Weekly Bulletin

9 November 2026 - 13 November 2026

Important Dates	
23 November	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
24-27 November	Year 11 Creative Design Mock Exams
30 November-11 December	Year 11 Winter Mock Exams
14-18 December	Year 11 Creative Design Mock Exams
21 December-1 January	Christmas Holidays
4 January	Spring Term Starts / Staff Training Day (School Closed)
5 January	Pupils Return to School

Parent Governor Vacancy - For more information and to apply, please visit: www.hodgehill.bham.sch.uk/pge26

Important Change to Pupil Absence Reporting

From Monday 9 November, we have introduced a new process for reporting pupil absences by phone. You can no longer report absences through our School Office team.

Please follow these updated steps:

1. Call the school as normal on 0121 783 7807
2. Press Option 1 to report a pupil absence
3. Select the Year Group of your child

This will route your call directly to the Assistant Achievement Coordinator (AAC) for that specific year group.

- If there is no answer: Please leave a voicemail. The AAC will call you back later that day
- If you have multiple children absent: You only need to make one call. Please state the names and year groups of all absent children in your conversation or voicemail
- Incorrect routing: Any absence calls through to School Office will be transferred to the AAC. If a transfer is not possible, you will be asked to redial and select the correct option

In-Class Assessments

Information about upcoming in-class assessments is available on our website and is organised by Year Group, Subject and Date. The schedule is intended to help pupils and parents plan ahead, support effective revision, and ensure that pupils are aware of key assessment points throughout the academic year. While these assessments form part of normal classroom learning, advance notice allows pupils to prepare appropriately and develop good study habits.

Parents and carers are encouraged to review the information with their child and support them in maintaining a consistent approach to homework, revision and attendance. Please note that assessment dates may occasionally be amended due to curriculum or operational requirements. We therefore recommend checking the webpage regularly for the most up-to-date information.

🔗 View the In-Class Assessment Schedule

Useful Links

Hodge Hill College | ParentPay | MyEd | Birmingham City Council

care courtesy achievement respect excellence

Be Punctual to School & Lessons

We are continuing to promote good punctuality to school and to lessons, as we believe that every minute matters here at Hodge Hill College. Please use the resource below to help your child be on time to school and when changing lessons:



We are monitoring late to school and lessons on a daily basis and we will continue to review our processes. If we make any changes we will inform both pupils and parents/carers.

What is a U Code and how is it different to a L (late) Code?

It is important to understand the difference between U & L codes. A L code is given to a pupil if they arrive to school before 9.10am. This means they have missed the opening of our morning registration but arrived in school before it closes (9.10am). This L code results in a 30 minute detention but it does not impact pupils attendance percentage.

A U code is given to a pupils if they arrive to school after 9.10am. This means they have missed our morning registration. This U code results in a 30 minute detention and it impacts pupils attendance percentage as a U code is classified as an unauthorised absence. Repeated U codes can therefore have a significant impact on pupils overall attendance percentage. Pupils who are regularly late miss valuable learning time, key information during tutor time and at the beginning of lessons and important opportunities to settle positively into the school day.

Supporting Your Child Through Exam Success

We would like to invite you to our upcoming Supporting Your Child Through Exam Success workshop, designed specifically for families of Year 11 pupils.

The session will provide you with the practical tools and insights needed to confidently navigate the exam season together. During the workshop, we will cover:

- Home Revision Strategies: Practical advice on creating an effective study environment.
- Effective Techniques: Live demonstrations of active revision methods that work.
- Free Resources: Access to high-quality online revision platforms.
- Revision Equipment: Essential physical tools provided to help your child get started straight away.

Event Details:

Please choose and attend one of our two available sessions:

- Session 1: Wednesday 18 November 2026 (10:45 am – 11:45 am)
- Session 2: Thursday 19 November 2026 (3:30 pm – 4:30 pm)

Refreshments (tea, coffee, and biscuits) will be provided at both sessions.

Places are strictly limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

🔗 To secure your place, please complete our Online Booking Form as soon as possible and select your preferred time slot.

ParentMail

Hodge Hill College will soon be moving from the MyEd app to a new communication platform called ParentMail. Once the transition is complete, you'll receive a notification through MyEd confirming the change, along with a link to download ParentMail from your app store.

You're welcome to download the app as soon as you receive this notification:

- Apple Devices: Download it directly from the Apple App Store
- Android Devices: Download it directly from the Google Play Store

Please note that downloading the app alone won't give you immediate access. We need to send you an activation invite first, which we'll do as quickly as possible after the migration. Don't worry if you can't sign in straight away – this is completely normal.

When you receive your invite, simply follow the step-by-step instructions to complete your account setup.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact the school for further support.

Is My Child Too Ill for School?

As we move into the autumn and winter months, we recognise that seasonal illnesses can make maintaining good attendance more challenging. However, every school day matters, and regular attendance is essential for pupils to achieve their full potential, build positive relationships and make the most of their education. The table below has been designed to help you decide if your child should or should not attend school. If you are unsure whether your child should attend, please contact the school for guidance.

By working together, we can minimise unnecessary absence, maintain high expectations and ensure every pupil has the best possible opportunity to succeed.

Is My Child Too Ill for School?	
When to come to school	Your child should come to school on time if they have any of the following: • Sore throat • Cold • Headache • Cough • Feeling tired • Feeling sick • Achy or sore limbs These symptoms are normally worse in the morning. However, once a child is ready and in school, they normally feel much better. Pupils should let their AC or AAC know they are not feeling well so a check in can be completed with the pupil throughout the day. There is no requirement for parents/carers to contact the school regarding this type of illness.
When to come to school but inform the school first	Your child should come to school on time if they have any of the following: • Stomach-ache – we can potentially issue a temporary toilet pass • Earache • Toothache • Twisted, sprained or broken limbs – we can utilise the LRC & The Bridge to ensure learning continues during recovery • Slightly high temperature If your child is experiencing any of the above symptoms, please contact the school in the morning. Pupils should let their AC or AAC know they are not feeling well so a check in can be completed with the pupil throughout the day. If your child is experiencing feelings of anxiety or displaying general unwillingness to attend school, it is important they still attend school. Our Pastoral Team can meet with the pupil to discuss their concerns and provide support. This may also include a parental meeting.
When to stay at home	We appreciate that there are occasions when your child will be too unwell to attend school. If your child is experiencing any of the following, please do not send them to school: • Temperature over 38 degrees • Sickness and diarrhoea • Contagious illnesses such as chicken pox, impetigo, measles Medical evidence should be provided to the school to ensure that the absence can be authorised. Failure to provide this evidence will result in the absence being unauthorised. Parents/carers should inform the school each morning that their child will not be in school.

Zero Tolerance

Please note that Hodge Hill College operates a zero-tolerance policy about verbal and physical aggression.

If you become abusive towards a member of staff, we will need to:

- Close down any conversation and not speak with you any further
- Ask you to leave and come back another time
- If necessary, call the police for assistance

Please be respectful of our staff in the School Office team. They will do their best to help you but in a large school with several buildings, over 150 members of staff, and approximately 1200 pupils, they may not always be able to find out what you want to know or locate a member of staff immediately, so please be patient.

Medical Appointments During the School Day

In order to ensure that your child's learning is not disrupted, it is strongly recommended that non-urgent GP, dentist, or optometrist appointments are scheduled outside of school hours.

If your child has a hospital appointment or requires specialist medical care, please inform the school in advance. You can do so by sending a photo of the appointment letter via MyEd or by submitting it in person to the School Office.

A copy of the letter will then be sent to your child's AC and AAC to authorise the absence.

Medication

As a parent or carer, it is your responsibility to provide the school with accurate and updated information regarding your child's medical needs. You should also be involved in developing and reviewing your child's individual healthcare plan.

If your child has any medical needs or needs to take medication during school hours, please visit the School Office to complete a Parental Medical Consent Form and drop off any medication that needs to be kept in school.

If your child has asthma, we highly recommend that they always carry an inhaler with them. Please provide us with an inhaler by dropping it off at the School Office in case of any emergencies, and completing the consent form.

Contact Details

Please remember to inform the school of any changes to your contact details.

This is important because we may need to contact you if your child is injured or taken ill, to provide you with information about trips and closures or to send you reminders and cancellations of any event.

Please update and submit any new details via the Change of Pupils Details Form on the MyEd app. Alternatively, you may visit the School Office to complete an electronic/paper copy of the form.

Confiscated Items

If a pupil has an item confiscated, their parents/carers can pick it up from the School Office after school on the same day between the following times:

- Monday: 16:10-16:45
- Tuesday to Thursday: 15:10-16:00
- Friday: 13:40-14:30

If parents/carers cannot collect it on the same day, they must pick it up on another day after school. Pupils are not permitted to collect the item.

Weekly Lunch Menu, Deals & Price List

Wondering what's for lunch? You can find our full menus, price lists, and meal deals on our website. Take a look today for a daily breakdown of our fresh and healthy school meals! View school lunch menus and pricing.

ParentPay

ParentPay enables parents/carers to make secure payments for their child's lunches and school trips.

ParentPay Activation

When pupils join Hodge Hill College, parents/carers are issued with a ParentPay Activation Letter that contains a temporary ParentPay username and password. As part of the account activation, the parent/carer will need to choose an email address and new password to use with ParentPay. Parents/carers should follow the instructions in the letter, and on www.parentpay.com to successfully activate their account. If you have more than one child at our school or have children in other schools that use ParentPay, you can create a single account to manage them all.

Forgotten Password

If a parent/carer can't get into their ParentPay account, they should go to www.parentpay.com > For Parents > Parent Login, and click on the "Forgotten password" link. Parents/carers should not need to contact school to regain access to ParentPay accounts.

Outstanding Balances

If you have an unpaid balance on your child's ParentPay account, we kindly request you to settle it as soon as possible by logging into your account. Your child will need to bring their own packed lunch and they will not be able to use the school canteen until the account is topped up and the debts have been cleared.

If you need help with adding credit to the account, please visit the School Office with your debit card.

FAQs & More Information

- FAQs: www.hodgehill.bham.sch.uk/parentpay
- More information: www.parentpay.com
- Call the School Office: 0121 783 7807

Free School Meals

Who is eligible for Free School Meals?

Your child may be able to get free school meals (daily allowance of £2.70) if you get any of the following:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no
- more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

Please note from September 2026, all pupils in households receiving Universal Credit will be entitled to free school meals, regardless of income level.

Apply for Free School Meals

We encourage you to apply for Free School Meals through the online service found on our website. You can also telephone (0121 783 7807) or come into school and complete a Free School Meals application online with a member of staff if you prefer.

Please make sure you have the National Insurance Number with you for the named person who receives either working tax credit/child tax credit and we will be happy to help.

Update to PE Kit - Quarter-zip Top

We are pleased to advise that a quarter-zip top has now been added to our PE kit. This item is available to purchase from our uniform suppliers, Mansuri Schoolwear and Clive Marks.

- **Mansuri Schoolwear (Sparkhill)**
  754-756 Stratford Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham, B11 4BP
- **Mansuri Schoolwear (Yewtree)**
  163 Yewtree Lane, Yardley, Birmingham, B26 1AY
- **Clive Mark Schoolwear (Sheldon)**
  2286 Coventry Road, Sheldon, Birmingham, B26 3JR
- **Clive Mark Schoolwear (Wylde Green)**
  409-411 Birmingham Road, Wylde Green, Birmingham, B72 1AU

Personal Development Curriculum

As a part of your child's education at Hodge Hill College, we promote personal well-being and development through a comprehensive Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education programme. PSHE education is the curriculum subject that gives young people the knowledge, understanding, strategies and practical skills to live safe, healthy, productive lives and meet their full potential.

Our PSHE programme is delivered through form-time activities to all year groups and through our Personal Development weekly lessons to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. The Personal Development Curriculum from September 2026 to July 2027, with a list of topics, is available on the school website.

If you would like to discuss our Personal Development & Tutor Time curriculum, please email personaldevelopment@hodgehill.bham.sch.uk and a member of staff will be in contact to arrange a meeting.

Key Stage 3 Assessment and Core Vocabulary Booklets

This term's assessment and core vocabulary booklets are linked below. These booklets feature key vocabulary that pupils will learn this term, along with definitions. They are organised by subject area for easy reference. This will support pupils in their comprehension and language development.

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9

Curriculum Handbook

You can find detailed information about the curriculum and the specific subjects and skills your child will be learning each year on the curriculum page of our website.

Uniform Donations

Throughout the year, we kindly request your help in supporting other families in need. If your children have outgrown their old school uniforms, please consider donating them to the School Office. We will collect all donated uniforms and distribute them to pupils who would greatly benefit from them. Even a single donated item can make a significant difference.

We are happy to accept donations of new uniforms too. Whether gently used or brand new, your contributions are greatly appreciated.

Please make sure to wash any used uniforms before donating and ensure they are in good condition. You can send the uniforms with your child or drop them off at the School Office yourself. We appreciate anything you can provide to help clothe and equip pupils whose families are facing financial difficulties.

Together, we can ensure that all our students feel comfortable, confident, and ready to learn.

Detentions

Hodge Hill College operates a detention system. If your child is late, misbehaves or doesn't hand in their homework on time, they will be given detention at lunchtime or up to 30 minutes at the end of the day. You will usually get a text or an in-app message on MyEd to inform you. Please ensure your contact details are up to date. For more serious matters, staff can issue an hour's detentions after school without giving parents/carers notice.

What the Law Allows

- Teachers have the power to issue detention to students (aged under 18)
- Schools must make clear to students and parents/carers that they use detention (including detention outside of school hours) as a sanction
- The times outside normal school hours when detention can be given (the 'permitted day of detention') include:
  - any school day where the student does not have permission to be absent
  - weekends - except the weekend preceding or following the half-term break
  - non-teaching days – usually referred to as 'training days', 'INSET days' or 'non-contact days'
- Parental consent is not required for detentions
- As with any disciplinary penalty, a member of staff must act reasonably given all the circumstances

This guidance is available on the Government's Behaviour in Schools page.

Uniform & Standards

As part of the school's continued drive to improve standards, we would like all pupils to consistently adhere to the expectations on appearance, conduct and equipment. We are a professional environment and as such, we need all pupils to look smart, professionally conduct themselves and come equipped for their learning.

If a pupil does not meet the standards consistently, they will sit a 30-minute detention. We must have your support to raise our standards collectively. Please can we remind you that pupils are not permitted to wear nose studs and patterns and lines are not to be shaved into hairstyles or eyebrows.

If there are any problems in acquiring uniform, please contact the school and we will endeavour to work with you to address these issues. Such cases will be treated with due sensitivity and confidence.

Our full school uniform and PE kit list can be found on the uniform page of our website.

Year 11 After-school Tuition

We have introduced a comprehensive new tuition model to support Year 11 pupils' academic progress. Pupils requiring additional help are identified early through mock exams and subject-led assessments.

Teachers use focused tuition sessions to provide targeted support in small groups. There are dedicated after-school sessions each week for Maths, English, Science, and other core subjects. Those making significant progress can move out of the tuition program, while those who require further support may receive more intensive interventions with subject specialist teachers.

This multi-layered approach aims to collect and utilise data effectively, allowing teachers to adapt and personalise tuition to meet individual pupils' needs throughout the academic year.

This timetable is available on the tuition page of our website.

Extra-curricular Activities & Clubs

At Hodge Hill College, our enrichment and extra-curricular provision provides our pupils with a breadth and balance of activities designed to broad their horizons, allowing them to develop their own interests and talents. The programme is an extension of the school's curriculum and builds on our CARE brand whilst instilling British Values.

We offer quality provision which provides our pupils with a number of opportunities to develop their resilience, character and performance. Our sports provision has continued to improve to develop pupils physically and mentally.

Please note, that all pupils must sign in at reception upon arrival for before-school sessions each morning.

More information and the activities timetable are available on the extra-curricular page of our website.

Loneliness

Everyone feels lonely from time to time but if you have limited social support or a lack of healthy relationships, it can really start to get you down.

You might find yourself feeling isolated, rejected or abandoned.

Loneliness can be a difficult to thing to deal with. Although it's not a mental health problem in itself, loneliness can often cause or be the result of a mental health issue. There are a number of ways to tackle loneliness.

Visit the Forward Thinking Birmingham website for more information, when to seek help and to see what support is available.

Year 11 Extra Tuition Available Throughout the Week

We are pleased to offer extra tuition sessions for Year 11 pupils throughout the week to help support their learning and exam preparation. We encourage all parents to check the Year 11 Extra Tuition Timetable for more information.

Absence Reporting

If your child is going to be absent from school, please let us know before 08:30. You can do this by sending an in-app message (free of charge) to the Absence Hotline via our MyEd app or calling 0121 783 7807.

Parents/Carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness.

Punctuality

All pupils must arrive on time each day to run the school efficiently. Pupils are expected to be on school premises by 08:30.

The Key Stage 3 and 4 gates will close at 08:37, and any pupil who arrives after this time will need to sign in via the School Office.

If a pupil is late for school, they will receive a 30-minute detention on the same day. Similarly, if a pupil is late for a lesson, they will receive a 30-minute detention on the same day.

If a pupil is marked late more than once in a day, the detention time will be increased on the same day.

Learning Wallets, School Bags & Equipment

All pupils have been given a learning wallet containing the equipment they need to bring to school to support their access to the curriculum.

This needs to be brought into school every day in a school bag to ensure it is kept safe. Failure to bring in the learning wallet or school bag will result in a 60-minute detention.

If pupils lose any of their equipment, they are responsible for replacing it. Stationery items are available for purchase at the Ready to Learn Hub for a nominal amount of 10p per item (cash).

If your child needs to replace their calculator, you can either provide one or purchase a new one through ParentPay/the School Office for £15 (cashless).

Empty learning wallets are also available to purchase through ParentPay/the School Office for £1.70 (cashless).

School Policies & Documents

Parents can access the latest school policies and important documents on the policies page of our website.

This includes our behaviour and expectations policies, which outline how we promote a safe, inclusive and positive learning environment and support high standards of conduct for all pupils.

Translate Our School Website Using Google Translator on Chrome

If you need help understanding information on our school's website, Google Chrome has a built-in translation feature that can translate the pages into your preferred language.

To use this, first make sure you have the latest version of Google Chrome installed on your device. Then navigate to our school's website and click on the three-dot menu icon in the top right corner of Chrome. Select "Translate" from the menu. This will bring up a sidebar where you can choose which language you want to translate the page into. Click on your desired language and Chrome will automatically translate everything on the webpage.

The translation may not be completely perfect, but it should help convey the key information and allow you to understand important updates from teachers or the school administration.

This feature works for dozens of popular languages - just select the one you feel most comfortable with.

Examples:

Arabic



Bangla



Chinese



Romanian



Polish



Urdu



Homework - Useful Links

ClassCharts

MathsWatch

My GCSE Science

Century

Mellors

MEXICAN FIESTA

NACHO AVERAGE LUNCH – 19TH NOVEMBER

MAIN

Chicken Enchilada

or

The Three Sisters Chilli

with

Elote (Mexican Corn)

Mexican Rice

Mexican Salad

Street Food including Burrito Bowls, Nachos

DESSERT

Xocolati Popcorn Square

Xocolati Cornflake Cake

Arroz Con Leche

(Creamy rice Pudding & Cinnamon)

ONLY £2.70

Mellors FOOD Happy

www.mellorscatering.co.uk

MAKE SAVINGS BY CLAIMING YOUR FREE SCHOOL MEAL

Mellors FOOD Happy

Save time and money by claiming your free school meal allowance today. Not sure if you can claim? Read on to learn more...

FREE SCHOOL MEALS (FSM)

Your child may be entitled to a Free School Meal. **However, with FSM you will need to apply.** The link on this sheet is for your local authority (search your postcode) and there is information from the Government website about FSM. Your child's school will also have an application form, if you prefer to complete it by hand.

Each day, your child can choose a hot meal from the menus or a sandwich, served with dessert, fresh fruit or yoghurt.

save up to £495 per year per child on school lunches.

Studies show that 55% of parents felt their children tried new, healthier foods on school meals.

84% of parents reported improved household finances.

Menus are available on the school website, and our Catering Manager is happy to discuss any food allergies, intolerances or dietary requirements.

DO YOU RECEIVE ANY OF THESE?

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (restrictions apply)
- Working Tax Credit run-on
- Universal Credit – **NEW eligibility criteria takes effect September 2026.** All households receiving Universal Credit will be able to access free school meals (previously capped at £7,400 income).

CHECK YOUR ELIGIBILITY TODAY!



CHECK YOUR ELIGIBILITY TODAY!

SCAN ME

or visit: **www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals** for more info!

THE EASY WAY TO PAY

We're using ParentPay so parents can easily pay online for school dinners, trips and clubs.

No stress, hassle free.



SIMPLE
QUICK
SAFE

www.parentpay.com

ParentPay
COUNT ON US

VISA VISA Checkout mastercard AMERICAN EXPRESS PayPoint

DONATIONS WELCOME

Hodge Hill College

Food Bank

BE PART OF OUR HELPING HANDS

OPEN EVERY THURSDAY FROM 3:10PM TO 3:30PM IN THE STUDIO

0121 783 7807

HOUSEHOLDSUPPORT@HODGEHILL.BHAM.SCH.UK

TO REQUEST SUPPORT, KINDLY COMPLETE AND SUBMIT THIS FORM: HTTPS://BIT.LY/3UXZI4X

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

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

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.

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

Hodge Hill College

REWARDS

EARN POINTS | CLAIM PRIZES | CELEBRATE SUCCESS!

Prize Drawer Entries

£40 Uber Eats Voucher Raffle Ticket *(Termly)*
45

Laptop Raffle Ticket *(Yearly)*
75

Game Console Raffle Ticket *(Yearly)*
75



Creative & Sports Equipment

LEGO Mini Figures
300

Colouring Book
350

Water Colour Paint Set
450

Felt Tip Pens
500

LEGO Technic Mercedes
800

Table Tennis Bat
400

Nike Football
850

Wilson Basketball
900



Academic & Learning Supplies

Wobbly Fuzzy Head Pen
75

Learning Wallet *(Empty)*
100

Book of Choice
250

Calculator
500



Audio Rewards

Wireless Headphones
1200

Bluetooth Speaker
1300



Experience & Lifestyle

Free Slush Pass
50

Jump the Queue Pass *(1 Day Only)*
75

Free Breaktime Snack or Drink
100



SAVE YOUR POINTS OR SPEND THEM - THE CHOICE IS YOURS!

care courtesy achievement respect excellence

HODGE HILL ALL STARS

WORK HARD, GET REWARDED

secure your voice your passions your well-being your future your relationships

BSOL, Branching Minds, RfA



Parent Carers Wellbeing Sessions 2026/27

Bi-weekly on Wednesdays @ 10:30 – 12:30

BAYC, 581 Pershore Road, Birmingham B29 7EL

Our FREE Wellbeing Sessions for Parent Carers provides a safe space to connect, listen, share and practice self-care. We welcome you whether your child, young person or adult is diagnosed or awaiting an autism assessment AND our team offer neuro-affirming activities, topics of discussion and signposting on autism and beyond.

Please scan the QR or use the link below to book onto the sessions:
https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/XnpjZvaqj1?origin=lprLink

23rd September 2026
7th & 21st October 2026
4th & 18th November 2026
2nd December 2026
13th & 27th January 2027
10th & 24th February 2027
10th & 24th March 2027

You can also email for more information
kam@resourcesforautism.or.uk

Eligibility:

- Live in Birmingham or Solihull
- Please Note: Navigating the Wait Together is Birmingham only families

Do you live in Birmingham and have a child under 16yrs on the autism assessment waiting list?

At these BSOL Wellbeing sessions you can also access our 'Carers Advice Corner' on what you can do whilst you are on the waiting list for the assessment.

Please select on the booking form if you are interested in connecting with the Navigating the Wait Together team, OR email: kelly@resourcesforautism.or.uk

The BSOL, Branching Minds, RfA programme is in its 2nd year offering support for autistic adults, parent carers, and the professionals who care for them. Across Birmingham and Solihull, the programme offers emotional wellbeing, confidence, early intervention, as well as improving capability of frontline healthcare staff and mental health services.

Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Provider Collaborative

resources for autism

BMET SEND OPEN EVENT



TUESDAY DECEMBER 8TH| 5:15-6:30

BMET MATTHEW BOULTON CAMPUS

1 JENNENS RD, BIRMINGHAM B4 7PS

To book contact : Meg.Bayliss@Bmet.ac.uk

Hodge Hill College