



## MESSAGE FROM MR ROBERTS

Mr Powell's message will be back next time!

It has been a very busy beginning to the term and we have been working very hard in school to continue to make sure we provide the very best we can for our children.

We are receiving great feedback from teachers on the benefits of some of the changes we have made this term. Some children have been identified for pre-teaching from 8:40am and we have been thrilled to see the benefits of this in the day's lessons, with them able to engage more fully and with greater confidence. We have also been pleased with the impact of our after-school boosters. Again, this can only benefit those who attend.

If your child has been invited to extra tuition, either before or after school, I do strongly urge parents to ensure that their child attends.

## SAFE CAMP

During the February half term London Sports Trust are running Safe Camp at Phoenix Academy and Canalside Activity Centre, from 10am – 2:30pm. There will be lots of activities including football, basketball, kayaking, table tennis, multi sports, and more. If you would like to know more, you can contact the London Sports Trust on 020 8968 4500 or [londonsportstrust1@gmail.com](mailto:londonsportstrust1@gmail.com).

## NURSERY – SPRING TERM TOPIC

Our topic this term is 'Who can help us?' and last week we learnt about key helpers in our school. Mr Powell, Mr Murphy and Barry, the

school's chef, visited Nursery and the children asked them questions about their role and all the important things they do to help children.





This week's shout outs go to:

Carpenter	India
Caxton	Hamza
Darwin	Jannat, Rafael
Dickens	Rinad, Rayyan D.
Faraday	Mohammed, Hajar
Fry	Lacey-May
Jenner	Tion
Johnson	Gabriela
Newton	Zafeerah, Ronnie
Pankhurst	Aiden, Saul
Seacole	Mya, Vitor
Shackleton	Maliq, Millie
Wilberforce	Zoe, Sarah, Nadeefa
Wollstonecraft	Amir, the whole class

Class Attendance – this week	
BUSS	86.9%
CARPENTER	86.9%
CAXTON	87.8%
DARWIN	91.1%
DICKENS	85.1%
FARADAY	73.3%
FRY	86.8%
JENNER	84.6%
JOHNSON	95%
NEWTON	90%
PANKHURST	85.2%
SEACOLE	86.8%
SHACKLETON	79.2%
WILBERFORCE	85.2%
WOLLSTONECRAFT	83.9%



At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many apps that 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.

## What Parents & Carers Need to Know about REPLIKA

**AGE RATING**  
UK & EUROPE: RATED 'MATURE'  
**17+**

Replika is an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot companion that its developers claim users can form an actual emotional connection with. Once users have created an account and chosen a 3D avatar, they select the type of relationship they want with the chatbot: friend, mentor or romantic partner. Using a neural network to hold an ongoing one-on-one conversation, Replika gradually becomes more like the user as it gathers data from their responses. It isn't the only AI chatbot app available, but Replika pushes the boundaries of the concept to offer a highly realistic conversational experience.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

**INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT** **18**  
As its age rating suggests, Replika includes content that isn't suitable for children, such as flirtatious messaging and sexual role-play. While the developer has recently updated the app to ensure this can only be accessed by adults who select 'romantic relationship', there are numerous accounts online of sexual content being seen by younger users of the app.

**NO SELF-AWARENESS**  
Replika is designed to seem very human, but it's important to remember that it's still an AI-powered chatbot that has no self-awareness. This means (as numerous users have highlighted online) that the chatbot sometimes fails to filter out inappropriate content: one user reports, for example, that Replika shared upsetting videos of vicious dogs.

**NOT MEDICALLY CERTIFIED**  
Replika claims to be able to improve users' emotional wellbeing by easing feelings of anxiety and loneliness. However, its disclaimer states 'we are not a healthcare or medical device provider - nor should our services be considered medical care, mental health services or other professional help services.' There is no guarantee that Replika can help with mental health issues - it could, in fact, have the opposite effect.

**POTENTIAL ADDICTION**  
Like many apps, Replika is addictive by nature. It encourages the user to provide more information so it can learn about them and become better at conversation. Not only does this mean your child could end up spending a long time on an app where they might share sensitive information, but also that they could find themselves forming an emotional attachment to the human-like chatbot.

**IN-APP PURCHASES**  
Replika is free to download, but its developers do offer in-app purchases. Users can pay to upgrade to a 'Pro' version of the app, which unlocks extra content such as additional activities, conversation topics and the ability to hold voice calls with their AI 'companion'. Users can also spend real-world money on the 'gems' used to buy new outfits or different personality traits for their avatar.

### Advice for Parents & Carers

**SET UP PARENTAL CONTROLS**  
Replika doesn't feature its own in-game parental controls, but most mobile devices come with these controls built in. On iOS devices, for instance, you can set content and privacy restrictions - so if you don't want your child to be using 17+ rated apps like Replika, you can adjust the settings to prevent these from being downloaded.

**TALK ABOUT THE DANGERS**  
If your child is determined to use Replika and you're happy for them to download it, then it's vital you talk to them first about the possible dangers of this type of app. For example, it's key that they understand not to give out any information which is personal or could be used to identify them - and it would be prudent to warn them about the potential of being exposed to mature content on the app.

**WATCH FOR WARNING SIGNS**  
If you're concerned that your child is spending too much time on Replika and might be forming an unhealthy emotional connection with their chatbot, it's important to look out for the warning signs. They may be giving increasing priority to the app ahead of more important everyday activities (such as doing homework or eating meals) or could be showing signs of irritability and a lack of concentration.

**SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP**  
If your child is suggesting that they should use Replika for mental health reasons - because they're lonely or having feelings of anxiety, for example - it would be sensible to recommend other options to them. Replika's developers freely admit that they are not a certified mental health service, so if your child needs help it would unquestionably be best to consult a qualified professional instead.

**Meet Our Expert**  
Carly Page is an experienced technology journalist with a track record of more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid *The Inquirer*, Carly is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant.

**NOS National Online Safety**  
#WakeUpWednesday

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