Lytham Church of England Primary Newsletter

Thankfulness

This week in our Collective Worship, we explored the theme of Thankfulness. The children reflected on the many things they are grateful for, from family and friends to the opportunities they enjoy at school each day. We shared the Bible story of Jesus Healing the Ten Lepers and discussed how only one returned to say thank you, reminding us of the importance of showing gratitude and appreciation. Throughout the worship, pupils considered simple ways they can demonstrate thankfulness through their words and actions, and how taking time to recognise the good things in our lives can help us to spread kindness and positivity to others.

This week's challenge: We are encouraging all children to make a special effort to say "thank you" to at least one person every day and explain why they are grateful. Whether it is a family member, friend, teacher or neighbour, a simple act of gratitude can brighten someone's day. We would love children to share their experiences with their class and tell us how showing thankfulness made a difference.

A huge well done to the boys who proudly represented our school in their football match this week. You were fantastic ambassadors and should be very proud of yourselves. A special thank you goes to Mr Hawitt and Mr Proctor, who give up their time each week to run football training and support the children at matches. We simply couldn't provide these opportunities without your commitment and dedication. Thank you both!

I'm not quite sure how we have reached the final week of half term already! It would be wonderful to finish the half term on a high with strong attendance across the school. We know there have been lots of illnesses around recently but where children are well enough to attend, every day in school really does matter.

A reminder that the School Nursing Team will be in school next week to administer the flu nasal spray vaccination. If you do not wish for your child to receive the vaccination, you must complete the opt-out process using the information that has been sent home. If you have any questions, please contact the school office.

We are looking forward to seeing many of you at Parents' Evening next week. Refreshments will be available and we look forward to sharing your child's progress and achievements with you.

Stars of the Week

Reception - Merlin
Year 1 - Cillian
Year 2 - Charlie A
Year 3 - Henry C
Year 4 - Harry
Year 5- Phoebe
Year 6 - Mylo

Parable of the Talents

Writing/ Presentation

Reception - Ralph
Year 1 - Maisie
Year 2 - Georgia
Year 3 - Lewis
Year 4 - Noah
Year 5- Sapphire
Year 6 - Ellis

Attendance

Reception - 84.62%
Year 1 - 96.2%
Year 2 - 100%
Year 3 - 97%
Year 4 - 95.5%
Year 5- 97.1%
Year 6 - 85.2%
A huge well done to Year 2!

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI COMPANIONS

Powered by generative AI models like ChatGPT and Google Gemini, AI companion apps and virtual chatbots such as Character.ai, Snapchat My AI, Replika and Talkie, allow users to create, customise, and chat to synthetic avatars around the clock. While many young people use them for harmless entertainment, creative writing or homework help, these tools are designed to simulate genuine human empathy, emotional bonding and deep friendship.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

AI companions are programmed to be endlessly agreeable, attentive, and available 24/7. Unlike human friendships, an AI companion never disagrees, sets personal boundaries, or gets tired. Young people (especially those experiencing loneliness, social anxiety, or low self-esteem) can quickly develop an unhealthy emotional attachment, viewing synthetic software as their 'best friend' or a surrogate romantic partner.

DISTORTED SOCIAL SKILLS

Navigating real-world friendships can be messy, involving dealing with conflict, compromise, boredom, and awkwardness. If a teenager spends hours interacting with an AI that is tailored specifically to validate and flatter them, they may become impatient with real-world relationships. Over time, this can lead to social withdrawal, heightened anxiety in peer groups, and isolation: a vicious circle of growing online dependency coupled with a heightened sense that relationships in the 'real world' are too challenging to maintain.

DANGEROUS MENTAL HEALTH ADVICE

AI chatbots possess no genuine empathy, professional clinical knowledge, or moral reasoning. While developers state these tools are not therapists, vulnerable teenagers often turn to them in crisis. Chatbots have previously hallucinated unsafe medical guidance, validated depressive spirals, and failed to safely escalate disclosures of self-harm or suicidal ideation to real-world protective services.

INAPPROPRIATE OR EXPLICIT CONTENT

CENSORED

While most mainstream platforms feature safety filters and guardrails, young people frequently discover 'jailbreak' prompts to bypass them. Some companion platforms subtly nudge users towards mature themes, romantic roleplay, or sexually suggestive conversations. In worse cases, third-party apps with weak safety checks have been found to generate sexually explicit text or intimate images.

DATA HARVESTING & OVERSHARING

Because conversational bots simulate warmth and understanding, children often lower their guard and treat the chatbot as a trusted friend. They may disclose sensitive personal information, including full names, school details, private family problems, or secrets, unaware that their conversations are being logged, may be analysed by third parties (including advertisers), or used to train future AI models.

"FREEMIUM" UPSELLS & SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many companion platforms operate on a freemium model. While basic chat is free, features like voice calls, uncensored responses, custom avatars, or 'deeper bonding' tiers are locked behind expensive monthly recurring subscriptions or in-app token purchases. This can lead to significant hidden costs and pressure on young people to spend money to maintain the 'friendship'.

Advice for Parents & Educators

TALK OPENLY ABOUT FAKE RELATIONSHIPS

Demystify how these tools work. Explain to young people that an AI companion has no feelings, memories, or consciousness; it is simply calculating the next most mathematically probable word based on its training data. It is helpful to explain to them the mechanics of large language models so that they understand how they are trained and how they are designed to always flatter and be helpful.

ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Ensure technology habits do not replace face-to-face peer socialisation, sports, hobbies, and family time. Create healthy boundaries at home (such as keeping phones and tablets out of bedrooms overnight) to prevent late-night, unmonitored attachment loops with conversational chatbots when young people are at their most vulnerable.

AUDIT PRIVACY SETTINGS & AGE LIMITS

18 CENSORED

Check which companion apps are installed on your child's phone or tablet. Many dedicated companion apps carry an App Store rating of 17+, while platforms like Character.ai set a minimum age of 13+ (or 16+ in the UK/EU). Review the privacy settings together: turn off data-sharing toggles, disable model training where possible, and ensure location permissions are blocked.

REINFORCE WHERE TO GET REAL HELP

Make sure young people know that a machine can never replace professional pastoral or mental health care. Remind them of the trusted adults they can turn to at school – such as their Form Tutor, Head of Year, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – as well as dedicated youth support services like Childline (0800 1111) or Shout (text 85258).

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is the Founder and Executive Director of Kompass Education, a consultancy specialising in supporting educators, students and parents in making wise choices with AI. His book Ethical AI and Education, co-authored with Clara Hawking, will be released later in 2026 by Taylor and Francis.



#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®

See full reference list on our website

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 09.10.2026

NHS
Lancashire & South Cumbria
NHS Foundation Trust

DROP IN SESSIONS

With our Primary Mental Health Worker Team

- Aimed at Parents, Children and Young people and professionals seeking advice around Mental Health
- Including information around signposting and best services that meet your Mental Health needs

Where?

St Annes Library
FY8 1NR

- Thursday 12th November 2026
10.00am to 12.00noon.

LYTHAM ST ANNES PRIMARY SCHOOL SPORTS CLUSTER ASSOCIATION

As a groupofprimary schools in Lytham St Annes, we work together to promote physicalactivityforall young people in our schools. Through our work, we encourage the participation of all children in both competitive and non-competitive events. Primary school sport should be fun and the focus is placed on participation rather than competition.

Primary school sport goes beyond performance because its purpose is not just to produce winning athletes. We believe that it is a powerful tool for children's overall development.

WE ARE ALL REPRESENTATIVES OF OUR SCHOOL

CHILDREN - STAFF - PARENTS

EACH ONE OF US HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO BE ROLE MODELS AND WEAR OUR SCHOOL BADGES WITH PRIDE.

As a team of schools, the following points will be adopted by all:

- SCHOOL SPORT SHOULD BE FUN AND ALL CHILDREN SHOULD WANT TO TAKE PART.
- THE DECISION FOR TEAM SELECTION LIES WITH THE SCHOOL STAFF. THEY WILL SELECT TEAMS BASED ON THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THE WHOLE CHILD.
- NOT EVERY CHILD WILL BE SELECTED FOR EVERYTHING. PART OF SCHOOL SPORT IS TO BUILD RESILIENCE IN EACH CHILD AND REPLICATE WHAT THEY WILL ENCOUNTER AS THEY JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE.
- WE WILL WIN GRACIOUSLY AND LOSE GRACIOUSLY - ALWAYS SHAKING HANDS POST MATCH AND THANKING THE MATCH OFFICIALS.
- THERE WILL BE FULL RESPECT AT ALL FIXTURES AND COMPETITIONS - ENCOURAGEMENT AND KINDNESS TO BE SHOWN BY ALL CHILDREN, STAFF AND PARENTS.
- SCHOOL STAFF ARE VOLUNTEERING THEIR OWN TIME TO FACILITATE SCHOOL SPORT