

BETHS VIP

Excellence - Community - Respect

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER



Happy Belated New Year!! It does feel like a long time ago that we were on our Christmas break, even though we are through our second week back.

The temperature since returning has seen its cold snaps. With this in mind, please ensure your child is wrapped up warm coming into school each day. Last week upon returning to school we were met with our heating system not working in some classrooms around the school site.

After much investigation we believe we have resolved the issue and heat has been restored to our classrooms. I would like to thank our staff and scholars for bearing with us whilst this was being resolved.

Housekeeping reminders, I would like to remind you to check your child's lunch account to ensure it is topped up should they use the canteen.

At the end of the December term, the Young Enterprise team held a raffle to go towards their funding for their product design. The prizes were 1st a £50 voucher of choice, 2nd a £20 Christmas mystery box and 3rd a box of celebrations chocolates.



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Our prize winners were:

1st prize – 200 pink ticket = Jay C, 9E

2nd Prize – 556 blue ticket = Kaan P, 11B

3rd Prize – 234 blue ticket = Mr Rushbrook

Our new Sixth Form building is scheduled to open on Monday 27th January for lessons to take place in there. It's been a long journey and it's a fabulous asset to the school, I hope our Sixth Form scholars enjoy it.

Have a wonderful weekend,

Richard Blyghton



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STUDENT SUCCESS

Congratulations to Oscar A in Year 12, during his last stint of racing he again represented Great Britain at cyclocross World Cup event over in France where he finished 3rd. As well as finishing 3rd and 4th in subsequent races. Oscar will also be competing in the next World Cup event in Benidorm! Best of luck to Oscar.



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DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

The Design and Technology department recently hosted a lovely afternoon tea and catch-up for their A-level students. It was a brilliant opportunity for everyone to take a breather, chat about their A-level courses, and share ideas. Some students even showed off their incredible projects and gave Ms Foley a quick demo on how to use the laser cutter, which was amazing to see! A huge thank you to the DT department for putting on such a fun and relaxing event – it was enjoyed by all!



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CHINESE EXPERIENCE CLUB

To celebrate the upcoming Chinese New Year, students tried making Hongbao (red envelopes), which are believed to bring good luck for the new year. With guidance from Mr Wen, some students successfully created impressive red envelopes!



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GOETHE INSTITUTE TRIP

Our Year 8 and 9 German students, accompanied by Mr Ford, Ms Bechikr and Ms McArdell, visited the Goethe Institute in South Kensington for a German Day. The event included workshops and an interactive quiz held in the excellent library of the Goethe Institute. It provided a wonderful opportunity for students to represent the school while gaining valuable insights into the opportunities that learning German can offer.



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A-LEVEL MUSIC

Our A Level Music students were delighted to be visited by Peter Ash, the conductor of the Odyssey Festival Orchestra. He introduced them to music by Modest Mussorgsky, which they will hear in a concert next week. Orchestra members Clara and Sam also shared their passion for Mussorgsky's music with our students.



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BETHS PARENTS ASSOCIATION



Many congratulations to the winners of our Winter Raffle which was drawn on the 17th December 2024.

Christmas Fizz Hamper - Melissa Perry

Christmas Hamper - Lee-Ann de Villiers

Beths Junior Bucket Hat - David Walker



Thank you to everyone who took part - watch this space for details of our next raffle!



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FIXTURES AND RESULTS

Results for week commencing 13th January

BASKETBALL					
Date	Competition	Team	Opposition	Venue	Results
13.01.25	Kent Basketball	U16A	V Rainham Mark Grammar School	Home	Won 79-18
14.01.25	Kent Basketball	U12A	V Hayes School	Home	Won 52-44

RUGBY					
Date	Competition	Team	Opposition	Venue	Results
14.01.25	Friendly	U14A	V Dartford Grammar School for Boys	Away	Lost 54-14



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FIXTURES AND RESULTS

Fixtures for week commencing 20th January

FOOTBALL					
Date	Competition	Team	Opposition	Venue	Start time
20.01.25	North Kent Cup	U14A	V Hurstmere	Home	2:10pm
20.01.25	Under 15s Fletcher Trophy	U15	V Maidstone	Neutral	7:45pm
21.01.25	North Kent Cup	U16	V Cleeve Park	Home	2:30pm

BASKETBALL					
Date	Competition	Team	Opposition	Venue	Start time
20.01.25	Kent Basketball	U16A	V Northfleet Technology College	Home	4pm
22.01.25	Kent Basketball	U18A	V Homewood School	Away	2pm
23.01.25	Kent Basketball	U18A	V Tonbridge School	Home	4pm
23.01.25	Kent Basketball	U15A	V Gravesend Grammar School	Away	4:30pm

RUGBY					
Date	Competition	Team	Opposition	Venue	Start time
20.01.25	Friendly	U13A	V Dartford Grammar School for Boys	Away	2:30pm
23.01.25	Friendly	U14A	V Bullers Wood School for Boys	Home	2:30pm
24.01.25	Friendly	U12A	V Bullers Wood School for Boys	Home	2:30pm

*Please note that some matches may be cancelled/postponed and therefore we ask you to keep an eye on the SOCS website.

Beths Grammar School | Sports Home (bethssport.co.uk).

If you have any questions, please email us at fixtures@beths.bexley.sch.uk



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KEEPING YOUR SCHOLAR SAFE

At The National College, our **WakeUpWednesday** guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

JUSTALK KIDS

JustTalk Kids is a child's version of the JustTalk app – a highly popular social networking platform – designed for users up to 13 years of age, allowing them to video call, message and participate in group chats. While adults can link their own JustTalk account to their child's and make use of parental controls, it's important to understand the risks associated with the app.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

SUBSCRIPTION FOR PREMIUM ACCESS

While JustTalk Kids is free, there's the option to subscribe to a kids' premium account or a premium family account. At a cost, this feature allows children to have access to more fun features such as games they can play with others in a call, exclusive stickers, a badge denoting them as a premium subscriber, and exclusive ringtones and themes.

RESISTANCE TO CONTROLS

JustTalk Kids endeavours to allow children the sense of having a chat-based app while allowing parents to set controls (within the app or from their own adult JustTalk account). The basis behind this is positive; however, some children are challenging their parents by refusing to use JustTalk Kids, preferring to use the adult version without any restrictions in place.

KNOWING THE PARENT PASSCODE

After downloading JustTalk Kids, parents can set a passcode which users must enter to add contacts. The parental controls help to manage which content can be viewed and who children can add as a contact; this then allows children to chat with friends in a controlled environment. However, prospective contacts don't have to know a specific username. In theory, someone could type in a random name and then add them as a friend.

POTENTIAL DATA LEAKS

JustTalk and JustTalk Kids claim to be secure and encrypted, going so far as to state that even the developers themselves won't access your data. However, a security lapse in 2022 highlighted that messages were not in fact encrypted – leading to concerns around the security of the app and the transparency of the development team.

CYBERBULLYING

Online chats can provide a sense of anonymity, leading some users to post things which they wouldn't normally say in person. Combined with the option of group chats, there's a risk that young people might join in with this kind of behaviour, escalating it further and potentially turning what should be a fun experience into something deeply negative.

TOO MUCH SCREEN TIME

A report by the UK Parliament Education Committee highlighted a 62% increase in children's screen time between 2020 and 2022 – as well as finding that 20% of children used their smartphones in a manner consistent with screen addiction. Introducing children to social networking apps when they're too young can lead to bad digital habits and a reliance on technology from an early age.

Advice for Parents & Educators

JUSTIFY THE CONTROLS

If parents allow their child to use JustTalk Kids, they should explain that they're putting parental controls in place to make the app safer. Make sure the child knows not to put their full name on the account and doesn't use a photo of themselves as their profile picture. This type of open discussion will help to ensure that a child is aware of the app's potential risks and knows how to reduce them.

TALK ABOUT ONLINE FRIENDSHIPS

Young children could be excited to use this app. However, highlight that they must do so in a positive, respectful and responsible manner. While it can be easy to get caught up in a group chat, it's important to talk to others politely and call out any unpleasant behaviour. Discuss the importance of limiting their contacts to people they know in real life and use parental controls to enforce this.

DOS AND DON'TS OF SHARING

Some children might not understand the potential dangers of oversharing online. Set clear guidelines around what is and isn't safe to share on the internet, and discuss the concept of a digital footprint. Children need to understand that the things they say and share online can never be completely erased. Even if they delete it themselves, it can be saved and distributed by others.

ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

Apps like JustTalk can sometimes lend themselves to bullying behaviours. Parents should monitor what their child is sending and receiving, check in with them regularly and encourage them to share their feelings (both positive and negative) at home. Remind them that they can block a contact if someone is treating them disrespectfully.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Chloe 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.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/justtalk-kids>



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