



# Cedars Park Primary School School Bulletin

Friday 13th March 2026

## Notable Dates

**Fri 20th March**—PTA Non Uniform for PTA Choc Bingo

**Fri 27th March**—Last Day of Term

**Sat 28th March**—PTA Chocolate Bingo

**Mon 30th March**—Fri 10th April—Easter Holidays

**Mon 13th April**—PD Day

**Tues 14th April**—Pupils Return to School

**Thurs 21st May**—PTA Fun Run (Details to follow)

**Mon 25th—Fri 29th May**—Half Term

**Wed 17th June**—Year 4 Music Festival at Trinity Park

## Lunch Menu w/c 16th March 2026

**Monday**  
Veggie Frankfurter with Potato Wedges

**Tuesday**  
Spaghetti Bolognese or Veggie Bolognese with Garlic Bread

**Wednesday**  
Roast Chicken or Roast Quorn Fillet with Yorkshire Pudding & Roast Potatoes

**Thursday**  
Hawaiian Pizza or Margherita Pizza with Wedges

**Friday**  
Fish Fingers & Chips or Veggie Fingers

*Jacket Potatoes available daily*

## Science Week



Science week isn't over yet but the children have been busy this week engaging in a range of exciting activities.

Thank you to our STEM ambassador Mr Jones who came into school and worked across multiple year groups helping them understand more about how rockets work. The children thoroughly enjoyed launching their own rockets outside on the playground!



Year 4 got stuck in to a very practical activity looking at the digestive system and how it works. Through a series of practical tasks the children were able to put food through a 'digestive system' to see how it really works.



Another thank you to parents

and carers who supported pupils at home with Science Week homework. It was great to see science being explored at home beyond the classroom.



As we said, the week isn't over yet and we look forward to welcoming Year 5 pupils to the Space Sleepover this evening. We have a lot of exciting activities organised including the visit from the planetarium.



## Attendance Focus—Fixed Penalty Notices

We all know that good attendance at school will help children achieve the best outcomes as they move through their educational careers. At Cedars, our first priority is to support pupils and families to ensure that they attend well and any barriers are removed.

However, sometimes, in line with DfE and Government legislation, we have to issue Fixed Penalty Notices. We often get questions from parents and carers about these so we thought we would remind parents and carers how these work.

### Why Notices are Issued

A penalty notice is considered if a child has **10 sessions** (usually 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling **10-school-week period**. These weeks can span different terms or even school years.

Common reasons for issuing a notice include:

- **Unauthorised holidays** taken during term time.
- **Avoidable absences** or persistent late arrival after the register has closed.
- **Failure to provide explanations** for a child's absence.
- **Parentally condoned absence** where the parent is unwilling to engage with support.

### Who is Liable?

A penalty notice can be issued to **each parent** for **each child**. This usually applies to parents with day-to-day responsibility for the child or those who allowed the absence to happen.

### Costs and Escalation

The penalty amounts increase depending on whether it is a first or repeat offence within a three-year period:

Offence	Cost per Parent, per Child	Deadlines & Conditions
First	£160	Reduced to <b>£80</b> if paid within 21 days; full amount due by 28 days.
Second	£160	Must be paid in full within 28 days (no reduced rate).
Third	No Notice Issued	The case may be taken directly to <b>Magistrates' Court</b> .

We hope that this clarification has been useful. A more detailed explanation can be found on this [Suffolk What is A School Penalty Notice Flyer](#).

## PTA Chocolate Bingo—Non Uniform Day, Friday 20th March

On Friday 20th March, we are inviting the children to wear non-uniform for the day. Children should bring in a donation of a chocolate item (no nuts please!) for the PTA Chocolate Bingo event which will take place on Saturday 28th March.

Details for the PTA Chocolate Bingo Event have already been shared.



### Class Cookies

Well done to **Chaffinch Class in Year 2** for having the the highest attendance this week.



### No Nuts

We are a nut free school!

### Attendance

This week's attendance was as follows:

Reception: 96.28%

Year 1: 91.82%

**Year 2: 98.22%**

Year 3: 93.92%

Year 4: 91.99%





Year 5: 95.28%

Year 6: 96.56%

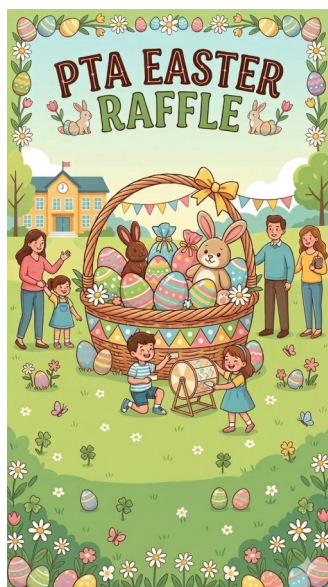
Well done to **Year 2** for having the highest attendance.

### Cedars Stars

Well done to this week's Cedars Stars!

 <b>Reception</b> Saaya G Lila W	<b>Year 1</b> Jesse D Eden C	<b>Year 2</b> Rafael DAR Thea B	
<b>Year 3</b> Thomas G Elaina S	<b>Year 4</b> Leo M Henry BJ	<b>Year 5</b> Harvey GW Mark W	
	<b>Year 6</b> Poppy W Thomas P		

### PTA Easter Raffle



You will have received communication this week about the raffle which will be part of the PTA Chocolate Bingo event on the 28th March.

Your child was sent home earlier this week with a book of 5 raffle tickets— tickets are £1 each.

The PTA ask that ticket stubs and money are returned together in an envelope to the school office, this is to ensure that they are kept together, by **Friday 20th March**. They also request that you return an unsold tickets as well.

1st Prize—Large Hamper

2nd Prize—Medium Hamper

3rd Prize—Easter Bunny Teddy

Thank you for continuing to support the PTA and the school in their fundraising efforts!

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI VIRTUAL FRIENDS

Artificial intelligence has seen significant development over the recent months, with companies releasing new AI-based software or adding an AI element to existing apps (such as Snapchat). One form of AI that has become especially popular has been the 'AI friend' or chatbot. There are now numerous 'virtual friend' apps available, with other successful platforms likely to adopt it soon.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### CONTENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AI chatbots may not always recognise when content is age inappropriate or harmful and should be filtered out. As a result, there's a possibility that children could be exposed to offensive language or explicit material while conversing with their virtual friend. The companies producing such AI solutions are also unlikely to take responsibility for any content that their algorithms generate.

### REDUCED SOCIAL CONTACT

An excessive reliance on chatbots for social interaction could potentially cause a child to begin reducing the amount of face-to-face communication they have, leading to social isolation. If young people become dependent on chatbots to provide companionship, it could possibly hinder the development of their real-life social skills.

### LACK OF SENSITIVITY

Chatbot software isn't always sophisticated enough to pick up on subtle emotional cues or recognise signs of distress in children, as most humans would. It might therefore fail to respond appropriately. AI misinterpreting what it's being told or replying insensitively to a young user who's already struggling could potentially impact a child's emotional wellbeing or exacerbate any existing emotional issues.

### UNINTENTIONAL BIAS

AI companions are only as reliable as the information they've been programmed with. The algorithms they use, therefore, may unintentionally promote bias, stereotypes or discriminatory behaviour. As many chatbots originate from the USA or UK, for instance, they can display a distinctly western-centric worldview. This could lead to children developing skewed attitudes and behaviours if they interact with the AI consistently.

### COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS

Although many are now undeniably advanced, AI-powered chatbots still have limitations in terms of understanding complex concepts, context and nuance. Depending heavily on chatbots to help with learning or solving problems may stunt the development of a child's own powers of critical thinking, their creativity and their ability to engage in open-ended discussions with other people.

### PRIVACY CONCERNS

Chatbots typically collect data about users, including personal information and conversations. This is ostensibly to improve their performance as they gradually learn about our behaviour – but many experts warn that there may be significant risks associated with how this information is stored and used (for instance, the possibility of potential breaches or misuse by third parties).

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### CHAT ABOUT CHATBOTS

If a child is already expressing an interest in AI apps, then a relaxed, natural chat should help you to discover which ones they're aware of and how they're using them (or are planning to). Discuss these options with children and perhaps do your own research to ensure that you think they're suitable. Once you're totally happy, you could sit and explore the range of AI chatbots together.

### CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

If a child is keen to engage with AI chatbots, encourage them to do so in a safe environment: ideally in a shared space, so you can easily keep an eye and ear on their progress. Set up appropriate content filtering measures in advance – and gently remind them that you'll be close by and ready to help with any questions or concerns that may arise.

### FIND A BALANCE

Work alongside children to establish the right balance in terms of how they might use AI-powered chatbots – and when it's appropriate. It's important to make sure that children still get plenty of opportunities to learn to solve problems for themselves, as well as building their interpersonal skills through face-to-face conversations with friends, family members and teachers.

### TAKE CONTROL

As with any form of app or game, when it comes to AI chatbots we'd strongly recommend that you consider employing parental controls (either on the device being used or within the software itself) to manage which apps children can download and interact with. This is particularly important for younger children, who may be more at risk of being upset or frightened by inappropriate content.

### RECOGNISE THE RISKS

It's unlikely that most children will have even considered the potential risks attached to having a virtual companion. So it's probably wise to explain some of the possible hazards and challenges of AI chatbots to them. Emphasise that AI isn't a real person (however much it might sound like one) and may occasionally tell them something inaccurate or skewed by bias.

### Meet Our Expert

A Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Gary Henderson is the Director of IT at a large boarding school in the UK, having previously taught in schools and colleges in Britain and the Middle East. With a particular interest in digital citizenship and cyber security, he believes it is essential that we become more aware of the risks around technology, as well as the benefits.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College