



Ark Atwood: Newsletter, Friday 9th December

A reminder that next Friday (16th December) is the last day of term.
 As always, we finish an hour earlier on this day at 2.40pm

Dear Parents,

Winter Fair Despite the cold, it was wonderful to see so many of you at our Winter Fair last night. Such a lovely occasion in the Atwood calendar, an opportunity to bring everyone together and raise funds for school. Not entirely sure how much we raised – I will let you know next week – but this money will be put to good use and we will let you know how and when it is spent. A huge thank you to Ishraf and the team for making it all happen. These events don't happen by chance and I know they spent a significant amount of time organising everything for which we are extremely grateful.



Quiz Night Next Wednesday is our next Friends of Atwood event – the Parent/Teacher Quiz Night. This promises to be a really fun evening and we would love to have lots of you with us. All the information you need is in the yellow flier on the right – please sign up via the office, Wise Pay or speak to me.

Next Week Next week we also have the Atwood Christmas lunch for the children on Wednesday. **If your child ordinarily has a packed lunch but you would like them to have the Christmas Lunch, please let the office know and pay the £2.60 cost.** Next week we also have a number of performances which we are very excited about especially given that these have not taken place over the last couple of years. All parents are invited (maximum of two parents per child for performances at Paddington Academy). **Children can wear something wintery or festive on the day they are performing.**

Date	Year Group	Times	Venue
Monday	Years 1, 2 & 3	Arrive 2.15pm / 2.30pm start	Paddington Academy
Tuesday	Reception	9.30am	Ark Atwood
	Years 4, 5 & 6	Arrive 2.15pm / 2.30pm start	Paddington Academy
Wednesday	Nursery	12.30pm	Ark Atwood

Best Wishes

James Evelyn
 Headteacher, Ark Atwood Primary Academy

Year 4 Samba Performance



Earlier in the week, the Year 4s put on a Samba performance showcasing all their learning this term. It was a great performance with brilliant levels of focus, concentration and timing. Thank you to all the parents who came along.

Sleep Workshop for Parents

On Tuesday 13th December our Educational Psychologist, Jaspar Khawaja, will be running a Parent Workshop on Sleep. All parents are welcome to attend. The workshop will cover topics such as healthy sleep habits for students, supporting successful bedtime routines and an opportunity to discuss and ask questions around sleep.

It will start after drop off in the morning at 8:45am running until approximately 9:30am. Sleep is such an important part of everyone's lives and professional advice can be ever so helpful. Do please attend if you are able to and share with other Atwood parents if you think this is something they might be interested in too!

Free School Lunches

We are delighted to inform parents that Westminster Local Authority has agreed to fund free school lunches for all children in Years Three to Six from January 2023 for a minimum of 18 months. This comes in addition to the free lunches that are already provided for children in Reception to Year 2. It is our understanding that this funding applies to all children attending the school regardless of whether they live in the borough.

We hope this initiative will provide help to families during this time of high food prices and energy bills. Further information can be found here: <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/news/free-school-lunches-all-primary-school-aged-children>

We ask that any parent with outstanding lunch debts makes these payments before the end of term.

Strep A

We know there has been a lot of stories in the news recently about Strep A.

Group A Strep infection is usually a mild illness that can be easily treated with antibiotics. But in rare circumstances, this bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause serious illness – called invasive Group A Strep. This is still uncommon. However, it is important that parents and carers are on the lookout for symptoms and see a doctor as quickly as possible so that their child can be treated and we can stop the infection becoming serious.

If your child develops symptoms or receives a Group A Strep diagnosis, please inform the school immediately. Please ensure that children unwell with the infection do not return to school until 24 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment. If no antibiotics have been administered, the child will probably remain off school for the last week. Please feel free to discuss with me any questions or concerns you may have. Further information from the government can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukhsa-update-on-scarlet-fever-and-invasive-group-a-strep>

Parent/Teacher Book Club

The next Book Club meet is on Wednesday 8th February. The autobiography/memoir title we will discuss is 'You don't know what war is' by Yeva Skalietska about a young girl's experience of the war in Ukraine. The following theme will be 'Books with a number in the title'. All parents and teachers welcome.



Attendance

Excellent attendance is vital to success at school. We track attendance closely and celebrate excellent attendance.

Congratulations to our classes with the best attendance over the last five days:

Class Breakdown			
Globe	92.6	Belgium	94.1
Mexico	75.8	Ghana	93.3
India	84.3	Brazil	95.4
Italy	90.1	Greece	96.8
France	80.5	Spain	91.5
China	85.2	Canada	89.3
Barbados	87.8	Australia	90.6
Norway	90.6	Whole School	89.5% 😞



Christmas Jumper Day

As well as the Winter Fair, yesterday was also Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day. Thank you to everyone who contributed – at the last count we had raised an excellent £192.

If you have not yet made your donation, please drop it off in the office.

E-Safety

We share E-Safety information with parents in the Atwood newsletter. This is to help you in ensuring that your child can use technology safely. Please read the following information.

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one app of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about HiPAL

AGE RESTRICTION 12+
(with reduced functionality for under-12s)

HiPal is a trending social media app which turns phones into walkie-talkies, allowing people to have voice conversations with friends or strangers. There are two account options: one for users aged under 12 and one for those aged 12 or above. The former has fewer features and limits interaction with strangers, enabling use of the walkie-talkie feature or photo sharing with friends and family only. The 12+ accounts offer more options, including adding strangers as friends, sharing photos and videos publicly, sending private messages and holding voice chats with strangers as well as friends.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

HiPal's under-12 accounts don't allow direct connections with strangers (although children seeking more friends can share their 'Friend Code' on other platforms), but for older users, chatting with strangers seems to be the app's main appeal. The 'Public Square' shows nine online users (hitting refresh replaces these with another nine), and clicking on someone's profile starts a conversation.

SEXING AND SUGGESTIVE PICS

Almost immediately after our expert downloaded the app, strangers began to message privately – asking for provocative images or sharing explicit photos of themselves. Likewise, in the 'Explore' feed, many of the pictures and videos are innocent... but some are for more salacious. There is always the risk of other users secretly saving a revealing photo and re-sharing it elsewhere.

NEED FOR VALIDATION

Some users – particularly girls – post photos on apps of this type hoping for positive reactions and comments to boost their self-esteem. Suggestive images tend to attract more flattering feedback, encouraging the user to post more frequently and with more explicit content. Conversely, receiving unkind comments about their picture can impact a young user's confidence and sense of self-worth.

NO AGE GATES OR MODERATION

Although users are given an initial choice of the under- or over-12 profile, there is no verification method to confirm someone's age: it is quite clear that the 'older' option offers a more complete experience on the app, but there seems to be no content moderation in place. Likewise, there is a reporting button for users to make a complaint but these reports do not appear to be followed up.

INTRUSIVE FEATURES

HiPal's walkie-talkie gimmick is no different from a normal phone call and seems rarely used; although it allows conversations to still be heard while a phone is locked, which could have awkward results. HiPal also offers 'Boom' messages: unmissable large-text notifications which are highly distracting and briefly take over the phone – users can't access other apps until the message fades.

LARGE GROUP CHATS

The app offers group chats with up to 100 people – both friends and unknown users. This not only means excessive 'Boom' messages taking over your child's device, but near-constant notification alerts and – most worryingly – the potential for walkie-talkie chatting and sharing photos with strangers outside parental supervision and apparently with no moderation from the platform itself.

Advice for Parents & Carers

EMPHASISE CAUTION

Remind your child of the dangers of connecting with strangers online. Some may be using the app innocently; others may have more sinister intentions. Encourage your child to consider what information they disclose in private messages and emphasise that they should inform a trusted adult if someone on the internet ever attempts to persuade them to meet in person.

TALK ABOUT SEXING

It can be an awkward conversation (which young people are often reluctant to have), but it's vital to talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting. Discuss the legal implications of sharing explicit images, as well as the emotional impact. Make it clear your child should never feel pressured into sexting – and that they should tell a trusted adult if they receive any unwanted explicit images.

BUILD RESILIENCE

With HiPal's lack of moderation, it's imperative that children are prepared for comments they might receive after uploading an image. You can build their resilience and equip them to manage these situations by having them show you any comments they've received. Together, discuss how the nice ones made them feel – and what they could do if someone posted a comment that upset them.

AVOID OVER-SHARING

Young people should think carefully about what they share in their profile, bio and posts. Talk to your child about not disclosing personal details such as phone numbers, other social media accounts or images which could reveal where they live or go to school. It's essential for children to recognise that strangers can assemble a detailed profile of someone based on things they can find online.

CONSIDER MENTAL WELLBEING

Many users on HiPal publicly share photos that are intended to be alluring in the hope of gaining more likes, friends and positive feedback – boosting their self-esteem and making them feel more self-assured. When young people regularly engage with social media platforms, it's important that parents and carers keep in mind the potential impact such platforms can have on mental wellbeing.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.

<https://hipal.app/about/privacy.html>

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#WakeUpWednesday

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