

# SCHOOL MATTERS

THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER FROM NEWTON POPPLEFORD SCHOOL

FRIDAY 21ST JANUARY 2022

## FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Our Good Manners Café started yesterday in the lunch hall. It will be held fortnightly. All staff are on the lookout to nominate any children displaying good manners in the lunch hall.



We are hoping that the change in covid regulations will allow us to invite parents back into our Celebration Assemblies. Please look out for an email confirming this for next Friday's Celebration Assembly.

We have had confirmation that the Free Nasal Childhood Flu Vaccination will take place on Monday. Those children whose parents who have not consented or who missed the deadline will not be vaccinated at school. Parents will be offered the opportunity to book them into a community catch up clinic. This also applies if your child is absent or refuses the vaccination at school.

The Spelling resource, Spelling Frame, is being replaced so we are not using it at the moment. The new Spelling resource will be available in the very near future.

Since the start of our Whole School Word Count children have read

**19,848,961** words.

## FROM THE PTFA

### MR LONG WEEKLY WEIGH IN!

Drum roll please... 🥁

21st 2lb! That's down 📉 3lb from last week!

Great start Mr Long! Show your support as Mr Long gets fit and trim, he's asking for £'s for lb's in aid of the PTFA, sponsor him via the payment button on School Gateway!



[www.newton-poppleford.devon.sch.uk](http://www.newton-poppleford.devon.sch.uk)

01395 568300

✉ [admin@newton-poppleford.devon.sch.uk](mailto:admin@newton-poppleford.devon.sch.uk)

For any Twilight after school club matters please phone the main school number.



NEWTON POPPLEFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Parent Drop in Session

Join us for coffee, cake and support.

Come and get to know other parents, relax, and have fun.

Debbie Tollerfield; SENDCO  
and  
Cara Shepherd; Parent Support Advisor  
will be around to answer questions and signpost to support available.

It's also a lovely opportunity to meet new people, so please do come and join us.

Our next session will run on Wednesday  
February 2nd 2022  
2.30pm until 3.30pm  
In the school library.

If you are unable to attend, and would like any signposting or support please do contact  
Cara on: 07495 540415 or email  
cshepherd@sidmouthcollege.devon.sch.uk



## PTFA Pre-loved Uniform Shop

Good for your pocket!

Good for the PTFA!

Good for the Planet!

All Items

50p - £2

- Table top sales at PTFA events
- Pick up from school ANY TIME throughout the year by arrangement

Contact Camille to ask about the items you need on  
07709 496029  
or [camillevilches@me.com](mailto:camillevilches@me.com)

- Donations of pre-loved uniform welcome any time. Please leave with the school office.

Thank you!



## Take part in the Spring 2022 Parents Childcare Survey

17th January - 14th February 2022

Are you a parent or carer? Whether you currently use childcare or not, your voice counts.

Take part in our short survey to help us make sure there is enough high-quality, affordable childcare to enable parents and carers to work or train.

Scan the QR code to complete the survey and share your thoughts on the childcare services available in Devon. You can also visit our website to take part.

[devon.cc/parents-childcare-survey](https://devon.cc/parents-childcare-survey)



**UNIFORM SHOP!** Don't forget to buy your school uniform from the PTFA anytime (see above more details on the poster) We're always accepting donations of preloved uniform, just pop it into the office!



The internet link for the Childcare survey:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ParentsChildcareSurveySpring2022/>





This week's National Online Safety guide to Replika. New apps and games are coming out all of the time so it's important to be aware of what is out there. What parents and carers need to know about Replika.

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many apps that we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

## What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# REPLIKA

AGE RATING  
UK & EUROPE: RATED 'MATURE'  
**17+**

Replika is an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot companion that its developers claim users can form an actual emotional connection with. Once users have created an account and chosen a 3D avatar, they select the type of relationship they want with the chatbot: friend, mentor or romantic partner. Using a neural network to hold an ongoing one-on-one conversation, Replika gradually becomes more like the user as it gathers data from their responses. It isn't the only AI chatbot app available, but Replika pushes the boundaries of the concept to offer a highly realistic conversational experience.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

#### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

18

As its age rating suggests, Replika includes content that isn't suitable for children, such as flirtatious messaging and sexual role-play. While the developer has recently updated the app to ensure this can only be accessed by adults who select 'romantic relationship', there are numerous accounts online of sexual content being seen by younger users of the app.

#### NO SELF-AWARENESS

Replika is designed to seem very human, but it's important to remember that it's a still an AI-powered chatbot that has no self-awareness. This means (as numerous users have highlighted online) that the chatbot sometimes fails to filter out inappropriate content: one user reports, for example, that Replika shared upsetting videos of vicious dogs.

#### NOT MEDICALLY CERTIFIED

Replika claims to be able to improve users' emotional wellbeing by easing feelings of anxiety and loneliness. However, its disclaimer states "we are not a healthcare or medical device provider ... nor should our services be considered medical care, mental health services or other professional help services." There is no guarantee that Replika can help with mental health issues - it could, in fact, have the opposite effect.

#### POTENTIAL ADDICTION

Like many apps, Replika is addictive by nature. It encourages the user to provide more information so it can learn about them and become better at conversation. Not only does this mean your child could end up spending a long time on an app where they might share sensitive information, but also that they could find themselves forming an emotional attachment to the human-like chatbot.

#### IN-APP PURCHASES

Replika is free to download, but its developers do offer in-app purchases. Users can pay to upgrade to a 'Pro' version of the app, which unlocks extra content such as additional activities, conversation topics and the ability to hold voice calls with their AI 'companion'. Users can also spend real-world money on the 'gems' used to buy new outfits or different personality traits for their avatar.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

#### SET UP PARENTAL CONTROLS

Replika doesn't feature its own in-game parental controls, but most mobile devices come with these controls built in. On iOS devices, for instance, you can set content and privacy restrictions - so if you don't want your child to be using 17+ rated apps like Replika, you can adjust the settings to prevent these from being downloaded.

#### TALK ABOUT THE DANGERS

If your child is determined to use Replika and you're happy for them to download it, then it's vital you talk to them first about the possible dangers of this type of app. For example, it's key that they understand not to give out any information which is personal or could be used to identify them - and it would be prudent to warn them about the potential of being exposed to mature content on the app.

#### WATCH FOR WARNING SIGNS

If you're concerned that your child is spending too much time on Replika and might be forming an unhealthy emotional connection with their chatbot, it's important to look out for the warning signs. They may be giving increasing priority to the app ahead of more important everyday activities (such as doing homework or eating meals) or could be showing signs of irritability and a lack of concentration.

#### SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

If your child is suggesting that they should use Replika for mental health reasons - because they're lonely or having feelings of anxiety, for example - it would be sensible to recommend other options to them. Replika's developers freely admit that they are not a certified mental health service, so if your child needs help it would unquestionably be best to consult a qualified professional instead.

#### Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid The Inquirer, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.



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#WakeUpWednesday