

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents and Carers

What a truly exciting and vibrant week it has been at Welland Park Academy!

This week, our school came alive with *Show Week*, and Disney's *The Little Mermaid* was an absolute triumph! The production was a dazzling display of colour, music, and immense talent, leaving audiences spellbound. I have been overwhelmed with emails, phone calls, and passing comments from parents, carers, and members of our community, all praising the incredible performances. One particularly lovely email mentioned that they forgot they were watching a school production and thought it was a professional performance – what a wonderful compliment!

After attending the closing night, I can wholeheartedly say I share this sentiment. The dedication, passion, and teamwork shown by our students, staff, and volunteers were truly inspiring. I know how many hours of rehearsals, set building, and creative work went into making this show such a success, often during weekends and holidays, but all that effort shone brightly this week.

Whilst it's impossible to thank every single person individually, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Mrs Towers and Mr Oakland for their outstanding leadership and commitment. A special mention also goes to our incredible lead performers: Ariel – Sasha Coyne, Sebastian – Victoria Chester, Prince Eric – Gwion Durham, and Flounder – Maya Burrows, who each brought their characters to life so brilliantly. You were all *amazing*!

In other news, this week also marked the conclusion of the Options Process for Year 9. Whilst there were a few hiccups with the software, I sincerely hope it didn't cause too much stress. Please accept my apologies if this impacted your family. The next stage is the careful task of allocating and finalising option choices. This is a complex process that may require us to liaise with some students if certain options are unavailable. Thank you for your patience as we navigate this important phase.

Finally, attached to this newsletter, you'll find some key information about Citizenship and Careers education. As part of our statutory responsibilities, we aim to prepare our students for life beyond school, nurturing their personal development and supporting their social, moral, spiritual, and cultural growth. This education also plays a vital role in promoting equality, diversity, and mental and physical wellbeing. Mr Askham, one of our Assistant Principals, is leading this important work, and I encourage you to read more about it in the attached document.

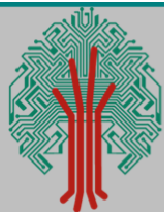
As we head into the weekend, I'd like to wish you all a restful and enjoyable break. I'm sure the cast and crew of *The Little Mermaid* will be especially grateful for some well-earned relaxation after such a phenomenal week.

Wishing you a restful and happy weekend!


Warm regards,

Pete Leatherland—Principal





PROM 2025 & CAMPS INTERNATIONAL  
EVERY TUESDAY & THURSDAY BREAK UNTIL FEBRUARY HALF TERM  
served from the outside hatch of the dining hall



Hot Chocolate - £1.00  
Hot Chocolate & Sweet Treat - £1.50

**SERVING**  
*Hot Chocolate*

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**Welland Park Academy Lunch & Deli Menu**  
**Week commencing 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Concept	Indian	American	Best of British	Italian	Fish Friday
Option 1	Chicken Tikka Masala	Chipotle Chicken Burrito	Sticky Red Onion Sausages	Homemade Beef Lasagne	Battered Fish
Option 2	Vegetable Rogan Josh	Vegetable Burrito	Veggie Bangers	Homemade Vegetable Lasagne	Vegetable Burger
Sides	Yellow Rice / Mixed vegetables	Hand Cut Wedges / Coleslaw	Cheesy Chive Mash / Roasted vegetables	Garlic Bread / Cauliflower & Broccoli	Chips Mushy Peas
Authentic Italian	Authentic Italian Pizza and Pasta Bar				
Hot Deli	Cheese & Tomato Panini Jacket & Topping	Tuna Melt Panini Jacket & Topping	Cheese & Onion Panini Jacket & Topping	Roasted Veg Panini Jacket & Topping	Cheese Panini Jacket & Topping



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### Stay Informed, Keep Your Child Safe Online!

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<https://nationalcollege.com/enrol/welland-park-academy>

For any questions, contact [askhame@wellandparkacademy.com](mailto:askhame@wellandparkacademy.com).





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](https://nationalcollege.com).

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## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about GROUP CHATS

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### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

On messaging apps, social media and online games, group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online. Involving three or more individuals, these groups allow users to send messages, images and videos to everyone in one place. While they can be great for connecting with others, there are several risks posed by these tools.

#### BULLYING

Teens are often trying to find their place in their social group. Unfortunately, group chats can sometimes lend themselves to unkind comments being shared freely, putting people down to make their peers laugh – often creating a vicious circle that encourages others to join in. Being bullied so publicly – in front of friends and acquaintances – can also amplify the hurt, embarrassment and anxiety that the victim feels.

#### EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: for instance, starting a new group, but deliberately excluding a certain child. Likewise, the chat may take place on an app which one person doesn't have access to, meaning they can't be involved. A child can also feel isolated when a group chat is used to discuss events that exclude them – for example, sharing photos from a day out that they didn't attend.

#### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some discussions in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and unsuitable images or videos. These could be viewed by a child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some apps have features that cause messages to disappear after they're viewed, so children may be unable to report something they've seen, as it can only be viewed once or for a short time.

#### SHARING GROUP CONTENT

Group chats can feel more private and protected, allowing children to share inside jokes and video calls with a smaller group of friends. It's important to remember that while the chat's content is private between those in the group, individual users can easily share material with others outside of the group, or screenshot what's been posted. The risk of something a child intended as private becoming public is higher if there are strangers in the chat.

#### UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Within larger group chats, it's more likely for children to communicate with people they don't know. These strangers may be friends of the host, but not necessarily friendly towards everyone present. It's wise for young people to avoid sharing personal details and remember that they have no control over what others do with the material they send into the chat.

#### NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications they tend to generate. Every time someone sends a message, each member's device will be 'pinged' with an alert. This could result in hundreds of notifications a day. This is often highly distracting, and young people's fear of missing out (FOMO) can cause increased screen time as they try to keep up with the conversation.

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## Advice for Parents & Carers

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#### CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats can become an arena for young people to compete for social status. This could cause them to do or say things on impulse which could upset others. Help children consider how people might feel if they behave in this way. If the child does upset someone, encourage them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

#### GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Group chats are an excellent way for children to connect and feel like they belong. However, remind them that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded, instead of responding to the person who's upset them. Validate their feelings and empower them by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. You can also encourage children to speak up if they witness others being picked on.

#### BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If a child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block whoever sent the material, report that person to the host app or platform and exit the group. If any of this content could put a minor at risk, contact the police. Emphasise that it's OK for children to simply leave any group chat that makes them feel uncomfortable.

#### PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

In any online communication, it's vital for young people to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Ensure children understand the importance of not revealing identifiable details like their address, their school, or photos that they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they can't be certain where it might end up and how it might be used.

#### AVOID INVITING STRANGERS

Sadly, many individuals online hide their identity to gain a child's trust and serve their own ends – for example, to gather information on them, to exchange inappropriate content or to coax them into doing things they aren't comfortable with. Ensure the child understands why they shouldn't add people they don't know to a group chat – and why they should never accept a group chat invitation from a stranger.

#### SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Having a device bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be an irritating distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to children that they can still be part of the group chat while disabling notifications – and that it would be healthier for them to do so, avoiding a situation where they could feel pressured to respond.

### Meet Our Expert

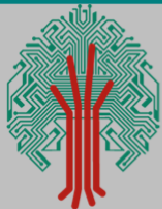
Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour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



#WakeUpWednesday®

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Sources: <https://www.thetechcoach.co.uk/18-tips-to-avoid-locking-online-group-chats/> | <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/chat-apps/>



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## NEW SCHOOL UNIFORM WEBSITE LAUNCH

On the **11th** of February  
we will launch our  
**NEW** website.  
The URL remains:  
[www.price-buckland.co.uk](http://www.price-buckland.co.uk)



Website QR code.  
This will take you  
to the homepage  
to search for your  
school



If you have ordered  
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**Account Section** and  
**re-set** your password.  
You can use the same  
password that you  
have currently.



You can then see  
previous orders and  
manage your  
account.

Any Questions? Call us on 01159 640827

# READING RAMPAGE

This week we launched Reading Rampage for Years 7 and 8. This is an amazing reading challenge, in which students aim to read 8 new books and vote for their favourite. There was a real buzz in the library and by Tuesday, ALL of the Reading Rampage books had been borrowed, which is incredible. Well done to those students who have already made a strong start - remember to read, rate and repeat!

To celebrate World Book Day on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March, we will again be holding a Book Swap. Donate your pre-loved books in return for tokens, which can then be used to choose different books! We are always very grateful for donations that are in good condition - these can be brought to the library after half term.

Mrs Hix and Mrs Jerred