

Headteacher's update

West Drayton's values are called 'The Four Pillars'. They articulate the moral and academic expectations for everyone in the school community, ensuring that every child who attends is aware of what the school aims to achieve for them. Pillar 4 is health, caring for ourselves and others.



Today is the second anniversary of our revised food policy. I would like to thank all parents for supporting the children's healthy eating habits. A copy of the food policy is on the website in the policy section. Eating more healthily helps children's physical and mental development, improves academic performance and establishes good habits for life.

Morning snack - only healthy options are permitted at morning break

Packed lunches - pack your child a healthy lunch box! There's lots of healthy ideas in the policy and healthy options are regularly shared in the weekly newsletter.

Thank you to all children, parents and staff for their hard work during this term. It's now time to rest and recuperate. The children return on Monday 2nd November.

Have a terrific break.

Richard Yates
Principal

Dates for your diary

26th - 30th October

Half term

2nd November

School reopens after half term

Celebration Assembly

Y2 Spelling Bee Finals
2:15pm

2nd - 6th November

5R Swimming

3rd November

Y3 Spelling Bee Finals 9am

Y4 Spelling Bee Finals
2:15pm

4th November

Y6 Spelling Bee Finals 9am

Y5 Spelling Bee Finals
2:15pm

9th November

Inset Day and Parents' Meetings

School is closed for children

Attendance

The class with the best attendance this half term is:

1st place: 4OR with 97.7%

2nd place: 5Z with 97.5%

3rd place: 2CS with 96.8%

It will be a non-uniform day for 4OR on Friday 6th November. Well done!



Spooktacular Halloween Celebrations

Our Apple class children had a time celebrating Halloween today!

The children dressed up in fantastic, colourful costumes and filled the day with creativity, joy, and plenty of festive spirit. From Halloween-themed crafts and fun sensory games to sharing treats and enjoying seasonal stories together, everyone had a wonderful day celebrating with friends.

It was truly a delight to see so many happy smiles and shared laughter throughout the day!



Year 1 Trip to West Drayton Library

Year 1 enjoyed an amazing trip to the West Drayton Library this week! The children loved exploring all the different types of books, reading with their friends and teachers, and learning how to get their very own library card! This 100 Club experience was such a great opportunity for Year 1 and we loved every second of it! Check out all the fun we had!



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Empathy Lab

Online Author event with Jacqueline Wilson

On 14th October, our KS2 classes enjoyed a very special online event with Jacqueline Wilson, beloved author of over 100 empathy-rich books to celebrate the launch of her brand-new title, *Esme Pepper*.

Jacqueline Wilson was informed that all our classes at WDA are named after famous authors, with one being named after her - 4 Wilson. Very excitingly, 4W, then received a personal greeting from Jacqueline herself.

During the event, pupils learned how 'empathy' helps us to understand others and that reading and talking about stories are scientifically proven to help build empathy skills. Reading helps us see through the eyes of the character and helps us to feel their feelings thereby developing our empathy muscles.



Jacqueline Wilson read an extract from her new book, 'Esme Pepper' and then answered many book related questions submitted from pupils across the UK. She also gave lots of valuable advice on writing - her inspiration for characters and story plots. We now eagerly look forward to many new budding authors from our school in the future.

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us for our vibrant **Navratri celebrations** hosted by the Culture Club!

Navratri is a joyful Hindu festival, celebrating the victory of good over evil, unity, and new beginnings through energetic music, traditional Garba and Dandiya dances, and rich cultural traditions.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the wonderful parents



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Parents Meetings: Monday, 9th November

Have you booked for Parents' Meetings?

You should have received an email invitation to book a slot for Parents' Meetings, taking place **Monday, 9th November**.

To accommodate as many families as possible we are offering an extended consultation with your child's class teacher to ensure that you have a satisfactory discussion with your child's teacher. The bookings are now open, If you have any issues please contact the school office.



West Drayton Academy

ANTI-BULLYING WEEK 2026

BREAK THE SILENCE

FRIDAY 20TH NOVEMBER

KIND WORDS MATTER

Let's work together to help stop bullying and make sure everyone feels heard, supported and included.

BE A FRIEND

INCLUDE EVERYONE

WEAR ODD SOCKS in support.

LISTEN TO OTHERS

RESPECT DIFFERENCES

STAND TOGETHER

MAKE A KINDER SCHOOL



Children in Need

Friday 13th November

Crazy Hair Day!

Donate £1

Children may wear their Children in Need clothing in support.

Thank you for helping us raise money!



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NAME OUR HOUSE TEAMS!

RED

BLUE

GREEN

We need your help to choose 3 influential Hillingdon people to inspire our Red, Blue, & Green houses!
From just colors to community identity...

Who should they be named after?

HAVE A DISCUSSION AT HOME!

Talk with your children about famous, inspiring, and history-making people from Hillingdon (such as aviation pioneer Amy Johnson, pioneering scientists like Alexander Fleming, trailblazing publisher Sir Allen Lane, and great local leaders & creatives!).
Who inspires you most?

[Click here](#)

VOTE NOW via Google Form!

CLOSING DATE: Friday 6th November

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POPPY APPEAL

ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION



POPPY MERCHANDISE FOR SALE

**From Monday 2nd November 2026 - Cash
Only**



**Traditional
Paper Poppies
50p**



**Poppy
Snap Band
£1 each**



**Poppy
Bracelet
£1 each**



**Poppy Reflector
Zip Puller
£1 each**



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Diwali Fair – Stallholders Wanted!

On Thursday, 6th November, we are excited to be holding our annual Diwali Fair. We would love to invite parents to get involved! If you would like to run a stall to sell items of your choice such as handicrafts, food and treats, or festive decorations please let us know.

If you are interested in booking a space, please contact Mrs Malik on 07718 492006. Space is limited, so stalls will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.



Votes for School

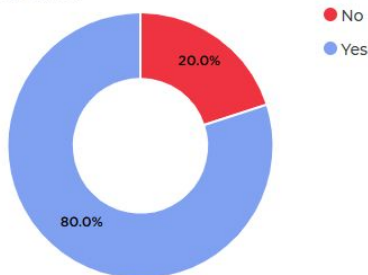
This week, during Votes for School, we discussed:

Is it easy to make healthy choices? (KS1)

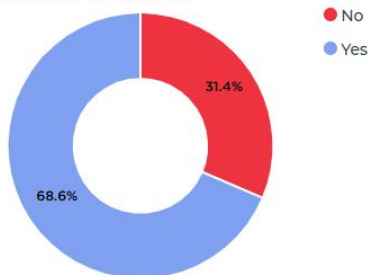
Should vapes have plain packaging? (KS2)



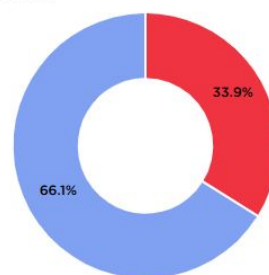
Your School



Regional (Greater London)



National



Coming up:

Should the UK should make more decisions with the UK (KS2)

Can you solve problems with your friends. (KS1)

Children will have an opportunity to discuss UK's relationship with EU, and share their thoughts about Brexit, it has been a decade since. Younger children will explore their own personal relationships, and will consider ways to solve problems with their friends.

Week Ending 16th October 2026

CHAMPION OF THE WEEK

THE FOUR PILLARS ARE WEST DRAYTON'S VALUES THAT THREAD THROUGH THE CURRICULUM. EVERY DAY, WE ASPIRE TO DEMONSTRATE AND APPLY THESE VALUES IN EVERYTHING THAT WE DO. WE BELIEVE THAT THE PILLARS WILL HELP TO PREPARE OUR CHILDREN FOR TODAY, THE NEXT STAGE OF THEIR EDUCATION AND BEYOND.

EACH WEEK, FROM EACH CLASS, ONE CHILD WILL BE SELECTED AS THE WEEKLY CHAMPION. THE CHAMPION IS SOMEBODY WHO HAS CONSISTENTLY EXHIBITED THEIR CLASS VALUE OF THE WEEK.



Iman

Sephora

Izahaac



Thomas

Ameer

Amelia



Amanullah

Safa

hriya

S

Stefan

Ziah

Sakina



Mahitha

Jegath

Nishwanth



Arnika

Rahim



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Week Ending 23rd October 2026

CHAMPION OF THE WEEK

THE FOUR PILLARS ARE WEST DRAYTON'S VALUES THAT THREAD THROUGH THE CURRICULUM. EVERY DAY, WE ASPIRE TO DEMONSTRATE AND APPLY THESE VALUES IN EVERYTHING THAT WE DO. WE BELIEVE THAT THE PILLARS WILL HELP TO PREPARE OUR CHILDREN FOR TODAY, THE NEXT STAGE OF THEIR EDUCATION AND BEYOND.

EACH WEEK, FROM EACH CLASS, ONE CHILD WILL BE SELECTED AS THE WEEKLY CHAMPION. THE CHAMPION IS SOMEBODY WHO HAS CONSISTENTLY EXHIBITED THEIR CLASS VALUE OF THE WEEK.

Y1

Urwa
Ayana
Lakshana

Y2

Sharvil
Josie-Mae
Anjola

Y3

Olivier
Cesar
Izza

Ali

Harshitha
Idhalini

Y4

Vednash
Srirangam
Ishaanvi

Y5

Lorik
Jacob

Y6

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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI COMPANIONS

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.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

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.

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.

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.

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.

INAPPROPRIATE OR EXPLICIT CONTENT

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.

"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

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 111) or Shout (text 85258).



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Healthy Eating for Healthy Kids Top Tips for Parents

As parents, supporting our children to make nutritious choices year-round can feel like a daily challenge. Based on expert advice from **BBC Bitesize**, here is a summary of five practical, effective strategies to help foster a healthy relationship with food in your home:

1

Be a positive role model

Children learn by watching us. When parents model balanced eating habits without villainising specific foods, children naturally pick up those positive behaviors. Aim for moderation rather than strict restriction, demonstrating that all foods have a place in a balanced lifestyle.

Keep Portion Sizes Realistic

Large portions can intimidate children and make mealtimes feel overwhelming. Serve age-appropriate, realistic portions to build confidence. Praise your children when they make healthy choices, and avoid pressure or forcing them to clear their plates.

2

3

Keep Food Fun and Interactive

Engage your child's senses through play, creative presentation, and involvement in the kitchen. Letting kids explore ingredients using sight, touch, and smell—or involving them in simple meal prep—sparks curiosity and makes them much more willing to try new foods.

Create a Supportive, Low-Pressure Environment

Mealtimes should be a relaxed, stress-free time for the family. Avoid using food as a reward or punishment, and don't label foods as strictly "good" or "bad". Providing a comfortable atmosphere encourages kids to listen to their own hunger cues.

4

5

Encourage Exploration at Their Own Pace

Introducing new foods takes time and patience—it can often take multiple exposures before a child feels comfortable tasting something new. Keep offering a variety of colourful fruits, vegetables, and whole foods consistently without forcing the issue.

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- ✓ Tennis
- ✓ Dodgeball
- ✓ Gymnastics
- ✓ Basketball
- ✓ Hockey



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