones so child accounts need an adult's authorisation to buy anything. On shared devices (like iPads, which don't allow user accounts), check the settings to ensure that in-app purchasing requires the account holder's password, fingerprint or face ID.

APPS ARE AGE RATED, TOO

Like games, apps in the major stores have age ratings, too – so you can see in advance whether an app's appropriate for your child. Additionally, phones' parental control settings allow you to set age limits, preventing young ones from downloading unsuitable apps themselves. These ratings aren't infallible, however: we've seen TV apps featuring adult shows with an age rating of 3, for example.

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CONSIDER STORAGE

Most apps and games will tell you in the online store how much space they need on a device. Check this carefully – especially with games, which can run into hundreds of megabytes and beyond. If you don't have enough free storage on a device to run the game or app, you won't get a refund from the store. You can normally check a device's available storage space through the settings menu.

WATCH OUT FOR IMITATORS

Even in the official stores, untrustworthy rogue apps can slip through the net. Common tricks are apps or games that have a slightly different name to the genuine article (Fortnite rather than Fortnite, for instance) or use logos which deliberately look very similar to the official app. To avoid downloading these imitations, read the app's description and check who the publisher is listed as.

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LEGAL APPS THAT BREAK THE LAW

There are many apps that are perfectly legal but enable illegal activity – streaming apps which let people watch football matches, say, without paying for Sky or BT Sport. Prosecution for using such apps is rare, but they can lead to risky behaviour like viewing rogue streams on sites teeming with malicious links. Watch for children installing unusual apps with 'TV', 'stream' or 'sport' in the name.

IN-APP REGISTRATION

It's common for apps and games to ask users to register, entering personal details like email address, date of birth and other information you might not want your child to divulge. Ask them to get your permission before giving any personal info to an app – and consider using your details rather than the child's, so they're not targeted by marketing spam or put at risk of having their data stolen.

STAY UPDATED

Most games and apps are subject to regular updates, which not only offer new content and features but also provide critical security improvements. Children tend to ignore such updates – usually because they don't understand why they're important, or they simply want to get straight on with gaming. Check your child's devices periodically to make sure these updates are being installed.

Meet Our Expert

Barry Collins has been a technology journalist and editor for more than 20 years, working for titles such as the *Sunday Times*, *Which?*, *PC Pro* and *Computeractive*. He's appeared regularly as a technology pundit on television and radio, including on *Newsnight*, *Radio 5 Live* and *ITV News at Ten*. He has two children and has written regularly about internet safety issues.



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Please be aware of

Group A Streptococcus

Group A streptococcus (GAS) is a common bacteria. Lots of us carry it in our throats and on our skin and it doesn't always result in illness. However, GAS does cause a number of infections, some mild and some more serious. The most serious infections linked to GAS come from invasive group A strep, known as iGAS. These infections are caused by the bacteria getting into parts of the body where it is not normally found, such as the lungs or bloodstream. In rare cases an iGAS infection can be fatal. Whilst iGAS infections are still uncommon, there has been an increase in cases this year, particularly in children under 10 and sadly, a small number of deaths.

How is it spread?

GAS is spread by close contact with an infected person and can be passed on through coughs and sneezes or from a wound. Some people can have the bacteria present in their body without feeling unwell or showing any symptoms of infections and while they can pass it on, the risk of spread is much greater when a person is unwell.

Which infections does GAS cause?

GAS causes infections in the skin, soft tissue and respiratory tract. It's responsible for infections such as tonsillitis, pharyngitis, scarlet fever, impetigo and cellulitis among others. While infections like these can be unpleasant, they rarely become serious. When treated with antibiotics, an unwell person with a mild illness like tonsillitis stops being contagious around 24 hours after starting their medication.

What is invasive group A strep?

The most serious infections linked to GAS come from invasive group A strep, known as iGAS. This can happen when a person has sores or open wounds that allow the bacteria to get into the tissue, breaches in their respiratory tract after a viral illness, or in a person who has a health condition that decreases their immunity to infection. When the immune system is compromised, a person is more vulnerable to invasive disease. What is being done to investigate the rise in cases in children?

What is being done to investigate the rise in cases in children?

Investigations are underway following reports of an increase in lower respiratory tract Group A Strep infections in children over the past few weeks, which have caused severe illness. Currently, there is no evidence that a new strain is circulating. The increase is most likely related to high amounts of circulating bacteria. It isn't possible to say for certain what is causing higher than usual rates of these infections. There is likely a combination of factors, including increased social mixing compared to the previous years as well as increases in other respiratory viruses.

What should you look out for?

It's always concerning when a child is unwell. GAS infections cause various symptoms such as sore throat, fever, chills and muscle aches. As a parent, if you feel that your child seems seriously unwell, you should trust your own judgement. Contact NHS 111 if or your GP if:

- your child is getting worse
- your child is feeding or eating much less than normal
- your child has had a dry nappy for 12 hours or more or shows other signs of dehydration
- your baby is under 3 months and has a temperature of 38C, or is older than 3 months and has a temperature of 39C or higher
- your baby feels hotter than usual when you touch their back or chest, or feels sweaty
- your child is very tired or irritable

Call 999 or go to A&E if:

- your child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- there are pauses when your child breathes
- your child's skin, tongue or lips are blue
- your child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake

How can we stop infections from spreading?

Good hand and respiratory hygiene are important for stopping the spread of many bugs. By teaching your child how to wash their hands properly with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, using a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes, and keeping away from others when feeling unwell, they will be able to reduce the risk of picking up, or spreading, infections.

A Message from Mr Hamp

Dear Parents/Carers,

We would like to thank all the pupils and Parents/Carers for their continued support and engagement as we come to the end of a very busy autumn term.

Friday we begin the Christmas holidays where the staff and all our pupils can enjoy a well-earned rest. However, there is some key information that needs communicating to ensure that you, as parents are fully aware of developments in school. As I hope you're now aware in August, The Peak transferred from The White Horse Academy Trust to the care of ReachSouth Multi Academy Trust. Since August we have been driving forward with a range of improvements related to :

During term 2 there has been a full review of the Teaching and Learning, and the assessment, marking and feedback policies to ensure alignment with need. We now have a Reading Strategy in place. Mr Evans is leading on this.

Year 11 are currently undertaking mocks. They deserve great respect for tackling what is always a difficult activity.

We have been on a mission to further increase our understanding of all our pupils and what may be their barriers to learning (This will be a theme of our training day on January 3rd 2023.) We are also building in more personalised interventions built from our understanding of individual need. We are also planning to further reward and celebrate those with high attendance. Attendance in school is vital for success!

Recruitment of support staff has been a challenge in the last two terms and the gaps in staffing have not helped us as we work to drive improvement at pace. However, we hope that our new website and the positivity of our wonderful staff, will help to get us back to a full team.

It is very important that The Peak now presents a positive and confident face to the community. We want to collaborate and work in partnership with parents and the wider community. The website will help but we've also appointed Emma Owen as our family support worker so that she, often working with Lois Portland, can directly engage with and support you around the issues which may affect and impact on your child in school.

We also aim to improve our reporting to you so that you have 3 reports per year. We're also rebuilding our relationship with Rednock School and hope to have a series of community events planned for 2023 to demonstrate our growing confidence and build contacts for volunteering, work experience etc.

We have big plans in 2023 for improving the environment of the school. The old head's house is being renovated for our therapy team and will open in term 4. The first consultation on 'Old House' has taken place. This will see this building refurbished and the old mobile classrooms replaced.

There are longer term plans in place for improved parking on site, repairing the MUGA (multi use games area), our IT infrastructure and having more green, therapeutic spaces across the site.

The second term has built well from the first. As the evidence above indicates there is a framework of improvement and development which has strength and clarity and is getting The Peak back to where it needs to be – a confident and happy school and place of work.

All staff deserve great credit for their resilience in the context of significant change whilst managing the day to day challenge of joining a new trust and consequent new systems, whilst positively managing the needs of our pupils. I cannot thank them enough for their commitment to your children.

Return to School – Term 3 School will re-open on **Wednesday 4th January 2023** as we have one scheduled teacher development day on Tuesday 3rd January.

Please find on the previous page, information regarding Group A Streptococcus. It is worthwhile for us all to read through this.

Christmas holiday support:

We recognise that the holiday transition may be difficult for some pupils. If you are in urgent need of support or have a safeguarding concern then please contact the school on 07809330745

We will then look to get in contact, signpost and offer support where we can.

May we all take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a safe Happy New Year.

Your Sincerely
Jon Hamp