



ON TRACK EDUCATION



Merry Christmas

FROM ON TRACK

Issue No. 10
December 2024

**The beautiful thing about learning is
that no one can take it away from you!**

**Don't
miss a
thing**

WHAT AN AMAZING TERM WE HAVE HAD!



What's new?

Letter from the Senior Leadership Team...

Season's Greetings to you all.

During the Summer our pupils again did a fabulous job in sitting their GCSE exams and completing BTEC work. All certificates have now been posted out to pupils.

This term we have also organised some mock GCSE exams in Maths and English for pupils to practice answering exam style questions in exam conditions with the support needs in place that they require. We hope this process will help acclimatise them all and make the summer exams go even smoother, now we have had a practice!

Last week we had a lovely surprise when some of last year's pupils dropped in to see us. They were all at Northampton College doing a mixture of A Levels and vocational courses like vehicle maintenance. One pupil reminisced that he didn't realise how lucky he was while at On Track to get all the support that he received, as it's not quite the same at college! So please remind current pupils to make the most of the opportunity while they are here.

School is not just a place where pupils learn as can be seen in the photograph on the left: Staff member Tony O'Connor recently achieved a black belt in kickboxing, a huge achievement. We also have a number of staff complete and some continuing to work on National Professional Qualifications to support their work with our pupils. A special well done also goes out to our SENCO Lucy Byatt for getting a distinction in her postgraduate diploma in specific learning difficulties and inclusion.

Thanks again to all our parents/carers and our amazing On Track staff for working so hard to support pupils through school, in making progress and achieving some fantastic qualifications.

We do all wish you a very relaxing Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Sally and Pete



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

Attendance



Whole school attendance is 87%. Well done to the 4 students who achieved 100% this term. They will receive a treat at the end of term.

Attendance is important and we would like any feedback from students on incentives we can offer! Please email: northamptonoffice@ontrackeducation.com



DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE & A CHRISTMAS CAROL - LIVE AT ON TRACK!

Space centre Trip

For National Space Week students were taken to the Leicester Space Museum which was a blast! Students got to see the planetarium show, which was incredible, before exploring the museum. Student feedback was really positive and we look forward to going again in the future.



Transformation was the theme that ran through the performances of 'Jekyll & Hyde' and 'A Christmas Carol'- Dr Jekyll's transformation representing the Janus-faced nature of the Victorian English gentleman and the moral lesson of Scrooge's transformation from 'covetous old sinner' to a merry philanthropist. Our students were enthralled by modernised adaptations of these powerful nineteenth-century texts whose themes of morality, power structures and spirituality persist in relevance today.

Students seized the opportunity to join in celebrating our culture of literature: exploring social change, our moral duties and what spirituality means to each of us. We were drawn into the world of Victorian Britain: one moment watching in terrific awe as Mr Hyde enacted his evil deeds in murky streets of London and the next singing Christmas carols and joining the Cratchits for a Christmas dinner party! A number of our students even volunteered to join the actors on stage to engage in acting workshops-singing, dancing and reciting key quotations from the text. We're so proud to see our students gaining in confidence and becoming enchanted with the world of literature and theatre.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

SPORT - certificate of commendation



KICKBOXING GRADING

The kickboxing groups have continued to excel once again this term and we have just had one of our most successful grading weeks yet. 17 belts were passed which included white, red, yellow, green and amazingly 3 blue belts. Congratulations to everybody involved! We also now have 3 members of staff that have Black belts, including Tony O'Connor who recently achieved a black belt this term.

FISHING

One of our fishing groups made it into the national Angling Times magazine!



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

££ ESCAPE ROOM CHALLENGE %%

➔ Religion WOW Days - Yom Kippur

RELIGION WOW DAY

At the beginning of October pupils had the opportunity to explore 'Yom Kippur', a Jewish festival. Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement, and is known as the holiest day of the Jewish year. During this period Jews traditionally ask for forgiveness from God for their wrongdoings. Pupils spent time during this day completing word-searches with subject specific vocabulary, creating forgiving hands, and painting positivity rocks.



Our maths students are encouraged to develop their "functional skills" to help solve real-life problems. On October 16th, students from every unit of the school put these maths skills to the test in an Escape Room Challenge.

Working in teams, they had to race against the clock to solve a sequence of maths problems, finding the codes to unlock the secret doors. Who could complete all 12 challenges in the quickest time?

Students showed fantastic teamwork during the session, sharing ideas and applying the maths skills they've developed in lessons. Every team solved all 12 sets of challenges in under an hour, which was a great achievement.

The Problem Solving Company are a leading provider of school maths events. Their staff were impressed at how quickly our students settled into their teams, their ability to solve problems, and the concentration and effort students showed to keep going.

Well done to all the students and staff who took part.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

➔ Christmas banners in Unit 3

Unit 3 students made Christmas banners and displays using their art and engineering skills. Their banners showed snow scenes, reindeer, holly and berries, night skies, and used mixed media to create 3D effects. Wishing everyone a Happy Christmas!



➔ School Council

School council meet once a term to discuss any issues, concerns or developments at school. This term they have voted for kindness winners of the term, Unit 2: Elias Unit 3: Troy Unit 1 to be announced in the new year.

Students have requested games to play in unit 3; Sally has approved this so they are very excited about it. New basketballs are being ordered for unit 2.

➔ Science

This term students have been working on how to prepare uncontaminated culture and effects of antiseptic on microorganisms, students have enjoyed being practical in lessons.



BTEC Business



This term our Business Studies pupils have been considering their future career plans, and exploring local businesses. Part of this included visiting a mixture of retail, service and retail and service businesses in Milton Keynes. Pupils are working very hard towards their qualification.

Up coming events!

WHAT'S ON

- Students return from the Christmas break on Wednesday 8th January 2025
- February Half term starts on 14th February. We return on 24th February
- Parents' Evening: Thursday 13th February 2025. More information to be sent out after Christmas
- School Visits to Museums and Zoos have been booked in for Jan/ Feb
- National Apprenticeship week is in February

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

➔ Macmillan Cake sale



The school arranged an afternoon event for this year's Macmillan coffee afternoon where we had a huge turnout of parents and carers supporting the charity. Students had baked items to sell, which went down a huge treat, whilst our business studies students sold items from their businesses, such as wax melts, crayons, custom pictures and charms. The school had a really positive buzz and students took part in the games, such as guess the sweets in the jar! The school is really proud to support this charity and we will be supporting Toni when she completes the London Marathon next year! Toni will also be returning to school to take part in the school's mini marathon to help her get her target.



➔ Guide Dogs



Our animal behaviour studies students have been working hard to raise money for The Guide Dogs for the blind association. They made their own dog safe treats and enrichment toys for our very own Diego. On Parents' Evening everyone was invited to see the stall and raise awareness of this incredible charity. We managed to raise £65 for the charity and we would like to thank all staff, students and parents/carers that donated.



➔ Donations received

I would like to thank all the companies for their donations we received this year to enable us to hold our Christmas Bingo and tombola. We had an amazing turn out of staff, students and families who won some amazing prizes. Special thanks go to:
Heather from Touch of Heather
Markie Prendiville from The Old Bank KFC
Riverside Hub
Deb at The Wardrobe Moulton
Parents that have donated present to school for students
Staff and their family and friends

SUPPORTING CHARITIES AND FAMILIES

Thank you for all of your support this term. We collected many food items for The McCarthy Dixon Foundation which they were very grateful for. We work in partnership with them supporting families that need it the most. We will continue this partnership throughout the year holding different events to raise money and awareness of the good work they do.



The MCCARTHY-DIXON
Foundation



The King's Award for Voluntary Service
The MBE for volunteer groups

CHRISTMAS FAMILY BINGO EVENT



Our Christmas Family Bingo was again a huge success and enjoyed by all. Thank you to all the parents and carers that attended. We had many prizes that were won on the tombola and the bingo games. This year we also held a cake sale, this was to help support and raise funds for The McCarthy Dixon Foundation, we raised an amazing £91.10 from the cake sale and tombola which has already made its way to the charity. This money will be used to support other families in Northamptonshire who are in need over the Christmas period. We look forward to our next event where we can all meet again and share some fun times.





FOREST SCHOOL

Due to the weather forest school has been a challenge for our students this term, but this has not stopped everyone having fun and making the most of our time. Students have built fires to cook on and to keep warm while drinking our hot chocolate. We have focussed on team building this term, encouraging our students to work together to make up new games or activities by using their imaginations and creativity. This has enhanced kindness, tolerance and their listening skills. We have had a lot of fun puddle splashing, mud dodging, leaf crunching and snow play. We have visited the National Space Centre and had a great day looking at the Christmas displays at Gates, Oakham. We are very proud of our students' endurance through a very wet and cold term.



ECO SCHOOLS



This term, Eco Schools have been learning about the the 3 R's and how they can help the environment by living greener lives.



Students have been making paper using recycled paper and wooden frames.



Students have reused jam jars to make Halloween lanterns.



Students have discussed how they can reduce their plastic waste.





RECYCLING THIS CHRISTMAS

***DID YOU KNOW...
we throw away
30% more rubbish
at Christmas?***



ONLY BUY WHAT YOU NEED. IN THE UK, A TYPICAL CHRISTMAS SEES BRIT'S THROW AWAY TWO MILLION TURKEYS.



ELECTRICAL WASTE LIKE CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS CAN BE RECYCLED AT RECYCLING CENTRES, BUT THEY MUSTN'T BE SENT TO LANDFILL.



REUSE CHRISTMAS CARDS AS GIFT TAGS OR TO WRITE SHOPPING LISTS ON!



CHRISTMAS CARDS WITH NO GLITTER OR FOIL CAN BE RECYCLED. JUST POP THEM IN YOUR HOME RECYCLING BIN!



USE UP YOUR LEFTOVERS FOR RECIPE IDEAS VISIT WWW.FOODSAVVY.ORG.UK/RECIPES




GOOD NEWS, REAL CHRISTMAS TREES CAN BE TREECYCLED! SOME AUTHORITIES ORGANISE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS OR DROP-OFF POINTS.



NEVER PUT BATTERIES IN YOUR RECYCLING BIN. TAKE THEM TO A BATTERY COLLECTION POINT.



SCRUNCH THE WRAPPING PAPER IN YOUR HAND – IF IT STAYS SCRUNCLED IT CAN BE RECYCLED



DONATE ANY UNWANTED CHRISTMAS PRESENTS RATHER THAN THROWING THEM AWAY.



***We throw away
roughly 227,000
miles of
wrapping paper
every Christmas.***

Recycled Christmas Craft

MAKE A CHRISTMAS LANTERN JAR



A clean jar, Glue,
Paint, Scissors,
Ribbon/string,
Stickers, buttons
Christmas or tissue
paper ,LED tealight

STEP 1: Paint your jar in a colour of your choice or wrap the jar with Christmas paper.

STEP 2: Leave jar to dry or if using paper wait for the glue to dry

STEP 3: Cover the jar with stickers or paint a design onto the jar

STEP 4: Add buttons or embellishments to your jar

STEP 5: Tie ribbon or string around the top of the jar.

STEP 6: Place an LED tealight into the jar.

ALLERGY REGISTER FOR SCHOOL

Allergy Register.

This term we have been working towards our school being placed on the Allergy register. We are ensuring that we are allergy aware and prepared for any possible anaphylaxis in school. We now have emergency adrenaline auto-injectors in school and all staff have undertaken training to manage an allergic response and anaphylaxis.

Please take the time to go through the information provided as everyone in our school community has a part to play.



HOW PARENTS CAN SUPPORT PUPILS

5-7% of children have a food allergy, so it's likely there are pupils in your child's class with a food allergy. There are ways you can do to support these children.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Learn about food allergies and take them seriously. Talk to your child about what it means to live with a food allergy.
- Be Allergen Aware. If you are bringing food into school (perhaps for a packed lunch or cake sale) and your school has asked you not to bring in a specific ingredient, please take this seriously. It's not always obvious that a food will contain a specific allergen, so read the ingredients and allergy labelling carefully.
- Children with allergies may be coping with higher levels of anxiety on a daily basis. Their friends can be their biggest supporters. Encourage your child to be an allergy ally.
- If your child is older and it is appropriate, why not encourage them to learn how to deliver potentially life-saving adrenaline in an emergency. [Check out this free training from The Allergy Team.](#)
- It's understandable that you might feel nervous, if your child has a friend with food allergies who is invited over for a playdate or party. These are some things you can do to help keep them safe and feel included:
 - Speak to their parent or carer to find out what they are allergic to and find out what foods they need to avoid.
 - If you're catering, think about all the ingredients that go into your recipes and make sure you read all the ingredients' labels on bought produce. [Here are some recipes from 4m the main allergens.](#) Be mindful of cross-contamination eg. make sure you use clean pans and utensils.
 - Please don't be offended if the parent/carer wants to send their child to your house with their own food. Sometimes this is more comfortable for everyone, especially if it's the first time they are visiting.
 - If you are worried about anything, speak to the parent/carer, they are likely to be very happy to help and keen for their child to be included in as many activities as possible.

theallergyteam.com



UNDERSTANDING FOOD ALLERGY



Allergic disease is the most common chronic medical condition in childhood. Food allergy will affect on average 1-2 pupils in every class.

WHAT IS A FOOD ALLERGY?



Food allergy is an overactivity of our immune system, instead of ignoring a food the immune system mistakenly sees it as harmful and reacts to it. A food allergy is very different to a food intolerance or a diet choice. An intolerance does not involve the immune system and is less serious.



Allergic reactions can vary in severity from mild and moderate, to severe and even life-threatening. Severe allergic reactions are called anaphylaxis and need to be treated as a medical emergency. To treat anaphylaxis you need to give adrenaline immediately using an adrenaline auto-injector eg. an EpiPen.



People with a food allergy must avoid their allergen. Even just a trace of the food they are allergic to, can cause an allergic reaction.

COMMON ALLERGENS



You can be allergic to any food but most reactions are caused by just 9 foods:



Venom (such as wasp and bee stings), medication, latex, animals and some vaccines can also cause serious allergic reactions.

Dear Parents/Carers,

At On Track we want to make sure our pupils with allergies feel safe at school. So, we're asking everyone in our school community to do their bit to become allergen aware.

Please take a look at the factsheet from The Allergy Team included in our newsletter, to find out more about allergies.

Why is this important?

At our school we have pupils with a range of allergies and food intolerances including:

- Dairy and Soy

These pupils are at risk of serious harm if they have an allergic reaction, so we ask that everyone does what they can to help us keep them safe.

How can you help?

- Let us know if your child has an allergy
- Talk to your child about allergies and the importance of:
 - Taking allergies seriously
 - Washing their hands before eating
 - Not sharing food with their friends
 - Being supportive of their friends who have allergies (being an allergy ally)
 - Learning about how to react if 1 of their friends has an allergic reaction. You could share these videos from <https://theallergyteam.com/treating-an-allergic-reaction/> with your child
- When bringing in food to share with friends:
 - Include a full list of ingredients
 - Let us know if there has been any risk of contamination with an allergen
 - Let us know in advance so that we can warn any parents of pupils with allergies
- If you want to bring in some food to share with friends, we can only accept shop-bought food in its original packaging. This is so that we can check the ingredients list and be sure that the food is safe for all our pupils to eat

If your child invites a friend over, ask them if they have an allergy, and contact their parents to discuss what their needs are. Try your best to exclude the allergen, not the child.

If you have any questions or concerns about allergies, please get in touch with Sally O'Connor or Lucy Byatt

did you know?

COST OF LIVING SUPPORT

can include:

- household bills (such as gas and electricity)
- rent
- council tax
- help with buying food
- childcare costs

as well as other important daily essentials

There are people on hand to support and advise you, so please get in touch today.

For more information on cost of living support visit www.northants.gov.uk/cost-of-living or call 0300 126 7000

*Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

I have information about a crime.

I am worried someone is going to get hurt.

Need to tell someone

Don't want my name involved

Who can I tell?

Tell us **WHAT YOU KNOW**

100% anonymously at Fearless.org

Follow this QR code to learn how to spot child exploitation

#LookCloser

Help us protect children and young people from exploitation and abuse.

If you are concerned about a child and think it's an emergency, dial **999** or **101** if it's not an emergency.

On a train text British Transport Police on **61016**.

If you would rather remain anonymous, you can contact the independent charity Crimestoppers online or call **0800 555 111**.

FAMILY SUPPORT

DOWTK Kids Eat Out For Less December

Day Out With The Kids

- Morrisons** - Kids eat free with the purchase of an adult meal over £4.49.
- TGI Fridays** - Kids eat free all day every day with every adult meal purchased. Must be a Stripe Rewards member.
- Bella Italia** - Kids eat for £1 with any adult main, 4-6pm Monday to Thursday.
- Sizzling Pubs** - Kids eat for £1 with the purchase of an adult main meal (3-7pm Monday to Friday).
- Beefeater** - Two kids under 16 eat for FREE with every adult breakfast purchased.
- Hard Rock Cafe** - Kids eat free with a DOWTK VIP Pass.
- Brewers Fayre** - Two kids under 16 eat for FREE with every adult breakfast purchased.
- ASDA Cafe** - Kids eat for £1 all day, every day - no adult purchase required.
- Sainsbury's Cafe** - One child's hot main meal or lunch bag for £1 with the purchase of an adult hot main meal from £3.20.
- IKEA** - Kids pasta and a soft drink for 99p or any other kids meal for £1.50. Available every day from 11am.

Information correct at time of posting

COPING AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas can be tough. That's why it's important to know there's always someone you can talk to.

- mind** - 0300 123 3393 Helpline, mind.org.uk
- shout 85258** - Text SHOUT to 85258, 24/7 text service, giveusashout.org
- SAMARITANS** - 116 123, 24/7 helpline, samaritans.org
- MINDS** - Text YM to 85258, 24/7 text service, youngminds.org.uk
- CALM** - 0800 56 56 56 Helpline for men, thecalmline.net
- PAPYRUS** - 0800 066 4141 Under 35s Helpline, papyrus-uk.org

FREE WELLBEING CAFÉ CHRISTMAS OPENING TIMES FOR 11-18 YEAR OLDS IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

If you find yourself needing support over the festive period, we're here to listen and help in your time of need.

- Monday 25th December - CLOSED**
- Tuesday 26th December - CLOSED**
- Wednesday 27th Dec 4pm - 8pm**
Time 2 Talk, Chantry House, 88 Walling Street, Towcester, Northants, NN12 6BT
07385 295008 - 01327 706706
- Thursday 28th Dec 4pm - 8pm**
Youth Works, 97 Rockingham Rd, Kettering, NN16 9HX - 01536 518339
- Friday 29th Dec 4pm - 8pm**
The Lowdown, 3 Kingswell Street, Northampton, NN1 1PP - 01604 634385
- Saturday 30th Dec 10am - 2pm**
Service Six, 15 Sassoon Mews, Wellingborough NN8 3LT - 01933 277520
- Saturday 30th Dec 12pm - 4pm**
Time 2 Talk, The Abbey, Market Square, Daventry, NN11 4XG - 01327 706706
- Monday 1st January 2024 - CLOSED**
- Usual Café days and times resume from 2nd January 2024**

12 Top Tips for Children and Young People to Enjoy a TECH-FREE CHRISTMAS

The Christmas holidays are tailor made for families to enjoy relaxed quality time in each other's company – but with distractions like ping-pong phone notifications, the lure of games consoles and online Boxing Day sales, that can be more difficult than it sounds. Staying off our phones, laptops and tablets, however, can really help us to appreciate the things that genuinely matter at this special time of year. Follow our 12 top tips for a tech-free festive season ... Yule be glad you did! Merry Christmas!

CHRISTMAS CRAFTING

Get out the paper, glue and scissors and have a go at hand-making cards or gift tags. You could also create your own decorations to add a uniquely personal touch to the Christmas tree.

NATURE QUEST

Try a scavenger hunt in the garden or your local park. Challenge yourself and your family to find natural treasures that are symbolic of this time of year – like holly or pinecones, say.

CAROL KARAOKE

Sing your hearts out with a Christmas carol karaoke night. Pick out your favourite tunes and enjoy a musical celebration with family and friends.

WANDER DOWN MEMORY LANE

How about making a scrapbook filled with your favourite memories from Christmases gone by? Unleash your creativity while you enjoy reliving those magical holiday moments.

TRY REFLECTIVE JOURNALLING

Get down your thoughts, feelings and reflections on the holiday in a notebook or diary – you could also list some of your main goals for the new year.

WRAP IT UP

Take time to get inventive with some luxurious gift wrapping. Break out the wrapping paper, ribbons and bows to make parceling up those presents into a creative adventure.

WALK IN A WINTER WONDERLAND

Delight in the great outdoors with some gentle walks over the holiday. The family can all wrap up warm as you add to your step count and savour the crisp winter air together.

BE A SEASONAL CHEF

Get the whole family working together in the kitchen for some Christmas cooking. Choose a recipe and whip up a festive feast that all of you can enjoy.

ENJOY A CHRISTMAS STORY

Christmas is a perfect time for sparking stories. Get cosy and lose yourself in a brilliant book, from Dickens to Dr Seuss or a more modern favourite by Chris van Allsburg or Tom Fletcher.

SNOWY SCULPTURES

If we're fortunate enough to get a white Christmas this year, make the most of the opportunity by having a family snowman-building competition.

GAMES NIGHT GALA

Dive into some old-school fun with a tech-free games night. Classic board games and card games have stood the test of time for a reason!

GOODWILL TO ALL

You and your family could spend a day volunteering – perhaps at a food bank or helping a local charity. After all, kindness and thinking of others are part of what Christmas is all about.

Meet Our Expert

Written by our digital safety experts from the National Online Safety Centre, this guide is packed with practical advice and ideas to help you and your family enjoy a tech-free Christmas. It's a great way to get the most out of the festive season and to make the most of the time you spend together.



The National College

NOS National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday

@nationalonlinesafety

/NationalOnlineSafety

@nationalonlinesafety

@national_online_safety

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 11.12.2023

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SETTING UP NEW DEVICES FOR CHILDREN

At Christmas, millions of lucky children will be excitedly ripping the wrapping off new phones, tablets, computers or consoles. However, in the rush to let young ones enjoy their shiny gadgets, many parents neglect to set those devices up safely – increasing the chances of children going online and stumbling across adult content, making expensive downloads or installing unsuitable apps. A little time configuring the device properly can save a lot of anguish later. Here are our top tips to ensure that a dream gift on Christmas morning doesn't turn into a nightmare by New Year.

PASSCODES FOR IPHONE/IPAD

If your child's getting their own iPhone or iPad, you can set parental controls that make it difficult for them to access inappropriate content or download expensive apps. Once the device is set up, go to the Settings app and tap Screen Time, then select Use Screen Time Passcode and enter a passcode. Keep it to yourself so your child can't switch the protection off.

SCREEN TIME SETTINGS ON IPHONE/IPAD

Once you've set a Screen Time Passcode, you can adjust various safety settings. You could, for example, only allow communication with people from the Contacts app, place restrictions on App Store purchases and apply age limits to movies, music and web content. There are many more protective options available within the Screen Time settings section.

FAMILY LINK FOR ANDROID

Parents can manage Android phones and tablets, as well as Google Chromebooks, through Google's Family Link app. This gives your child some independence (and their own Google account) but lets parents monitor which apps are being used, set limits on content and ensure that parental permission is required to install apps. Look for Family Link in the Google Play Store.

ADD A CHILD TO FAMILY LINK

The easiest way to add a child's device to Family Link is to set it up with its own Google account. It's a good idea to create this before they use their new phone, tablet or Chromebook. Once they're logged in, open the Family Link app on your phone, press '+' in the top right and add a new family member using their Google account details. Then follow the on-screen instructions.

FAMILY SHARING ON A MAC

Families using a Mac get similar screen time options to iPhone and iPad users. Again, if you're setting up a Mac for a child, make yourself the main admin and add them as a user. This is handled through Apple's Family Sharing service, which not only allows you to put restrictions on child accounts but share apps and other purchases with them too. Search 'Family sharing' at <https://support.apple.com>.

PLAYSTATION PARENTAL CONTROLS

With parental controls for the PS3, you'll need a PlayStation Network account (as the 'family manager') and the child will need their own account, which they should link to with an ID. However, this all needs to be set up in advance, as you might want to do it before the big day. Go to PlayStation.com and search 'family account' for instructions.

DISCUSS IT WITH YOUR CHILD

If you're planning to implement any kind of restriction or protection settings on your child's new device, we'd recommend having a discussion with your young one first about what these controls do, and what they are for. If you try to impose parental controls surreptitiously or with no advance warning, don't be surprised if your child tries to find a way around them.

SET AN ADMIN ON PCS

On Windows PCs and laptops, it's important not to let your child have a general admin account as this is the main admin on the device. If you're setting up a new family PC, go to Windows' own device, set it up using your own account details and you'll become the admin by default. Then set up children with their own separate accounts: Settings > Accounts > Family & Other Users > Add Other User.

SET WINDOWS LIMITS

Once your child's account has been created, a parent admin can go back into the Family & Other Users menu and apply limits to it. These include restricting access time, the type of games and apps that can be installed, and which users can share. Microsoft also includes reporting tools which, for example, can alert you with a weekly summary of your child's activity on the device.

TREAT AN XBOX LIKE A PC

The same control settings you use for a PC can be used to apply parental controls on an Xbox. Again, once your child is signed into the Xbox with their own account, you can then monitor and regulate their activity from a PC or web browser. Microsoft's dashboard allows you to manage such a communication through the console, so you can limit who can contact your child, for example.

INSTALL XBOX FAMILY SETTINGS

If you don't have a PC, but your child does have an Xbox, it might be easier to use the Xbox Family Settings app for iPhone or Android. Here, you can restrict console screen time (especially handy if the console is in a bedroom), restrict communication and monitor the types of games being played. There's also a feature where you can allocate spending money for games or in-game purchases.

STAY VIGILANT

It's important to remember that none of these methods is 100% foolproof. Nobody will ever invent flawless filters or parental controls – not least because what's unacceptable to some parents is perfectly acceptable to others. So although devices' parental controls will help to keep your child safe online, they work best side by side with good old-fashioned parental vigilance.

Meet Our Expert

Bobby Collins has been a technology journalist and editor for more than 20 years, writing for sites such as the Sunday Times, Weekly PC Pro and Cnet.com. His work has appeared regularly as a technology pundit on television and radio, including on Newsnight, Radio 5 Live and TV News or Ten. He has two children and writes regularly about internet safety issues.

