



**Thought for
the Week**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

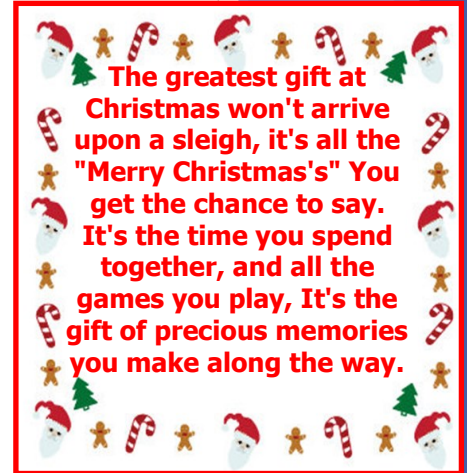
I can hardly believe I am writing the last message of this year and what a year it has been at Hillside. From our Ofsted in September which saw us achieve our long awaited and much deserved 'Good' judgement, to winning an Educate award in November for Innovative and Creative Literacy. Followed by an extremely successful Challenge Partners Review, which saw us become the first secondary school in our Hub to gain an accredited 'Area of Excellence'.

These awards are a reflection of our amazing young people and they should feel very proud of everything they have achieved so far this academic year. As always we couldn't do this without all your support.

As we finish for Christmas we say goodbye to Ms Lazaroff one of our Maths teachers and Mr Gibaud our AAVP and Subject Leader, English. We are really sad to see such valued colleagues leave us, but wish them every happiness in their new adventures.

I hope everyone can enjoy some time off over the Christmas break, to spend precious time with family and friends. I wish everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas and best wishes for 2024!

Amanda Ryan, Principal



Key Dates 2024

- Monday 8th January—Term commences for staff and pupils**
- 17th January – Year 10 & 11 Immunisation Catch Ups**
- 22nd January—Year 11 Predictor Results Day**
- 25th January—Year 11 Progress Evening 4.15pm - 6.45pm**

Take a Bow kids!

Last Thursday night pupils from Years seven up to eleven came together to form the cast, band and tech crew for Hillside's pantomime Cinderella. They performed to a jam packed audience with not an empty seat in the house, and boy did they put on a show! They retold the traditional story with a Hillside twist and had the hall rocking. Festive cheer was spread with renditions of Last Christmas, Baby it's Cold Outside and the big finale of Merry Christmas Everybody had the whole audience of their feet as snow fell over Cinders and her Prince during their happy ending. A fantastic night was had by all and we kicked off Christmas in style. A huge round of applause for all pupils involved, and a special thank you to all the staff who helped out on the night. I'm sure Miss Yusuf will forgive us at some point in 2024 for getting her up on stage! Merry Christmas Everybody!

Miss Brown & The Performing Arts Team!



I am delighted to share our published report from Ofsted with you. This is now live on our website for staff and parents to access. The link is here: [Hillside High School - Hillside is a Good School!](#)



admin@hillsidehigh.co.uk



0151 525 2630

Year 7 Christmas Homework – Junk Model Number

Last Wednesday, 20 Year 8 girls had the opportunity to visit Aintree Racecourse to take part in the 2023 Cyber First event to encourage more girls to enter the world of network security post 16. They all had the chance to take part in different challenges across the day to develop their knowledge, interest, leadership, and teambuilding skills. From the five schools attending Nadia K was one of two pupils who was chosen to win a prize for going above and beyond during the event.

Mr Henesy



Department Trip

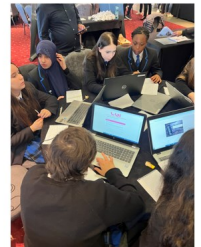


MEMBER OF THE WADE DEACON TRUST

EXCELLENCE IN THE HEART
OF THE COMMUNITY



Department Trip



MEMBER OF THE WADE DEACON TRUST

EXCELLENCE IN THE HEART
OF THE COMMUNITY



Team Around The School

Team Around the School (TAS) is a multi-agency project aimed at providing support to families to make sure that issues are dealt with at the earliest point and families receive the help they need. We know that at times, families need help and support and that's ok. You may have worries such as

- Work
- Finances
- Housing and benefits
- Parenting
- Relationships
- Emotional health and wellbeing
- Managing behaviour

To access Team Around the School support you can contact your child's progress leader who will be able to complete a referral with you or alternatively email safeguarding@hillsidehigh.co.uk. We will also have drop-ins taking place from Monday 29th January between 9am and 10am with Yvonne and Ellie from the TAS team.

Team Around the School Pilot South Sefton



We are delighted to let you know that our school is part of the South Sefton Team Around the School Pilot. Our school community now has a team who will work together to find solutions and provide support, to enable our children, young people and families to reach their full potential.

Part of the team will be based at our school one day a week. Please make them feel welcome and say hello when you see them around school.

Together we can do great things!



IT WAS CHRISTMAS AND THEN IT WASN'T

By Mr. Cosgrove & 8MC



In the halls of Hillside, tinsel gleamed so bright,
With 8MC all waiting for the holiday light.
Mr. Cosgrove told us, "Christmas is near!"
We dreamed of mince pies, spreading good cheer.



It was Christmas, then it wasn't, oh what a tale,
The calendar's trick, a whimsical fail!
Jingle bells stopped, but our spirits stayed high,
For in Hillside High, the cheer never says goodbye!



Mr. Edwards planned a show, extravaganza so grand,
With lights and carols, the best in the land.
We sang and we danced, in a festive parade,
Remembering the joy that Christmas had made.



It was Christmas, then it wasn't, oh what a tale,
The calendar's trick, a whimsical fail!
Jingle bells stopped, but our spirits stayed high,
For in Hillside High, the cheer never says goodbye!



Then Mrs. Buckley said, with a smile so bright,
"Every day's a celebration, if you hold it right."
So we laughed and we learned, in our Hillside way,
That Christmas is a feeling, not just a day.



It was Christmas, then it wasn't, oh what a tale,
The calendar's trick, a whimsical fail!
Jingle bells stopped, but our spirits stayed high,
For in Hillside High, the cheer never says goodbye!



So here's to 8MC, and our festive fun,
Remembering the joy when all's said and done.
In our hearts and our halls, the spirit stays lit,
It was Christmas and then it wasn't, but we'll never quit!



Breakfast Club

Come along to our fantastic breakfast club which is free of charge to all pupils.
Mrs McGing will be in the Dining Room everyday between 7:45am-8:20am





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 issues 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 **SETTING UP APPS, GAMES AND SOFTWARE**

Millions of new phones, tablets, laptops and games consoles will be nesting under Christmas trees this year. However, even if parents and carers have gone to the trouble of setting up these new devices and enabling the safety features, there are still potential hazards in the apps, games and software that children will want to install and use. Knowing what to look for and discussing those risks with your child may help avoid any nasty surprises this Christmas. Here are our top tips for ensuring that unwrapping this year's presents doesn't unleash any unexpected dangers.

TAKE NOTE OF AGE RATINGS

Back when most games were bought in shops, checking the age rating was easy: it was on the front of the box. Now that most games are downloaded, it's tougher – but not impossible. All reputable download stores show a game's age rating at the point of purchase, and you can check the suitability of a specific title your child wants to play at videostandards.org.uk/RatingBoard/games.



'FREE' ISN'T ALWAYS FREE

The games market has changed radically in recent years. Many titles are free to download, but then tempt players to pay for cosmetic items (as in Fortnite) or to unlock additional content. There can be huge peer pressure for children to pay for these items. Agree a budget for in-game purchases before the game is downloaded, and make sure children can't authorise in-game purchases by themselves.

DISABLE IN-APP PURCHASING

It's not wise to leave children with devices that can make in-app purchases without your permission. Ideally, set up computers, consoles and phones so child accounts need an adult's authorisation to buy anything. On shared devices (like iPads, which don't allow user accounts), check the settings to ensure that in-app purchasing requires the account holder's password, fingerprint or face ID.

CHECK THE SPECS

To avoid let-downs, check a game's specs before buying – especially for PC or Mac, where games often need a particular graphics chip or processor to work. Sites like systemrequirementslab.com can scan your computer to see if it will run certain games properly. On consoles, make sure you're buying the right version: some newer Xbox or PlayStation games won't play on older consoles.

MONITOR IN-GAME COMMS

Voice chat with friends is part of the fun of modern gaming – but danger lurks here too. Many titles have open chat systems, meaning that children could speak to strangers or hear adult language and verbal abuse when games get particularly competitive. Using a shared family area (as opposed to alone in bedrooms) for online gaming is a good way to keep an occasional ear on what's being said.

BE WARY OF GIFTS

Titles like Roblox, Minecraft and Fortnite have in-game currencies, which can be earned through progress in the game – but can also be bought with real money. A common scam is for a young player to be offered currency if they click a link, visit a certain site or contact another user directly. Warn your child about such offers: they should show you if they're in any doubt over an in-game gift.

APPS ARE AGE RATED, TOO

Like games, apps in the major stores have age ratings, too – so you can see in advance whether an app's appropriate for your child. Additionally, phones' parental control settings allow you to set age limits, preventing young ones from downloading unsuitable apps themselves. These ratings aren't infallible, however: we've seen TV apps featuring adult shows with an age rating of 3, for example.



CONSIDER STORAGE

Most apps and games will tell you in the online store how much space they need on a device. Check this carefully – especially with games, which can run into hundreds of megabytes and beyond. If you don't have enough free storage on a device to run the game or app, you won't get a refund from the store. You can normally check a device's available storage space through the settings menu.

WATCH OUT FOR IMITATORS

Even in the official stores, untrustworthy rogue apps can slip through the net. Common tricks are apps or games that have a slightly different name to the genuine article (Fortnite rather than Fortnite, for instance) or use logos which deliberately look very similar to the official app. To avoid downloading these imitations, read the app's description and check who the publisher is listed as.

LEGAL APPS THAT BREAK THE LAW

There are many apps that are perfectly legal but enable illegal activity – streaming apps which let people watch football matches, say, without paying for Sky or BT Sport. Prosecution for using such apps is rare, but they can lead to risky behaviour like viewing rogue streams on sites teeming with malicious links. Watch for children installing unusual apps with 'TV', 'stream' or 'sport' in the name.

IN-APP REGISTRATION

It's common for apps and games to ask users to register: entering personal details like email address, date of birth and other information you might not want your child to divulge. Ask them to get your permission before giving any personal info to an app – and consider using your details rather than the child's, so they're not targeted by marketing spam or put at risk of having their data stolen.

STAY UPDATED

Most games and apps are subject to regular updates, which not only offer new content and features but also provide critical security improvements. Children tend to ignore such updates – usually because they don't understand why they're important, or they simply want to get straight on with gaming. Check your child's devices periodically to make sure these updates are being installed.

Meet Our Expert

Barry Collins has been a technology journalist and editor for more than 20 years, working for titles such as the *Sunday Times*, *Which?*, *PC Pro* and *Computeractive*. He's appeared regularly as a technology pundit on television and radio, including on *Newsnight*, *Radio 5 Live* and *ITV News at Ten*. He has two children and has writes regularly about internet safety issues.

