

Peafield Lane Academy Newsletter

Friday 9th February 2023

I can't believe that we are already at the end of the first half term of the new calendar year and my first as head teacher at Peafield Lane. I hope that those of you who attended our Year 5/6 Indian 'Experience' and Year 1/2 'Muffin Showcase' enjoyed these events. I was very disappointed to miss them and will ensure that I better align my diary in future so that I can join you to celebrate the children's achievements! As always, it's been a pleasure going around school over the past few weeks and continuing getting to know everyone. The children are full of smiles and are always keen to talk to me about themselves and their learning. Confident and articulate! In other news, Gordan and Gino (our school Guinea Pigs) will be taking a roadtrip to the Heathcote household over the half term break. My two boys are VERY VERY excited so please spare a thought for Gino and Gordan and wish them good luck! I hope that you have a wonderful half term break and I look forward to seeing the children back in school on Monday 20th February.

Mr Heathcote

Head Teacher

Adults In School

Please can we ask that parents/ carers do not enter the school building unless you are accompanied by a member of school staff at all times. Parents/ carers should enter via the school reception unless you are talking to your child's class teacher at pick up or drop off. When entering the school reception you will be asked to sign in and given a school lanyard if you are going beyond the reception/ office area. Thank you for helping us to keep everyone safe.

School Bags

Staff are working really hard with the children at the moment regarding keeping our school clean and tidy. Cloakrooms can be a bit tricky for us due to the amount of and the size of school bags. To help us with this, please can we ask parents/ carers (where possible) to consider whether their child needs to bring a school bag and also the size of this. Thank you in advance for your support!

Attendance

This week, Acorns A & Sherwood Class had the highest attendance with 100% Well done to both classes!

The whole school attendance for the week was 94.6%.

This means that our attendance for the year to date has dropped to 94.2%. We aim for our attendance to be above 96%, and hope that you can help us meet this target.



Diary Dates

Monday 20th - Friday 24th February - Book Fair (3.15pm onwards in the school hall)

Monday 20th - Friday 24th February - Hathersage residential (Year 1/2)

Monday 27th February - INSET Day

Thursday 2nd March -World Book Day

Friday 17th March -Comic Relief

Tuesday 28th March -Parents Evening (3.30pm- 6.30pm)

Wednesday 29th March -Parents Evening (3.30pm- 5.30pm)

Friday 31st March -Rock Steady Easter Concert (invite only)

Monday 8th May -Extra Bank Holiday

Tuesday 8th May- Friday 12th May - Year 6 SATS week

Year 5/6 Athletics Competition

Congratulations to our Year 5/6 athletics team who came 3rd out of ten schools in a local area competition. Mr Nightingale says that you were a real credit to the school, behaving fantastically and showing great perseverance and determination.

Well done Team Peafield!



New Playground Equipment

We are delighted to finally have our new playground equipment installed and in use. We have designed a rota for lunchtimes and breaktimes to ensure that all of our children have access. Please can we remind parents/ carers not to allow their children to use the equipment before and after school due to our school risk assessment and supervision requirement. Thank you!



Eco Council Litter Pick

Well done to our Eco-Council who went litter picking in Peafield Park last week. They managed to fill up a whole black bin bag full of rubbish! One of our school values is citizenship and the children certainly showed this by taking the time to look after the environment and our local school community. They were so keen to do this again that they have asked Mr Green if they can do this EVERY WEEK...Mr Green has compromised and they will get to do this the first week of every month. We wouldn't want them missing too many Friday assemblies!



Working Hard At Peafield Lane



Books...Books...Books

Our annual book fair will be taking place in the main hall From 20th- 24th February. This will be open every day after school and we can take both cash and card payments. Proceeds from this will go towards purchasing new books for our children in school. Additionally, on Thursday 2nd March we will be celebrating World Book Day in school. Your child can come to school on this day dressed in a book themed costume should they wish.

What Parents and Carers Need to Know about SOCIAL BOTS

WHAT ARE SOCIAL BOTS?

Bots are computer-generated accounts which sit on social media, masquerading as humans. While many are harmless or even have good intentions, others are designed to extort, sell products, spread propaganda or bully human users. Bots – short for ‘robots’, of course – are often confused with state-funded troll accounts; the two can be difficult to tell apart. However, if the results are the same, then both should be treated similarly.

KNOWING THE RISKS

ASTROTURFING

Propaganda and conspiracy theories are usually niche interests on social media. But with an army of thousands of bots amplifying posts through retweets and shares, people can make their messages travel further and appear to reflect mainstream opinion. Known as ‘astroturfing’, this can make children more susceptible to questionable beliefs.

CYBERBULLYING

Bots can be set to hunt for certain search terms or opinions and then automatically reply aggressively to anybody who uses them in a message. This means that if your child posts something that whoever programmed the bot doesn't like, they may be deluged with angry messages from fake accounts – which can be overwhelming and comparable to cyberbullying.

EXTORTION

Criminals use bots to trap users into extortion or online blackmail scams. The bot cultivates a flirtatious online relationship with the victim, then persuades them into a video chat during which they are tricked into posing inappropriately or carrying out a sexual act. This footage is recorded, and threats are then made to release it to the victim's friends and family unless money is paid.

SHADY SELLING

Bots are often used for illicit advertising – that is, they spam social media platforms with links to commercial websites. Additionally, some unscrupulous influencers have been found to use bots to artificially inflate their number of followers and the engagement with their account – making them seem more popular and therefore able to charge companies more to work with them.

SPOTTING THE SIGNS ...

Beware Prolific Posting

Bots post a superhuman amount of content. A visit to their profile usually proves they're responding to people far faster than a human could. Check their join date and number of followers. If the account has been around for ages and still doesn't have any friends, it probably isn't a real person. A brand-new page is also a red flag.

Notice Odd Usernames

Finding a social media username that isn't taken can be difficult. People often end up with their name and some numbers – but not the way bots do it. A username like johnsmith5273 is either a sign of a random number generator or a site offering an unwieldy alternative because the preferred name is taken, which isn't something most humans would accept.

Verify Profile Pics

Check a user's authenticity by investigating their profile picture: bots obviously don't have faces, so they tend to skim publicly available photos to try to fool people. Put suspicious pics through a reverse-image search like TinEye – you might find they actually belong to someone else or are stock images.

Check the Content

Bots can't think for themselves and usually just exist to amplify somebody else's message. Try copying and pasting the text into the search function on Twitter, for example, and see if it's being said anywhere else. If a lot of similar-looking accounts are saying the same thing, you're probably looking at a bot army.

Advice for Parents & Carers

SPOT THE BOTS

Forewarned is forearmed, so if your children aren't that familiar with the world of bots yet, explain what to look for using the tips in this guide. At the moment, most bots still aren't that sophisticated – so finding accounts which are designed purely to troll people or spread misinformation isn't hugely difficult, even for an untrained eye.

BLOCK AND MOVE ON

Your child isn't obliged to be friends with anyone online, bot or not. Pretty much every social media app has a block button, and you should encourage your child to use it whenever something or someone is making their digital lives less than pleasant. If everyone blocked malicious bots rather than engaging them, they wouldn't pose a problem.

BE SUSPICIOUS

While many people have made lifelong friends over the internet, it's important not to be too trusting. Random strangers adding you on Facebook could well be bots, so do some background checks: do they have any mutual friends? Is it a new account? Even if everything seems fine, encourage your child to be cautious: warn them of potential risks.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist and the former deputy editor of technology and internet culture website Alphr. Now freelance, he has contributed articles to publications including the *New Statesman*, *CNET*, the *Evening Standard*, *Wired*, *Rock Paper Shotgun*, *Gizmodo*, *Pocket Gamer*, *Stuff*, *T3*, *PC Pro*, *Macworld*, *TechRadar* and *Trusted Reviews*.



SOURCES: <https://www.computing.co.uk/feature/3085226/the-positive-passer-twitter-bots> | <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/18/world/europe/russia-troll-factory.html> | <https://truepublica.org.uk/united-kingdom/propaganda-automated-bots-defending-the-government/> | <https://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/presenters/ames-obrien-what-are-the-twitter-users-with-eight-numbers/>



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