

Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day



Thameside In-touch!

Edition 37: 14th February 2025

Facebook: @ThamesidePrimary

Dear Parents and Carers,



It has been a really productive first term of 2025! This term our children have experienced a huge range of curriculum enrichment experiences to bring their learning alive and support their enjoyment of school. These have included a professional performance of Cinderella; a drone workshop; Cyber Champions workshops and also class visits, such as the recent Year 3 visit to Headington Rye School for a fantastic music workshop. These wider experiences are a key part of our vision and offer at Thameside – developing children's wider personal and character development is central to all we do.

We also welcomed some trust Headteachers and our governors this term; we received some really positive feedback which provides great validation of the work we do at Thameside. There are always things to develop and having these 'fresh eyes' is always really helpful to shape our priorities.

We are still awaiting the report which we will share in more detail next term, but the reviewers commented particularly on:

- ✓ **the 'oustanding' personal development opportunities we provide – clubs, workshops, visitors, pupil leadership which are inclusive of all children.**
- ✓ **strong teaching practice across the whole school**
- ✓ **the knowledge that leaders (including subject leaders) have of the strengths and areas for development of the school**
- ✓ **how positively our children speak about our school.**
- ✓ **Our warm and caring environment**

They also commented on the excellent behaviour of our pupils:

'Behaviour was excellent, and students were polite and friendly as well as being engaged in their respective activity'

Forest School

We are also incredibly excited that Miss Higgins Boyce will very soon be completing her Forest School Lead training – from the summer term we will be able to start offering Forest School sessions, initially for Early Years and then widening to other year groups' next year. A fantastic new addition our school offer!

Staffing updates

In staffing updates, sadly Miss Cross will be leaving us at Easter to embark on her retirement. Miss Cross has taught at Thameside for many years and has been a huge part of the Thameside journey. Her kindness, nurturing approach and passion for science will be greatly missed by us all - I know she has positively impacted the lives of so many children, staff and parents over the years. I will also personally miss her wonderful sense of humour and our regular conversations about what constitutes a 'proper' hot cross bun! Miss Cross will be missed greatly but we are excited to hear all about her planned retirement adventures (and I am sure we can convince her to come back soon to Thameside and volunteer!)

After a rigorous recruitment process (that also involved our Head Pupils), we are delighted that we have appointed an experienced teacher, Mrs Kerry White, who will take over from Miss Cross in Year 3 after Easter - she will be spending time in school with Miss Cross next term to get to know the school and the class before formally starting after the Easter break; we hope that this will ensure a really smooth and positive transition for our children.

Finally, as mentioned in my email, Julie Price (Home School Linker) has made the decision to leave Thameside due to personal reasons – we wish her luck for the future, and we have an advertisement out for a new Home Link Worker so please do share far and wide.

Wishing you all a restful half term and we look forward to seeing you back at school on Monday 24th February.

Laura Youngman

Headteacher

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Science Fair

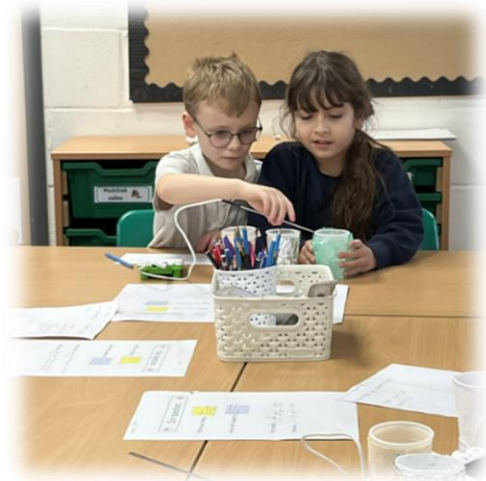
Over the last term, children from 16 different primary schools from the Faringdon, Wantage and Abingdon local area have been investigating science questions in preparation for the Science Fair; this included approximately 3000 children! Thameside was excited to part of this amazing science

opportunity.

Classes at Thameside have investigated which materials float, how we could change the properties of paper, keeping drinks warm in the Arctic, how weather can be used to make energy, which liquids mix and which don't and Year 6 looked at plastic pollution and investigated whether we could make an environmentally friendly plastic.



Every child in Key Stage 1 and 2 was totally engaged in their science learning. It was amazing to see everyone so engrossed in science and to hear children talking about what they have learned. Ask



anyone in Year 5 what miscible and immiscible means and I am sure they will explain it to you!

Each pair of children carried out a practical investigation and then produced a poster showing what they had learned.

Two children from each class were chosen as year group winner and went to the Semi-Final at King Alfred's School in Wantage.

Congratulations to these children.

Year 1 – Robyn and Ellison

Year 2 – Mason and Aashitha

Year 3 – Rezwan and Saharsh

Year 4 – Elsie and Evie-Mai

Year 5 – Lucas and Kateryna

Year 6 – Flint and Shane



Two children from each class were chosen as year group winner and went to the Semi-Final at King Alfred's School in Wantage.

Everyone had an amazing time at King Alfred's and enjoyed showing off their exhibit to the judges and were great at explaining what that had learned from their investigation.



Mrs Warren, Director of Education for the Trust commented, "The girls from Thameside were so proud to tell me about how they used RPM as a measure for their investigation."

We are very proud to announce that these children have been chosen to take part in the Science Fair final in April.

KS1 – Mason and Aashitha

Y3/4 Elsie and Evie-Mai

Y5/6 Flint and Shane

Although we are obviously delighted that some children are representing Thameside at the Final, we must remember that it is the taking part that counts and say a big well done to every child in Key Stage one and two who took part and everyone should be proud of their effort and enthusiasm for Science this year. Well done Thameside!



Parent survey update



Thank you to everyone who completed the parent survey – we had approximately 50 responses and we greatly value your feedback to help us keep developing our school.

We received some lovely comments, a sample of which we have captured below.

My children love attending Thameside school. They are happy and learning lots every day, thanks to the hard work and dedication of the fantastic staff team.

Thameside School is a fantastic school and I could not be more grateful to all staff for treating my daughter so well and always looking for the best for her and working with us at home as a team to achieve the best outcomes. Thank you for all you do

My child is happy with school and the support he has received since joining has been brilliant. The staff are a credit to the school and wouldn't hesitate in recommending.

Thameside is like a family which my child enjoys being a part of. He really enjoys the improving enrichment opportunities offered to him.

Headline results (responses not including disagree or strongly disagree)

My child is happy at this school	96%
My child feels safe at this school	98%
The school makes me aware of what my child will learn during the year	98%
My child does well at this school –	100%
I would recommend this school to another parent –	100%

We listen carefully to feedback provided by parents and carers and are considering the areas for development suggested.

These included:

- **Development of clubs for children in EYFS – Nursery and Reception**
- **Continuing to provide opportunities for parents to learn about our offer – e.g. open classrooms, parent information sessions.**

- Considering and reviewing IT systems used – for example for communication and payment

We also recognise that surveys are anonymous and would always encourage parents who would like to speak to us directly to contact the school office via the office email; we would always be happy to arrange a meeting to discuss any concerns.

Playtime changes!

Our new Playtime Initiative has been really successful so far. The children have loved playing in our new zones-it has been a real joy to see all our children so engaged in play! Our Sports Leaders have done a great job at organising the equipment and staff have noticed a big reduction in playtime incidents as a result. Many of our visitors this term have also made very positive comments about our new *Thameside Playtime Curriculum*. As this will be an on-going project, Mrs Russell is still collecting toys for our zones, **so if you have any dolls, action figures, games, etc that you would like to donate to school, it would be most appreciated.**





Keeping Safe online

This term we took part in internet safety day, which included a number of workshops run by Cyber Champions about how to stay safe online. This provided an excellent opportunity, alongside our Computing and PSHE curriculum to empower our children to stay safe and what to do if they encounter something that makes them feel uncomfortable.

We also have a huge number of resources on our website for parents and carers at the following link:

[Thameside Primary School - Online Safety](#)



Class learning reviews

To find out more about what each year group is learning, please do check out our updated parent curriculum overviews on the class pages of our website!

[Thameside Primary School - Class Pages \(thamesideschool.co.uk\)](http://thamesideschool.co.uk)

Nursery

We have had a fantastic term of real-life superhero fun in the Early Years. We started by reading 'Supertato' and completed lots of fun activities around this topic including vegetable treasure hunts, freeing vegetables from trees and vegetables hanging from tables. This was also a great opportunity for the children to practise their fine motor skills.

We also talked about healthy eating and how it is important to look after our teeth. We turned our role play area into a hospital and the children really enjoyed playing doctors and



nurses. We also really enjoyed reading Dr Raj's book "A superhero like you."

Our traditional tale was 'The little red hen' which helped us to think about teamwork and sharing. We have also been learning about fire fighters, dentists and the police.

Reception

This term Reception have been learning all about the 'People who Help us'. We have been exploring lots of different jobs that people have and thinking about what we want to be when we grow up.

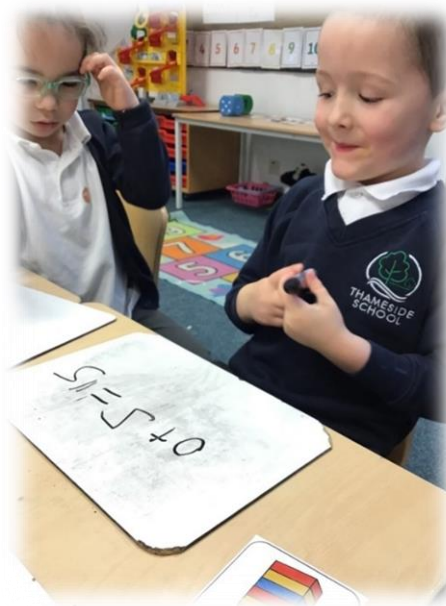
Each week our role-play area has been transformed into a new workplace and the children have been taking on many different job roles to discover future jobs for themselves.



We have learnt about jobs including:

Doctors and nurses, firefighters, police officers, vets, cleaners, detectives, artists, scientists, teachers, bin disposal people, singers, dancers, farmers, shopkeepers and many more.

Our Reception children even 'arrested' one of our visiting headteachers last week!



Year 1

Y1 (Adeola Class) have been so busy since the start of the year and are really growing in maturity. We are so proud of the way they are learning to collaborate and



listen to each other's ideas. These were particularly important skills at the Drone City workshop last month (see photos) where they had to work together on sequencing

challenges. Our English

and Geography work has been about all sorts of different animals and their habitats. Ask us about which creatures live in the wild in the UK and which live in other parts of the world!



Year 2

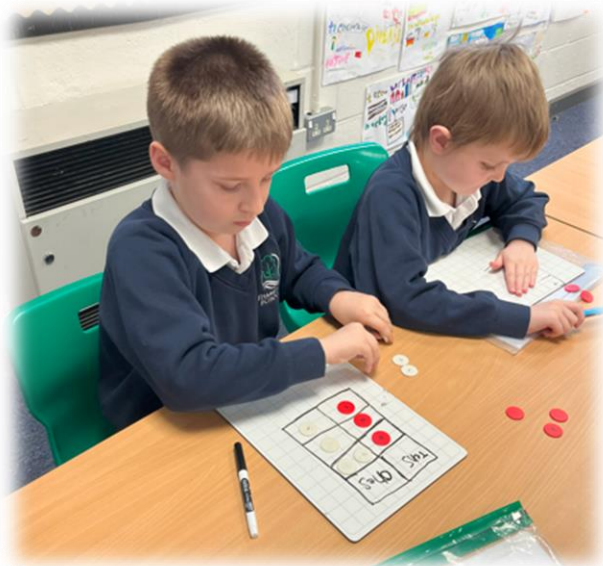
In Year 2, we have been incredibly busy learning all about the properties of paper and exploring how we can change these properties to make paper waterproof, rigid, and stronger. This inspired our Science Fair project, where we sought to answer the question: What can we do with old paper to make something new and useful?

I was blown away by the results! Some students created cups, pens, waterproof t-shirts, and even prototype tents. The students fully embraced the Science Fair and worked like real scientists, investigating the properties of paper and coming up with creative solutions to answer our question.

We've also been expressing our creativity in our Art unit by exploring the work of Henri Rousseau. We've had a go at drawing jungle scenes, portraits, and landscapes, as well as designing and creating animal masks, all inspired by Rousseau's iconic style. We're looking forward to sharing all our artwork with you during the open afternoon!

Year 3

What a great term we have had in Year 3. In English, we wrote instructions for making wildflower seed balls. It was great fun making the seedballs to begin with and we are looking forward to making more at home. In Maths we have been using our times tables knowledge to divide two-digit numbers by one-digit numbers. The children had great fun making a division game and testing me to see how quickly I could work out the answers! In Science we investigated the question, 'How can we keep a drink warm in the Arctic?' The children had lots of great ideas for materials to use to insulate the cup – including tin foil, felt, fabric, a duvet and keeping a lid on the cup. We checked on the temperature using a data logger and recorded our result. Rezwan and Saharsh were very excited to represent our class at the Science Fair semi-finals in Wantage.



One of the most exciting things we have done this term is our swimming lessons. I have been incredibly proud of the children for the resilience they have shown in the water as well as their excellent behaviour throughout the session. A member of the public even commented on how quiet and well behaved the children were while we were waiting at the end of the lesson. Well done to everyone!



Year 4

This term, Year 4 have really enjoyed being scientists and artists. We have enjoyed creating Andy Warhol inspired art using blotted line technique and painting with a small selection of colours. In science, the children also looked at the questions 'What is weather?' and 'How is wind measured', before creating our own anemometers.



Year 5

Year 5 have had another amazing half term. They have worked exceptionally hard in Maths, showing all 5R's when learning the methods for long multiplication and short division. The children showed great perseverance and resilience in order to calculate their answers pictorially and in an abstract format in addition to applying their knowledge to problem solving. In English, Year 5 have been understanding what the word Humanism means. They have written a non-chronological report about the subject and produced a balanced argument text with a focus on cohesion within and across paragraphs. Year 5 have put so much effort and thought into their Science Fair project this half term. They investigated whether liquids were miscible or immiscible by mixing different liquids together to see whether it blended or separate layers were formed. Also, they planned and made a pot out of clay during our art sessions and have learnt all about the Scandinavian countries. I wish Year 5 a lovely half term and cannot wait to see them back for another amazing half term of learning! Keep up the amazing work, Year 5!

Miss Krawiec

Year 6

Year 6 have been on an Eco Warrior journey this term, making plastic from potatoes and learning how to protect the Earth in Geography. Yet again, we have all been working extremely hard towards SATs and preparing for the 'real' thing in May - a huge well done to all the children for sticking with it and being so resilient! As part of our English learning - creating and selling our own chocolate creations - we sent our persuasive radio advert to Cadbury's to persuade them to make our class chocolate creation; we are all waiting patiently to hear back from them! Once again, we have all earned ourselves the upcoming break to rest, relax and have fun!

Our Acorn Room

In the Acorn Room we've been having lots of learning fun, through play and sensory play, we've been working on our colours and shapes, we've spent time finding shapes within our school and classroom. The children have also added the picture communication sign for "walk nicely" and "line up", which they all can now use daily, even lining up toys within the classroom.



TTRockstars and Times Tables at home! Numbots at home!

TTRS

It has been incredible to see so many students joining the exclusive group of Rock Heroes!

Special congratulations go to Henley, Hasham, Ronja, Morgan, Daria, and Filip, who have worked especially hard to get their studio time down to less than 1 second!

Let's see who else can become a Rock Hero next term.

Numbots

It's been brilliant to see so many students tackling the Challenges on Numbots! A huge shout-out to Anna, who currently holds the

highest score for Number Bonds to 10, with Simmal and Felicity close behind.

Special mentions also go to George, Robin, William, Ellison, Haniya, Samitha, Aashita, and Lillian for their continued dedication to Numbots.

Keep up the amazing work, and let's see who can challenge Anna's speed next term!

If you are looking for more Maths games to play over the break there are some suggested links below:

- [Learn to Count with fun Counting Games for KS1 Children](#)
- [25 Fun Maths Games For Kids To Do At Home](#)
- [Maths at Home | NRICH](#)
- [Free KS2 Maths teaching resources | Page 1 of 8 | Oak National Academy](#)

Learning at home resources

Please do check out our website which is continuing to grow! We have included lots of new information about our curriculum and resources to help support you at home on the following pages:

[Thameside Primary School - Keeping Safe \(thamesideschool.co.uk\)](http://thamesideschool.co.uk)

[Thameside Primary School - Families and Learning at home \(thamesideschool.co.uk\)](http://thamesideschool.co.uk)

Library Corner



OUR NEW THAMESIDE 100 READING CHALLENGES!

We are very excited to be launching our very own 'Thameside 100' reading challenge!

We have chosen 100 wonderful, diverse books which we would love the children to enjoy while they are at Thameside. They are split into four categories - bronze, silver, gold and platinum - based on interest level and how easy/hard they are to read.

To complete a challenge, the children need to read twenty of the books on that list. We will read some in class. Others they can share at home during story time with a grown-up or - when they are more confident - they will be able to read by themselves. There's no time limit on the challenge: we all read at different speeds!

Everyone is welcome, right from Nursery up to Year 6, and the staff will be joining in too 😊 For each challenge completed, our pupils will get a lovely certificate, badge and their names in the T100 book of fame!

We will send home a paper copy of the challenges, but you can see the covers in colour and get more details on our website:

[Thameside Primary School - Thameside 100 Reading Challenges!](#)

The website below also includes some top tips for how parents can continue to support and motivate children with reading during holidays



[Reading in the holidays | Oxford Owl](#)

Pay it Forward - £2 or £5 for our new library?

If you'd like to support our new library, there's now a '**pay it forward**' option on our brilliant 'Mostly Books' website (scroll to the end – link below). You can donate £2 or £5 towards a new book. Every little counts, so please do consider helping our amazing school in this way. Maybe skip a coffee at Costa or Starbucks this week and give us the money instead! Thank you 😊
Thameside Primary School Archives - Mostly Books (mostly-books.co.uk)

Key Diary dates for next term

[Thameside Primary School - Term Dates \(thamesideschool.co.uk\)](http://thamesideschool.co.uk)

We will add new dates to the online calendar on our website as well – so please do check regularly!!!

- Monday 24th February – start of term
- Year 4 swimming – see letters sent
- Week beginning 10th March – Years Nursery to Year 5 Parents' evenings
- Thursday 6th March – World Book Day (Information to follow)
- Tuesday 18th March – Year 5 Oxford Playhouse Showcase (afternoon)
- Friday 21st March – inflatable brain workshops
- Monday 24th and Tuesday 25th March – Year 3 and 4 Trinity Church Easter Experience
- Friday 4th April 9.00am – Star of the term assembly
- Friday 4th April – end of term 1.30pm (with PTA egg hunt in the morning!)

Children are using smart devices from a much younger age than ever before. It's why it's essential we talk to our children about how to use them safely. There are so many positive benefits to the new technology at our disposal these days - however there are plenty of downsides too. As a parent, it's important you understand these risks and how you can take steps to protect your family against them.

1 PUT YOURSELF IN CONTROL

Make use of the parental control settings available to you. With most devices, you're able to change the settings to control the content your child has access to. This isn't difficult to do, as you'll often find guidance in the instructions that come with the device. By setting a private pin code on certain devices, you can make sure your child can only access it when you allow it.



2



PROTECTING ANDROID DEVICES

You can set up restricted users on Android tablets through a Google account. Open the settings menu (look for a cog icon) and select the 'Users' option. Here you can add a new restricted user. After setting up a password and username, select which applications you want to restrict access to. On an Android smartphone it's similar, but first select 'Parental Controls' in the play store.

3 PROTECTING APPLE DEVICES

For Apple devices, you can simply visit the preferences/settings menu and within 'General' there is an option for 'Restrictions'. Here you can turn off any applications or features on your child's device that you do not want them to have access to.



3

4



THINK ABOUT ALL YOUR SMART DEVICES

As well as tablets and smartphones, you should think about any device in your home connected to the Internet: a games console, a media hub, or a personal computer. In each case you can usually find parental controls in the settings. Think carefully about how much access you want to allow your child, especially when it comes to accessing the Internet.

5



MAKE SEARCHING MUCH SAFER

Most search engines, such as Google, Bing or Yahoo, have a 'safe search' setting. You should activate this. Otherwise, it's extremely easy for a seemingly harmless search on the Internet to return unexpected and inappropriate results. Depending on the browser you're using, go to the settings and search for 'safe search'. Make sure you save the change so it defaults each time you open the browser. This will seriously reduce the chances of your child being exposed to something they shouldn't be.



NOS National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

9 Top Tips To Get Smart About children's devices

6

REGULARLY CHECK SOCIAL MEDIA SETTINGS

Before you allow your child to use social media, you should discuss the dangers with them. You should also make sure you're able to access their profile and privacy settings and check them regularly. The companies behind social media platforms often make privacy changes without making it very obvious to the user, such as Facebook's introduction of facial recognition software.



7

DON'T LET PEOPLE SEE WHERE YOU ARE

Location software sounds useful for seeing where your child is, but it also provides the opportunity for others to locate your child too. For safety, it's a good idea to disable location software on all devices or at least turn it off when it's not required. Also, be mindful of specific apps that record running routes or locations where your child might be playing a game. Talk to your child about why these can be dangerous and how to turn the setting on and off as required.



WATCH OUT FOR FAKE PROFILES

Sadly, social media presents an enormous opportunity for the likes of paedophiles to set up fake profiles and interact with children. Keep a track of the people your child interacts with on social media and if you do not recognise a user as a friend, consider blocking them.



8

KEEP A CHECK ON SCREEN TIME

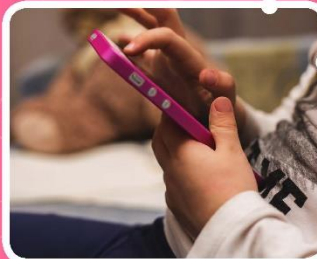
Managing how much time we spend on screens is a new challenge for us all. It's critically important when it comes to children, especially younger children who are still developing. It's not just a case of setting arbitrary time limits. Guidelines published by The Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health suggests it's more important to consider the 'context and content' of what the screen is being used for. Still, it is helpful to put limits on devices using 'Guided Access' functions, which you can find in the settings of certain devices.



9

Meet our expert

Emma Davis was a secondary school Computer Science teacher for more than decade. Since leaving education, she has been working in a cyber security firm delivering cyber awareness training to businesses and carrying out network testing. She is a mother of a five-year-old, she's had vast experience of controlling and managing how children access online services and use apps.



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.



Publish date: 24/10/18



'Apps' are designed to run on certain devices and are written for a specific operating system, such as Apple iOS, Windows, or Android. The official store for the Apple iOS operating system is known as the 'App Store' and it's where you can browse and download more than 2 million apps and games to use on the iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch and other Apple devices. When your children are using the app store, you need to be aware of the risks...



What parents need to know about THE APP STORE

IS YOUR CHILD 13+?

To download and buy apps from the App Store, your child will need an Apple ID. If they have used other Apple services, such as iCloud, they can sign into the App Store with the same Apple ID. If they are aged 13 and under, they cannot sign up for an Apple ID on their own, but an adult can create an Apple ID for a child.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Apps are either free, paid-for or free with in-app purchases. In-app purchases are optional transactions that can unlock extra functionality, virtual goods or unique content. Unless you change the settings, once your child has entered a password to make an in-app purchase, they can make additional purchases for 15 minutes without re-entering a password. This makes it extremely easy for children to accidentally run up huge bills.

LOOKALIKE APPS

Some developers release apps that copy the functionality, user interface and even product names and branding of popular apps, in an attempt to trick unsuspecting users to install them. By downloading an app from an unknown developer, your child could find their device compromised. Experts warn that through app permissions, hackers can potentially take photos using the camera and access media remotely, track your child's location, record any passwords they enter for other accounts, and send text messages from phones.

INAPPROPRIATE APPS

Some apps and games have content that is unsuitable for younger children – even the most popular or innocuous looking apps may feature adult-themed content, violence or cruelty to other people or animals, unmoderated chat, pornographic or sexual content.

THIRD-PARTY APP STORES

Because the official Apple App Store has a very stringent policy about what apps it approves, children may look elsewhere for apps and games they've heard about from friends. As well as the Apple App Store for iOS, there are hundreds of other third-party app stores, but the danger is they may not apply the same level of scrutiny toward the apps they allow to be listed. There's a higher chance of apps that infect devices with malicious codes or put user privacy at risk by extracting sensitive information.



Top Tips for Parents

CREATE YOUR CHILD'S ACCOUNT

You can create an Apple ID for a child under 13 and add them to your family group to keep an eye on their activity. Go to Settings > [your name] > Family Sharing > Add Family Member > Create a Child Account > Next. Enter your child's birthday and tap Next. Review the Parent Privacy Disclosure and tap Agree. With Family Sharing, you can add up to six family members to share App Store purchases, as well as iTunes and Apple Books.

SWITCH ON 'ASK TO BUY'

If you have a child that is over 13 years of age and has their own Apple account, make sure that you only allow them to make purchases with gift cards. You can also activate the 'Ask to Buy' feature if you are using Family Sharing, so that whenever a family member who isn't an adult initiates a new purchase, a request goes to the account organiser. You can also limit what content your child can access on the devices they use.

RESTRICT IN-APP PURCHASES

You can restrict your child's ability to make in-app purchases. On an iOS device, open Settings, tap General and then Restrictions. Tap 'Enable Restrictions'. You can put a limitation that requires a password every time there is a purchase made in the App Store or iTunes Store.

BROWSE APPS BY AGE

To find apps and games that are right for your children, check the age ratings. On an iPhone or iPod Touch, this can be found in the information section on an app's product page, and on an iPad or desktop, the age range is near the Buy button. On the Kids page, you can find apps for age ranges, including 5 and under, 6 to 8, and 9 to 11.

AVOID OTHER APP STORES

Put a rule in place that your child can only use the official App Store to download apps and games. Explain why it is wise to only install applications from a trusted source to ensure their device is not affected by security issues or virus attacks.

HOW TO KNOW AN APP IS SAFE TO INSTALL

Advise your child that just because they're downloading an app from an official store, it doesn't make it safe. Fake or copycat apps will often include misspelt words and poor grammar, so always read the app description, and double check the developer name and title for warning signs. Be wary of apps that come with a long list of permission requests. Check the app's reviews and ratings – one star, one-line reviews complaining that an app didn't work on a certain device, or that there was a billing issue, is not a good indication.

SPOT FAKE REVIEWS

When checking the customer reviews within the app store, make sure they aren't vague and generic, or overly effusive, as some developers will try to manipulate their apps' positions by posting fake ratings and reviews. Check the number of downloads the app claims to have – the higher the number, the more likely it is to be safe. Your child can also check the company's website to see if the app is a

SOURCES: <https://www.engadget.com/2017/12/18/fake-cuphead-itunes/> & <https://mashable.com/2017/11/06/fake-whatsapp-app-google-play-store-android/europe=true>

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