

APRIL 2024

Welcome to the second edition of our 2023/2024 newsletter.

It's been another great term at JSCHS where our pupils have continued to embrace all the opportunities that are made available for them. This newsletter gives you a flavour of what has been on offer.

It is now the critical point for our Year 11 pupils as they enter the final stages of preparation for their exams; it is always a daunting time, but we will provide them with the support they need to succeed. We wish them the very best.

I hope that you enjoy reading about all that we've been up to over the past term.

Jonathan Heath
Headteacher



TRIP TO CHINA



On the 22nd March Mrs Winder as well as Maisie and Lilly in year 10 set off to China on a student ambassador program.

The aim of the trip is to build relationships with Chinese schools and to present to them, what it is like in the UK, and what it is like to attend John Spence.

The girls are presenting in assemblies across the North East of China, in a different city every day,

along with two of our other PELE trust schools, Ponteland and Duchess. They will travel by Bullet train from city to city and attend a formal dinner every evening with local Chinese delegates.

An amazing opportunity! We hope to bring you plenty of photographs in the summer newsletter.

順風

Meaning: Bon Voyage



YEAR GROUP UPDATES

Year 7

The Year 7 cohort have enjoyed a very productive second term at John Spence which has included lots of opportunities for them.

It is amazing to see so many of the year group settling in so well and buying into the many varied extra opportunities at school and I would love to see more of them getting involved. I have been especially impressed with the acts of kindness and consideration that occur on a daily basis and those students are certainly making a lovely impression within school.

This term as part of the form time program, and fit for life lessons, Year 7 pupils have been exploring the skills and attributes they possess that will make them successful in life. Pupils completed the icould buzz quiz to find out their personality type and analysed the skills required for a successful employee.

Attendance is such an important and integral part of school and I am thrilled that Year 7 have continuously been one of the best attending year groups. A huge congratulations needs to be given to those students who have achieved 100% for the year so far!

I do hope that everyone enjoys the Easter holidays as we move into our final term of Year 7.

Mr Betts
Head of Year 7

Year 8

Year 8 have enjoyed a great Spring term so far with lots of extra-curricular opportunities to get involved with. The boys football team have made it through to the quarter-final of the County Cup and will play Ponteland in a hope to secure their first piece of silverware. Whilst our netball and cricket teams have done exceptionally well in their respective recent competition; coming up against some very talented schools, but securing excellent wins.

As we move into the Summer term I hope that more of our students can become involved in such extra-curricular opportunities and make wonderful memories. A special mention must go to George S who continues to represent Northumberland cricket team and Ella B who is apart of the North Tyneside girls football squad.

Year 8 parents evening is on 26th March, the support of parents/carers is so valuable when it comes to the education of our pupils. Please can I remind all families to encourage the pupils to complete all homework in advance of deadlines to promote learning outside of the classroom. Year 8 complete SPARX homework for maths, English and science on a weekly basis, so it is imperative that pupils have an organised schedule to do this at home or by using the extra intervention sessions at school.

Our Class Charts rewards system allows parents to keep up-to-date with all behaviour points recorded for their child and I am aware that most families are using the app, but I would encourage any family without access to get in touch. Have a wonderful Easter everyone.

Mr Burnip
Head of Year 8

YEAR GROUP UPDATES

Year 9

Another busy time for Year 9 as they pass the half way point on their journey through John Spence Community High School. The New Year had barely started when students got involved straight away with Table tennis and Cross-country events. Miss Armstrong selected 25 students to take part in this year's 'TICE' event. This has been a major event in Year 9 for a number of years now and every year, ends with a presentation of work that any A-level student would be proud of.

Finlay, Arren, Cameron, Miya May and Anna were all interviewed by the 'Youth Sports Trust' and are now Sports Leaders who can be regularly found running a range of sports-related activities around the school – often well into the evening when most students have left for home. Frankie, Izzy, Maggie, Dylan, Kylie and Niamh all put a different range of skills to good use when they helped Mrs Entwisle deliver an art session to some of our local Year 6 students. Mr Grazer was also out about with a number of students including Arren, Jack, and Maggie when they took up the offer to spend an afternoon with the songwriter, Fraser T Smith.

February offered an opportunity for several Year 9 boys to show off their 'FIFA' skills when they were offered a chance to represent the school in this year's competition in which finalists would battle it out at the home of West Bromwich Albion. Dylan, Musa and Kyle all tried to outplay each other in the early rounds. Sean, Kyle, Riley and Will (all possible Bill Gates' of the future) took part in a coding master class with Mr Huck; and then a number of girls all ducked, dived, dodged and dipped in a dodgeball tournament held here in our own sports hall.

As all of this was going on, students were also preparing for the next major event which was to decide on their option choices for Year 10. Form tutors helped to deliver several sessions in the weeks leading up to the Options Day on 29 February and that work really paid off as it was great to see so many families on that day with students who, in almost every case, were able to get their first choice of options.

Mr Crowe
Head of Year 9

Year 10

The Year 10 students have had a busy term. It is hard to believe that they are almost half way through their GCSE courses now! This time next year they will be preparing for their GCSE exams which will start in May. The recent snapshot exams will give a good indicator as to how students cope with exam pressure, revision and preparation. This will then help us to identify any support or intervention individuals may need moving forward. Students were given lots of information from their subject teachers to support their revision at home and hopefully they put this to good use.

The majority of the Year group are now organised with their work experience placements and next term will see all of year 10 spend the week of 13th May out at a work experience placement. This is a really beneficial opportunity for students to experience first hand the demands and expectations of future employment.

A massive well done and shout out to two Year 10 girls, Lily Bo and Maisie; who applied, interviewed and were successfully chosen to go to China with Mrs Winder. Whilst there they will present to lots of different schools about what life is like for them, living in the North East and attending John Spence School. I had the privilege of watching their presentations and was incredibly impressed at how much work and effort they had put in. Well done to both!

As we turn to the final term of Year 10 I would like to thank all parents/carers for their ongoing support. I hope you all have a lovely Easter break and I look forward to welcoming Year 10 back for their final term of Year 10.

Mrs Wyllie
Head of Year 10

I cannot quite believe Year 11 are moving into their final half term at John Spence. It is crazy (and a little bit sad if I'm honest) to think that their 5 years with us are almost complete! As we continue to prepare for the final GCSE Examinations which start in May, I must applaud Year 11 for their continued efforts as this has been a busy term with morning intervention classes, lunch and after school revision sessions and lesson 6 in full swing and all well attended. Please do encourage your child to attend these next term to allow students every opportunity to prepare as best as they can. In addition to this, students must also consolidate their in school learning at home with a thorough revision schedule for all of their subjects. I cannot stress the importance of independent learning at home as this will be a key element in your child achieving the best final grades they possibly can. My advice to all is to make sure revision starts now (if it has not already) and continue to keep in the habit of this after school, weekends and during the holidays as outlined in the recent Y11 review day. Not only will this ensure that students will have all the knowledge and tools they need for their exams, but will also go a long way to helping them not become overwhelmed and overloaded during what will be a hectic exam period.

There has been lots of work going on to ensure students have a plan in place for when they do leave John Spence. Christina from Connexions has been working with students since the start of Year 11 to support all pupils and there are a large number who have already managed to secure college, sixth form or apprenticeship positions for their life after John Spence, which is just fantastic. Christina will continue to offer support and guidance to those pupils who have not yet fully made their minds up so that everyone has a place somewhere. Equally I encourage you at home to continue having conversations about this and please do not hesitate to get in touch with school if you need to, about anything related to post 16 applications or any general queries in the lead up to the Summer exams. Email is the best way to contact me.

One final plea from myself is around attendance at school. While I understand that everyone gets sick from time to time, good attendance is going to be key over the next term. Quite simply if a child is not in school they cannot access the vast amount of support on offer to them and their learning will be impacted which could have a negative impact on their GCSE outcomes.

It has always been my pleasure to be part of their journey so far and I will do my absolute best to support you and your child as much as possible as we complete this final part together. I hope everyone has a lovely break and I look forward to seeing everyone back, raring to go after Easter. One final term to go with one final push to get everyone the results they deserve!

Oh yes, and prom aka the John Spence Praty (no that is not a typo)...will be going ahead and I cannot wait to get started planning this with students. More details on this to be sent out in due course

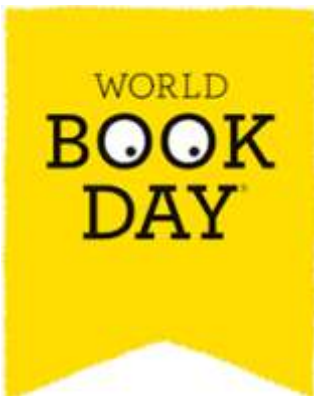
Mrs Brown
Head of Year 11

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

The spring term has remained busy in the library at school with a large proportion of the week given over to library lessons for years 7 – 9. These have continued in the same format as last term, giving students a chance to access a wide variety of texts with different themes and discussion points enjoyed as a whole group, as well as time to enjoy free choice in the library and make the most of the thousands of books available to the students.

Sparx Reader has continued to form the basis of homework for years 7-10 (optional now for year 11), and continues to encourage good reading and understanding. Regular reading homework is vital to improve all students understanding as well as for enjoyment, and benefits not just English, but all their subject lessons across school. It has been great to see so many achievers every week, and we now also have 14 students from years 7 to 11 who have attained more than 10,000 Sparx Reward Points – well done to the following students who have achieved their Bronze Award, and to Emma N who has also achieved her Silver Award (over 20,000 SRP), and Anisha K who has achieved her Gold Award (over 30,000 SRP).

Anisha K Y10, Emma N Y11, Ellie MI Y7, Ruby J Y10, Niamh S Y10, Raashad A Y10, Lena Y Y8, Sam M Y7, Cody T Y11, Stefan M Y10, Summer V Y10, Sophie J Y9, Kylie G Y9, Molly Y Y11.



Thursday 7th March saw World Book Day celebrated across the country, and given the importance of reading for all students, John Spence marked this day with a variety of events to bring attention to reading for learning and enjoyment. These included a large number of staff dressing up as book characters (not just for the amusement of students, but also to initiate the many conversations about books and reading that took place throughout the day). There was also a Masked Reader competition in form time (think the Masked Singer but better!) where students had to guess which members of staff were hidden behind a mask while reading, as well as a quiz to find out the favourite childhood books of over 40 members of staff. The fun activities will have helped raise the profile of reading within the school. Prize winners were awarded Amazon vouchers, and the winners were:

Favourite Childhood Books Quiz:

1. Maggie-Jo G (Y10)
2. Lily J (Y10)
3. Alyssia D (Y9)
4. Kyran C (Y8)
5. Holly S (Y7)

Masked Reader:

1. Daniel D (Y7)
2. Hannah J (Y8)
3. Lucas J (Y9)
4. Poppy L (Y10)
5. Danial H (Y11)

Some of the new books available to students, and new to the library this term include:



Sparx Reader

Over the weekend of the 16th March, we burst through the 1000 completed books mark on Sparx Reader. This equates to nearly 7000 hours of careful reading time on the application.

1000 completed books on Sparx Reader is a real achievement for the school. We know that children find it easy to simply stop and find another if there are moments in a text that maybe aren't as engaging. It takes resilience to persevere and for that to happen so often is testament to the dedication and commitment of our students.

At the time of writing, the 18th March, our top student has reached 40000 SRP. That's amazing. Well done, Anisha in Year 10. Other Year 10 students who are flying high include Ruby, Niamh and Raashad. In Year 7, Ellie is still our most progressive student with 20000 SRP with Sam not far behind. Lena and Sophie lead the way in Year 8 and Year 9 respectively. There are numerous students who are well ahead of expectations and this reflects very well on the reading taking place out of school.

Mr Gibson

RECIPROCAL READING

The first wave of Reciprocal Reading intervention concluded at half term and the second wave is now well underway.

The small groups that were selected enjoyed exploring a range of short stories.

The focus was on inference and discussion within the four strands of our Reciprocal Reading strategy.

We will always make time to:

- Predict
- Clarify,
- Question
- Summarise

This provides stability and confidence when reading and we are very optimistic that the work we have done will result in improved outcomes - both in class and in assessment situations.

Mr Gibson



CAREERS

FUTURES MONTH



Futures Month at John Spence!

January was Futures month here at John Spence, with pupils from each year group taking part in Career related activities throughout the month. Futures Month allows pupils to explore career possibilities, take part in employer encounters and learn about life after school.

Whether that is through an apprenticeship or University degree course, there is something for everyone.

This year, we hosted our first 'Careers Cafe; an informal drop in during lunch where students could call in and talk to employers. The cafes were a great success with over 60 pupils dropping in every

week. Those in attendance included Greggs, Sage and a local law firm, as well as an undertaker!

Year 7

As part of their Fit for Life lessons, year 7 pupils have been exploring the skills and attributes they possess that will support them in later life. Pupils completed the **icould** buzz quiz to find out their personality type and analysed the skills required for a successful employee. This year saw our very first Alumni speed dating event, with 15 ex John Spence pupils from all ages discussing their current employment status and their career journey with Year 7. If you are an ex John Spence pupil, and would like to get involved with events like this, please contact kate.winder@johnspence.org.uk



Year 8

The Year 8 program explored the world of work, types of jobs and local labour market information. Pupils explored gender stereotypes, types of work and the opportunities in the North East. As part of our work to ensure every students has at least one employer encounter every year, year 8 students participated in our 'Careers Zone', an hour long workshop in which students rotated around different employers to complete activities. Employers included the NHS, the police and local Engineering companies.



CAREERS

FUTURES MONTH



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Year 9

Year 9 focused on options and pathways after John Spence, which coincided with their GCSE option choices. They experienced lessons from each subject outlining the careers options they could pursue in relation to that subject, as well as reflecting on their skill set and which lessons they enjoyed.

The Year 9 drop down event was a speed dating activity in which students rotated around 15 different employers every 5 minutes and discussed where the person worked, and what they did.

A selection of students were also invited to participate in a workshop from Cambridge University around University life and aiming high.

Year 10

Year 10 completed work around preparing them for their next steps. This included practice CV's and application forms. They discussed the importance of grammar, spelling and presentation, and created personalised CV's.

Year 11

The Year 11 program was targeted at next steps and whether their current performance would give them the opportunities they wanted. Students have had assembly presentations from a large variety of local colleges and sixth forms and have recently had the opportunity to attend an Apprenticeships fair. A selection of students were also invited to participate in a workshop from Cambridge University around University life and aiming high.



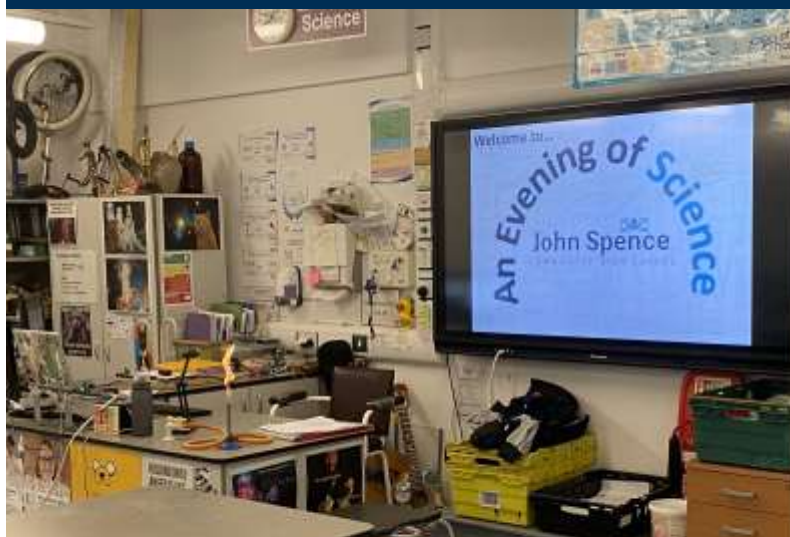
We have a huge variety of activities throughout the year here at John Spence and here are a few that are coming next term.

- **Newcastle College Aviation academy trip** - for students interested in Engineering and roles in cabin crew.
- **Year 10 work experience** - students will be out on their placement in May. If you are in a position to offer a work placement please contact the school.
- **Apprenticeships support drop in** - Christina from Connexions is hosting a drop in once a week in G4 to support any year 11 pupils looking for an apprenticeship next year.

Christina is part of North Tyneside's Connexions team, and is more than happy to answer any careers related questions. If you, or your child would like to get in touch, please email her at christina.didsbury@johnspence.org.uk.

connexions
Let's talk about you

PARENTS SCIENCE CLASSES AT JOHN SPENCE



One of the whole school priorities at John Spence is to develop good links between the school and the parents/carers of the children who attend here. While most of the contact between the school and home is with regard to pastoral issues, a new initiative has been launched to help parents/carers to support their children academically.

Mr Black is leading on the initiative involving inviting parents in to school for an 'Evening of Science'. The GCSE Science curriculum is massive, encompassing knowledge and skills from across the subjects of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. To enable parents to help to support the progress being made by their children at school Mr

Black has started delivering science themed 2 hour sessions each half term initially to the parents of Year 10 students. "Getting the parents in to teach them some of the Science that their children are learning gives them an idea of the complexity of knowledge that students need in just one subject area... a realisation of the rigours of just one GCSE course, should help parents help their children to develop their understanding and ultimately prepare them more thoroughly for their exams".

The first Evening of Science had a Biology theme. Parents were taught some key information about cells; they then completed a core practical – preparing a microscope slide of cheek cells and using a microscope to record their findings.

The most recent 'Evening of Science' had a Chemistry theme. Again, parents were taught some theory – atomic theory and how to understand the Periodic Table. They were then guided through a core practical – starting with copper carbonate, performing a number of reactions to produce a sample of copper sulphate crystals.

Both evenings have been overwhelmingly successful. While initially planned with just the parents in mind, a number of students have attended too. Mr Black has received some very positive feedback from both parents and students regarding the planning and preparation that has gone into the evenings, as well as how useful the parents have found the information that has been conveyed.

Mr Black is currently planning the next 'Evening of Science' with a Physics theme. This will be scheduled for the next half term. Unfortunately, at this time the sessions will only continue to be offered to the parents of Year 10 in Science however a future possibility would be to roll this out for other year groups and in other subject areas so WATCH THIS SPACE!



NEW CATERING @ JOHN SPENCE

When we return from the Easter break we will have a completely new catering service in school complete with brand new menus with exciting and tasty new additions on offer throughout the school day.

The new catering system will operate via the [School Gateway app](#), please ensure you have downloaded this app, more details to follow in the coming weeks!

Here is a sneak peek of some the new items on offer:



PELE TRUST	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
CLASSIC MAIN	Chicken Tikka Masala Served with Steamed Rice & Naan Bread	Mince & Onion Pie with a Suet Crust Served with Creamed Potatoes & Garden Peas	Lemon, Garlic & Thyme Roast Chicken Breast & Yorkshire Pudding Served with Roast Potatoes, Fresh Vegetables and Gravy	Pork Ragu Lasagne Served with Dressed Salad and Garlic Bread	Fish and Chips Served with Mushy Peas or Baked Beans
CLASSIC VEGGIE	Aubergine & Squash Curry Served with Steamed Rice & Naan Bread	Feta, Mint & Pea Risotto Served with Dressed Salad and Crusty Bread	Mushroom & Sweet Potato Stroganoff Served with Steamed Rice	Mexican Bean Tortilla Served with Dressed Salad and Garlic Bread	Cheese & Potato Pasties Served with Chips and Baked Beans
STREET EAT	1/4 Pounder Cheese Burger Served in a Brioche Roll with Salad & Sauce (Veggie Available)	Meatball Marinara Sub Served with Cheese and Ice-berg Lettuce	Roast Chicken & Stuffing Sandwich Served with Roast Potatoes and Gravy	Giant Frankfurter Served with Crispy Onions, Ketchup and Mustard	Northern Fried Chicken & Chips (Curry Sauce Available)
PASTA OPTION	Meatball & Tomato Or Tomato & Roasted Red Pepper	Chicken, Pesto & Tomato Or Tomato & Mascarpone	Pasta Carbonara Or Tomato & Basil	Macaroni Cheese Served with a Selection of Toppings	Cheese & Tomato Pasta Bake
PIZZA & PANINI	Selection of Pizza Served by the Slice Margherita, Pepperoni & Pizza of the Day!	Selection of Panini Ham & Cheese, Pizza or BBQ Chicken	Selection of Pizza Served by the Slice Margherita, Pepperoni & Pizza of the Day!	Selection of Panini Ham & Cheese, Pizza or BBQ Chicken	Selection of Pizza Served by the Slice Margherita, Pepperoni & Pizza of the Day!

Also Available Daily - Chef Specials, Filled Jacket Potatoes, Soup of the day, Sandwiches, Salads, Fresh Fruit and Homemade Cakes

TRIPS

CORE 37



KS4 Design and Technology Textiles students had a fantastic trip to Core37 this term to see the Textiles theory come to life. Core37 is a local company who have a talented team who design and make sports kits on site. From our logo here at JSCHS, they created a design for a new sports top, sublimation printed onto paper, heat pressed onto fabric,

cut using a laser cutter and then machine sewed it together! All the processes that we do here in the classroom, but on a much bigger scale. It was brilliant for our students specialising in textiles to see them in action. Pop along to G2 to see the real kit as Core37 very generously gave us the sample top and towel.

THIS IS CREATIVE ENTERPRISE



This Is Creative Enterprise (TICE) once more has had a fantastic set of Year 9 students getting involved in being creative.

We started with 25 students in school with a day looking into the industry, investigating predicted trends and making a toile of their final design. They were then set the briefs, which ranged from designing a new T-shirt for Bella Freud to being stylists for the winners of The Voice UK, Jen and Liv.

The next stage was a masterclasses at Northumbria University fashion department, where we learned to decorate fabrics, style and photograph at a photoshoot and design

a repeat pattern. Jen and Liv were actually there to be styled! We can't wait to see the finished results.



TRIPS

DYNAMIC EARTH



On Friday 22nd March 46 of our year 9 students travelled up to Edinburgh to visit Dynamic Earth, a science centre and planetarium, telling the epic story of planet Earth from the beginning to today.

Students took part in a workshop focused on our Exploding Earth, where they were able to get their hands on rocks representing the different layers of the earth. There were even some samples of meteorite that students were able to touch and feel, which were very heavy for their size! The visit was excellent preparation for our tectonics unit that year 9 will study in the summer term.

Our students were also able to take a tour around the museum which included interactive displays on the structure of the Earth, plate tectonics, glaciers and biomes. Feedback from the students suggest they really enjoyed the glacier display which allowed students to touch a large block of glacial ice, and the rainforest exhibit.

The trip is a fantastic opportunity for budding geographers to do some learning away from the classroom and build relationships with staff. We look forward to going on this trip again next year with our current year 8 students.



TRIPS

GREAT NTLT LITTER PICK



On Wednesday our school Eco Council took part in the inaugural Great NTLT Litter Pick in North Tyneside. This event was inspired by former Trust Governor and High Sheriff of Tyne and Wear, David Bavaird who sadly passed away last year. One of David's last wishes was that we all "give some of our valuable time to our community" and over 1000 children, young people and staff gave up some of their time to help make our local areas look great.

Our team focused on Walton Avenue as this is an area used by many of our students on their walk to and from school each day. Seven students along with two teachers, Mr Langley and Miss Howard,

spent nearly two hours clearing rubbish from pavements, grassed areas and bushes to make our local community look much cleaner. In total we collected four full black bin bags of rubbish which is a fantastic effort from the students involved. This is not the end of litter picking for the Eco Council, we are always keen to get out and contribute to making our community a better environment for people to enjoy.



FUNDRAISING

WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY



The 21st of March marks World Down Syndrome Day and this year Mrs Buckles-Wright organised her famous bake sale to raise awareness of the day.

Alongside her were a team of incredible year 9 students - Rowan R, Millie L, Kylie G and Dylan H, who were on hand to set up and sell a mixture of sweet treats.

Miss Weymes' grandma's famous chocolate chip cookies made an appearance and keen bakers such as Mrs Deighton and Mr Burnip's mum also contributed. Donations of goods, such as tray bakes, cupcakes and donuts all added to a sensational sale. The sale this year was so big, the team had to draft in the mentors - Kellie and Zoe to assist.

Posters of the sale and World Down Syndrome Day were set up and yellow and blue balloons (kindly donated by Mrs Martin and her form class SMA) were tied to the railings outside the Hub; the colours that represent Down Syndrome.

It was reported that a certain Mr Brierley wasn't prompt and ended up at the back of the queue! Luckily for him, he still got to see all the action taking place.

I can happily reveal that the team raised over £220 - an incredible amount!

Well done!



SAFEGUARDING

COUNTY LINES



How do these criminals exploit children?

What is County Lines?

County Lines is a form of criminal exploitation involving the transport and sale of drugs. It can involve moving drugs and money from one street to the next, or from one end of the country to the other, and the people who do the 'running' are often children who have been targeted and groomed into doing so by criminal gangs. Drugs are advertised by text message on dedicated 'deal lines' and on social media.

Target

Criminals will watch an area - e.g. the school gates or a park - to see if they can spot a particularly vulnerable child. They will then strike up a friendship and get to know them before moving to the 'test' stage.

Test

The criminal will offer gifts, money, expensive trainers, a phone to make the child feel special and part of the gang. They will then test the child's loyalty by asking them to run small errands or hold onto items for them, whilst rewarding this loyalty with more gifts.

Trap

The criminal will now control the child by isolating them from their friends and family, making threats, and demanding payback for all the gifts previously given, which could include moving and selling drugs, and sexual exploitation. The child will now feel indebted and trapped. A staged robbery or embarrassing image or video may be used to coerce the child.

What are the signs that a child is being criminally exploited?

Protective of their phone and checking it more frequently

Changes in appearance: Unwashed and tired or suddenly wears expensive clothes, jewellery, fragrance

Missing episodes

Behavioural changes: Withdrawn, Edgy, Aggressive

Have concerns about a child? Want to report information?

In an emergency: Dial 999 for POLICE
Otherwise, dial 101 or report via our website

Anonymous reporting via Crimestoppers
0800 555 111 or
www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Child concerns:
Follow school protocol

Speak to your DSL

For guidance and support:
NSPCC Helpline
0808 800 5000 or
email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Search online: 'Crimestoppers County Lines' for more information

www.northumbria.police.uk



SAFEGUARDING TIKTOK

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 of many apps 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

TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

(certain features are restricted to over-18s only)

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

While TikTok's "Following" feed only displays videos from users someone follows, "For You" is a stream of clips based on their previously watched content. Most videos on a child's "For You" feed will therefore be light-hearted and amusing, but it could potentially surface something unsuitable. TikTok's guidelines prohibit the sharing of illegal or inappropriate content, but the sheer volume of uploads mean they aren't manually monitored and vetted.

18
CENSORED

DAINGEROUS CHALLENGES

Due to TikTok's immense popularity, some young people have unfortunately been influenced by videos challenging them to perform harmful, criminal or even deadly acts. One extreme example was the "blackout" trend, which encouraged users to hold their breath until they passed out from a lack of oxygen. It led to two families filing lawsuits against TikTok over the tragic deaths of their children.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

With around 1.1 billion users globally, the potential for contact from strangers on TikTok is high – especially as accounts created by over-18s (or youngsters using a false date of birth) are set to public by default. This not only means that someone's profile is visible to everyone else on the app, it also lets their videos be suggested to others and enables anyone to comment on them or download them.

IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but users have the option to buy TikTok coins, which can be used to purchase emojis in the app. These emojis are then sent as rewards (retaining their monetary value) to other users for videos they've created. Coin bundles range from £9.99 to an eye-watering £99. TikTok's policy is that they can't be bought by under-18s, but it's possible to bypass this with a fake birthdate.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

TikTok can be addictive, especially for young people: compulsive repeated use can interfere with sleep patterns and be a distraction from other activities. The platform recently introduced default usage time limits of 60 and 90 minutes for new members under 18 (in the UK, children with TikTok average 102 minutes per day on the app), but these restrictions can easily be removed in the settings.

TIKTOK NOW

Introduced in late 2022, the 'TikTok Now' feature lets users post a daily video or photo at the exact same time as their friends. Users receive a synchronised notification at a random time of day, giving them three minutes to take a video or real-time photo. This addition can not only be a distraction to young people but could lead to them inadvertently sharing private content such as their location.

Advice for Parents & Carers

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account with their child's and control their settings remotely. Parents can then, for example, turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content); set screen time limits; and manage their child's ability to send messages (and to whom). Children can't alter these settings without parental approval.

MAKE ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Although under-18s will have their TikTok account set to private by default, bypassing this setting is relatively easy. However, parents have the ability to manually set their child's account to private – meaning that their videos won't be visible to strangers and they won't be able to exchange messages with people who aren't on their friends list.

LIMIT IN-APP SPENDING

If your child is using an iPhone or Android device to access TikTok, you can alter the settings to prevent them from making in-app purchases. We'd recommend that you enable this feature, as it's quite easy for a young person – without realising what they're doing – to spend a significant amount of real money buying TikTok coins so they can unlock more features of the app.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If your child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's crucial to talk about the potential risks in this type of app. For example, ensure they understand not to share any identifying personal information – and that they realise they could be exposed to inappropriate content. Thinking critically about what they see on TikTok can help children become generally more social media savvy.

READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that your child might be spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something inappropriate or upsetting that they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the possible signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as are failing to complete homework or regularly not eating meals.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid The Inquirer, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



NOS
National
Online
Safety
#WakeUpWednesday

[@natonlinesafety](https://twitter.com/natonlinesafety)

[/NationalOnlineSafety](https://facebook.com/NationalOnlineSafety)

[@nationalonlinesafety](https://instagram.com/nationalonlinesafety)

[@national_online_safety](https://tiktok.com/@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: 02.03.2023