Slaley First School

SCHOOL GAMES GOLD 2021/22

Friday 24th March 2023

Dear Parents / Carers,

Only four more days and then we are at the end of our second term this year. Easter is fast approaching and next week we have two Easter events planned for the children-

- Decorate an egg at home and bring it in on Wednesday 29th March (Prizes for the best eggs will be given out on Thursday and entries will be on display at our Reading Coffee Morning).
- FoSS Easter Egg Hunt – Thursday 30th March – All children will be involved, but if you would like to make a donation towards our FoSS fund, please follow this link (You may have to copy it into the browser). https://www.justgiving.com/page/slaleyfirstschooleasteregg2023

Thank you to everyone who returned sponsor money for the children's sponsored walk. We raised over £500 which will pay towards our school enrolment on the Science Quality Mark Project. Miss Parr and myself have already signed for an information session which will take place at the end of April. We will post photos next week of our walk on our website and Facebook Page. (Permitted children only.)

Today we have had our local Vicar, Reverend Helen who came to talk to the children about Easter and she also informed us that there will be an Easter Service at St. Mary's Church at 10.45am on Easter Sunday followed by an Easter Egg Hunt at 11.30am. All are welcome!

Don't forget we have our Parents' Afternoon / Evening next week ; if you haven't yet signed up for an appointment, please drop us an email.

We are so excited to have had enough Reception / Year 1 children signed up to our 'Cheerdance Club.' Further details will be sent out to parents with regards to payment after the weekend.

There will also be an Art Club starting after Easter for Reception children and I will send out more details about this next week (Tuesday nights, 3.15pm–4.15pm). Watch this space for details of other clubs coming for Classes 1 / 2.

Thank you to all the children in Year 4 who are interested in becoming a Reading Ambassador. I have had a lot of applications and will be having a little look at these next week.

Please don't forget that school is closed next Friday (31st March) for staff training and when we return (Monday 17th April) the children in Classes 1 and 2 will be going swimming. (Please refer to the swimming letter details).

Thank you everyone, have a lovely weekend.

Mrs Hayward

What is happening soon?

Monday 27th March – Parents Afternoon / Evening (appointment times have been allocated)

Thursday 30th March – Easter Reading Coffee Morning – Timings are as follows –
Choir Performance 9.10am – 9.30am
Choir Coffee / Reading Session – 9.30am – 10am
EYFS Coffee / Reading Session – 10am – 10.30am
Class 1 (Children who don't attend choir) – 10.30am – 11am
Class 2 (Children who don't attend choir) – 11am – 11.30am
Any Parents wishing to combine their slots for children in different classes – Please drop us an email.
Thursday 30th March – Last day of term
Thursday April 27th 3.15pm–4.15pm – SATs Information Evening for Parents of Year 2 children (Please note the change of day from Monday 24th April.)

Mrs. Dixon has appointed Sports Leaders in school who have been leading games on the yard on a Tuesday and Thursday. After Easter we will also be setting up a 'Sports Equipment Lending Library,' where children will be able to borrow sports equipment from school.

Minecraft is played by millions of children around the world, who use their imagination to build three-dimensional worlds with virtual building blocks in a digital, pixelated landscape. It is classed as a 'sandbox game,' which means players have the freedom to build their own creations with 'blocks' they collect and also have the opportunity to explore other people's creations with their characters. Players can choose from thousands of different 'servers' to join, which are created by other players, making every experience of Minecraft unique.

Minecraft has approximately **74m** users each month

AGE RESTRICTION 10+

What parents need to know about MINECRAFT

GROOMING

As the majority of users who play Minecraft are children, this makes it an 'appealing' gateway for groomers. It has been reported that some users have created worlds in Minecraft to lure young people into a conversation to ask for explicit photos. There have even been more serious cases in which children have been persuaded to meet these people in real life.

CYBERBULLYING & GRIEFING

In multiplayer mode there is a live chat feature which allows players to talk to other players through text. This chat functionality includes basic filtering to block out external links and offensive language being shared, but varies between each server. Griefing is when someone purposely upsets another player during the game. This can be done by ruining somebody's creation or generally doing something to spoil gameplay for another. Essentially, 'Griefing' is a form of cyberbullying and can be extremely frustrating for players.

COMMUNICATING WITH STRANGERS

Minecraft incorporates thousands of servers to choose from which are a single world or place created by the public and allow users to play the game online or via a local area network with others. No two servers are the same and each has its own individual plug-ins which are controlled by the creator. This means that some servers will allow communication with strangers.

VIRUSES & MALWARE FROM MODS

There are several websites that offer downloadable 'mods' which modify gameplay in a number of ways. Most of the mods will be safe to use, but as they have been created by the public, they will often contain viruses that can infect your child's device and potentially try and find personal information about you or your child.

AGE RESTRICTION & 'FANTASY VIOLENCE'

According to the 'Entertaining Software Rating Board' (ESRB), Minecraft is suitable for users aged 10+. Due to its 'Fantasy Violence,' the ESRB states that this rating has been given as 'players can engage in violent acts such as setting animals on fire and harming them with weapons. Mild explosions are occasionally heard as players use dynamite to fend off creatures and mine the environment.'

CHILDREN MAY BECOME ADDICTED

As with other games, Minecraft is a game where players can keep returning with constant challenges and personal goals to achieve. Children may find it difficult to know when to stop playing, becoming absorbed in the game and losing track of time.

National Online Safety — NOS

Top Tips for Parents

DISABLE OR MODERATE CHAT

To avoid potentially inappropriate comments in a live chat, you can follow these steps to turn live chat off: 1. Select 'Options' 2. Toggle the Chat button to 'Hidden' or 'Commands Only'. Bear in mind that the chat feature is also where your child can enter commands during the game, so this may restrict their game play.

MONITOR YOUTUBE TUTORIALS

Many Minecraft users turn to 'YouTube' for video tips on improving their game play and discovering new techniques. Although many videos are age-appropriate, some include sexual references and bad language. We suggest watching Minecraft tutorial videos together with your child. If your child is under the age of 13, we suggest installing 'YouTube Kids' which provides a safer platform for children to safely find the content they want.

SCAN 'MODS' FOR MALWARE

Minecraft 'mods' add content to games to give extra options to interact and change the way the game looks and feels. However, although 'mods' can bring fun for a child, it's important to consider that downloading and installing 'mods' could potentially infect their device with a virus or malware. In 2017, security company Symantec stated that between 600,000 and 2.5 million Minecraft players had installed dodgy apps, which hijacked player's devices and used them to power an advertising botnet. Install a malware scanner on every device that your child plays Minecraft on and make sure it's regularly kept up-to-date.

PLAY IN 'CREATIVE' OR 'PEACEFUL' MODE

Even though the age limit is 10+, Minecraft can be quite overwhelming at times, especially for younger players or SEND children. We suggest restricting your child to play in 'creative mode' or 'peaceful mode' which takes away the survival element and removes the 'scarier' monster/zombie characters.

SET TIME LIMITS

With 'Gaming Disorder' becoming an official health condition, we suggest setting a reasonable time limit when playing Minecraft. Parents can use parental controls on devices to limit the time a child plays games. It is worth having a conversation with your child to understand which 'mode' they are playing the game. This may help you decide on the amount of time you would like them to play. For example, a mini game will have an 'end,' but this will depend on how long the game creator has made the game last. In 'survival mode,' the game has no end as there is no goal to be achieved other than the child's own e.g. after they have built something.

CHOOSE SERVERS CAREFULLY

To protect your child from engaging in conversation with strangers, advise them to only enter servers with people they know and trust. Your child can also create their own multiplayer server and share this with their friends, which is safer and more controlled than joining a stranger's server.

Sources:
https://minecraft.net/en-us/article/minecraft-multiplayer-server-safety
http://parentinfo.org/article/staying-safe-on-minecraft
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