

ALWAYS AIMING HIGHER, TOGETHER

ISSUE 4.20 | 05/03/2018



What is #LaFontaineHQ about? Who and what is #LaFontaineVillage for?

IMPACT BEYOND OUR SCHOOL GATES

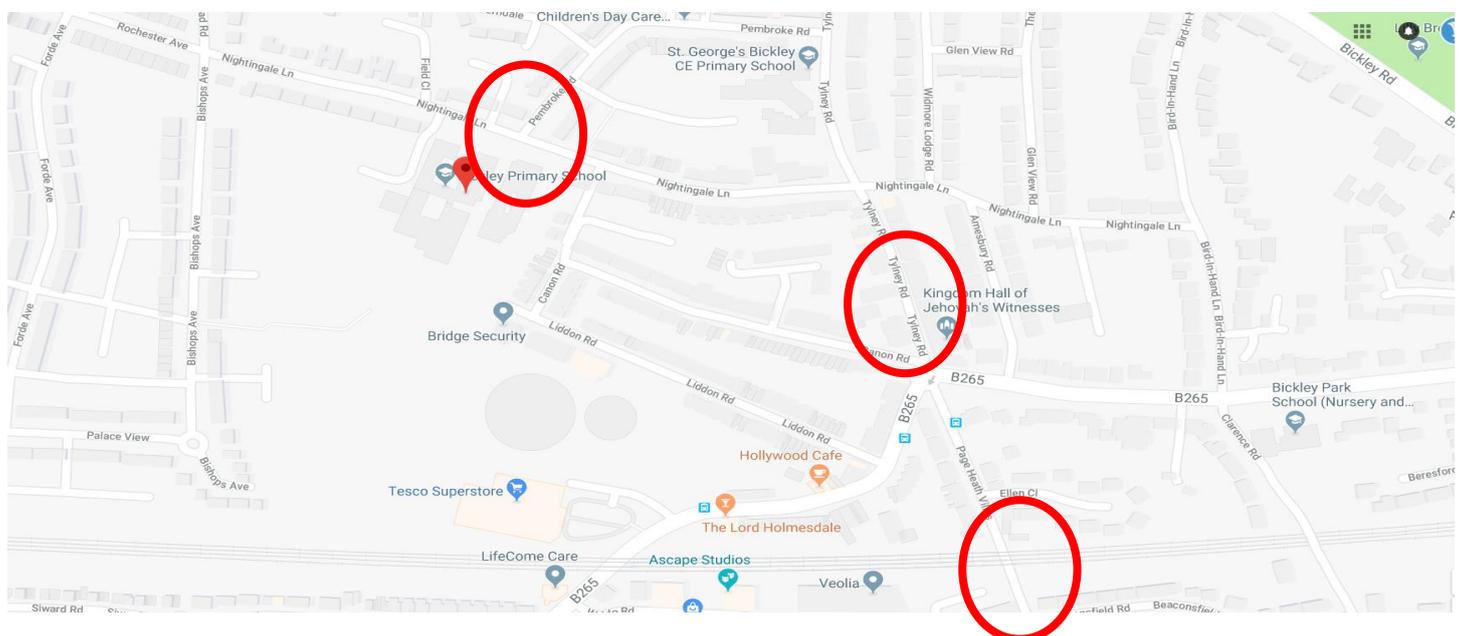
Thanks to all the parents/carers who have contributed to our first discussion on road safety issues.

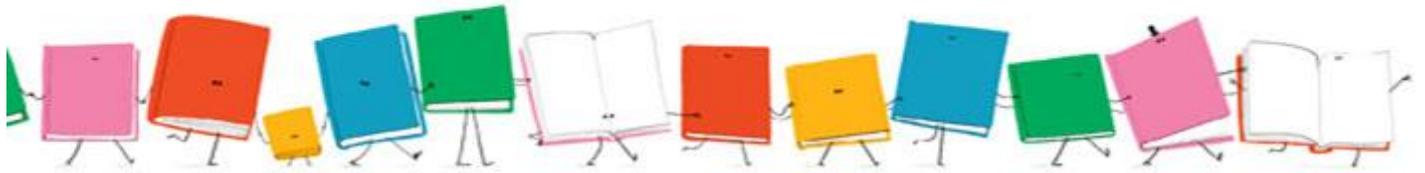
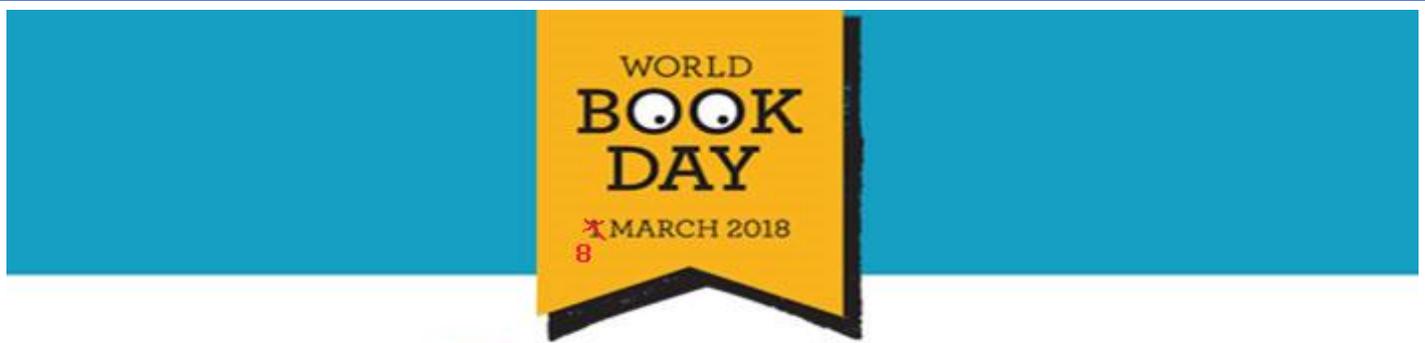
As a school, we feel we can/should affect change beyond our school gates and it feels right to start with issues of road safety.

A meeting to discuss next steps will take place on Friday 9th march, during our next Coffee Morning. We'll discuss how to take our research further and how we can start identifying who has the power to address the issues we've raised.

See below for the key areas identified as dangerous.

For those interested in how we may be able to develop a successful safety campaign, see pages 16-22 [here](#).





We will be celebrating World Book Day on **Thursday 8th March**. Children are asked to come to school dressed as their favourite storybook character. Please, encourage book characters and not those on television shows as we are trying to celebrate the importance of books.

On this day, and to further enhance our library corners, we kindly ask children to **donate a book** of their choice to their class (in good condition).

We hope that you will support this fun day and get creative with making an outfit from clothing you already have. Pinterest has some excellent ideas!



WALKING TO SCHOOL / WALKING HOME

Please, remember that, in line with our school policies, children cannot walk to school/home on their own.

Children in Year 5, in line with our 'Walking To School - Walking Home Policy', after the Easter Break, will be able to walk to school/home on their own as long as they inform us beforehand and as long as it is in line with our expectations.

See [here](#) for more details. Remember that consent forms must be completed and sent to school before any arrangement is put in place.



MOBILE PHONES [SEE ARTICLE BELOW FOR FURTHER DETAILS]

See our policy on Mobile Phones [here](#). Only non-smart phones are allowed, from Year 5 (post-Easter).

The reason why we do not allow smart phones is not because we don't believe in the use of technology. Rather, it is because the way children use smart phones when unsupervised is, sadly, dangerous and addictive.



CAR PARK GATES – BISHOPS AVENUE GATES

Soon, padlocks will be installed on those gates, so that we can use the field at the back of our school safely during the day.

The car park gates will be locked from 09:15 to 14:45 daily.

Regarding the car park gates, be informed that, as soon as padlocks are installed, drivers won't be able to leave their cars in the car park during the day.

Katharine Birbalsingh | March 2018



I am the Headmistress of a school called Michaela, a free school in inner-city London, trying to make a difference. We opened in 2014 and we have been straining to increase opportunity for our working-class kids ever since. The good news is that so far we have been winning the fight. The bad news is that the technology epidemic is one hell of a weapon in the enemy's arsenal.

Visitors to our school often ask me what has been our biggest obstacle. I used to say our detractors. Protesters demanding the closure of free schools outside our gates, or letters/emails/tweets shouting abuse or even death threats are hard to handle. We also have to manage the

absence of a sports hall and sports fields (we don't have any grass at all) and tightening budgets. Finding excellent teachers is also hard. But none of that compares to the fight we have against technology.

In the last few weeks, I have had dozens of individual meetings with our Year Ten families as we prepare for 2019 when their children will take their GCSE exams. In some of the meetings, both the child and the parent will say that the child is doing too much homework, that the school should expect less of them. The parent knows the child has their smartphone next to them during homework time, giving them access to video games, Snapchat, Instagram, Netflix, WhatsApp and YouTube. Yet the parent is still convinced that their child is doing their homework properly.

I then try to explain to the parent why I think this is dangerous, as I have done at assembly to the children. Several of the big tech CEOs don't allow their children to own smartphones and when they are older don't allow them unsupervised access to the internet on their phones. Steve Jobs, when asked what his children thought of the iPad when it came out in 2010, said they had not tried it because he thought it was too dangerous. Both he and Bill Gates preferred their children to spend time around the dinner table talking about books and history. Imagine that: these big tech CEOs pack their houses with real books with pages to turn!

This is always eye-opening for our parents. They, like me, had no idea. In fact, I hear stories from parents who have saved for months in order to get their child a new smartphone for their birthday. Some of them then look to me in desperation, saying that the present they saved up for now monopolises and controls their child.

For parents who are still unconvinced, I suggest that these CEOs must know something we don't know. They must have inside knowledge. They are protecting their own children from what they are selling to our children. I explain how the tech CEOs remind me of Snoop Dogg, who sells rap to other people's children, yet doesn't allow his own children to listen to his music.

At this point, I can usually see the penny beginning to drop. Except it is often too late. Their child is already addicted. That's because of what the insiders know that we don't know. They know that they adapt their product constantly to make it more and more addictive because that means they'll make more money. Get the kid hooked when he is a toddler and you have him for life.

Psychologists have been warning us about this for years: the mental health problems it causes, the loneliness, the breakdown in family communication, the inability to concentrate for more than 20 seconds. But our concentration spans aren't long enough any more to pay attention to the warning bells.

My friend with a two-year-old son doesn't imagine for a moment the future problems she is handing to her little boy as she sits down to lunch with me and gives him her phone to occupy him. She doesn't see into the future when he is 12 and she will be desperately trying to get him to put the phone down in order to pick up a book instead.



Not all aspects of the new technology are bad, of course. In order to reach all of our school parents, we made a video of me talking to the camera, giving advice about the evils of technology, and then we sent it to them via text. Why? Because we knew that they would all get it. No one is ever far from their phone. School letters, on the other hand, often end up at the bottom of a child's bag.

We also set a lot of online homework. Pupils have the choice to stay after school in the computer room to complete the homework. It saves the teachers many hours of marking time and gives the child instant feedback. If they are doing it at home, there are videos teaching them what they might have forgotten from their lesson. The internet has helped us to transform homework in useful ways. But if homework is in constant competition with more "fun" stuff on the internet, then it will never be done properly.

Dealing with addiction is hard. It is especially hard when the world doesn't even recognise the addiction. The most maddening thing is that while the children are meant to be working they are having interminable group chats on WhatsApp complaining about how they have too much work to do. The reason they do this is because they are continually counting how many views, likes or subscribers they have. Make a rap with racist, misogynistic language — as some children as young as 13 are doing — and your popularity soars. It is hard to resist online fame.

The most worrying thing is the damage these networks do to their abilities. Children no longer watch television. Even if a child has not had access to books at home, other things such as films, soap operas or TV dramas would expose them to a narrative. But a story with a beginning, middle and end is a thing of the past these days. Snapchat and Instagram provide 10-second recordings where you follow someone as they film themselves with their smartphone, walking down the street — "Just on my way back from the hairdressers." No moral at the end of the story and no attention span required to follow it.

For the first time in history, parents cannot filter what their children see or who they communicate with. Parents say that they want their child to have a phone as a means of protection, something they can track their whereabouts with. But this is a two-edged sword. If your child uses a flash smartphone in public they are an easy target for crime. They are also meeting all kinds of undesirable people on the phone. Once upon a time, the older kid who was a bad influence would have had to physically meet one's child to lead them astray. Now it is done in the middle of the night via Snapchat without the parents' knowledge.

We give assemblies on how easy it is via the internet for someone to know what any given pupil looks like and everything about them in a matter of minutes in the hope of scaring them. But they are kids. They just don't realise how dangerous this stuff is. I give them assemblies where I tell them about poor Breck Bednar, whose mother must forever wish she had never allowed him online to play games with his friends, including with one outsider whom she didn't know. In the end, although she expressed her concerns to the police, they couldn't or wouldn't help her, and her lovely 14-year-old boy had his throat slit by that young man she had never met.

Never before have we allowed our children to be so vulnerable to the dangers of the world. The pressure on them to use their phones to send each other nude photos of themselves is immense. Bizarrely, we still put the porn magazines on the top shelf in the shops while real live porn on video is readily available to children on their phones.

For years I thought that the video game called Grand Theft Auto was about stealing cars. What I didn't know was that stealing cars is the least worrying of the crimes one has to commit when playing the game. Lap dancing by girls or hiring prostitutes and then killing them are among its various activities. Sure, the game carries an 18 certificate, but many 13-year-old boys play it. Jean Twenge, an American psychologist, has been analysing teen behaviour for decades. She says, "All screen activities are linked to less happiness, and all non-screen activities are linked to more happiness." It is reassuring to know that the sugar-rush of "killing prostitutes" does not make children happy in the long run.

The disease of technology is spreading. As with all diseases, it hits the poor first and hardest. Unless we do something soon, things will only get worse. The iPhone came out in 2007. Affordable Android phones have only been around for a few years. The teenagers of 2018 did not begin life with a smartphone. Nowadays, toddlers do.



So what should we do about it? Cigarettes are sold with a big warning on the packet saying “Hazardous to your health”. Why not force the big tech companies to do the same with advice on how to use devices less?

At school we have suggested software (some paid for, some free) to prevent access to certain websites on home computers. I would like to introduce a parent tech information meeting at the beginning of Year Seven to advise parents on how to place parameters on phone use, including banning phones in bedrooms and using an alarm clock instead.

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt is worried about online addiction among children and he needs official backing from his cabinet colleagues. While it is great that government is investing in a £5 million scheme to train primary school staff to spot mental health problems, we need to be thinking about what is causing the spike in these problems in the first place.

The Pied Piper of WhatsApp, Snapchat, Instagram and YouTube is leading us to the edge of the cliff. We are sleepwalking into disaster and must act before it is too late.

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PE TIMETABLE FOR THIS WEEK

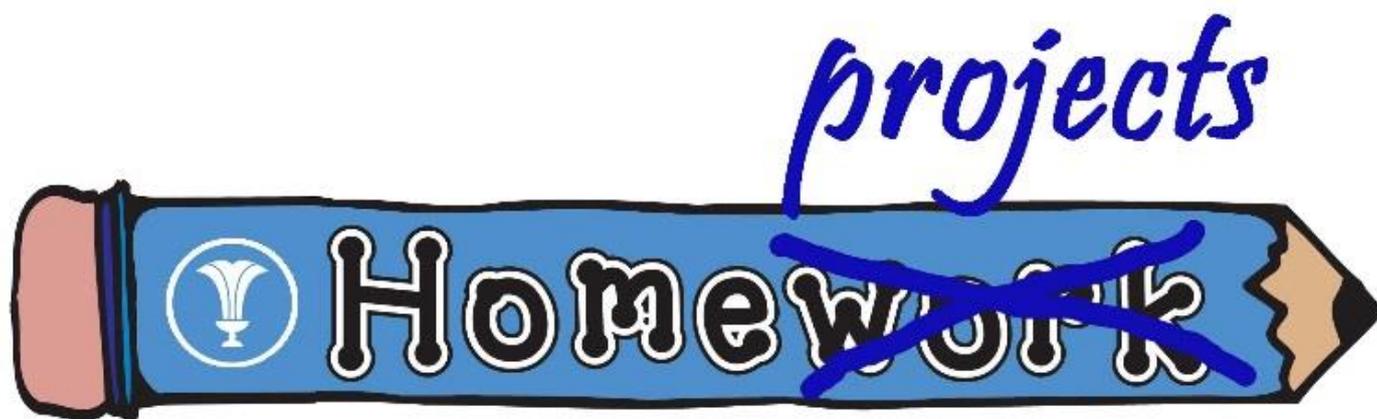
	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
PE KITS NEEDED	YEAR 1 – MADAME ZAKIR YEAR 1 – MADAME HARRIS	YEAR 2 – MONSIEUR SPEZIALE	YEAR 3 – MONSIEUR HEWITT YEAR 2 – MADAME PARPIA		YEAR 3 – MADAME HOGG YEAR 4



WRAP-AROUND CARE – POLITE REMINDERS – BOOKING SYSTEM

We’d like to remind you that STEP Zone and Breakfast Club need to be booked in advance. Only emergencies can be arranged by email.

Go on ParentPay to book sessions.



HOME PROJECT EXHIBITION

This will take place on Thursday 22nd March, from 16:00-18:30. More details will soon be shared!





PARENTS & TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

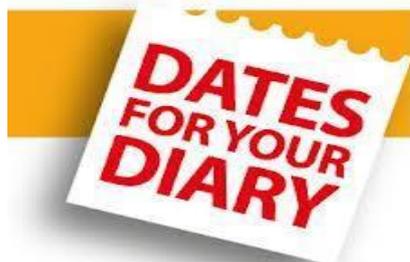
www.ptalafontaine.org.uk



WELCOME TO NEW SITE, PARENTS' WINE & CHEESE EVENING

As a 'welcome' to our new site we are hosting a wine and cheese evening on Friday 9th March, 19:00-22:00. This will be an opportunity to see the inside of the new school and the classrooms, and of course drink wine and eat cheese!

Tickets are available via Classlist using the PayPal link and are £5 per person, to include the cheese buffet. There will be a bar at the event run by the PTA. Ozlem Jones and Jean Claude Bardot are the coordinators for this event, please contact them if you have any queries.



SPRING TERM EVENTS

- **EASTER EGG HUNT AND TEA PARTY** – Thursday 29th March from 15:30 onwards. @ La Fontaine Academy, Nightingale Lane

SUMMER TERM EVENTS

- **ANNUAL COUNTRY RAMBLE** - Sunday 20th May
- **QUIZ AND CURRY NIGHT** - Friday 8th June @ La Fontaine Academy, Nightingale Lane
- **ANNUAL CAMPING WEEKEND AT CUDHAM** - Friday 23rd - Sunday 25th June
- **SPORTS DAY** -Tuesday 26th June @ La Fontaine Academy, Nightingale Lane
- **BASTILLE DAY SUMMER FETE** - Saturday 14th July @ La Fontaine Academy, Nightingale Lane.



FONTAINE LINKEDIN GROUP

Please join the "**La Fontaine Academy professional connections**" group on LinkedIn. We would like to increase professional connections between parents and carers, and with the school. This will help us to make use of any talents or skills in our community for the benefit of the school, and to increase connections between working parents.

DONATIONS

One very important way we can all support the school is by making a financial contribution, of any size. We have a number of opportunities available, many with little effort or time required. For more information – please visit www.ptalafontaine.org.uk/donate.



Using the MyDonate platform, this scheme allows you to make a monthly donation to the PTA via direct debit for an amount of your choice. Be sure to register via the instructions on our website. It takes less than a minute to sign up.



Sign up to Easyfundraising and every time you shop online, the online retailer will give you a cash reward that you can turn into a donation for the PTA.



If you work for an organisation that has a match funding policy, any money you raise could be matched by your employer. Please check with your employer if you are interested.



If you would like to do a one-off donation, please do not hesitate to email us at contact@ptalafontaine.org.uk.

HELPING PARENTS AND CARERS BUSINESSES

We encourage La Fontaine Academy's parents and carers to send us information about their businesses, to support and grow the La Fontaine community. More info is available at www.ptalafontaine.org.uk/offers.



GROUP EUNISURE LTD - A FAMILY ORIENTATED BUSINESS

OLA AJAYI (Priscila's dad) would like to promote his business. Calling all LFA parents and carers who are looking for affordable insurance services such as Life & Critical illness cover, Income Protection, Accident & Sickness cover, Mortgage Protection, Home Insurance, Private Pension, Will writing, Funeral Plans etc.

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If you would like more information, please contact Ola Ajayi (Branch Manager/Local adviser) on [07788237540](tel:07788237540).

