

# SCHOOL MATTERS

THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER FROM NEWTON POPPLEFORD SCHOOL

## Friday 8th October 2021

### From the Headteacher

Dear Parents and Carers,

This is the most difficult letter I have had to write during my time as Headteacher of Newton Poppleford Primary School. It has been a privilege to lead such a vibrant school with such enthusiastic and engaging young people, supported and challenged by caring, dedicated staff but I have taken the decision to retire at the end of this academic year.

Headship in any school is a roller-coaster existence and I have experienced so many highlights and fantastic achievements by the children. My overall reflection will be immensely positive with overwhelming support from staff, parents, governors and the wider community. Indeed, a true test of any organisation is how they cope in times of adversity and I genuinely believe that we have shown great resilience in every case, during the last 18 months.

I have been incredibly proud to be Headteacher at Newton Poppleford Primary School and have always tried my best to lead the school firmly and fairly, ensuring that every individual is valued equally and encouraged to aspire to be the best they can be.

There have been many edicts from the DfE, but one that did mean something to how I believe a school should be was 'Every Child Matters' and I strongly believe every child should be treated as an individual and to be nurtured.

By the same token, 'Improving Life Chances' is not a vague promise; every member of the Newton Poppleford Primary School staff team has bought into that philosophy and I am humbled to say that we have created an environment where the adults go the extra mile to maximise the potential of every child, regardless of ability, background or circumstance.

No organisation is perfect and I accept that we don't always get decisions right but at Newton Poppleford Primary School, school staff and leaders recognise the need to look at all aspects of a situation before carefully deriving a fair outcome and are willing to apologise for any errors of judgement.

[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.

I have now worked in education for over 30 years. This is my 16th year at Newton Poppleford Primary School and my 19th overall as a Headteacher and that relentless accountability has certainly inflicted wear and tear!

There is never a 'right' time to retire but the PSBP new building project stretched me to the limit, along with the impact of COVID on all schools and I feel exhausted. Headship is a challenging enough role without the added pressure of major project management in the parallel universe of construction with all its specifications and brinkmanship and it did take its toll. Combine that with the last 18 months of running a school during a global pandemic.

We were all pleased to move into our new school building. Whilst we have a great new learning environment, a school is definitely not just about bricks and mortar, it's about people and more importantly the quality of relationships between staff and students and I am sure that retaining our ethos will prove more of a legacy than the new building itself. I am confident that the existing inspirational staff team and leadership structure will ensure the school is sustained and continues to grow. They will be wholeheartedly supported and scrutinised by our Full Governing Body (FGB), under the leadership of Mr Slade and Mr Ireland.

Our FGB has already started the recruitment process for a permanent successor and whilst that is ongoing, I feel confident that they will succeed in their search for the best possible replacement to move Newton Poppleford Primary School forward into the medium and long term.

Meanwhile, I have much unfinished business to attend to and guarantee that no stone will be left unturned before I leave on 31 August 2022. Newton Poppleford Primary School has worked its way into my DNA and I leave with a heavy heart but having devoted the last 19 years to Headship, I feel that I should now spend some quality time with my family and visit some of the places I have always dreamed of.

Newton Poppleford Primary School will always have a place in my heart and I wish the governors and the team every success for the future in the certain knowledge that they will do everything in their power to continue the quest to improve the life chances of every Newton Poppleford Primary School student.

Many thanks for making me feel so welcome and all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Stuart Vaughan

## **Survey on Parent consultation meetings**

Dear Parent/Carer

We would appreciate if you could take a few minutes to complete the google form, which can be accessed through the following link;

<https://forms.gle/wYwFVoHT7Wkwk4si7>

This will help us to decide how we hold our forthcoming and subsequent Parent consultation meetings this year.



## DT 'Wow' week

From Friday next week until the end of term we will be having a DT 'Wow' week in school. For children in Years 1 to 6 this will start off with an Aardmann workshop and our thanks to the PTFA for supporting this. We will be inviting parents in during the afternoon of Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October to view the children's work. Exact timings will be on next week's School Matters.

## Celebration for Finley

On Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October we plan to hold a celebration of Finley's life and to name the classroom in Adventure Island after him. The celebration will be held at 2:45pm, parents are welcome to join us, please bring wellies (as it may be muddy!)

# MARVELLOUS ME

## School Office Reminder

Thanks to all the many parents who have signed up for the Marvellous Me app. If you are yet to do so, please return the permission slip next week.

## From the PTFA

### PTFA AGM!

Wednesday 13th October, 7:30pm at the school. Please join us for committee elections, reporting on last year, and planning for the year ahead. Everyone welcome! Nominations for committee roles are accepted in advance, please email [terilouisemurphy@yahoo.com](mailto:terilouisemurphy@yahoo.com) for more information.

The AGM Agenda can be downloaded from the front page of the school website.

### CRISP PACKETS!

We need your empty crisp packets for our Terracycle crisp packet recycling scheme! The PTFA earns money for every kilo we divert from landfill. Win-win! Any brand of packet accepted, flat not folded please. There is a collecting bin by the main entrance. Thank you!

**THE CRISP PACKET RECYCLING SCHEME**

Every year countless pieces of crisp packets end up in landfill sites across the UK. We are working with TerraCycle® to put an end to this enormous loss of resources. The Crisp Packet Recycling Scheme allows us to recycle your crisp packets and prevent them from ending up in landfill. Not only are you helping the environment, but the waste you recycle with us also helps to fund schools or organisations.

The more you recycle, the more money we raise for our school!

Learn more at [www.terracycle.co.uk](http://www.terracycle.co.uk)

Waste that is accepted:

- Any brand of crisp Packet including multipack outer packaging

Waste that is NOT accepted:

- Popcorn bags
- Crisp tubes
- Pretzel bags
- Meat snack bags

Please do not fold the crisp packets into triangles.

Drop your waste at **Newton Poppleford Primary School.**



## Sidmouth Science Festival 2021

Fortunately, most of this year's Sidmouth Science Festival, our 10th, is able to go ahead in person. It runs from **Friday 8th until Sunday 17th October** with a wide variety of activities spread around various venues in Sidmouth. There are events for everyone; adults, children and families.

Hands on activities, talks and demonstrations take place on Super Science Saturday **9th October** with a marquee at Kennaway House where you can make small items to take home. Whilst there come and see the Primary Schools' Art Exhibition. Has your class won a prize? Or try your hand at the what3words treasure hunt. More details can be found at :

<https://www.sidmouthsciencefestival.org>



The poster for the Sidmouth Science Festival 10th is vibrant and colorful. It features a large orange diamond shape with the text '10th Sidmouth Science Festival' inside. Surrounding the diamond are various science-related icons: a handprint, a hot air balloon, a wind turbine, a dinosaur, a robot, a fish, a crab, and a microscope. Below the diamond, it says 'Friday 8th to Sunday 17th Oct 2021'. A box on the right lists activities: 'Food, materials, robots, dinosaurs, astronomy, geology and much more...'. At the bottom, it lists sponsors: Sidmouth Science Festival, SVA, Devon County Council, and others. A QR code is also present.

**10th**  
**Sidmouth Science Festival**

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021**

In and around Sidmouth with some online events or all online subject to government guidelines.

*Food, materials, robots, dinosaurs, astronomy, geology and much more...*

Sponsored by:  
Sidmouth Science Festival, SVA, Devon County Council, etc.

For the latest information look on our website [www.sidmouthsciencefestival.org](http://www.sidmouthsciencefestival.org)



Pre School, along with the rest of the school, have been celebrating Hello Yellow Day.



# This week's National Online Safety guide to FORTNITE Battle Royale. What parents and carers need to know about FORTNITE Battle Royale.

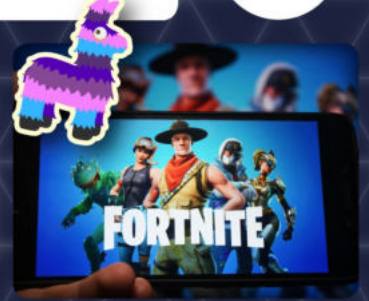
At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should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



There's a very good chance you've heard of Fortnite, but what exactly is it? And why is it so popular amongst young people? Fortnite is an online multiplayer "battle royale" game developed by Epic Games, and is playable on Playstation 4, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, PC and mobiles. It gained popularity in late 2017 and has since become the biggest game in the world, thanks to its rapid and engaging gameplay. As with most games, Fortnite itself is a highly enjoyable and safe experience, but it pays to be vigilant, as the safety is not water tight.



## What parents need to know about **FORTNITE BATTLE ROYALE**



### BATTLE ROYALE

Battle Royale games have become very popular over the last couple of years, and most tend to follow a very similar setup. Taking Fortnite as an example, 100 players drop into a map, loot buildings for weapons and armour and attempt to beat all the other players to be crowned victor at the end. If you've ever seen the Hunger Games movies, you'll have an idea of what this entails. Each game can take up to 20 minutes (assuming you last to the end) and can be restarted relatively quickly once 100 free players have been found.



### IS FORTNITE ADDICTIVE?

Fortnite is at the forefront of gaming addiction discussions because it is so popular with young people. But whether it actually contributes to gaming addiction is up for debate. WHO (World Health Organisation) have classified gaming as a legitimate addiction, but this is not solely a concern with Fortnite. Signs of addiction can include irritability when not playing, lying about the amount of time played and a preoccupation with thoughts of the next gaming session. Realistically, it must be down to parents and carers to recognise these symptoms and act accordingly if they think they are developing.



### FREE TO PLAY... OR IS IT?

While Fortnite is technically free to play (in that you can download and play it without paying) it does come with the caveat that spending money on things like skins and emotes in-game is heavily pushed to players. The currency used in-game is called 'V-Bucks' and can be bought with real money through the game's online store. It's worth remembering that these purchases are absolutely not necessary, are cosmetic only and that V-Bucks can be earned in-game with enough play time.



### SEASONAL UPDATES

Every 10 weeks or so Fortnite is updated with a new season. This essentially adds new things like skins and emotes to the game, while also sometimes changing up the game map in interesting ways. These seasons are free to everybody and don't require additional money to play, though battle passes for each season can be bought with V-Bucks. A battle pass will typically allow a player to earn experience faster and gain fun in-game items by completing a host of daily challenges.



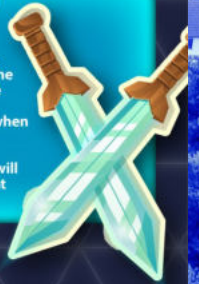
### CROSSPLAY IS AVAILABLE

One of the wonderful things about Fortnite is that it can be played cross-platform. This means that no matter what platform a person plays on (PC, PlayStation 4, Xbox One etc) they can play with friends who own the game on a different platform. To do this, an Epic Games account must first be created online (which is free) and then linked with your platform account. Doing this removes the age-old boundary of not being able to play together because you don't have the same console and opens up a whole new world of playing online with friends.



### IS FORTNITE VIOLENT?

Fortnite has been rated by the ESRB (Entertainment Software Ratings Board) as teen, as it contains cartoony violence and the weapons and acts depicted in the game are some way removed from their real life inspirations. Characters don't draw blood when shot and instead of dying, they are simply beamed up off the map. Naturally, players younger than the recommended age limit will want to play the game and that should be at the discretion of parents and carers.



## Top Tips For Parents



### BUYING V-BUCKS

As mentioned, Fortnite does contain in-game purchases and microtransactions in the form of V-Bucks which can be bought with real money. If you do decide to let your young one spend money in the game, be sure to delete your card information afterwards as it can be very easy to purchase more items at the press of a few buttons. It's important to set a limit on any purchases (as mentioned they are absolutely not necessary to play the game) and a suggestion would be capping the spending at around £50 - this is the normal retail price of a game



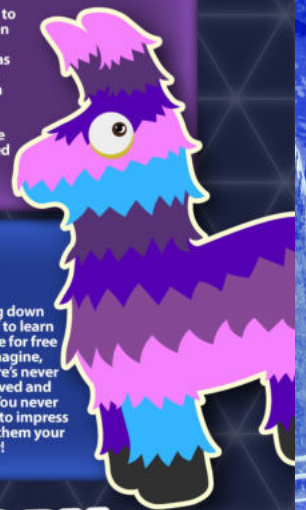
### GAMING WITH STRANGERS

Fortnite Battle Royale is an online game, and as such, there is a chance that young children could come into contact with strangers who are randomly placed into their groups in a game. It's difficult to predict what another person might say or do in a game, so it's a good idea for friends playing together, to be grouped together. The only real countermeasure to interacting with strangers offered by Fortnite is to turn off all mic communications, which can be done in the game's settings. Using outside chat apps, like Skype or Discord while playing, is a great way to make sure you know who you're talking to and that nobody else is listening in.



### LIMIT TIME, BUT BE FLEXIBLE

A game of Fortnite can last up to 20 minutes, so be flexible when it's time to put it away. The approach of 'one more game' as opposed to '10 more minutes' will stop any complaints that a match is still ongoing. Better still, play with your child and take it in turns; that way you're helping control the time played and can keep an eye on what they're experiencing.



### TALK TO OTHER PARENTS / CARERS

If you're concerned about play time or spending money in the game, talk to other parents and carers of your child's friends. If you approach as a collective, it will be easier to know when their friends are online and you don't have to worry about who they're playing with. It can also help curb expectations on spending money on battle passes and skins if you stick together.



### CAN DEVELOP SOME IMPORTANT SKILLS

It's often overlooked just how good gaming can be for young people. Fortnite encourages team play, quick and complex problem solving and communication; that's not to mention the lightning fast reflexes gamers can develop. While taking breaks to do other activities is of course important, there are benefits to screen time which might not be immediately obvious.



### PLAY THE GAME YOURSELF

There's no substitute for sitting down and playing the game yourself to learn all about it. Fortnite is available for free on almost anything you can imagine, even your smartphone, so there's never been a better time to get involved and see what all the fuss is about. You never know, you might even be able to impress your children when you show them your impressive Victory Royale tally!

### Meet our expert

Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGbible. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.



<https://www.theguardian.com/games/2018/mar/07/fortnite-battle-royale-parents-guide-video-game-multiplayer-shooter>, <https://www.psychguides.com/behavioral-disorders/video-game-addiction/>, <https://www.polygon.com/2018/3/23/17146848/cross-platform-crossplay-ps4-xbox-pc-switch-ios-mobile-enable-friends-compatible-matchmaking701E7d>, <https://www.esrb.org/ratings/34948/Fortnite/>