

NEWSLETTER

FRIDAY 22ND MAY 2026



Preparation for life's journey

Dear Families,

We've had a fantastic start to the week! On Monday, our Year 1 and 2 children achieved an incredible result, winning the Key Stage 1 Cross Country event by an impressive 15 points. Mr Upton believes this may be the lowest team score recorded—an amazing achievement! A huge well done to all the children who took part. You showed great determination and resilience, and we are very proud of you all. Special congratulations go to our medal winners: Ernie, Raya, Luke, Izzy and Max. A special mention to Max, who even outpaced the Year 6 pacer—what an accomplishment!

This week, we were also pleased to welcome the Mental Health and Support Team, who delivered a workshop for parents on supporting children with anxiety. We received very positive feedback, and we're grateful to them for providing such a helpful and informative session.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

Have a fantastic half-term,

Faye Herron and the Gresham Village School & Nursery Team

School Packed Lunch Option

Some of you may have noticed that we will be offering a school packed lunch option after half-term. We are hoping that this will prove popular as the weather gets nicer and children are enjoying eating outside. The options are:

- ♦ **Cheese or Tuna Mayo Sandwich**
- ♦ **Cheese & Tomato Pizza Swirl**
- ♦ **Carrot sticks**
- ♦ **Orange or Apple Wedge**
- ♦ **Shortbread biscuit/ Dessert of the day**

WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN...



PUFFINS?

In Puffin Class, we have been working very hard in the lead up to half term. In English, we finished our story Tidy and completed our final piece: a persuasive letter written to Pete. The children created plans to support their writing and explored a model text, acting as detectives to identify punctuation and mastery keys such as using "and", suffixes and the prefix un-. In Maths, we began our unit on Money. We explored coins and notes, identified pounds and pence, compared values, and developed our understanding that £1 is equal to 100p. The children also practised counting money and selecting appropriate coins and notes to make different amounts. In Science, we continued our learning about Animal Survival by exploring microhabitats in the woods. The children investigated under logs and discovered a range of living things, including worms, beetles and insect eggs. We also explored food chains, learning that plants are producers and that predators are found at the end of the chain. In History, we continued our topic Marvellous Monarchs, extending our knowledge of kings and queens by studying a range of monarchs in more depth, including Alfred the Great, William the Conqueror, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. In P.E., the children have continued developing their ball skills, teamwork and game skills with Mrs Dunnett. In PSHE, we focused on staying safe online, including keeping personal information private and knowing to speak to a trusted adult if something online feels upsetting or unsafe.



STARLINGS?

I can't believe we are heading into the final half-term of the year! Starlings continue to work hard and challenge themselves every day.

We had a fantastic time at cross-country on Monday and were delighted to come away with two first places and a third place from Starlings class. Every child tried their absolute best and showed wonderful support and encouragement towards one another, which was heartwarming to see.

The children have thoroughly enjoyed our writing unit this half-term, especially as they were able to draw upon their passion for looking after the environment to create some fantastic pieces of writing. We are very much looking forward to our final half-term together after the break.

WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN...



SKYLARKS?

This week we have been working on our information reports about rivers, consolidating the use of conjunctions in sentences.

In maths, the children have been working hard on learning to tell the time, AM and PM, converting between digital and analogue and duration.

In history, the children have learnt about Ancient Egyptian hierarchy and pharaohs.

We have finished our science unit of grouping and classifying, which is the final science of the year. We are looking forward to the second half of the summer term when we will be rehearsing our play with Puffins and Starlings.



GOLDFINCHES?

Dear Parents,

What a fantastic end to the term! The children had so much fun building their model Athens and we also finished our persuasive writing unit this week to encourage our school to avoid sending as much waste to the rubbish dump.

On the first week back, PE will be on a Friday but I will send a reminder once we're back at school. There will be a big focus on the performance, Hoodwinked, when we return. Please can the children try to learn some of their lines over the break so we can jump straight in when we come back.

Enjoy the sunshine!

WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN...



KESTRELS?

The children in Kestrels have certainly earned a holiday! We are incredibly proud of the determination, resilience and effort they showed during SATs week, and the mature attitude they demonstrated throughout. The children can now look forward to enjoying their final weeks at Gresham Village School, and we have lots of exciting activities and learning planned for this final half-term. This includes rehearsing and staging a production of *Peter Pan* alongside Goldfinches class, which we are all very much looking forward to. Details about this, along with our plans for leavers' events and our end-of-year trip, will follow soon. You should also have received details of our upcoming trip to Gresham's for a STEAM competition, which promises to be another exciting opportunity for the children.

PHONICS SCREENING CHECK

In the week commencing 8th June, all children in Year 1 will be taking the phonics screening check. Any children in Year 2 who did not pass last year, will also take the check. This will be administered by Miss Neylon who all of the children are familiar with through their Read Write Inc assessments. Please contact us if you have any queries.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MINECRAFT

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

As the best-selling game in history, Minecraft has made a name for itself by empowering audiences of all ages to harness their creativity. Originally an indie hit, it's become a cultural phenomenon with merchandise, spin-off titles, and wider media adaptations. Even if you don't know your Creepers from your Endermen, this guide will explore the risks of Minecraft in 2026 and explain how to support a safe gaming experience for the children in your care.

PUBLIC SERVER COMMUNICATION

Many players enjoy Minecraft with others, including friends and unknown players online. In-game text chat is commonly used to coordinate building projects and gameplay, and this can extend to adding friends to voice chat. While often harmless, this creates risks around contact with strangers, and in some cases server hosts may expose IP addresses (if hosting independently), which raises privacy and security concerns.

GRIEFING BEHAVIOUR

Some players deliberately damage or destroy other players' creations. This behaviour, known as 'griefing', is a form of bullying that can undo hours of effort and cause frustration or distress to affected players. Although many servers treat griefing as a serious offence, enforcement varies. Children who prefer to build independently may feel safer working on private worlds or controlled servers.

ADDICTIVE GAMEPLAY LOOPS

Minecraft's creative focus can make it easy for players to lose track of time. The cycle of gathering resources and building projects can be highly engaging, which may challenge agreed screen-time limits. If not managed effectively, this can impact children's sleep, schoolwork, and real-world social interaction.

SCARY GAME ELEMENTS

Although often compared to digital construction toys, some gameplay modes include hostile creatures with unsettling sounds and sudden encounters. While there is no graphic violence, younger players may still find zombies, spiders, or dark environments frightening. These experiences can lead to anxiety or reluctance to play, depending on the child's age and sensitivity.

IN-GAME SPENDING

Minecraft requires a one-off purchase after a free trial, usually around £15, but additional spending is possible. Players can buy cosmetic content or subscribe to Minecraft 'Realms' for private servers. Without supervision, children may make unintended purchases. Subscription services and add-ons can also increase overall costs over time if not monitored.

ONLINE INTERACTIONS

Playing with others can introduce broader online safety concerns, including exposure to inappropriate language or behaviour. Some players may attempt to move conversations beyond the game, which can increase risks to children's safety and welfare. Children may not always recognise these situations, meaning guidance and ongoing conversations about safe interactions are essential.

Advice for Parents & Educators

CHOOSE SUITABLE GAME MODES

Creative or Peaceful modes remove hostile creatures and reduce the pressure during gameplay. These options allow children to focus on building and exploration without fear of attack. They are also ideal for shared play between adults and children, creating a calmer environment to learn the game and enjoy collaborative projects.

USE PRIVATE SERVERS

Setting up a private server helps control who can join a child's game. Access can be limited to trusted friends through passwords or invitations. This reduces the likelihood of unwanted interactions and gives adults greater oversight. While some options involve a subscription fee, they offer a safer and more controlled multiplayer experience.

DISCUSS ONLINE STRANGERS

Children should understand that not everyone they meet online is who they claim to be. Clear guidance about not sharing personal information is essential. Encourage children to report any worrying or uncomfortable interactions and reassure them that they can seek help without fear of punishment. Open, ongoing conversations help build their confidence and awareness of these issues.

SET SPENDING BOUNDARIES

Agree on clear rules around purchases before letting children play, and use device settings or platform controls to restrict spending within agreed limits. Explaining that in-game currency uses real-world money can help children make informed decisions. Regularly reviewing purchases together can also prevent unexpected costs and encourage responsible behaviour.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes spent 7 years in games media, before moving into the games industry via PR and marketing. A parent himself to a Minecraft-loving son, he understands why it's so important to stay safe online.



See full reference list on our website

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College