Safeguarding and Attendance Newsletter

Welcome to our Safeguarding and Attendance newsletter! We are thrilled to share with you the latest developments in our mission to make a positive impact in our community.

Firstly, I would like to introduce myself - Mrs Jackson - to our school community. I will be in school to support with any safeguarding needs and to monitor and support attendance. I am based in the Community Room and parents are welcome to reach out to me for support as and when needed

This term, I have been settling in to life at Peartree Spring Primary School and getting to know the children and parents who have all made me feel very welcome here.

I will be holding an introduction session on Friday 20th March 2026 at 2.30pm and Monday 23rd March at 9am in the Community Room for anyone who would like to come along and find out more about the work I do or to come and say hello.

I look forward to working with many of you in the future.

Mrs Jackson

In this newsletter you can expect:

Introduction

Attendance information

Support we can offer

Online safety information

Attendance

Attendance is a very important part of school. Did you know that one day of school, every two weeks leaves you with only 90% attendance? This is categorised at 'persistent absence'. We know that you can't help being ill and it is important to stay home when you are unwell as it reduces the spreading of infections whilst contagious but when you are well enough to attend school, it is important to do so.

Every day missed at school is a lost opportunity for learning. Being on time is important too. Being late fifteen minutes every day is the equivalent of 10 days of school being missed.

We are here to support. If you have a concern about your child's attendance or are struggling to get them to come to school, please get in touch with Mrs Jackson for a meeting.

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

Don't miss out on the education you deserve.

365 DAYS IN A CALENDAR YEAR

175 NON-SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR

There are 175 non-school days during the year to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments. Days off school add up to lost learning.

190 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR (0 days absence) 190 days for your education	180 DAYS OF EDUCATION 10 days absence Over 50 hours of lost learning	171 DAYS OF EDUCATION 19 days absence 95 hours of lost learning	(Half a term missed) 161 DAYS OF EDUCATION 29 days absence (half a term) 142.5 hours of lost learning	152 DAYS OF EDUCATION 38 days absence 190 hours of lost learning	143 DAYS OF EDUCATION 47 days absence 235 hours of lost learning
100% Attendance	**95%** Attendance	**90%** Attendance	**85%** Attendance	**80%** Attendance	**75%** Attendance
GOOD EXCELLENCE ATTENDANCE. Best chance of success. Gets you off to a flying start. WELL DONE!		WORRYING POOR ATTENDANCE. Less chance of success. Makes it harder to make progress. CONCERNING!		SERIOUS CONCERN VERY POOR ATTENDANCE. Serious impact on education and reduces life chances! EXTREMELY CONCERNING!	

Good attendance means being in school at least **94%** of the time or 180-190 days.
Did you know? A two week holiday in term time means that the highest attendance you can achieve is 94.5%.

School absence

If your child is absent due to illness, please contact the school before 8.30am each day. This allows us enough time to input the reason for absence into our registers. This can be done via Studybugs, email to attendance@peartreespring.herts.sch.uk or by calling 01438 233900, option 1. Please do not report absences via Schoolgateway.

When your child is absent for other reasons, please inform us in the same ways. It may not be authorised but communication is key to a positive relationship between home and school.

Our school policy is to contact any parent who has not informed us of their child's absence that day. This is due to safeguarding reasons. Please remember to contact the school with any reasons for absence.

Holidays in term time are not authorised and you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice if you do take your child out of school for a holiday.

Requests for leave of absence must be addressed to Mrs Skeggs and emailed to attendance@peartreespring.herts.sch.uk at least 4 weeks prior to the leave taking place.

Lateness also contributes to the overall attendance percentage. Being late to school means the register has been taken for that session (morning or afternoon) and they have missed the present mark.

We work closely with the Attendance Team to monitor attendance in line with government policies.

For more information about attendance, please contact Mrs Jackson.

Meet the team

Mrs Jackson

Mrs Hansen

Mrs Jackson is our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Attendance Lead.

Mrs Hansen is our Family Support Worker and Pastoral Lead.

How can we help?

- If you have concerns about your child's wellbeing or your personal circumstances, please reach out to one of us for a meeting to see what support we can offer
- We hold a coffee morning for parents every half term
- Parent workshops
- SEN family afternoons
- Pastoral support in school
- Referrals and signposting to external agencies for parents in need of support
- Transition support
- A listening ear

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about
ROBLOX

Roblox is an online platform where users can play and create games known as 'experiences' made by other users. Roblox has a large UK audience. ITV News has reported that millions of people in Britain use the platform regularly, with children forming a significant proportion of its users. The sheer scale of it makes it extremely difficult to moderate effectively, creating risks for unsupervised children.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

A PLATFORM RATHER THAN A GAME

Roblox differs from traditional video games in that it hosts millions of user-created experiences rather than a fixed set of developer-produced content. Each experience is self-rated by its creator rather than independently age-rated in advance, as is the case with PEGI-rated games. With millions of user-created experiences, moderation is largely automated which means that inappropriate content may reach younger players and have a harmful effect.

MATURE CONTENT

With much of Roblox's moderation automated through AI and creators self-certifying suitability, inappropriate content frequently appears on the platform. Some experiences may include content intended for older players. While Roblox has tools to restrict access based on age settings, these systems are not always perfect. Younger players are likely to encounter content you may deem unsuitable.

IN-GAME SPENDING

Roblox is free to play, but many experiences and cosmetics include optional purchases using Robux, the platform's virtual currency, to get advantages in games. This business model is common across online games, but reporting has highlighted cases where children have spent large amounts of money unintentionally or without understanding the real-world cost.

RISK OF ADDICTION

Roblox encourages repeated and extended play. Many experiences are made of short tasks, rewards, and progression systems that can prompt users to keep playing for longer periods of time. Some games also use reminders, daily rewards, or timed events to encourage frequent logins. These designs can make it difficult to stop playing. Spending long periods online may affect sleep, schoolwork, or other activities if boundaries are not in place.

COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER USERS

Roblox includes text and voice features that allow players to chat in shared game spaces. While the platform uses automated filters and moderation tools, media investigations have found that inappropriate and potentially harmful messages can still get through. There are risks that children could be targeted by groomers. In response, Roblox has announced changes to how chat works. The platform plans to use facial age-estimation technology to restrict chat access between adults and children they do not know.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Roblox's parental controls provide an important starting point. Linking a child's account to an adult account allows parents to apply spending controls, limit communication features, and review recent activity. Regular supervision, use of parental controls, and conversations with children about what they see online can help reduce the risk of exposure to inappropriate content.

CONSIDER LIMITING OR DISABLING CHAT

Although Roblox is introducing tighter age-based chat restrictions, some parents and educators may prefer to disable chat entirely for younger children. Children can still play games while communicating with friends they know through other supervised platforms.

PLAY TOGETHER WHERE POSSIBLE

Playing Roblox with a child can help adults understand the types of experiences available, how monetisation works, and how children interact online. This shared engagement can also make it easier for children to raise concerns if something feels wrong. Parents and educators should monitor all games played on Roblox due to its self-rating nature.

ENCOURAGE OPEN CONVERSATIONS

Many Roblox experiences are creative and age appropriate, and for many children, the platform is an important way to socialise with friends. Rather than banning it outright, parents and educators should talk openly with children about online safety, spending, and how to respond to inappropriate behaviour.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is a technology journalist who has written for publications including Wired, TechRadar, The Telegraph, The Evening Standard, The Guardian and The New Statesman.

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What Parents and Carers Need to Know about
SOCIAL BOTS

WHAT ARE SOCIAL BOTS?

Bots are computer-generated accounts which sit on social media, masquerading as humans. While many are harmless or even have good intentions, others are designed to extort, sell products, spread propaganda or bully human users. Bots – short for 'robots', of course – are often confused with state-funded troll accounts; the two can be difficult to tell apart. However, if the results are the same, then both should be treated similarly.

KNOWING THE RISKS ...

AS TROTURFING

Propaganda and conspiracy theories are usually niche interests on social media. But with an army of thousands of bots amplifying posts through retweets and shares, people can make their messages travel further and appear to reflect mainstream opinion. Known as 'astroturfing', this can make children more susceptible to questionable beliefs.

CYBERBU YING

Bots canbe set to hunt for certain search terms or opinions and then automatically reply aggressively to anybody who uses them in a message. This means that if your child posts something that whoever programmed the bot doesn't like, they may be deluged with angry messages from fake accounts – which can be overwhelming and comparable to cyberbullying.

E XTORTION

Criminals use bots to trap users into sextortion or online blackmail scams. The bot cultivates a flirtatious online relationship with the victim, then persuades them into a video chat during which they are tricked into posing inappropriately or carrying out a sexual act. This footage is recorded, and threats are then made to release it to the victim's friends and family unless money is paid.

SHADY SE ING

Bots are often used for illicit advertising – that is, they spam social media platforms with links to commercial websites. Additionally, some unscrupulous influencers have been found to use bots to artificially inflate their number of followers and the engagement with their account – making them seem more popular and therefore able to charge companies more to work with them.

SPO ING THE SIGNS ...

BEWARE PROLIFIC POS T ING

Bots post a superhuman amount of content. A visit to their profile usually proves they're responding to people far faster than a human could. Check their join date and number of followers. If the account has been around for ages and still doesn't have any friends, it probably isn't a real person. A brand-new page is also a red flag.

NOTICE O USERNAMES

Finding a social media username that isn't taken can be difficult. People often end up with their name and some numbers – but not the way bots do it. A username like johnsmith5273 is either a sign of a random number generator or a site offering an unwieldy alternative because the preferred name is taken, which isn't something most humans would accept.

VERIFY PROFILE PICS

Check a user's authenticity by investigating their profile picture: bots obviously don't have faces, so they tend to skim publicly available photos to try to fool people. Put suspicious pics through a reverse-image search like TinEye – you might find they actually belong to someone else or are stock images.

CHECK THE CONTENT

Bots can't think for themselves and usually just exist to amplify somebody else's message. Try copying and pasting the text into the search function on Twitter, for example, and see if it's being said anywhere else. If a lot of similar-looking accounts are saying the same thing, you're probably looking at a bot army.

Advice for Parents & Carers

SPOT THE BOTS

Forewarned is forearmed, so if your children aren't that familiar with the world of bots yet, explain what to look for using the tips in this guide. At the moment, most bots still aren't that sophisticated – so finding accounts which are designed purely to troll people or spread misinformation isn't hugely difficult, even for an untrained eye.

BLOCK AND MOVE ON

Your child isn't obliged to be friends with anyone online, bot or not. Pretty much every social media app has a block button, and you should encourage your child to use it whenever something or someone is making their digital lives less than pleasant. If everyone blocked malicious bots rather than engaging them, they wouldn't pose a problem.

BE SUSPICIOUS

While many people have made lifelong friends over the internet, it's important not to be too trusting. Random strangers adding you on Facebook could well be bots, so do some background checks: do they have any mutual friends? Is it a new account? Even if everything seems fine, encourage your child to be cautious: warn them of potential risks.

M t Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist and the former deputy editor of technology and internet culture website Alphr. Now freelance, he has contributed articles to publications including the *New Statesman*, CNET, the *Evening Standard*, Wired, Rock Paper Shotgun, Gizmodo, Pocket Gamer, *Stuff, T3, PC Pro, Macworld*, TechRadar and Trusted Reviews.

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Dates for your diary

20th March **2.30pm**	Meet Mrs Jackson
23rd March **9am**	Meet Mrs Jackson
23rd March **3.15 - 4.30**	SEN parent event

PEARTREE SPRING PRIMARY SCHOOL

Featherstone Wood Primary School

THE WILLOW CENTRE

CHERRY TREE