Percy Hedley School's

Whole School Blog

News, STARS, Photographer Logan, Parliament Week & Upcoming Christmas

Events! - from John & the PHS Team

Friday 28th November 2025

Hi all,

Another packed blog this week and that follows a very busy time for everyone. Lots of preparations for lots of things at the moment, and we had Governors meet this week too, which was great, especially our two parent governors, whom we're very grateful for. Do have a look at Eileen's blog as well as this one, and the rest of the website, but in the meantime have a look at some great STARS, some really smart articles, a couple of lovely updates from classes – and some Christmas dates for your diary.

Hopefully we'll see you up here. All the best!

John S

OUR SCHOOL VALUES:

Respect,

Teamwork

& Resilience

HOW THE CURRICULUM WORKS & WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO US:

3 Super-Steering Groups deliver our Key Drivers through our curriculum.

The Key Drivers are Communication, Wellbeing and Independence

The Groups are Literacy, Physical Development & Personal Development

Hi everyone,

From Rebecca:

This year we have decided to support our friends at the People Kitchen with their 'Winter Appeal', as part of the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award. We will be completing a collection in school for them, to support the people of Newcastle over the Christmas period, and the winter months.

On the back of this letter there is a list of the items that they would like donated to support the appeal. Please only donate if you can, there is no obligation to get involved. There are several items of clothing they are requesting, which do not have to be new, as long as they are in good condition. If you are having a clear out, they would really appreciate them. They are also asking for 'bag for life' style bags, which they use to create food parcels for those who need them, therefore if you are having a clear out, a bag of bags would also be appreciated. If you are sending food items, please choose those off the list, that are in date. Please do not send any perishables. Our student council will be sorting these items in school, and we will be delivering them to the centre before the Christmas holidays. Therefore, please can any items be brought into school by Friday 12th December.



Literacy

Becky, our Literacy Specialist Lead, leads a team that improve all aspects of literacy, including writing, oracy, reading, phonics, books & the library! Here's Becky!

NON-FICTION NOVEMBER!

We have been focusing on all things factual this week, as we celebrated 'Non Fiction November' across school. This is our third time of joining in with Non Fiction November, a national campaign aiming to highlight the joy that non-fiction reading and writing can bring! I know there have been some lovely activities this week and will be sharing more on next week's blog.

In the meantime, as we speed towards the festive season, we wanted to make you aware of the Winter Mini Reading Challenge which is launching next week! A lovely excuse to slow down, enjoy a book and possibly enjoy a bit of writing, the Winter Mini Challenge encourages families to read over the winter months and then review what they've read on the children's website. You can then look at book recommendations, watch videos from authors, play games, and discover a huge range of activities.

What's the challenge?

Read 3 books and review them on the website between 1 December 2025 and 20 February 2026.

Prizes and Rewards?

- Children will get a special online badge for their profile and new winter certificate of achievement.
- They will be entered into a prize draw to win a bundle of exciting children's books!

It's a national campaign running in libraries and schools across the country, and well worth a look! Please find out more information and sign up here if you and your young person fancy giving it a go: http://www.wintermini.org.uk/ Do let your class teams know if you decide to take part!

Happy Reading & Writing!

Becky F



Physical Development & Healthy Living

Everything that is in the world of Physical Development, including physio, hydro, MOVE, PE, HI, VI, OT and other key areas for us, including Outdoor Learning, the John Muir Award & many other aspects. Steph oversees this. Here's Ash!

THE INNOWALK PRO!

There has been lots of excitement in our PHS physio team the past two weeks as we have just finished a taster trial of a fantastic piece of equipment: The Innowalk Pro!!

The Innowalk Pro is a motorised dynamic stander and trainer that enables weightbearing and guided repetitive lower-limb movement for children who cannot independently stand or walk

National guidelines recommend that children with disabilities take part in 120–180 minutes of aerobic activity each week, alongside regular standing and strength-and-balance work. For our PHS students with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD), these targets can often be difficult to achieve due to high support needs, limited mobility or medical complexities. The Innowalk Pro is a fantastic bit of equipment which can help bridge this gap by providing a safe way to experience stepping, weight-bearing and gentle cardiovascular activity, even for those who cannot use a walker.

It provides full postural support while gently moving the legs in a walking pattern, giving students the chance to take part in meaningful physical activity during the school day. The device supports the development of gross motor skills, offers opportunities for strengthening in an upright position and helps pupils meet physical activity goals in a personalised, achievable way. It also promotes engagement and wellbeing by giving students access to movement they may not otherwise experience.

Recent studies in other schools have shown improvements in functional skills after regular use, particularly in older pupils, and many teams also report secondary benefits such as improved breathing, improved bowel regularity, better comfort and reduced sedentary time! We were delighted to have the opportunity to trial this

piece of equipment and are hopeful we might get further opportunities in the future. Just look how much enjoyment Nat and Toby have had these past two weeks getting to trial this bit of kit!!!









The Innowalk Pro!



Personal Development

One of the best things about the school and one of the most important for our pupils, PD covers PSHE, Wellbeing, Careers, Social Moral Spiritual & Cultural, Online Safety, Behaviour & similar areas. Jo pulls it all together.

UK Parliament Week





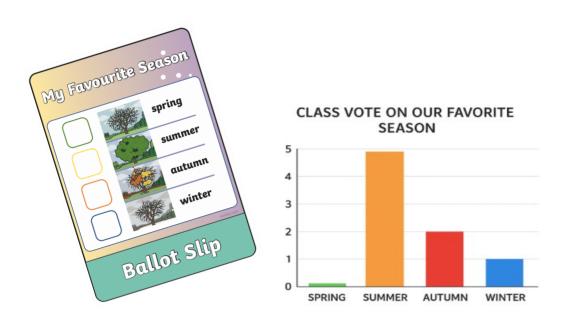
This week, 2CC we had a fascinating time learning all about **Parliament Week!** We learnt what Parliament is, what it does, and how people involved make important decisions for our country. We started by looking at pictures of Parliament. We loved the big buildings; they look like castles!



We discovered that the people in Parliament talk about lots of different ideas and then they vote to decide what should happen. To help us understand voting, we held our own class vote! Our topic this term is "Season of Fun!", so we decided to choose our favourite season. Everybody had one vote, just like in Parliament, and we counted them all together.

The results are in!

You can check out our bar graph to see which season Class 2CC loves the most. Some of our friends chose summer for the sunshine, others picked autumn for the colourful leaves, and a few voted for winter because they love snow! What season would you vote for?



School Values

5AH Getting Ready for Our MATP Showcase!

Over the next few weeks, our class is preparing for our MATP (Movement and Physical Therapy) Showcase, and we are excited to invite parents and carers to see all the hard work in action! Our sessions have a Rugby theme, inspiring a range of movements while supporting physical development, coordination, and confidence.

Students are practising different positional changes—moving from lying and sitting, to kneeling, standing, and walking with support using walking slings and frames. Activities are designed to build strength, balance, and independence, while encouraging personal growth and resilience. Equipment such as swings, rebound trampolines, balls, mats, and soft cones allows students to explore movement safely, try new skills, and experience a sense of achievement.

Our sessions also focus on teamwork and respect, as students support each other, take turns, and celebrate everyone's successes. Through challenging movements and cooperative activities, students demonstrate resilience by trying new things,

respect by acknowledging the efforts of others, and teamwork by working together to complete tasks.

Parents and carers are warmly invited to watch our MATP Showcase over the next few weeks. It's a wonderful opportunity to see how students are developing their physical skills, confidence, and personal qualities—resilience, respect, and teamwork—in a fun, rugby-inspired environment.







OUR NEXT RESILIENCE DAY

Our Next Resilience Day is... International Volunteering Day! Next Friday, 5th December, is Resilience Day, and we will be celebrating International Volunteering Day by thinking about the importance of volunteers

This day is designed to build empathy, connection, and resilience through helping others in our school and local area.

Willing students will be matched with various roles across the school and local community, potential roles include:

Lunch Hall Assistants
Outdoor Learning Assistants
Office Helpers
School Tour Guide
Maintenance Support
Laundry Support
Volunteer Readers/Story Tellers
PE Assistants
Tuck Shop Monitor (in the cinema)
Ticket Collector (in the cinema)
Usher (in the cinema)
Local Litter Pickers
Bird Feeders (Killingworth Lake)
Librarian
Gardeners

We will also host a "pop-up cinema", showcasing the Disney short film "Loop" which highlights themes of helping others, empathy and connection - there will be a free tuck shop and free stickers in the cinema

We look forward to a fun and interesting day celebrating all things "volunteering!"





Photographer Logan!

We saw that Logan had done some work experience at Springfield café a few weeks back. Well, he's also done some really exciting work as a photographer – at the Foundation's Ball no less. And then he's written about it! Let's hear from him.

On Saturday I took the opportunity to attend the Hilton Hotel in Gateshead to take photos for the Percy Hedley Ball.

I used a Polaroid camera to take pictures of people and groups of people at the ball.

After the pictures had been developed, I took the picture and placed it in a small

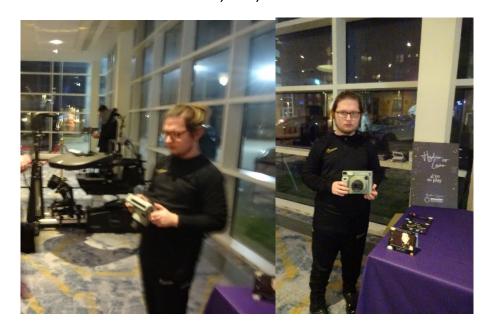
mini folder and gave to back to those in the picture.

People responded positively by smiling and showing happiness and seemed very impressed to be able to take them home with them.

I felt very good and very proud that I could complete this opportunity

My support worker Louise shared that "She was very proud of how I presented myself and was able to communication my emotions and identify when I felt I needed support. I was able to ask her to help me place the photos in the sticker card as I found this difficult. We ended up working as a good team to finish the

photos and give them out to the people although it was difficult to find where everybody was."



(The photographer had also taken pictures using their camera)





Russell's Class

Russell's class often do some lovely & interesting things that they share with us in the blog. Let's have a look and see what they've been doing this week! Sounds like proper learning to me!

Dominic has been learning about technology in the home in Post-16. When discussing the changes in lighting over time, he was able to explain that he preferred modern lighting to candles as candles might drip hot wax on people and the curtains might catch fire. A very sensible, thoughtful explanation, Dominic!



Dom! Well done!



PE with Nathan!

PE News from Nathan has become a key part of the blog every week, and it's terrific to have such a focus on physical activity like we do. Cheers, Nathan! Right, what has he got for us this time?

🧩 PE Update: This Term's Focus — Handball Skills! 🤾 🤾

This term in PE students have thrown themselves into the fast-paced world of handball! It's a fantastic way to build teamwork, agility, coordination, and tactical thinking — all while keeping everyone active and having fun.

Our students have really taken to the game — almost as much as football! Here at Percy Hedley School, football is always a favourite, but handball is quickly becoming the next sport everyone is buzzing about.

Over the past four weeks, students have been mastering key skills like passing, shooting, dribbling, ball control, defensive positioning, and communicating effectively on the court. These skills are helping them build fitness, sharpen reactions, strengthen motor skills, and boost confidence.

As their skills have grown, we've introduced small teams and turned the last 20 minutes of PE into a lively mini-competition. It's been brilliant to watch students put their learning into action, work together, and enjoy some friendly rivalry.

For the rest of the term, we'll continue developing these skills, explore more tactical play, and may even finish with an extended friendly game, giving everyone extra time to enjoy the match and show off all they've learned.





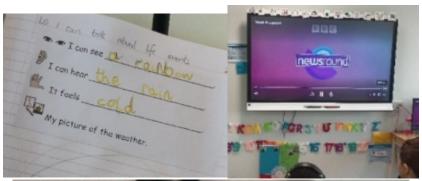


Chris Carr's Cool Class!

Chris Carr's Cool Class are great! They get up to all sorts in their lessons and they like to share it with us! Can't wait to see what fun they've had this week. It's their Season of Fun, so let's what that topic has brought to a range of subjects this week in this lovely class.



What a wonderful week it has been in our classroom as we celebrated 'Nonfiction November'. We began by learning the Makaton signs for fiction and nonfiction. The children loved comparing the two ideas and the signs really helped everyone understand the difference. We are huge fans of fun, imaginative stories but this week we discovered that informative books can be just as exciting.





As our topic is Season of Fun, we used our new skills to begin a daily weather diary. Each day the class did a weather check outside and wrote sentences about what they noticed. We practised saying our reports using microphones which was great fun. In computing, we took things a step further and used the green screen to make our own television style weather reports.



In design and technology, we made rotating weather wheels using split pins. These helped us choose weather words when planning our reports. The finished creations looked fantastic and were very useful throughout the week.

In maths we revisited the vocabulary more, less, and same. The children worked with energy and enthusiasm to build towers and compare the different amounts. It was a fantastic, hands-on way



In religion we have been thinking about special stories and celebrations. With an important holiday just around the corner we learnt about Advent and began making our own classroom Advent calendar. Each envelope will reveal a part of the Christmas story, a quiz question, a festive picture, or perhaps even a woefully terrible joke which we will be all too eager to share at home!





Behaviour for Learning (BfL)

Aylisha and Corin have developed the BfL Team and work on supporting our pupils all the time, in all situations. They've been joined by Nicola and Nat, Sarah and Andrea this year to make a really important team for the school

If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact the BfL Team aylisha.holland@percyhedley.org.uk

c.orr@percyhedley.org.uk

L Call: 0191 216 1811

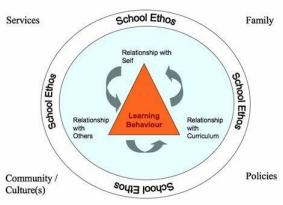


Figure 1: Behaviour for Learning conceptual framework



Early Years - The Ducklings!

Well, our Ducklings have entered their second year as a class in the school, and they seem to be going from strength to strength. It's great to get these updates and pictures from Kerry

Another lovely and busy week in Early Years!

Our woodland adventure this week took us tiptoeing after a little brown mouse, who was very busy meeting all sorts of forest friends — a snake, an owl, a fox and (brace yourselves!) the one and only Gruffalo!

In our tuff tray, we whipped up some wonderful "owl ice cream" using shaving foam and ice-cream cornets. In maths, we carefully counted the Gruffalo's purple prickles and matched all the animals — mice, snakes, foxes and owls. So much woodland learning fun in our continuous provision!

George created a beautiful rainbow using the paint pens after spotting a real rainbow outside once the rain finally disappeared. He carefully lined up all the colours and used them each in turn naming them as he drew. Showing fantastic representation through observation.

Out in our outdoor area, we showed brilliant teamwork as we balanced on the beam. Lots of giggles as we wobbled.

Music has also been a big part of our phonics sessions this week. We played the instruments and had great fun exploring fast and slow, start and stop, and lots of exciting new sounds — our phonics sessions have been full of noisy fun!

And of course... Bike Club continues to be a big hit! Lots of peddling around the large gym.

Another wonderful week of learning, exploring and imagining in EYFS!



















Absolutely wonderful stuff from The Ducklings!



Preparation for Adulthood with Hannah

PfA is a key part of the School Improvement Plan. Let's hear below what Hannah & the PfA Team have been working on – PfA is one of our very biggest priorities!



(Stolen from Darlington!)

SAVE THE DATE: 21.1.25 9.30 – 11am - our next Parent Carer Forum will have a focus on Social Care and planning for the future. We'll be discussing

What can social care offer?

Why might it be helpful to have a Social Worker?

What is Early Help?

What does 'Child in Need' mean?

What happens when an EHCP ends?

We'll be running it as a hybrid, so you can join us in person or online. Hope to see you there!

I.finlay@percyhedley.org.uk

e.robinson@percyhedley.org.uk

Hannah.fuller@percyhedley.org.uk

There will be more sessions during the year, so here are the dates for your diary, and an idea of the topics of discussion. Please make a note and look out for our reminders

21.1.26 – Social Care: planning for the future

11.03.26 – Benefits: how can you support your child/young person with their money?

06.05.26 - Making decisions: the Mental Capacity Act, deputyship and Lasting Powers of Attorney

10.06.26 - Supporting Independence: Travel and Independent Supported Living

We are very keen to help you in making the best decisions around planning for the future and these forums are a great place to have informal discussions, ask questions and find out more. We have a Family Liaison Officer and a Careers Officer who are always happy to offer support and guidance. We look forward to meeting and planning with you over the coming year.



School Lunches

Please find the menus here: <u>School Meals - Percy Hedley School</u>. Unless your child is in receipt of Free School Meals or Bursary, please ensure your iPay account is topped up before meals are taken. Thank you for your understanding & continued support in helping us to provide good quality, safe & nutritious meals for our children

If you have any questions or need support with your iPay account, please don't hesitate to contact the school office





Safeguarding – this week, Early Years



Aylisha is our Safeguarding Officer, Rebecca is the DSL. Tracy and Corin round out a great DSL Team, with others involved too in many aspects of safeguarding.

This week we have had a focus on the safeguarding for our Early Years department. Three of our Safeguarding team completed the Early Years DSL training this week to ensure that we are up to date with the new requirements for the department, and check that our training schedule was up to date for our staff.

From this training we will be continuing to work through our actions from the Early Years Audit, which we completed earlier this year, and working on further improving our processes for safe eating, safe sleep and internet safety within this area of school.

If you have any questions, please just get in touch.

As ever if there is anything that the DSL Team can help with, or if you have any queries or questions at all, then please don't hesitate to contact <u>r.fletcher@percyhedley.org.uk</u> or <u>aylisha.holland@percyhedley.org.uk</u> for anything like at all that you think is, or even may be, related to safeguarding.



Safeguarding is a lot of different things!

Online Safety

Online safety is a huge part of the work that we are doing within school, and our Online Safety Blog can support you with issues you may be having at home. If you need any support at all please reach out to the safeguarding team who can support or signpost you to help you may need

Please do tell us what you feel would be helpful in the Online Safety blog, and the team will look into it. We know what a priority this is for many of you.

Read the online safety blogs here

View information about online safety at Percy Hedley School



No-Spray School



We'd also like to remind families that we are a no-spray school. This means pupils & staff should not wear perfumes or aerosol body sprays, as these can cause serious allergic reactions (including anaphylaxis) for some members of our community. Rollon deodorants and water-based sprays are absolutely fine to use. Thank you for your support in keeping our school a safe place for everyone.



Attendance!



Thank you for your support with attendance, an area of national scrutiny for everyone. Here's Kelly.

We are still seeing a lot of requests for family holidays coming through. Please note these will be declined. It is only in exceptional rare circumstances any such requests will be approved. Taking time out of school for holidays detracts from valuable learning time. Please ensure your child only takes holidays in authorised holiday time

If any appointments can be planned in advance as much as possible and made for outside of school hours. Understandably some cannot. An absence request form and proof are required to be submitted. Forms can be emailed, posted, or collected from the school office

Just a brief reminder about how to contact the school for reporting an absence. Parents and carers have a crucial responsibility to notify the school if their child is going to be absent. Please note this is daily for each day the child is absent. This may be via

Note in the school diary if the absence is known in advance (e.g. medical appointment)

A telephone call to the school office <u>before 9.30</u> on the first day of absence if the absence was unplanned (e.g. illness)

Email to class teacher or <u>PHSattendance@percyhedley.org.uk.address</u> before 9:30 on the day of the absence'

As always, any queries feel free to reach out - kelly.richardson@percyhedley.org.uk

Thanks for your support and partnership in this area



Parent/Carer Code of Conduct



Our Parent/Carer Code of Conduct is on the website here: <u>Parent and Carers Area – Percy Hedley School</u>. Most schools have these now, so please do have a read – they aren't used very often. Thanks for your support with it – both in general terms and in most times and cases that arise every day



Friends of PHS - the FoPHS!

A huge thank you to all the FoPHS for their time, commitment & support, with projects, ideas and all sorts. Great to have you guys on board, you're such an important part of the school. Here's Eileen to set it all out.

All parents, carers and staff are members of the FoPHS by default. The change to a Friends of was to enable us to involve extended family members and those in the community to support us

Your FoPHS committee is

Chair Ollie Teasdale (parent)

Vice Chair Hannah Fuller (staff) Secretary

Tracy Smithson (staff)

Treasurer Ros Holden (parent)

School link Eileen Robinson (staff) - school- role specific appointment

Our 2 parent governors are Chair and Vice Chair of FoPHS too. We are members of Parentkind, which provides guidance and structure to ensure we operate correctly. Benefits include insurance for events, links with their partners and training for parents, carers & staff We meet half termly; our most recent was on Wednesday 19th November. Our AGM is due to take place on Wednesday 28th January. Time and place will be confirmed.

Ways in which you can help

Join the 100 club https://www.percyhedley.org.uk/percy-hedley-school/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2025/10/100-club-A4.pdf

Attend meetings, share suggestions

Volunteer at events. We currently need volunteers to set up a Santa's grotto on Monday 8th December and to help with the Christmas fayre on Thursday 19th December

Donate items which may be requested throughout the year. We will have a raffle at the Christmas fayre on Thursday 18th December and would appreciate donations of raffle prizes

We have had some generous donations recently and will work with school to agree the most effective way to use these to benefit our students

We plan to take school photos again next term and will share more with you once we have agreed the best way of doing these

Here is the link to a Newsletter article from July which will give you some idea of how we support school

https://www.percyhedley.org.uk/news/support-friends-of-percy-hedley-school-atthe-great-north-run/



Why don't you join! The Fabulous Friends are always looking for volunteers for events! If you can offer any support, please contact Eileen at e.robinson@percyhedley.org.uk



Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) – with Tracy and the Team!



Please get in touch with Tracy and she will be happy to respond to any queries, suggestions about the LPPA and other issues for parents - from Tracy and the LPPA team - t.smithson@percyhedley.org.uk



Stars of the Week!

That reflect our School Values!

ENGAGEMENT

Emily!

Teamwork!



This week we are celebrating Emily for her fantastic work during our MATP challenge preparations. Emily showed brilliant persistence, exploration and communication by holding her head up, looking left and right and letting Abi know when she wanted 'more' while sitting on the swing. Well done, Emily!

Emily the STAR!!!



ELTBA

Josh!

Resilience!



The Hydro!

Our ELBTA star of the week is Josh for resilience and determination when using the hydro pool this week. Well done, Josh! POOL STAR!!!



APPROPRIATE ACCREDITATION

Resilience

Joshua For hard work in ELS!

Teddy B for working hard in MOVE despite feeling fatigued!

Evan P for working consistently well and always trying his best in transdisciplinary sessions and physiotherapy sessions!

Teamwork

Joe B and Josh W for working together to compromise in therapy sessions this week!



POST-16!

Love our Sixth Form!!!

Post-16 have been very resilient this week, and it's a great list. Well done!

Andrew coped really well with disappointments and changes of plan due to the snow. He made some very mature choices. Very well done!!

Drae did some brilliant reading during the library session. Great work!!

Michael produced an amazing piece of writing using all the Christmas songs in Radio. Very clever!!

Casey has been working independently in Maths and has produced some wonderful work. Excellent!!

Olivia has a great attitude in class and is working really well. Brilliant!!

Brandon is independently choosing to use his walker and is now walking 3½ laps round school. Go Brandon!!!

Charlie has been really enthusiastic & resilient during cookery and produced some great food.



Makaton Signs of the Week with Julie!

Every Sunday Julie prepares a message for the whole school on Makaton signs that are current and relevant to the time of year. I reproduce that here so that you can do the same thing at home if that suits you — or just for you to learn a few signs each week. Hope it works for you! Here's Julie

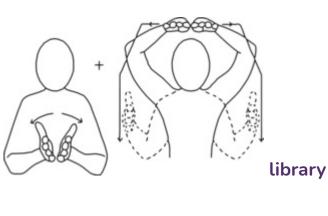
Non-fiction November

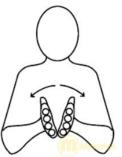
We have been celebrating Non-Fiction November in school this week

The signs are library, book, read, listen, story, fiction, fact (non-fiction) and true

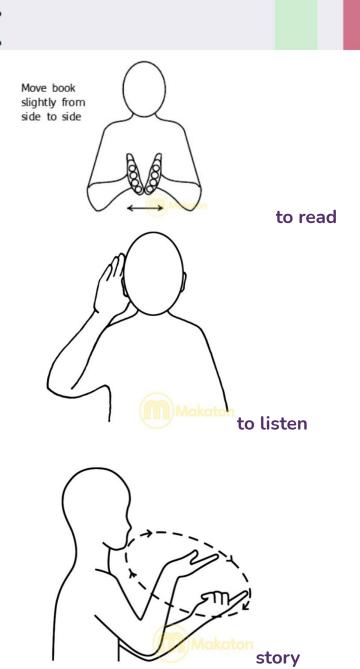
The video demonstrates fact, fiction and true. Find the video here

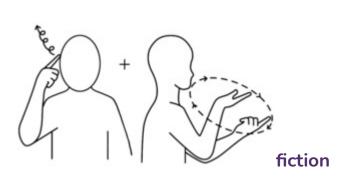
Here are the signs

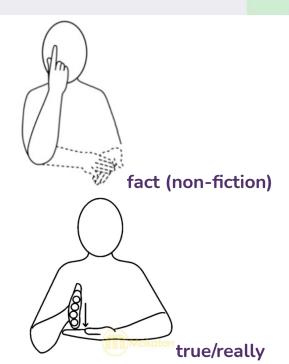




book







Have an amazing week full of interesting facts about your favourite topics!



Keep signing!



Julie







Finally.....IT'S THAT TIME!!!!!!!!

Christmas Dates

5th December - Gosforth Civic Theatre: Storytime with Santa for BE, LT/SH & CHe classes from the engagement pathway

9th December - Christmas lunch

10th & 11th December - MOVE Winter Wonderland incorporating Santa's Grotto on 10th.

11th December - 'Save the Children' Christmas Jumper day

15th December-AM & PM – Christingle Service at St John's Church, Killingworth

16th December Lower School Christmas afternoon - EY's LSTE (LT/SH & BE) & ELTBA classes. Parents invited.

16th December, St

18th December – Upper School Christmas Fayre. Parents invited

19th December 1:30pm onwards - Appropriate Accreditation Christmas Party (Disco)

.....from John & the Team here at PHS

Our Key Drivers

Communication, Wellbeing, Independence