

HEADMASTER'S WELCOME

Our staff and pupils have really stepped up to provide a wonderful last few days of term, here in school and beyond.

Our community christmas carols, pictured here, saw a dizzying array of music which entertained two packed audiences in the PAA over the weekend with enthusiastic audience participation and a range of responses to the talent on show which, given the power of music to move and stir our emotions, included tears and laughter, and a sense of togetherness that is something to be really cherished. Spirits were lifted and, for those who needed it, the festive season was well and truly launched. Well done to all involved!

Since then, in just a few short days, we have seen our pupils wandering the streets singing Christmas songs, on their way to entertain Vision 25 - a wonderful local charity - for their Christmas party. Our Prep School pupils have been visiting local care homes to entertain residents with carols and Christmas songs. A group of pupils and staff welcomed about 100 guests for the inaugural 'Memento' dementia friendly choir, with our very own Mr McGrother leading the evening alongside our School of Skiffle and other fantastic contributions from our pupils. This was a really special event, much appreciated - I know - by our guests,

who had travelled from far and wide to be there. We look forward to the next installment.

On Tuesday morning our talented staff brass band - Mr Skirving, Mr Yates, Mrs Lodge, Mr Lyle, Dr Prideaux and Mr Mist (and special guest Chloe) welcomed us all into school with a medley of carols, setting us up for the day in festive cheer. Having had our end of term assembly which celebrated a wide range of achievements, contributions and activities from the whole term, we now look forward to the School's Carol Services in St Mary Magdalene Church later today to conclude our term and welcome the Christmas holiday.

This last newsletter is, as ever, a fascinating read, with everything from success on a national level in the

Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge to a termly review by the CCF, from praise for Abi's book review from the book's author to another fascinating book review by Georgia, from festive creative writing to Yarm Apprentice updates, and to finish a summary of success on both the rugby pitch and netball court. Many congratulations and thanks to all who have contributed to this, and to all our newsletters over the term.

I hope that the break to come brings a chance for rest, recuperation, valuable time with family and friends and a sense of togetherness and hope as we look ahead to 2023. Wishing all families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Dr Huw Williams



CREATIVE WRITING

The first of our two seasonal offerings for you today.

Ms H Blakemore

Snowflakes on Christmas

Crystal snowflakes dance through the sky, draping a blanket of white over the path. Gracefully, they pirouette to the ground, each an intricate design before they blend in with the rest, forming a clean sheet of snow. It is only disturbed with our footprints, whilst we race each other through the snow, with smiles etched across our faces. With the sounds of our voices, the snow comes alive, and what was once a white sheet of snow, has a carrot for a nose and buttons for eyes. The piercing cold whips through the air, but it is that time of year when it doesn't matter. All that matters is us and snow. Without it, it wouldn't be Christmas.

Sanju Vasireddy, Second Year

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Last week we were delighted to invite Mrs Cheryl Scollay from the Wellness Centre in Yarm to lunch with the Lower Sixth Apprentices who raised over £500 for the Centre. Ollie's team enjoyed the opportunity to suggest uses for the funds, as Mrs Scollay is keen for there to be student involvement in the decision making. we were inspired by Mrs Scollay

explaining all that had been achieved by volunteers in such a short period of time.

We hope we are able to help and support this valuable aspect of the local community more in the future.

Miss C E Rhodes



FORMER YARM STUDENT NAMED THE TIMES 'LAWYER OF THE WEEK'

We were delighted to read last week that former student, Patrick Tomison, had been named 'Lawyer of the Week' by The Times. This followed his involvement in a case supporting a former employee of Marks and Spencer who was made redundant over email mistakes despite her dyslexia. The case centring around an alleged disability discrimination was heard at a central

London employment tribunal. Patrick's case hinged on his ability to demonstrate the impact of the employee's dyslexia on her work, arguing that the employer had overlooked the impact of this disability.

Patrick, who works as a barrister at Outer Temple Chambers in London, left Yarm School in 2010 and went up to read Law with German at

Oxford. He studied Politics, History, German and Maths at A Level.

Mr S Edwards



REFLECTIONS ON THE AUTUMN TERM IN THE CCF

This term in the CCF our contingent have been on exciting trips and learned a lot of new skills in our Monday night parades. By far the biggest event of the year was our contingent's participation in the Remembrance Service carried out on the High Street. After practising our drill our contingent attended a church service and then marched down the High Street before forming up in ranks at the town hall in front of a large crowd of spectators. This was a huge honour for our contingent and we were very proud to represent the School on the day. I was given the opportunity to carry the contingent standard during the service which is an experience I will always carry with me with pride.

Monday parades bring equal excitement as they bring opportunities to learn new skills as well as take on different roles within a team. For example a lesson on manoeuvring across the battlefield without a weapon was led by CSgt Stussi and CSgt Jones. This parade allowed cadets to understand the significance of body positioning whilst manoeuvring as well as providing an opportunity for us leading the parade to gain valuable experience taking on a leadership role and preparing a lesson.

Sergeant McGee and Corporal Chan delivered a lesson on camouflage, starting off with a small hunt for CCF

items. It was fun, teaching the younger cadets the principles of camouflage and hiding before we gave them a summary of the skills involved. I hope we will get to use our new skills at summer camp!

We've also had the fantastic opportunity this term to shoot air rifles. This was a great session for those who went on the DCCT trip. We learned how to aim and fire the air rifles, and loaded the magazines too. This, personally, was my first time using an air rifle, and it was exhilarating to fire. Lance Corporal Faye Lane emerged as the best air rifle shot with a group size of an unbelievable 90 points out of a high score of 100! She now has the nickname 'dead eye Faye'.

The contingent has been on trips too this term, with the first excursion being a paintballing and obstacle course. We had great fun paintballing in the morning and tackling an obstacle course in the afternoon. Although it was quite muddy and the obstacle course tested our endurance, we were delighted to spend the day with friends, working in teams. 'We were excited to have the chance to practise manoeuvres from field craft camp' stated Lance Corporal Cochrane.

Our most recent trip was the Third and Fourth Year DCCT trip to



CCF REFLECTIONS (cont.)

Catterick where they fired the SA80 rifle. The cadets had a 25 metre group range, and also 100 metre range of 10 rounds. This was a new experience for the Third Years, who enjoyed it. Lance Corporal Chawla thought 'it was lovely to see the Third Year putting their weapons handling drills into practice'. Cadet Boddy found it to be a 'really fun and interesting' trip. This was a great opportunity for the newer cadets to experience!

It's been a thoroughly informative and fun term with the CCF, from paintballing, to the poignant Remembrance Service, to whistle-stop sessions with Sixth

Form cadets, and the thrilling DCCT trip. We've had an amazing time, and look forward to next term's activities! 13 cadets are lucky enough to be leaving straight after assembly to head down to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst for an overnight stay and an amazing insight.

Colour Sergeant Jakob Stussi,
Upper Sixth, and Corporal Jennifer
Chan, Lower Sixth

UNIFORM SHOP OPENING HOURS

The Uniform Shop will be open on Tuesday 20th December 1:30-4pm in the holidays.

They will be then closed until the new term, re-opening on January 5th when they will resume their term time hours of 1:30 - 4:30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

BEBRAS COMPUTATIONAL THINKING CHALLENGE 2022

Earlier this term, 219 Yarm School pupils from First Year to Lower Sixth joined over 340,000 young people from across the UK, to take part in the 2020 Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge run by Oxford University.

This is a timed challenge designed to introduce students to strategies used in problem solving and software development. Examples of these techniques would include the ability to break down complex tasks into simpler components, algorithm design, pattern recognition, pattern generalisation and abstraction.

Of the 219 Yarm School pupils, 52 were in the top 10% nationally and have been invited to take part in the prestigious Oxford University Computing Challenge taking place during the Spring term.

Our pupils competed in the Junior, Intermediate, Senior and Elite categories. With the following pupils achieving Best in School in their respective categories-

Junior - Ewan Paul, Thomas Pritchard and Euan White (joint)

Intermediate - Katie Melvin

Senior - Patrick Winters



Elite - James Waine

In addition to receiving a Best in School, Patrick was joint first in the Senior category, beating 37,310 other competitors from across the country!

Well done to Ewan, Thomas, Euan, Katie, Patrick, James and all the other pupils who took part in Yarm School's most successful ever Bebras Challenge!

FOURTH YEAR PUPILS GAIN EXPERT INSIGHT INTO THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Saturday's frosty morning was devoted to increasing their knowledge of and exposure to the health professions by a group of pupils from the Fourth Year. Hosted by the Strive Centre at the James Cook University Hospital, the centre is the venue for the training of a vast range of medics and dentists from across the region, including students from the York-Hull and Newcastle Medical Schools. On hand to assist the pupils was a diverse range of medical practitioners who were able to take the students in small groups through a series of workshops.

These included the likes of obstetrics and gynaecology where pupils learned on a simulated model the process of delivering a baby, a session with a vascular surgeon who gave a visual presentation of some of his most challenging surgeries, and then sat down to teach dexterity in vessel tie-offs to the pupils, a session with an anaesthetist who works in intensive care who showed the pupils all of the complex equipment and processes involved in such patient cases, and a workshop centred around keyhole surgery training skills involved a gastric surgeon. Other students learned more about cardiology with video and mannequin simulations, whilst others took their turn learning to insert cannulas into a model of an arm, albeit complete with a blood

supply to more fully replicate the real experience.

It proved to be a fascinating morning for so many pupils, gaining their first hands-on experiences as they begin to consider their future options, and whether their skills and temperament could benefit this diverse profession field. We are most appreciative of the time and efforts of all of the staff at the Strive Centre and James Cook for facilitating this wonderful visit.

Mr S Edwards



Learning to insert a cannula



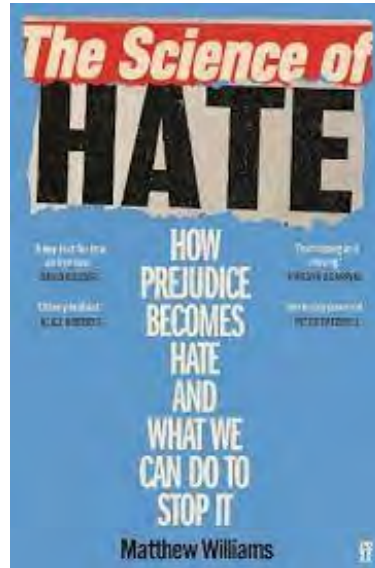
Guided by a vascular surgeon in the manual dexterity required to perform the tying off of vessels



Practising with a keyhole surgery simulation kit

POLITICS STUDENTS EXPLORE THE SCIENCE OF 'HATE' WITH A WORLD LEADING CRIMINOLOGIST

Our guest speaker, renowned criminologist Professor Matthew Williams, began his talk by praising the writing of Upper Sixth Politics student, Abi Saddington, who had written [a review of his recent book](#). The author claimed it was the best review he had read of his work, and encouraged Abi to publish it online so that he could link his own site to the review - considerable praise from such a highly regarded academic!



Matthew's work, centred at Cardiff University, focuses on hate speech, hate crime and extremism online. In 2017 he founded a global hub, the HateLab, to conduct empirical research into this topic, and its findings have gained a worldwide reach and impact, featured in most British newspapers, New Scientist, Politico, Psychology Today, the BBC News, as well as other media outlets including Panorama, Radio 4's Today programme, Times Radio and File on 4. The research lab represents the UK's largest investment in social media research, and its reports have informed the likes of the Welsh Government's Framework for Action on Tackling Hate Crime and the Metropolitan Police.

Matthew's visit came at an interesting time given the undoubted proliferation of online responses to the World Cup

campaigns. His Hate Lab has developed sophisticated software to monitor, gather and interpret the online reactions and comments, noticing that at this World Cup there had been a fall in racist abuse centred on England football players, but an increase in homophobic hate speech. It patterns in terms of non-white players typically being racially abused while white players are the recipients of homophobic abuse. Our guest also spoke about the process of and potential for deradicalisation of individuals, providing notes of hope, but only if the systems were in place to intervene effectively.

Questions from the students explored the dynamic between online hate speech and the lack of openly gay Premiership footballers and the extent to which a shift here could lessen online abuse, the

impact of high profile or celebrities and their impact on levels of abuse, including the recent outpourings of Kanye West, as well as the extent to which there is a 'scientific' basis to hate and the impact of this approach. The challenges are considerable and it was evident that huge amounts of work were being done to provide the knowledge and insight to combat hate crime. On balance the vast majority of online messaging is positive, and the experience of the England women footballers at Euro 2022 was overwhelmingly positive, but the online space is precarious, vulnerable and susceptible to significant shifts, making the work of Professor Walker and his HateLab all the more necessary.

Mr S Edwards

BOOK REVIEW: WHY WE GET THE WRONG POLITICIANS BY ISABEL HARDMAN

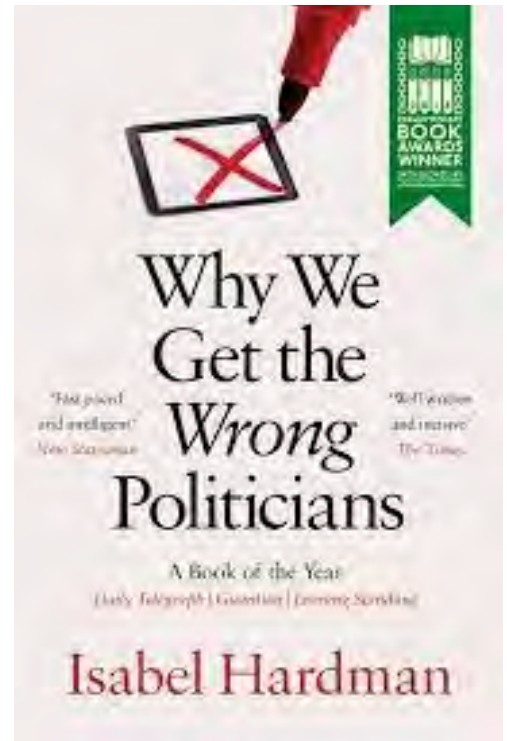
'Why We Get the *Wrong* Politicians' is an insightful book by Isabel Hardman, not only is it a critique of British lawmakers and government officials, but it also clarifies the mechanics of Parliament, exposing its injustices and inefficiencies and explaining what can be done to fix it. Hardman's book is as much about Parliament's structure and culture as the politicians inside it.

The book is neither a defence nor a criticism of how politicians behave, and its tone is incredibly neutral even in these times of hostility towards politicians. Hardman, who is a political journalist, aims to use the book not to highlight terrible politicians, nor to idolise those she thinks are good. She seeks instead to look at how and why our politics forces politicians to be good or bad. The strongest part of the book is its discussion of how politicians get selected as candidates and then elected to parliament. Hardman goes into great detail surrounding this subject, casting new light on why politicians end up in two categories: 'yes men', used to spending their time doing absurd tasks to prove themselves, or difficult backbenchers whose main focus is their personal projects.

The book goes on to look at how political patronage, parliamentary one-upmanship and the system for

passing bills into laws – through limited debate, faux scrutiny in a public bill committee and strong-arming House of Lords amendments is creating poor legislation. Worse than this are the areas she highlights that get no thought and no legislation, such as the state of policy about temporary accommodation for people awaiting housing. Hardman manages to enter the debate thoughtfully and without bias. She provides detailed yet readable scrutiny of these policies and their outcomes, and demonstrates how a neutral stance with an understanding for a topic might offer a useful critique – something that did not happen before these policies were left to negatively affect millions of lives.

There is a huge amount written these days about the lack of diversity in parliament, usually focusing on race, gender and class. Hardman includes some of this. However, her focus is on how the experiences and peer groups of politicians and civil servants lead them to make mistakes. Hardman theorises that even those who come from working-class backgrounds are, by the time they end up in parliament, fairly removed from the realities of tax credits, temporary accommodation and fire safety in tower blocks. It seems to be the case that many people agree with this as



they see those who make it to Westminster as distant, in both their friendship groups and lived experience, from most of their constituents. Hardman also argues that few politicians would have friends and family in temporary accommodation or living in council blocks, or would have understood how important tax credits were to a family income, yet there is limited evidence to support these claims.

This book has a thought provoking account about MP's constituency duties and does a really good job of humanising politicians and their constituents. Hardman devotes a portion of the book to the overlooked work that MPs and their staff do in their constituency surgeries, taking examples from across the political spectrum,

BOOK REVIEW (cont.)

because of the balanced nature of this book. For people in hardship, who have exhausted every other avenue of remedy, an MP is often the last hope of dealing with a housing emergency, a benefits dispute or other personal crisis. Many MPs take this part of the job very seriously and that is a change from the past when an MP could get away with being highly neglectful of their constituents, paying them attention only every four to five years when they needed their votes. These days, MPs spend every week sitting in “chilly church halls, leaky community centres and library basements” listening to distressed constituents. Quite often, the MP can help the voter navigate their personal crisis; a letter on Westminster notepaper to a

government official or local bureaucrat can untangle a mess. Voters sometimes put in bizarre demands however, as one MP was once asked for help returning a pair of trousers that didn't fit; another received a request to find someone to feed a constituent's dog while he was on holiday. This raises a question that is as important as it is usually neglected: should MPs be spending less of their hours functioning as an emergency service for distressed constituents in order to have more time to devote to being effective in parliament? Hardman addresses this dilemma but gives no direct answer and instead uses it as a thought provoking take for the reader to decide on.

‘Why We Get the Wrong Politicians’ suggests some very practical improvements, especially around candidate selection, though there seems to be little chance of these taking place. Hardman is not a strongly opinionated person surrounding this topic and has a gentle approach in her dealings with politicians which is a contrast to the norm. This makes the book a seemingly honest and accurate appraisal of the UK political system. Overall I find Hardman's book to be a vital and compelling read for anyone interested in the way UK politics does or doesn't work.

Georgia Charnley, Upper Sixth

CREATIVE WRITING AT CHRISTMAS

The second of our two seasonal offerings for you today, written by members of the Creative Writing activity.

Ms H Blakemore

Memories

As I stepped into the room, the welcoming scent of pine wafted towards my nose: bringing with it a host of warm memories...

Waking up, exhilarated at the idea of Santa having come in the night to fill my stocking with enough trinkets and toys to keep me occupied long past the icy throes of winter. Opening presents, surrounded by family, anticipation with every fold of the paper pulled back. Toiling to drag heavy sleds up a path

laden with snow, only to race back down again moments later, with adrenaline pounding in my heart. Walking into the kitchen and the chaotic rush that is the preparation for our Christmas dinner. Then, enjoying the meal while enveloped with the comforting voices of others drifting over me. Finally, in the evening, being curled near the fire, with a hot chocolate and mince pie resting on the table next to me.

My mum called me and my siblings through, telling us to help carry dishes over for our Christmas

dinner...

Decorating gingerbread houses with my sisters- would we be able to resist the sweet tastes until we had finished? Walking down the High Street, each window lighting up the darkness with its promise of Christmas. Dancing and singing with my friends to the tunes of our favourite Christmas songs.

Christmas. Family. Presents. Mince pies. Happiness.

Elsa Williams, Fourth Year

RUGBY REPORT

It has been a very pleasing season across the age groups in terms of effort, commitment and enjoyment. This has seen great numbers at practices and matches in all our teams. The key this season has been the real development in our junior teams in terms of skill levels, game understanding and a willingness to focus on positive rugby whilst having fun; great to see the new U12's have such a good term! Alongside this was a great senior tour to Dubai.

Throughout the season we have had some great performances and results against the likes of; Durham, Ampleforth, Pocklington, Bradford Grammar, Dame Allan's, Ashville, to

name a few.

Special mention to the U13, U14 and U15 sides who all went undefeated in the County cups to be crowned Durham County Champions, scoring a huge number of tries between them and conceding very few; a superb achievement. The U15 side also recorded some very impressive wins in the NatWest National Vase competition.

All this bodes well for future years and also next term's 7s.

We continue to have many boys involved in the representative and performance pathways, which begin at U14 level with some others starting after Christmas;

England Rugby Developing Player Programme:

Oliver Blake, Henry Bottomley, Harry Staggs, Oscar Burns, Sam Arnold, James Graham, Fin Cook, Jamie Elsworth, Cameron Morrison, Essa Ibrahim, Thomas Hardy, Alex Bromiley.

Durham County U18:

Jacob Rutter, Raf McNicholas

Newcastle Falcons U17/18

Academy:

Jacob Rutter

Newcastle Falcons U18 Academy League Squad:

Harry Wildridge

Mr C Webb



NETBALL REPORT

Netball at Yarm has got off to a fantastic start this season. The U12, U13, U14 and U15 squads are all through to the quarter finals of the Sisters n Sport National cup which will continue after the Christmas break. All teams have had some fantastic results along the way including score lines of 24 - 8, 43 - 8 and 45 - 5.

In the National School competition all 3 of our teams (U14, U16, U19) won their County rounds and are through to the Regional rounds in January as Stockton champions.

Miss L Hodgson



SISTERS N SPORT

On Wednesday the U14As played a Sister n Sport netball match against Wolfreton. We dominated the game with some good defence and shooting. The end score was 43-8 to us. We had goals to achieve during the game especially the defense, this made us work hard on the court. Well played girls!

Amelia Hudson, Third Year



THE REAL THING

THE REAL THING with ORIGINAL VOCALISTS Chris Amoo and Dave Smith and live 5 piece band are coming to Yarm!

Best known for their legendary hits 'You To Me Are Everything', 'Can't Get By Without You' and 'Can You Feel the Force', as well as their ground-breaking 1977 song, 'Children of the Ghetto', The Real Thing remain Britain's most successful black group of all-time.

Saturday 25th February 2023, 7:30pm

[Book Online Here](#)



BOYCS AND AGGERS - THE LENNON AND MCCARTNEY OF CRICKET

AN EVENING WITH AGGERS and SIR GEOFFREY BOYCOTT

This show night is peppered with wickedly funny anecdotes and will, as ever, be fun, fiery and full of surprises. It will cover films of Sir Geoffrey's playing career and commentating career.

There will be stories, anecdotes, questions from the audience and some straight forward cricket sense but best of all it will be fun.

Wednesday 19th April 2023 7:45pm

[Book Online Here](#)



BEYOND THE BARRICADE

Beyond the Barricade, the UK's longest running Musical Theatre Concert Tour features past principal performers from Les Miserables and delivers over two hours of the best of Broadway and the West End, ending of course with a stunning finale from Les Mis.

This brand new show will include many of the best numbers that have made Beyond the Barricade the most popular musical theatre concert in the country.

Friday 28th April 2023, 7:30pm

[Book Online Here](#)





National
Online
Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

12 Smartphone Online Safety Tips

FOR CHILDREN WITH NEW DEVICES

The Christmas season has finally arrived and soon many of you will be opening your presents in the hope that Santa has listened to your request for the latest mobile phone or smart device.

Owning a mobile phone can be fun, but it's important to use it safely and responsibly. By following our safety tips below, you can make sure that you set up your phone securely, keep your personal information private and enjoy using your phone in the healthiest way possible.

1 ALWAYS SECURE YOUR PHONE WITH A PASSWORD

This will help to keep your private information safe and won't allow others to access your phone without your permission. Make sure your password is memorable and personal to you but something which other people can't guess, and always share it with your parents just in case you forget it.

2 DISABLE LOCATION SETTINGS

This can usually be done from the device's privacy control settings. Disabling location settings means that your phone can't be tracked by others and strangers can't tell where you are when you're using it. It also helps to save battery.

3 ALWAYS USE A SECURE WIFI NETWORK

When you use your WIFI at home usually it is a secure network that only you and your family know the password to. Public networks, like those in coffee shops, can be accessed by anyone which means that people could potentially hack into your device and access your personal information without you realising.

4 ONLY PAIR WITH BLUETOOTH DEVICES YOU KNOW

A Bluetooth connection with another device means that you can send and receive data wirelessly. For example, you could listen to music wirelessly or receive pictures and videos from your friends. However, pairing your phone with a device you don't know means that you could be sharing personal information with a stranger or could leave your device open to receiving viruses.

5 ONLY USE APPS WHICH YOU ARE OLD ENOUGH TO USE

Before downloading any new apps, always check the age-rating of the app. If you need help, ask your parent or carer to make sure that the app is safe for you to use and never download anything which you are too young for as it may contain things that aren't safe for you to see.

6 BEWARE OF BECOMING ADDICTED TO YOUR PHONE

Your phone can be fun to use and it's easy to become too attached, whether it's keeping in touch with friends, discovering new features or downloading the latest apps. Remember it's always good to talk in person, go out and have fun and get regular exercise. This will keep you fit and healthy and make you appreciate there's more to life than just your mobile phone.

7 LIMIT YOUR SCREEN TIME

Using your phone for too long, particularly in the evenings, can make you feel tired at school, affect your concentration and make you lose interest in other things in life. Only use your phone at certain times of the day and don't use it close to bedtime. You can set a 'screen time limit' via the settings on your phone. This will help you stay fit and healthy and means that you will still be able to focus and perform well at school.

8 THINK OF OTHERS WHEN TAKING PHOTOS

Don't take embarrassing photos of other people on your phone. If other people get access to the photo and share it with more people, it could make that person really upset and treated as a form of bullying. Always be mindful of the photos you take using your camera and who you share them with.

9 MAKE SURE YOUR PARENTS SET UP 'PARENTAL CONTROLS'

This means that you will be able to use your phone safely and securely and won't accidentally do things you shouldn't do. The best time to do this is when you get a new phone or device so that you're protected from the very beginning.

10 ALWAYS TALK TO YOUR PARENTS IF YOU DON'T FEEL SAFE

Sometimes, even though your phone is really secure, you might see something you don't like, or someone might contact you who you don't know. If this happens, always tell your trusted adult like your parents, carers, other adult family members or a teacher, all of whom will be able to support you and advise you on what you should do next.

11 DON'T TEXT AND WALK

This might seem like a strange thing to say but it can be dangerous to stare at your mobile phone whilst walking outside alongside busy roads or bicycle paths. In some cases, children have been knocked over by cars or cyclists because they haven't been aware of their surroundings whilst texting or playing games on their mobile devices.

12 DON'T SHARE YOUR NUMBER OR YOUR DEVICE WITH PEOPLE YOU DON'T KNOW.

Never feel pressured into sharing your phone number with people you don't know and don't lend your phone to strangers or keep it where others could get hold of it. Look after your device and always keep it hidden from sight to avoid it being stolen or broken into.