



(Article 16)

You have the right to privacy.



Friday Letter



16th January 2025

www.billquayprimary.org

Dates for the diary:

Friday 20th February - Break up for half term

Monday 2nd March - Inset day

Tuesday 3rd March - Return to school

Nursery Applications

If you wish to apply for a Nursery place for your child, please follow the link below to submit an application form. Once the form has been received, your child's details will be added to our list and we will contact you during the term before they are due to start to discuss which sessions we can offer.

<https://forms.gle/d7kJFs9sMPL8VxM29>

Pupil Progress Meetings (Reception)

Mrs Morton will hold pupil progress meetings on a Thursday morning beginning Thursday 22nd January. Meetings will last around 15 minutes and can be held face to face or by telephone. They are now available to be booked using the link below;

<https://billquayprimary.schoolcloud.co.uk/>

If you have any problems with booking using the system, please contact the school office. For anybody who wishes to receive a telephone call, please let us know in the comment section when booking.

Year 4 - Centre for Life Trip

Year 4 will be visiting the centre for life on Thursday 22nd January to take part in an 'Extreme Materials in Antarctica' workshop and a science centre visit. The cost of this trip is £12.00 per child and can be paid using the SchoolGateway app. A link to the consent form has been sent to you via email.

Parking

Could we politely remind parents/carers to park considerately when dropping off or collecting children from school.

Year 4 Bake Sale - Friday 30th January

Children in year 4 will sell cakes to all pupils in school on Friday 30th January. Any year 4 children who wish to donate cakes or biscuits to this sale, please do so via the school office on the morning of the sale. Items will be sold for 50p each. There will be no snack attack on this day.

Valentine's Disco

Children in Rec-Y6 are invited to come along to our Valentine's disco night on Wednesday 11th February. Children who are in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will attend from 3.30pm (straight after school) until 4.40pm. Children may come to school in their disco outfit and should be collected from the Year 6 door at the back of the school by the ramp. Children in Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 can attend the KS2 disco from 4.50pm until 6.00pm. Children should enter via the steps in the infant yard and be collected from the KS2 door at the back of the school next to the ramp. Tickets cost £3.50 which includes a drink and a hotdog and can be purchased using the SchoolGateway app. There will also be a tuck shop available on the night and children can purchase crisps and sweets using cash. Please ensure younger children bring cash in a clearly labelled envelope. For catering purposes, please ensure tickets are purchased no later than Friday 6th February.

PSE and Relationships Policy

We are currently reviewing and developing our PSE and Relationships Policy, including the curriculum content so that it meets the new statutory guidance which will come into effect from September 1st 2026. As a school, we refer to the PSE Association's scheme of work to support our teaching of PSE and Relationships education. This is currently being reviewed and updated; therefore, our Personal Development Programme will also be updated in line with these new changes. The policy and programme can be found on the school website within the PSE curriculum section.

We are keen to receive any feedback regarding the content of the policy or our programme. Please e mail the school office with your feedback and we will be in touch.

Gateshead Early Bird Parenting Programme

The early years SEN team will be running an information session for parents from 9.30am to 10.30a.m. on Thursday 5th February 2026. This will be held in the Saltwell Room at Gateshead Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH.

The National Autistic Society Early Bird course runs weekly (6 x two hour weekly sessions) for parents who have a child with a diagnosis of autism, or who are awaiting an autism assessment, up to the age of 6 years old. Attending Early Bird gives parents and carers an opportunity to develop their understanding of autism and look at practical solutions to managing behaviour. It also provides an opportunity to meet other people in a similar position and hear about their experiences in an informal but supportive atmosphere.

The information meeting is an opportunity for interested parents to meet the team who deliver the course, ask any questions and complete a referral form should they wish to attend a course.

Should you wish to attend the information meeting, please let us know by email so that we can make them aware of how many families will be attending.

Parent Views

Thank you to all parents who took the time to complete our parent questionnaires at the end of the Autumn term. Results of this can be found on our website.



SEND
LEGO CLUB

Tuesday 20th January
4:00-5:00pm
Chowdene Family Hub

Children under 12 with additional needs - come along
and join a LEGO building session!
Parents, carers and siblings welcome.

Contact: familyhubs@gateshead.gov.uk
Phone: 0191 433 5052



Gateshead
FAMILY HUBS



Gateshead
Council

All National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and educators with the information they need to have an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. Please visit nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

Part of our Online Information Society



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NOS National Online Safety
www.nationalonlinesafety.com

What you need to know about...

VOICE ACTIVATED SEARCHING

What is it? 'Voice Activated Searching'

Voice activated search, also known as 'voice search' or 'voice-enabled search' is a search tool that allows the user to use a voice command to search the internet, a website, or an app. It is commonly associated with smart speakers or digital assistants such as Alexa, Siri and Cortana. They can be used on smart phones and also operate on separate devices like the Amazon Echo or Google Home. They are particularly beneficial for children with disabilities who struggle with using a keyboard.

***Ahem* Ok Kloe, what's the number for National Online Safety?**

...Okay. Here is the number I have found. 0800 368 8061

Know the Risks

Data Misuse

This is one of the biggest concerns about voice activated search. Many times, we do not know where our data is being stored and how it will be used. Before using a voice activated search, it is always good practice to know what happens to our data once we hand it over to digital assistants.

Forming bad manners

There is a concern that children will get used to giving commands instead of politely requesting for something when using a voice search. They may think that such behaviour is considered normal and it could influence how they speak online in the real world.

Adult content

Children can ask questions that may not be appropriate for their age. Voice assistants aren't able to identify the age of a user and hence might provide them with answers that may not be suitable for their age group. Similarly, devices may play explicit versions of songs if no parental controls are applied.

Online purchases

If you have your credit card or other online payment information linked to your voice activated search, then there is a risk that children could make unauthorised purchases, potentially racking up huge bills.

Safety Tips

Use it together

When using voice activated searching, it's important to do it together with your child, especially at the initial stages. This will help them to become familiar with it and to understand how it should be used properly. Teach them how useful it can be and remind them to always speak politely, even when issuing commands.

Set parental controls

Review the parental settings on your devices. Implement filters and block any access to explicit or adult related content. Remove connected cards or implement safety measures to ensure children cannot spend freely.

Keep security software updated

Keep software updated on your devices to help keep the voice activated search feature secure. Use two-factor authentication whenever possible and set a strong password to avoid the risk of hacking.

Mute speaker when not in use

On smart speakers installed at home, it's good practice to mute the speakers when not in use or to just unplug the device when in standby mode. This reduces the risk of the speaker misidentifying an activation command and helps to improve your privacy and security.

Wider Benefits

Can improve learning

Voice activated searching can be used as an educational tool to help stimulate children's critical thinking and problem-solving skills. For instance, it can help children with their spelling, solving mathematical problems and also with reading, writing and their time-management.

Help reduce screen time

When used correctly, voice activated search can help to reduce the amount of time children spend in front of a screen. This could be in the form of a story, conducting a quiz or playing music rather than watching TV or playing computer games.

Learning assistant for children with SEND

Smart speakers can be a beneficial digital assistant for children with SEND since it removes the need for typing. Some children may struggle using a keyboard or having to multitask so using voice activated search can be a good tool to help children be digitally connected.

Our Expert Parven Kaur



Parven Kaur is social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience in the social media arena and is the founder of Kids N Clicks, a web resource that helps parents and children thrive in a digital world.