



Anker Valley Newsletter

Friday 11th April 2025

Please note that school will be closed Thursday 1st May for INSET, and Monday 5th May for May Day Bank Holiday.

The deadline for sign up and payment for summer term trips are as follows:

Year 2 Llandudno – 25th April at 15:30.

Year 2 East Midlands Airport – 8th May at 15:30.

Year 3 Cadbury World – 9th May at 15:30.

Year 1 Twycross Zoo – 16th May at 15:30.

Current Year 2 Laches Wood Residential deposit due (when in Year 3) – 23rd May at 15:30.

Easter Bonnet Parade

Thank you to all parents for supporting with making the children's Easter bonnets; They all looked fabulous!
The competition has been judged, and our winners are below:



Easter Fun at Anker Valley

The children have had a fun-filled week celebrating Easter by taking part in lots of egg-citing activities! They have been successful in their Easter egg hunt, made Easter cards, created lots of Easter crafts and enjoyed the annual Easter disco. It has been a lovely week at school, and a great finish to a long spring term.



Termly and Weekly Attendance

School attendance this year: **96.7%**

School attendance this term: **95.9%**



Dragonflies (this week): 99.1% (1 lates)

Heron (this week): 95.9% (2 lates)

Kestrels (this week): 97.9% (2 lates)

Kingfishers (this week): 97.1% (1 lates)

Dragonflies (this term): 96.5% (1 lates)

Heron (this term): 95.6% (2 lates)

Kestrels (this term): 96.8% (2 lates)

Kingfishers (this term): 96.8% (1 lates)



Congratulations to our children in **Dragonflies** for winning our weekly attendance award! Thank you to all parents who have supported their child this academic year with their attendance. We really do appreciate it.



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Stars of the Term

Arthur (Dragonflies) - for always making the right choices and being a role model for the other children in the class.

Georgia (Heron) - for being a ray of sunshine in our classroom and always trying her best.

Terae (Kestrel) - for always having a smile on his face. His enthusiasm for learning has shone through this half term and he has made fabulous progress. We are really proud of him!

Harry (Kingfisher) - Trying his hardest in all lessons and showing his determination and resilience constantly.



What we have been learning in Dragonflies...

Dragonflies have had an amazing week this week learning all about Easter. We have explored how families celebrate Easter, made hatching Easter eggs and even spent some time with the chickens. In maths, we have been looking at different ways we can make the number ten and recording these as number sentences and in phonics we have been continuing to practice chunking up longer words to read them independently.

Dragonflies have had yet another amazing term and Miss Stacey and I are so proud of what they have all achieved! We hope you all have a fabulous Easter holiday.



What we have been learning in Herons...

This week, Herons have been trying hard with all of their lessons. In maths, the children have been exploring mass and volume. The children have been measuring, comparing and learning the correct terminology associated with each of these measurements. In English, the children have enjoyed labelling their own home with adjectives ready for writing a description. In the wider curriculum, the children have been creating 3D birds and have been identifying a range of wildflowers. We wish all of our Herons a lovely Easter break and we look forward to welcoming them back for the new term!



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What we have been learning in Kestrels...

The spring term seems to have flown by, and we cannot believe that we are nearly in our last term of the academic year and that the children will soon be in Key Stage Two. This week in Kestrels, we have been finding out about mass and capacity in our maths lessons and have solved problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. In English, we have innovated the poem 'The Owl and the Pussy-cat' and written our own first verse making sure to include rhyming words. In RE, we have thought about books, which are special to us and shared these with our friends. We have created Easter cards for our families and practised the songs for our Easter assembly and bonnet parade. During our Rock It music lesson, we put on a fabulous performance for our parents and showcased our learning from this half term with Mrs Smith. We hope if you were able to join us that you enjoyed listening to the children's performance; we are really proud of how hard they have worked. Have a lovely Easter break, Kestrels!



What we have been learning in Kingfishers...

In Kingfishers this week, we have started to explore mass by weighing items in grams and kilograms. In English, we have been trying hard to remember previously learnt skills and include them in our writing. In the afternoons, we have had fun sewing, learning about the layers of the earth with playdoh models and had some Easter fun. We hope all of our Kingfishers have an incredible Easter holiday and look forward to welcoming them back after a well-earned break!



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Dates for your Diary

Monday 14th April – Friday 25th April – Easter Holiday

Thursday 1st May – INSET Day (School closed to pupils)

Monday 5th May – May Day Bank Holiday (School closed)

Tuesday 6th May – Tempest Class Photographs

Thursday 8th May – Parent Workshops to celebrate VE Day

Friday 9th May – Year 3 Level 1 Bikeability

Wednesday 14th May – Year 2 trip to Llandudno

Monday 26th May – Friday 30th May – Whitsun Holiday

Thursday 5th June – Y3 Cricket Competition

Monday 9th June – Heron's Rock It Parents session (2:30pm)

Monday 9th June – Friday 13th June – Y1 Phonics Screening Week

Monday 9th June – Diabetes Awareness Week (Wear blue to school)

Thursday 12th June – Year 3 Trip to Cadbury World

Monday 15th June – Friday 20th June – Sports Week

Friday 20th June – Sport's Day (1:30pm)

Wednesday 24th June – Year 1 Trip to Twycross Zoo ****Please note date change****

Thursday 26th June – Year 3 Tennis Tournament

Thursday 26th June – Year 2 Trip to East Midlands Airport ****Please note date change****

Monday 30th June – Dragonflies' Rock It Parents session (2:30pm)

Thursday 3rd July – Summer Fair (2:30pm – 4:30pm)

Saturday 5th July – Festival Celebrations in the Castle Grounds (10am-5pm)

Monday 7th July – Friday 11th July – Fierté Festival Week

Friday 18th July – End of Term Family Picnic, Family Games and Celebration Assembly (12:30pm – 3:30pm)

Monday 21st July – INSET Day. School closed to pupils.

End of Term – Summer Holiday

Spring 2 and Summer 1 Family Library Sessions and Assemblies

Fri 2nd May – Kestrels

Fri 9th May – Herons

Fri 16th May – Dragonflies

Fri 23rd May – Kingfishers

Polite Request

As I am sure you are aware, we have classrooms on the front of the building which inevitably with the warmer weather have had the windows open. Staff have drawn attention to occasions when parents have been using inappropriate language or having inappropriate conversations which are subsequently being overheard by children. Please can we ask that when lining up and, on the playground, you are respectful to the fact that you are on school premises.

VE Day Celebrations

We are delighted to invite parents into school on **Thursday 8th May** from **9:00am** until **1:00pm** to take part in a series of workshops with the children. The activities will include a baking activity, an art activity, maypole dancing and traditional games. After a fun-filled morning, we would also like to invite you to enjoy lunch with the children, followed by an assembly where the children will share some songs that they have learnt in school. **This special day at school will mark the 80th anniversary since the end of the war.** We will share finer details and information regarding lunch bookings closer to the time.

Safeguarding – Our Designated Safeguarding Leads are:

Mrs Natalie Horlor (Headteacher) nhorlor@ankervalley.org

Mrs Andrea Free (Class teacher) afree@ankervalley.org

Mrs Julia Jones (Safeguarding Lead Governor) jjones@ankervalley.org

The school Safeguarding Policy is available to view on our school website.



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The NSPCC have developed a new resource to help parents keep their children safe online. It is aimed at those beginning to explore the digital world. Techosaurus encourages positive conversations about healthy online habits:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/techosaurus/>

THE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAM IN SCHOOLS ARE **OPEN** OVER THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Monday 14th April - Friday 25th April
(excluding weekends and bank holidays)

If your child is experiencing low level mental health difficulties, we may be able to help. Call us* between 9am - 5pm (Monday to Friday), leave your name and number and one of our practitioners will give you a call back to see what support we can offer.

We can help with:

- Low mood
- Anxiety
- Sleep difficulties
- Worry
- Panic

Burton and Uttoxeter
01283 504487

Cannock and Lichfield
01283 352113

Stafford
01283 352097

Tamworth
01785 301027



*Please note that these contact numbers are not to be used in an emergency.



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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

INSTAGRAM

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

Instagram remains one of the world's most popular social media platforms, especially among teens – with around 70% of 13 to 17-year-olds using it. Owned by Meta, Instagram allows users to share photos and videos, create interactive 'stories', broadcast live, send private messages and follow others. With regular updates and new features, it's essential for parents and educators to stay informed about how children are using the app – and what the risks are.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME

Instagram's design encourages prolonged use through endless scrolling of trending content and generating a fear of missing out (FOMO). Children can quickly lose track of time browsing posts from friends, influencers, and strangers, which may disrupt their day-to-day activities.

THREADS INTEGRATION

Threads is Instagram's sister app for public, text-based conversations. Posts from Threads appear in users' Instagram feeds and can lead children to view, share, and comment on public conversations with strangers. The content may not always be age-appropriate and can be misleading or false.

AI CHATBOT CONCERNS

Meta's AI, which is available on Instagram, allows users to chat with an in-app chatbot. While often helpful, it can blur boundaries for young users, who may ask for or read content that is inappropriate or see it as a real friend or confidant. Privacy issues also arise, as conversations may not be as secure or private as children assume.

SCHEDULED MESSAGING

Instagram's newer ability to schedule direct messages means that children could receive messages late at night or early in the morning. This can disrupt their sleep or keep them preoccupied before the school day even begins.

RISKS OF GOING LIVE

The livestream feature allows real-time broadcasting to followers – or anyone, if the account is public. This increases the chance of unwanted contact from strangers and pressure to act in ways that gain attention, including engaging in inappropriate behaviour. Viewers may also post offensive or harmful comments during live sessions.

EXCLUSION AND LOW SELF-WORTH

Feeling left out online can have a real emotional impact. Being left out of photos, receiving fewer likes, being unfollowed, or being ignored in chats and comments can leave children feeling excluded, which often hurts as much as in real life. There is a risk this can lead to reduced self-esteem and a sense of not belonging.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE INSTAGRAM'S SUPERVISION TOOLS

Instagram's built-in Family Centre lets parents monitor how much time their child spends on the app. Specialised 'teen accounts' are private by default and offer controls on who can message them. Make sure that children use their real age when registering their account to ensure they have these protections.

SET BOUNDARIES FOR THREADS AND AI

Parental controls on Instagram also apply to Threads. These allow parents to monitor time spent in the app, check follower lists and adjust exposure to sensitive content. Discuss AI features, too, therefore helping children understand that chatbots aren't real people and should be used with care.

OPEN UP THE CONVERSATION

Talk regularly to the children in your care about what they enjoy on Instagram – and what makes them uncomfortable. Encourage honest chats about filters, body image, and online approval. Reassure them that they don't need to edit their appearance or chase 'likes' to feel valued.

BE MEDIA-SAVVY WITH INFLUENCERS

Parents should follow a few of the influencers their child watches, so they can better understand the content they're seeing. Use this as a springboard to talk about the difference between genuine recommendations and paid promotions – and how online personalities can shape opinions and behaviour.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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