



Sally Banfield

Headteacher

8th May 2026

Dear Parents and Families,

Time seems to be flying by and we are already at the end of week 3 this half term. The weather has been very kind to us, and this is always what we need for our summer trips and residentials.

This weekend, a group of students and staff will take part in the annual 10 Tors Jubilee Challenge on Dartmoor. As I type this letter, they have already left and I will join them very soon for a night of camping in tents and then walking between 8.9 and 15.4 miles. A huge amount of organisation and training has taken place and I'm sure you will wish us all well over the weekend.

Experiences like 10 Tors are what make Combe Pafford so special, and everything we do is for the young people and the community we serve. This is only possible because of the wonderful staff team we have at school and for the time and dedication they give in their roles. I know that all the children and I are blessed to have such a wonderful team of people.

Residentials

I am pleased to share that our recent residential trip to Belgium went extremely well. The pupils had a wonderful experience, and we are very proud of how they represented our school throughout the visit.

The KS2 trip to Bideford is next week 11th – 13th May and the Llain Activity Centre in Wales for Year 7 from 11th – 15th May. Details have been shared with parents separately but, if you have any questions in relation to either of these trips, please contact the school office.

Residentials are a very exciting time for all our young people, whether they are traveling away or staying in Torbay for day trips. Can we ask that parents and families check their email boxes for all the information they need.

Immunisations

Please be reminded that the HPV Vaccinations will be taking place on Wednesday 13th May for Years 8, 9, 10 & 11. If you have not submitted a consent form, please click on this link <https://www.kernowimmunisations.co.uk/Forms/HPV.aspx> and enter the unique school code **DV139540** where asked to do so.

GCSE's

Please see the dates for your diary page at the end of this letter for a full list of GCSE's due to take place in the coming weeks. We wish all our Year 11, 12 and 13 students the very best of luck with their external exams.

Extra Inset Day on 22nd May

A gentle reminder that the children break up on Thursday 21st May due to the extra inset day on 22nd May. We welcome children back to school on Monday 1st June.

Kindest regards



Sally Banfield
Headteacher

Viral Trand causing Severe Burns to Children

Children and young people are microwaving squishy silicone toys after seeing online videos claiming this makes the toys softer and more pliable. When the toy is squeezed afterwards, it bursts and sprays boiling material, which reportedly has left children's hands and faces seriously burned. This trend has seriously injured children in the UK and US, most recently in May 2026 in Bristol, UK.

We ask that parents, school staff, and professionals avoid searching for this challenge directly on platforms as each search feeds the algorithm and increases the content's reach, making the videos more visible to users. Instead, [refer to our article](#) to understand more and get guidance on responding.

[SAFEGUARDING ALERT: Viral Trend Risks Causing Severe Burns to Children - Ineqe Safeguarding Group](#)

Checkpoint Wellbeing Services

The Children's Society offers a range of free wellbeing and mental health support for children and young people aged 8–24, including early emotional wellbeing help, one-to-one and group support, short-term and more intensive CBT for anxiety or low mood, quick-access drop-in support, and social groups for young people who are socially isolated or neurodivergent.

**The
Children's
Society**

Wellbeing Drop-Ins

Tuesdays @ People Parkfield
38 Esplanade Road,
Paignton, TQ3 2NH

1pm - 4:30pm

Thursdays @ Checkpoint
7 Victoria Road, Torquay, TQ1 1HU

1:00pm-17:00pm

Who?
11-24 yearolds.

How to refer?
Attend a drop in.

Or, scan the QR to register and
a member of staff will be in
contact.



For more information contact:
01803 200 100

Keeping Children Safe Online - Please see the attached poster in relation to keeping your children safe whilst using AI. If you would like a printed copy of this poster, please let us know.

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. Previously delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, tips and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI-GENERATED VIDEOS

AI-generated videos are increasingly difficult to spot and easy to share. From fake news clips to deepfake abuse, children and young people face new risks every day online. These videos can imitate real people, spread false narratives or even generate harmful content from scratch. Understanding these dangers is crucial for schools and families who want to protect children in a fast-evolving digital world.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

DEEPAKE ABUSE CONTENT

Technology, artificial intelligence is now being applied to create child sexual abuse material (CSAM). These videos are created using AI-generated images, often generated by manipulating real children's photos, including those shared innocently online. Worrisome, the internet search engines (and) have identified a sharp rise in this disturbing trend. Whether real or AI-generated, this content causes lasting trauma – and its creation or possession remains a criminal offence under UK law.

EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION

AI-generated videos can be used to provide strong evidence, including text, images or audio. These images of crying children, injured students or learning buildings may be created purely for clicks, donations or political influence. Children may feel upset or persuaded, unaware that what they are watching has been digitally invented to manipulate their emotions.

DISINFORMATION

AI-generated videos can spread false news, making it harder for children to separate fact from fiction. False clips may include a credible interview, a real disaster or fabricated family videos. AI is also being used to produce misleading or persuasive material that appears authentic. They don't develop media literacy, children may accept false content as truth.

IMPERSONATION AND SCAMS

With just a few photos or video clips, AI can even imitate someone's appearance or speech. This makes it easier for scammers or fraudsters to create false videos of children, teachers or celebrities. These impersonations can be used for fraud, harassment or blackmail – and can spread quickly through social media or group chats, due to the viral potential of video, in particular, on social media.

BLURRED REALITY

Regular exposure to false content can erode a child's trust in real-world evidence. If everything can be faked, they may struggle to recognise genuine videos – including actual abuse or injustice. This is known as the 'liar's dividend', where real facts are dismissed as false news. It can discourage victims from coming forward or speaking up.

USED FOR BULLYING

Deepfake technology is already being used by peers to create and spread or exploit clips of classmates. These videos can be used to appear as though a child said or did something they never did. Even when they are removed, it can be difficult to delete completely. AI-generated bullying adds a new layer of harm, that is deeply personal and difficult to prove.

Advice for Parents & Educators

TEACH HOW IT WORKS

Explain to children that videos can be faked – and show them how. Demonstrating video-clip examples of how AI-generated clips can be used to create, spread, and even remove can be helpful for children. Understanding the technology reduces fear and builds confidence in navigating digital content safely.

TALK ABOUT TRUST

Always keep lines of communication open. If a child sees something upsetting or uncomfortable, they should feel safe discussing it without judgement. Create an environment where they know they will not get in trouble for asking questions. This also helps you step in quickly if harmful content has been shared, trust is vital and needs to be nurtured.

ENCOURAGE CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Help children question what they watch. Who made this? Why was it made? Is it trying to persuade me? These skills encourage digital thinking, especially when videos claim to be shocking or controversial. Remember that not everything shared by friends or influencers is true, even if it looks convincing or fun, and that the safest approach should always be one of scepticism.

STRENGTHEN PRIVACY SETTINGS

Advise children not to share voice notes, photos or personal videos on public platforms. AI tools often scrape content from social media to create deepfakes. Use privacy controls to limit who can see their content and take out social media apps where possible. Please guide through these options for children.

Meet Our Expert

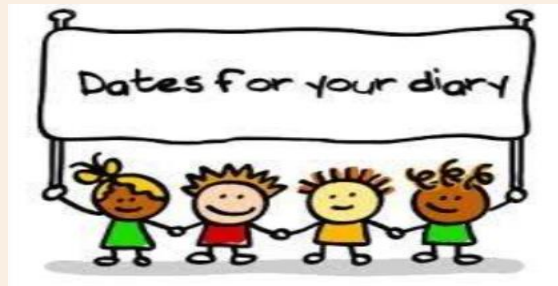
Brandon O'Sullivan is a headteacher and digital education consultant with over a decade of experience in education. As Director of Digital Strategy across multiple schools and an adviser to The National College, he specialises in digital safety, SEND, and pastoral care.

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

X @wake_up_weds **f** /www.thenationalcollege **@** @wake.up.wednesday **d** @wake.up.weds

These advice guides do so at their own discretion. No liability is accepted. Content as of the date of release 18.11.2023



MAY 2026

- 11th In School Residential Week
- 11th – 13th KS2 Bideford Activity Centre Residential
- 11th – 15th Year 7 Llain Activity Centre Wales Residential
- 13th HPV Immunisations for Years 8, 9, 10 and 11
- 14th GCSE Maths Paper 1
- 18th GCSE Chemistry Paper 1
- 19th KS2 Swimming
- 21st GCSE English Literature Paper 1
- **21st Last day of Term**
- **22nd INSET DAY FOR STUDENTS**
- **1st June Students welcomed back to school**