

Spalding High School weekly bulletin 22nd October 2026

This week from Mrs Anderson, Headteacher

Over the past week, our school community has enjoyed two truly outstanding events that showcased the very best of our students' enthusiasm, commitment and school spirit.

A Spooktacular Fright Night for Years 7 and 8!

Our Year 7 and Year 8 Fright Night was a tremendous success, bringing together around 100 students for an evening packed with fun, laughter and Halloween-themed challenges. From Halloween Runaround and relay races to bingo, bowling and our very own version of The Traitors through a thrilling game of Wink Murder, there was something for everyone to enjoy.

The atmosphere throughout the evening was fantastic, with students throwing themselves wholeheartedly into every activity. The costumes were simply incredible, with many pupils making a real effort to embrace the Halloween theme and displaying impressive creativity and imagination. Events like this do not happen by accident, and special thanks must go to our dedicated staff team, who not only gave up their time to support the evening but fully embraced the occasion by dressing up and joining in the fun. We are also incredibly grateful to our excellent team of prefects and sixth form helpers, whose enthusiasm, energy and leadership helped make the event such a memorable experience for our younger students.

Celebrating Excellence in Sport, Music and Drama

We were also delighted to host our annual Celebration of Achievement Evening, recognising the outstanding commitment, talent and dedication of students across sport, music and drama. More than 120 students were awarded their school colours in recognition of their achievements and contributions. Sporting colours were presented across a wide range of disciplines, including rugby, football, netball, cricket, rounders and athletics, reflecting the strength and breadth of participation within our sporting community; hence the amazing roll call of honours in the School's sporting achievements for 2025-26.

Students were also recognised for their contributions to the performing arts, with colours awarded for Music and Drama. These awards celebrated not only individual talent but also the commitment shown through participation in school productions, concerts, ensembles and other performances throughout the year.

The evening was a fitting celebration of the hard work, resilience and dedication shown by so many of our students. We are enormously proud of all those who received awards and grateful to the staff, coaches, directors and families who continue to support them in pursuing their passions and representing the School with such distinction.

Both events were wonderful reminders of the vibrant opportunities available beyond the classroom and the tremendous sense of community. Thank you to all of the staff involved in the event and congratulations to everyone involved.

Looking ahead, there are still many exciting opportunities to come. We would encourage all Year 11 students and their families to attend our upcoming Sixth Form Information Evening. The event will provide valuable information about post-16 pathways, courses and enrichment opportunities, helping students make informed decisions about the next stage of their educational journey.

Have a lovely half term break – have fun and stay safe.



Sixth Form Information Evening

TUESDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2026

We warmly invite all Year 11 students and their parents/carers to attend our Sixth Form Open Evening and discover the wide range of A Level courses available.

Meet our staff and students, explore the subjects on offer, and find out more about life in our Sixth Form.

No booking is required. Simply come along between 5.00pm and 8.00pm.

We look forward to welcoming you.

Winter uniform after half term

Please may we remind you that winter uniform is to be worn after half term - this means ties and button up collared shirts for Years 7 to 11 inclusive. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Student of the Week

Staff Name	Student Name	Student Form	Reason
Mrs Spinks	Florence Stone	7C	Mathematics
Mr Martindale	Isla Kennedy	7J	D&T
Mrs Nowak	Ella Watkin	7J	Community
Mrs Schwarz	Libby Hurrell	7N	Textiles
Mrs Norton	Matilda Nizzer	8S	Community
Mrs Busfield	Wiktorina Gren	9C	Physics
Mr Garbett	Jessica Majewicz	9N	Music
Mrs Neal	Lily Smith	9N	Art
Mrs Lee	Xien Han Tao	9P	German
Mr Murphy	Freya Blackshaw	9S	Latin
Mr Ganger	Bethanie Lane	10C	Mathematics
Mrs Jones	Katy Marsh	10C	Latin
Mrs Nowak	Daisy Houghton-Bird	10C	Mathematics
Mrs Aurikko	Bethany Johnson	10S	Chemistry
Mrs Barats	Bethany Johnson	10S	French
Mrs Rogers	Amber Batten	10S	Geography
Mrs C Lord	Evelyn Barclay	11J	Mathematics
Mrs Martindale	Ella Skidmore	11J	Biology
Mrs T Waldron	Holly Claydon	11J	Biology
Miss Ashley	Kausar Habibi	11P	Mathematics
Mr Hemsall	Arjannya Das	11P	History
Mrs Tanner	Grace Ekins	11S	Art
Miss Rossouw	Alana Wasterfall	12NG	Psychology
Mrs Bennett	Florence Perowne	13FD	Geography
Mrs Kingerley	Sky Salkeld	13FD	Community
Mrs Kingerley	Poppy Carr	13TD	Community

Please find here the nominations for Student of the Week for the week commencing 12th October 2026.

Nominations can be made by both teaching and support staff and can be subject related or community focused.

Sports News

On Friday 9th October the U14 football team played against John Fernley College, Melton Mowbray in the ESFA National Cup.

Coming from 2-0 down at half-time after a disappointing first-half display, the team produced a superb second-half turnaround to win 4-2 and book their place in the next round.

The opening 45 minutes were below the standards we know we're capable of, with the opposition taking full advantage to establish a two-goal lead. However, the response after the break showed great character, determination and belief.

The comeback began with a moment of relentless pressing, as our forward Lily chased down the goalkeeper and forced a mistake, allowing us to pull a goal back and spark the revival.

From there, two outstanding pieces of individual brilliance from Maddie turned the game on its head. Moments of quality and composure in key areas gave the opposition little chance and demonstrated exactly what this team can produce when playing with confidence and desire.

The fourth and final goal came after capitalising on a defensive error, with the loose ball falling kindly before being calmly slotted into an empty net to complete the comeback by Annalise.

Player of the Match goes to Maddie for a dominant display in midfield rewarded by two goals.

To overturn a two-goal deficit and run out 4-2 winners was a fantastic achievement. The contrast between the two halves could not have been greater, with a much-improved performance after the interval seeing us play with energy, purpose and quality.

Most importantly, the victory sees us safely through to the next round when we will face Kesteven on Wednesday 21st October.

Thank you to Lexi who refereed the game; having qualified last year, it was great for us to get to see her in the middle. Lexi had a firm grasp of control on the game and was ably assisted by Freya running the line; thank you to you both for your support. Both Freya and Lexi have played pivotal roles in their school team age groups, so it is great to see them continuing this into other roles within the game.



On Friday 16th October, students from the High School competed at the South Lincolnshire Schools' Cross Country Championships, producing an excellent set of results against some of the strongest runners in the south of the county.

A special mention must go to "Flying Felicity", who continued her outstanding form by claiming her third consecutive cross-country victory of the season, making it three wins from three events so far. A fantastic achievement and a testament to her hard work and determination.

We are also delighted to congratulate the following athletes who finished in the top 20 of their respective races and have therefore qualified to represent the South Lincolnshire team at the Lincolnshire Cross Country Championships at Belton House on 12th January:

- Year 7/8: Felicity, Nyah, Ula and Marissa
- Year 9/10: Iris and Megan
- Year 11/12: Pela Tian-Wright

Congratulations to all of our runners on their performances and for representing the school so positively. We wish our qualifiers the very best of luck as they prepare to compete at county level in January.

PE department



Netball Match Report – Year 8 & Year 10

Both our Year 8 and Year 10 netball teams got off to a fantastic start in their first games of the season, with both teams securing well-deserved wins!

The Year 8 team put in a brilliant performance, winning **16–4**, while the Year 10 team also impressed with a fantastic **15–1 victory**.

Both teams demonstrated excellent teamwork, communication and tactical awareness throughout their matches. In attack, players worked hard to create space, make well-timed runs and move the ball quickly down the court to create scoring opportunities. The attacking positions showed great movement and passing, while the defending positions worked tirelessly to mark their opponents, intercept passes and put pressure on the opposition to win back possession.

It was fantastic to see both teams working together, supporting one another and putting their skills and tactics into practice in their first games of the season. A brilliant start for both teams, and we look forward to seeing how they continue to develop throughout the season!

Players of the Match:

Year 8: Lily

Year 10: Isla

Well done to both teams on two excellent performances and a great start to the season!

Miss Parker



Year 7 Netball V BA : Monday 19th October

Our Year 7 netball team got their season off to a brilliant start in their first fixture on Monday 19th October against Bourne Academy.

The team showed excellent teamwork, determination, and skill throughout the match. A particularly strong defensive helped keep the opposition under pressure, while accurate and confident shooting allowed us to build an early lead.

The team started the game exceptionally well, taking control from the first quarter and racing into a 4-0 lead. Their hard work continued throughout the match, with strong passing, movement, and communication across the court.

The final whistle saw the team secure a fantastic 13-4 victory, an outstanding result for their first game together. Every player played their part and represented the School brilliantly.

A special congratulations goes to Florence, who was named Player of the Match for her excellent performance at GS/GA. Her movement, determination, and outstanding shooting were contributory in the team's success.

Well done to all the players on a superb first match. We look forward to seeing what the rest of the season brings!

Miss Pascoe



Maths News

Outstanding Success in the Maths Olympiad for Girls!

We are delighted to celebrate the achievements of our students in the **Maths Olympiad for Girls**! With participation limited to just four students per school, we were able to nominate only four girls to take part, all of whom are studying A-level Further Mathematics.

The competition tested their mathematical knowledge, logical thinking and problem-solving skills over a demanding 2.5 hour period, featuring some particularly challenging problems. We are extremely impressed that all four students achieved at least a Merit, a fantastic accomplishment that reflects their hard work, mathematical ability and determination.

A special congratulations goes to Zofia, who achieved a Distinction and was the highest-scoring participant at School. This is an excellent achievement and a wonderful recognition of her mathematical talent.

Congratulations to all our fantastic participants!

Mrs Nowak

Read their experiences of the competition:

Taking part in the Mathematical Olympiad for Girls was a fantastic opportunity to challenge myself, develop my problem-solving skills and explore Maths beyond the school curriculum. I enjoy the logical thinking and creativity involved in tackling challenging mathematical problems, and I love the sense of satisfaction that comes with finding a solution. I do Maths and Further Maths so I'm also really grateful to the Maths department for fostering my enthusiasm, encouraging me to push myself and creating an environment where I feel inspired to deepen my understanding of the subject.

Zofia, Year 13

I found the Maths Olympiad really enjoyable; it was fun to answer a different style of Maths questions that needed written answers and explanations. Although challenging, it pushed me to think outside the box and incorporate my Maths skills into proof-based problems. Overall, the experience was great for developing my confidence in Maths and I am very proud of my result ☺.

Pela, Year 12

I enjoyed participating in the Maths Olympiad because it completely tested my mathematical ability. The 2.5-hour challenge consisted of 5 questions, focusing not only on achieving the correct answer but also showing clear and methodical working, so I attempted every question even if I didn't reach an answer for all of them. Overall, I'm glad I was given the opportunity to really challenge myself and got to spend more time problem solving.

Ava



MFL News



Library News

Year 7-11 Book Club Updates

13th October 2026 – Books with a Spooky Setting

We had so many suggestions for this topic with haunted houses, creepy attics and deserted buildings frequently mentioned in our discussion. We discovered that isolation, confinement, dread or something monstrous were common themes in our recommendations and we thoroughly enjoyed them in our books! We loved Grave Inheritance, Bad Bones, Good Girls Die First, Five Survive, The Midnight Game, You're Not Supposed to Die Tonight, The Enemy, The Bunker Diary, Mina and the Undead and for a couple of classics ... The Picture of Dorian Gray and The Woman in Black.

20th October 2026 – Witchy Reads

In our last book club of the term and being so close to Halloween, we continued to draw inspiration and go for some witchy reads!

The Harry Potter series was a firm favourite and was first on our list, followed by The Worst Witch, The Bewitching of Aveline Jones, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, The Haunting and many more!

Happy Halloween reading!

Mrs Lees and Mrs O'Sullivan

Extended Library Opening Hours



We are pleased to offer extended after-school library opening hours for students in all year groups from **Monday to Thursday, 3:45pm to 5:00pm.**

This provides a quiet space for independent study, homework, reading, and research.

Parents/carers of students in **Years 7-9** must complete the online form ([Extended Library Opening Hours for Independent Study - September 2026 to July 2027 – Fill out form](#)) in order for their child to attend. This form only needs to be completed once. It will be parents/carers' responsibility to ensure that their child will be collected at 5:00pm or allowed to leave and travel home independently.

Students in **Year 10 and above** are responsible for informing their parents/carers that they will be staying until 5:00pm and for making appropriate arrangements for their journey home.

Please note that those students who are attending these sessions will need to stay in the library until 5:00pm at which time, the supervising staff will take them out to the front entrance.

We look forward to welcoming students to make the most of this additional study opportunity.

Charity News: Hello Yellow Day 2026

We had a non-uniform day last Friday for Hello Yellow Day - donations were collected and paid to the Young Minds Charity which supports children and young people with their mental health. A total of £700.37 was raised which is amazing. Please see here a couple of photos of the yellow day.





Celebrating the Individual : Mathilda, Year 13

We are delighted to share that Mathilda in Year 13 has been selected for the England Rugby U18 Player Development Group (PDG).

Mathilda only took up rugby in Year 9 and missed the whole of last season with a knee injury, which makes this an even more remarkable achievement. Her determination and hard work in recovering have been outstanding.

Congratulations, Mathilda!

Miss Parker

Celebrating Year 7

It has been a fantastic first term for Year 7, and it has been wonderful to see how quickly our students have settled into life at SHS.

There is a happy, sociable atmosphere around the year group, with lots of new friendships being formed and students growing in confidence as they become part of our school community. Our lunchtime clubs have proved extremely popular, giving the Year 7 students even more opportunities to get involved, pursue their interests and meet new people. It has been encouraging to see so many students making the most of these opportunities.

I recently had the pleasure of watching a performance by 7J during a PE lesson. It was lovely to see such enthusiastic participation and, equally importantly, the support shown by their peers. The applause at the end reflected the encouragement, confidence and sense of community that is developing within the year group.

Looking ahead to next term, some of our Year 7 students will have the opportunity to return to their primary schools to give presentations about life in secondary school. This will be a fantastic chance for them to reflect on their own experiences, share advice with younger pupils and demonstrate the confidence and maturity they have developed since joining Spalding High School.

All in all, it has been a very successful first term for Year 7, and we are incredibly proud of how well the students have settled into Spalding High School, embraced new experiences, formed new friendships and become valued members of our school community.

Mrs Spinks, Induction Manager & Head of Year 7

Careers News

Year 13 – University Applications

Twenty students have submitted their university applications to UCAS and six students have already received conditional offers from their chosen universities which is very motivational for them. For remaining applicants, the internal deadline for submitting applications to me for processing is 6th November.

Oxbridge Presentations for students in Years 11 and 12

We are looking forward to welcoming a representative from Christ's College, Cambridge to School on Friday 6th November to talk to students in Years 11 and 12 about applying to Oxbridge courses. Students who are interested in attending should sign up using the links in their Careers Teams.

Green Careers Week – 2nd-7th November

Please see the information below as an introduction to Green Careers Week in November.

Green Careers Week aims to raise aspiration, support diversity, challenge stereotypes, and promote real opportunities for young people to have a career that will genuinely make a difference.

A green career can be any job, role or occupation that contributes to preserving or restoring the environment and our planet. It can be any industry, not just those seen as 'green.' Green skills are abilities, attributes, values, attitudes, knowledge, and technical skills needed to adapt services, processes and procedures to support climate change.

Green careers are a fast-growing global employment sector that touches every company, employer, employee, and education establishment. Requiring everyone to work together to build a talent pipeline from school through to employment for the thousands and thousands of jobs and roles needed for the future. Green careers reach into every aspect of our lives and offer young people an exciting array of opportunities. There are green careers and green skills suitable for everyone.

NCW GCW THE FUTURE IS GREEN GREEN CAREERS WEEK UK Atomic Energy Authority **STEM LEARNING**

ELECTRIC VEHICLE ENGINEER

DRIVE THE GREEN REVOLUTION

Electric vehicles are transforming transport.

Battery technology Engineering
Innovation Sustainability

Could you design the next generation of transport?

#GCW2026
Green Careers Week - 2-6 November 2026

Scan for school resources:

NCW GCW THE FUTURE IS GREEN GREEN CAREERS WEEK UK Atomic Energy Authority **STEM LEARNING**

ECOLOGIST

NATURE NEEDS YOU

Ecologists help protect habitats, wildlife and biodiversity.

Conservation Fieldwork
Science Environment

Turn your passion for nature into a career.

#GCW2026
Green Careers Week - 2-6 November 2026

Scan for school resources:

CARBON ACCOUNTANT

COUNT WHAT COUNTS

Businesses need specialists who can measure and reduce carbon emissions.

Business

Sustainability

Data

Strategy

Green careers aren't just science and engineering.

#GCW2026

Green Careers Week · 2-6 November 2026

Scan for school resources:

SOLAR ENERGY ENGINEER

TURN SUNLIGHT INTO POWER

Solar Engineers design and install systems that generate clean electricity.

STEM skills

Problem solving

Innovation

Sustainability

The sun powers the future. You could too.

#GCW2026

Green Careers Week · 2-6 November 2026

Scan for school resources:

GREEN BUILDING DESIGNER

DESIGN THE CITIES OF TOMORROW

Create schools, homes and workplaces that use less energy and produce less carbon.

Architecture

Sustainability

Digital design

Low carbon solutions

Build a better future.

#GCW2026

Green Careers Week · 2-6 November 2026

Scan for school resources:

FUSION ENERGY SPECIALIST

THE NEXT BIG ENERGY CAREER

Atomic energy is creating exciting opportunities in engineering and energy.

Research

Technology

Energy

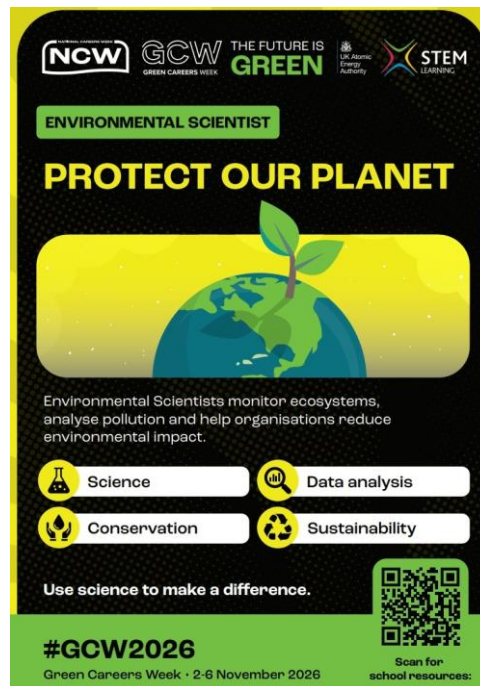
Innovation

Be a part of the clean energy revolution.

#GCW2026

Green Careers Week · 2-6 November 2026

Scan for school resources:



Success at School – Upcoming Webinars

‘Success at School’ is running some webinars in December regarding Accountancy – ‘University vs Apprenticeships’ which may be of interest to parents and students.

[Webinar Calendar 26/27 — Book your place](#)

Opportunities for Students Interested in Law

Young Professionals is hosting two in-person events for aspiring law students/law apprentices during half-term with the opportunity to network with representatives from a range of UK law firms. Please see the information in the link:

[Meet 50+ top law firms this October half term: City Century Live, Manchester and London](#)

If any students attend, could they please let me know.

Aspiring Physiotherapy Event in Half Term

The Lincolnshire NHS Talent Academy has opened applications for their Aspiring Physiotherapy 2026 one-day careers event which offers young people an insight into NHS Physiotherapy.

The event provides students with the opportunity to learn directly from NHS Physiotherapy professionals, hear from current University of Lincoln Physiotherapy students, and take part in a range of interactive activities that showcase the role of a physiotherapist in supporting patients to improve mobility, recover from injury, and regain independence.

What students can expect:

- Meet and chat with NHS Physiotherapy professionals
- Hear from current Physiotherapy students at the University of Lincoln
- Take part in hands-on workshops and practical activities
- Explore specialist equipment used in patient care
- Experience realistic patient scenarios and case studies
- Discover the different career pathways within Physiotherapy

Event Details

Location: Lincoln College, Monks Road, Lincoln, LN2 5HQ

Available Dates (both days offer the same programme):

- Monday 26 October 2026
- Tuesday 27 October 2026

Time: 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Eligibility:

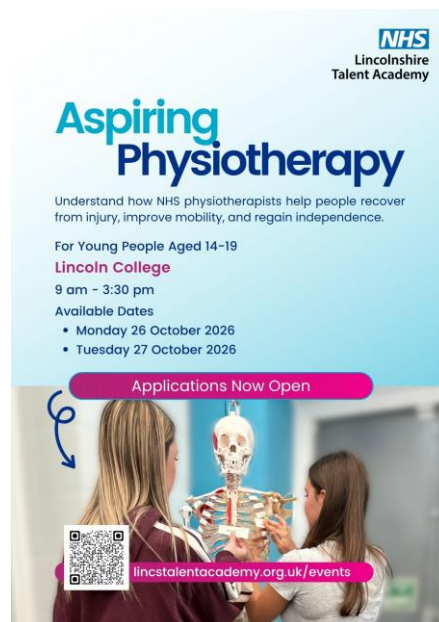
Applicants must:

- Be aged 14-19 on the day of the event
- Live in Lincolnshire or be educated within the county

How to Apply

Students can learn more and apply by visiting: <https://lincstalentacademy.org.uk/events/>

Could students please let me know if they apply and gain a place.



Aspiring Occupational Therapy Event in Half Term

The Lincolnshire NHS Talent Academy has opened applications for their Aspiring Occupational Therapy 2026 one-day careers event which offers young people an insight into NHS Occupational Therapy.

The event provides students with the opportunity to learn directly from Occupational Therapy professionals and take part in a range of interactive activities that showcase how Occupational Therapists help people live independently and get back to doing the things that matter most to them.

What students can expect:

- Meet Occupational Therapy professionals and learn about a variety of career opportunities
- Explore specialist equipment used to support patients in everyday life
- Experience simulated activities and case studies that demonstrate how Occupational Therapists help people maintain independence
- Ask questions and gain first-hand insights into studying and working in Occupational Therapy

Event Details

Location: Lincoln College, Monks Road, Lincoln, LN2 5HQ

Date: Wednesday 28 October 2026

Time: 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be aged 14-19 on the day of the event
- Live in Lincolnshire or be educated within the county

How to Apply

Students can learn more and apply by visiting:

<https://lincstalentacademy.org.uk/events/>

Could students please let me know if they apply and gain a place.



Aspiring Occupational Therapy

Explore a career that helps people overcome barriers, regain independence, and get the most out of life.

For Young People Aged 14-19
Lincoln College
9 am - 3:30 pm
Wednesday 28 October

Applications Now Open



 lincstalentacademy.org.uk/events

InvestIN Insight Days

Please see the link regarding insight days offered by InvestIN. Please note there is a charge for these.

<https://investin.org/collections/insight-days>

Support:

As always, I can be contacted by email if parents or students in any year group have any queries:

Dawn.bushell@spaldinghigh.lincs.sch.uk

Mrs Bushell, Careers Leader

Other notices and information

Upcoming diary dates:

Thursday 5th November Y13 Parents' Evening

Friday 6th November Y7 & Y8 Sleepover

Tuesday 10th November SHS Sixth Form Information Evening

Thursday 12th November SGS Sixth Form Information Evening

Wednesday 18th November GCSE Presentation Afternoon 2pm

Wednesday 18th November Maths Kangaroo and Maths Olympiad

Thursday 19th November Y11 Parents' Evening

Friday 20th November Children in Need (non-uniform)

Friday 20th November MFL GCSE Mock orals start

Friday 20th November SHS Choir Performance Spalding

Friday 20th November Sixth Form Bingo Evening

Tuesday 24th, Wednesday 25th, Thursday 26th November Christmas Craft Fair

Friday 27th November Y7 Christmas Tree competition

Monday 30th November - Friday 11th December Y11 and Y13 mock exams

Release of Grand Theft Auto 6

You may be aware that **Grand Theft Auto VI (GTA 6)** is scheduled for release on **19 November 2026** and is expected to be one of the most talked-about video games among young people this year. As part of our commitment to keeping children safe and supporting their wellbeing, we would like to share some information to help families make informed decisions.

GTA games are intended for adults and are expected to carry an **18-age rating**. This means the content is designed for people aged 18 and over and may not be suitable for children and young people. This classification is not based on difficulty or complexity of gameplay, but on the presence of content considered unsuitable for under 18s. The game is expected to contain themes that may include:

- Realistic violence and criminal activity.
- Strong and offensive language.
- Drug and alcohol use.
- Sexual and adult themes.
- Mature online interactions and user-generated content.

Large entertainment releases can have a significant cultural impact among young people. Children may encounter this content directly through gameplay or indirectly through videos, livestreams, social media clips, and conversations with peers and family members, even if they do not own the game themselves. Some young people can find such content upsetting, confusing, or influential, particularly where they have not yet developed the maturity to understand and critically evaluate the themes being presented.

We recognise that gaming is an important hobby and social activity for many young people. Our aim is not to discourage gaming or create unnecessary concern, but to support families and children in making safe, healthy well-informed and age-appropriate choices.

Gaming is a normal and enjoyable part of many young people's lives, and we recognise that students will be talking about GTA VI when it launches. However, because the game has been designed for adults, we encourage parents and carers to take an active interest in the content their children are accessing, have open conversations about what they see online and make use of age ratings and parental controls where appropriate.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us keep our young people safe, healthy and ready to learn. As always, we encourage families to contact the school if they have concerns about online safety, gaming habits, wellbeing, or any safeguarding matter. If you are interested in further support information, please see the information below.

On Line Safety - A Practical Checklist for Parents/Carers

1. Know What Your Child Is Watching

Many young people who do not play GTA VI will still watch others playing it. Consider:

- Asking which gaming channels, streamers or content creators they follow.
- Asking what games they are playing and who with.
- Occasionally watching some content with them so you understand what they are seeing.
- Be aware that clips shared on TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram and YouTube Shorts may contain mature content.

2. Have Open Conversations

One of the best safeguarding tools available to parents is simply talking to their child. You might ask:

- What do you know about GTA VI?
- Why are people excited about it?
- Have you watched any videos about it?
- What do you think about the age rating?

Try to keep conversations curious rather than confrontational. Children are often more willing to share experiences when they feel listened to rather than judged. Open conversations are often more effective than outright bans.

3. Consider Whether the Content Is Appropriate

Every young person is different and parents know their children best. Questions worth considering include:

- Is my child mature enough to understand the adult themes in the game?
- How do they normally respond to violent or mature content?
- Are they likely to discuss anything they find upsetting or confusing?

Age ratings exist to help families make informed decisions about age-appropriateness.

4. Encourage Healthy Sleep Habits

Major game launches often generate excitement and can lead to late nights. Children and teenagers benefit from consistent sleep routines and to support this, together with wellbeing and learning:

- Agree sensible screen-off times during the school week.
- Encourage devices to be charged outside bedrooms overnight where appropriate.
- Talk about the importance of sleep for mood, concentration and school performance.
- Monitor late-night gaming and online activity; even a few late nights can have a noticeable impact on focus and learning.

5. Use Parental Controls

Most consoles, phones and gaming platforms include parental controls that allow you to:

- Restrict age-rated content.
- Control purchases and downloads.
- Set screen-time limits.
- Manage online communication features.
- Monitor gaming activity. These tools can be helpful even for older teenagers.

6. Talk About Online Safety

If your child is engaging with gaming communities online, remind them:

- Never share personal information.
- Be cautious about who they communicate with.
- Report inappropriate behaviour or upsetting or inappropriate content.
- Speak to a trusted adult if something online makes them uncomfortable.

7. Watch for Changes in Routine

Most young people will enjoy gaming responsibly. However, it may be worth checking in if you notice:

- Regular tiredness or significant changes in sleep patterns
- Reduced interest in other hobbies
- Increased irritability when not gaming
- Spending excessive amounts of time online

These changes are often best addressed through conversation and agreed boundaries.

UK Safeguarding and Online Safety Resources

Parents and carers can access the following trusted organisations for advice, support and practical tools to help keep children safe online. These resources are particularly useful if your child is interested in GTA VI, online gaming, livestreams or gaming-related social media content.

🇬🇧 UK Safer Internet Centre

The UK's leading online safety partnership provides guides for parents, age-specific advice, gaming guidance, social media information and conversation starters to help families discuss online safety.

Website: <https://saferinternet.org.uk>

Useful topics include:

- Gaming and games consoles
- Screen time
- Livestreaming
- Social media safety
- Reporting harmful online content
- Family conversation guides

NSPCC Online Safety Hub

The NSPCC offers practical advice for parents on online safety, gaming, social media, parental controls and supporting children's online wellbeing. It also provides guidance on discussing difficult topics and responding to concerns.

Website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Key resources:

- Online gaming advice
- Screen time guidance
- Online wellbeing
- Age-appropriate technology use

- Parental controls

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)

If a child experiences unwanted online contact, grooming, exploitation concerns or behaviour that makes them feel unsafe, reports can be made directly to CEOP. CEOP is part of the National Crime Agency.

Website: <https://www.ceop.police.uk>

Use CEOP if:

- An adult has contacted a child online inappropriately.
- You are concerned about online grooming.
- A child feels threatened or exploited online.

Childline

Children and young people can access confidential support about anything that worries them, including online experiences, gaming concerns, bullying or inappropriate content.

Website: <https://www.childline.org.uk>

Telephone: 0800 1111

Internet Matters

Internet Matters provides easy-to-follow family guides covering:

- Video games
- Social media
- Device settings
- Screen time
- Parental controls
- Digital wellbeing

Website: <https://www.internetmatters.org>

When Should Parents Seek Support?

Please seek support if you notice:

- ☐ Significant sleep disruption affecting attendance or learning
- ☐ Exposure to violent, sexual or otherwise age-inappropriate content
- ☐ Online bullying or harmful interactions linked to gaming platforms

- ☐ Excessive gaming affecting wellbeing or family relationships
- ☐ Sudden changes in mood, behaviour or emotional wellbeing
- ☐ Any safeguarding concern relating to online activity

The most effective online safety tool remains an open and ongoing conversation with your child. Knowing what they play, watch and discuss online, and maintaining clear expectations around sleep, screen time and age-appropriate content, can significantly reduce risk and support their wellbeing

Image credits

Young Minds logo: www.youngminds.org.uk

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