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SCHOOL



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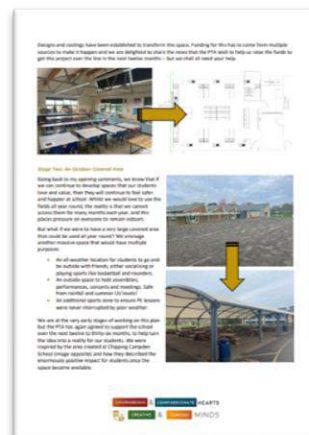
Dear Parents and Carers

May I wish both Eid Mubarak and a Happy Easter to you all on this final day of the spring term. With the exception of our hardworking Year 11s and Year 13s, it is time for a proper rest and break after what has again been a very busy term!

**PTA Fire Walk**

There is still time for you to make a contribution to the PTA following last Friday's fire walk in town. You may recall [I wrote to you back in mid-November](#) and set out our goals for site development and the central role we hope that the PTA can play in fulfilling those ambitions for your children.

The images below illustrate the lengths that some parents are willing to go but please be assured that fire walking is not compulsory but [a one-off or regular donation](#) to the PTA will go a long way for hundreds if not thousands of children at CNS.



In this era of further tightening of school funding, we become more reliant on one another for those extras that enhance students' experiences. Please do look at [our dedicated PTA page](#). Once again well done to Steve, Dan, Chris and Dom!

**Mobile Phone Usage at CNS**

Many thanks for the comments received as a result of [my letter to you on this topic](#) two weeks' ago. It is clear that there is widespread support for our gradual approach or at least no one disagreeing that our youngest students should enjoy a smartphone free school. I am happy to receive any further comments on this topic before discussing this with the Local Governing Body in the summer term.

On the topic of access to the digital world and gaming in particular, I recognise that unless one is a gamer, we have very little idea how exciting and risky online gaming can be for our children. They usually play on their own



in their bedrooms, often with headphones, and occasionally with complete strangers. It has come a long way from Munch Man and Astro Wars. Fortunately, we have been advised of this [Game Safe Guide for Parents](#).

As we approach the much-anticipated school holidays, we know that many children will be eager to spend more time online, connecting with friends and enjoying online games. Gaming can be a fantastic and engaging activity, offering opportunities for social interaction, problem-solving, and even creativity. However, it is crucial to acknowledge and address the potential risks that come with increased online activity.

We understand the importance of striking a healthy balance between screen time and other activities. To support you in navigating this, I highly recommend exploring the comprehensive guide provided by Internet Matters. This resource offers invaluable advice on:

- **Balancing gaming with other activities:** Ensuring a well-rounded holiday experience;
- **Setting up consoles correctly:** Maximizing safety and security;
- **Connecting with others safely:** Understanding and managing online interactions.

Internet Matters provides detailed information and practical tips to help you and your children enjoy the online world both safely and responsibly.

### **John Smith's Centre – Youth Poll**

I have only just begun to look at the headlines of this major poll of young people (aged 16-29), let alone read [the highly accessible report](#), but note a number of really interesting headlines that counter some of the gloomy narratives that can pervade. The introduction summarises as follows:

*"Nearly two-thirds (63%) say they feel optimistic about their personal future, versus only 20% who feel pessimistic. This striking confidence coexists with their awareness of adversity. In effect, society at large may lament the tough hand dealt to Gen Z, but young people themselves largely believe in their ability to adapt and thrive. The data paints a picture of a generation that refuses to succumb to despair – they recognize the obstacles before them, yet remain optimistic that with hard work and resilience they can prevail."*

Interestingly, on the issue of whether social media ought to be banned for under-16s, 67% agreed compared to 28% who did not. It appears that the older the respondents were (those in the aged 25-29 bracket), the more certain they became that social media was unhelpful for under 16s. Once we receive the data from our recent RLT surveys we can triangulate it with some of the other available data to explore how CNS students feel and how we can move forward together.

### **And finally...**

We hope the 50+ students taking part in the ski trip to Austria in the coming days have a safe and memorable experience. My thanks to Mr James and colleagues for organising and taking part!

Have a lovely Easter break!

Very best wishes,



Barry Doherty, *Headteacher*

