

Percy Hedley School's

Whole School Blog

**News, STARS, MOVE-ing in a Winter Wonderland, our Rights
Respecting School Council & Santa is still here!**

Friday 19th December

Hi all,

Well, we've got to the end of term, everyone is wearing whatever their thing is, and the school looks lovely. We've had the Christingle, and the fairs and discos, and Christmas trips and parties, and the only thing left is to see the children safely off and wish you all a very happy Christmas. Thank you for supporting us in 2025, and we really do hope you have the best holiday and all the luck and joy in the world in 2026. Thanks so much if you managed to find the time to come up to the school for one of the activities this month – and if you couldn't make it – then maybe next time. We love having you here

All the very best, we have a Training Day on Monday 5th, so we'll see you and your son or daughter on Tuesday 6th. We're looking forward to it.

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

UNICEF Rights Respecting School UPDATE!!!

Our Rights Respecting School Council have been busy this week sorting all of the donations for the People Kitchen Christmas Appeal. A huge thank you for your support with our giving and volunteering project that we have been running, it is amazing how much we managed to collect

It will be delivered to the Peoples Kitchen this week, with thanks to our friends at SOS Group LTD, and will be there to support those who access the amazing work that the Peoples Kitchen do over the festive period

We really hope it makes a difference to them!



Ella, Dom, Teddy and the Rights Respecting School Council

MOVE WINTER WONDERLAND

This festive season, our school sports hall and small gym were transformed into a magical Winter Wonderland as students took part in a fun-filled, Christmas-themed MOVE event - our MOVE-ing in a Winter Wonderland!! The day was designed to celebrate movement, sensory exploration & purposeful play, ensuring every child could participate in a meaningful & joyful way

There were so MANY wonderful photos but here is some of our students across the school showing us their wonderful experience being greeted by falling snow from our amazing Snow Machine!! Excitement filled the air as the winter adventure officially began... Here is Teddy from 3MM and Ellis from 3RC showing us how to press the button to Make it Snow!!



In our Enchanted Christmas Tree Forest students worked on reaching, sorting & co-ordination skills. See Benjamin from AH and Cayden from 3RC Sorting colourful baubles into the correct colours...



Chloe from 3RC and Nat from CH's class show us how to activate lights to make the forest glow whilst in their walking frames!!



Over to the Candy Cane Lane next we see Harry from 4MM and George from AH's class enjoying activities which promoted weight-bearing and balance but also enjoying the bright and cheerful pathway.



Our to the **Winter Games Zone** brought lots of laughter and learning including building snowmen to develop gross motor & construction skills, throwing hoops on to reindeer antlers & snowball skittles, encouraging turn taking & co-ordination. Here are Ameen and Amelia showing us what to do...



On to our **Swirly Whirly Snow Storm** next – a sensory favourite!! Students explored sensory activities such as Ethan from 3RC who had a blast in the snow, Charlie from AH enjoyed feeling through snow to find the acorns, and Amelia showed us how to press the button to activating the wind machine to create make the snowy streamers swirl





Matthew from 3RC and Emily from CH's class absolutely LOVED the tickle tunnel on their way to Santa's workshop



Finally, on to our sensational **Santa's Workshop** with challenging hand-eye coordination and festive fine motor stations where we see Ayaan from 4KR and Michael from 3RC designing decorations...



These activities support writing, reach & grasping and creativity in a meaningful festive context. Here we see Maisie and Christopher engaged with composing and posting their letters to Santa and deciding if they are on the “Naughty” or “Nice” list!



MOVE-ing in a Winter Wonderland was a truly special event, combining festive magic with meaningful movement opportunities. Each activity was carefully planned by our AMAZING MOVE Team to support out PHS students' individual needs while promoting independence, confidence, and joy!!



A special **THANK YOU** to the FoPHS team for their wonderful support to create such a magical experience. It was wonderful to see all the smiles, laughter, and proud moments as our pupils moved, explored, and celebrated together!



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!

JOLABOKAFLOD



The festivities very much continued this week throughout school, and one small part of that was our 'Jolabokafloð', or 'Christmas Book Flood'. This is a tradition from Iceland originally, where families gift each other a book on

Christmas Eve and spend time reading them together with warm drinks and sweet treats

It's our fourth year of including 'Jolabokafloð' (roughly pronounced Yoh-lah-bok-a-floð) in our Christmas celebrations, and in that time we've collected quite a variety of festive themed books for all ages which we get out to share each year. This year ELTBA & some of LSTE included Jolabokafloð as one part of their parents' afternoon, which was a busy but lovely event. The rest of school were given slots to come and choose from the book boxes to create their own special festive reading time that suited them

Here's some of 5RR in action, thanks for sharing Russell!



2025 was a very good year for all things literacy at Percy Hedley School, with students working hard and making fab progress with their reading, and the new library being built. Earlier this term we were visited by the team from BookSpace (who designed the library) to see their work completed and being used by our students. We're in the middle of writing a case study with them about creating an inclusive library space, but for now, for those of you who haven't been able to come and have a look

Happy Reading, Happy Jolabokaflod and Merry Christmas!

Becky F



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 & one of our priorities this year is Healthy Living. Here's Nathan to tell us about what he has been doing with some fab students

Healthy Habits in STEM: A Parent Update

We are excited to share a snapshot of learning from our Fitness and Healthy Lifestyle classes, which is part of our broader STEM program. Recently, students participated in a hands-on, collaborative activity that combined nutrition and exercise education with creativity, helping them develop a real understanding of how a fit and healthy lifestyle can enhance individual choices and overall wellbeing

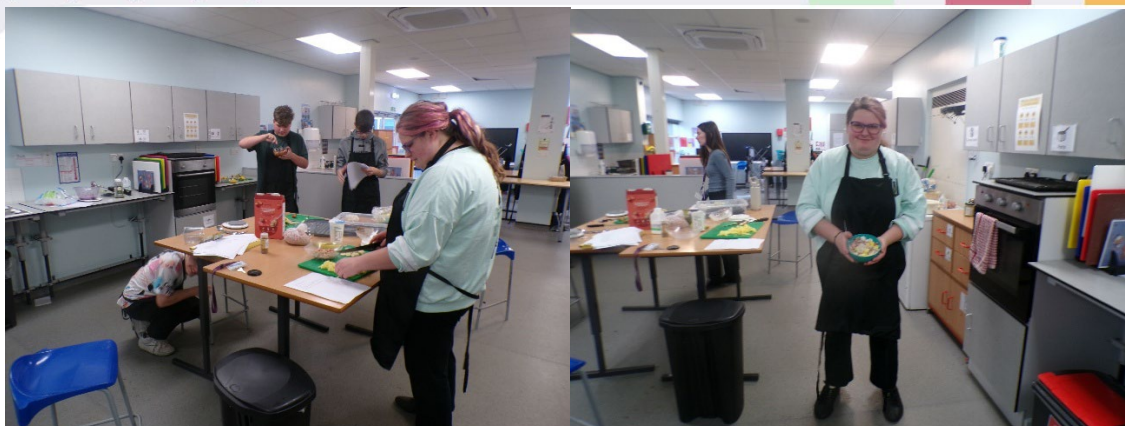
Working both individually and in groups, students were challenged to design their own healthy breakfast or snack. The goal was not only to select nutritious ingredients but also to consider how those foods support energy, focus, and overall health. Each group then gave their creation a unique and creative name, such as Jayden with "The Tropical Boost" Owen with "The Pre-Football Snack."

Throughout the term, I have had the privilege of supporting the Post-16 Lena group during our 45-minute lessons. This ongoing involvement has allowed me to foster a supportive classroom environment, promote inclusion, teamwork, and create positive learning experiences for all students.

Through this activity, students practiced important STEM-related skills, including collaboration, planning, and communication. They also learned how healthy food, movement, and lifestyle choices contribute to a balanced, energetic life—whether for a busy school day, sports, or everyday activities.

Most importantly, this activity encouraged students to connect what they learn in the classroom to the choices they make in their daily lives.

Here are some pictures of their healthy creations in the kitchen!





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



Therapy STAR of the Week

Makaton Club!

Love Therapy STAR of the Week! Here's Kate to talk about Makaton Club!





Students in lower school have been having some festive fun in the Makaton lunch club this month. They have been singing and signing Christmas songs over the past few weeks and enjoyed wearing some festive accessories too! Lovely signing everyone! Merry Christmas!

Resilience with Russell!

Say hi to Logan who has been a STAR!!!



In 5RR/Robins, Logan returned to school after a spell in hospital and immediately undertook a phonics assessment. That's resilience, Logan!

Wellbeing

Let's hear from Andy what's going on with wellbeing. Take it away Andy

A message from the Wellbeing Team...

As we reach the end of the autumn term, we want to wish all our students and their families a restful two-week break.

To those in our school community celebrating, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and we wish everyone a wonderful start to 2026!

A Note on Wellbeing

While this time of year is often associated with celebration, we also recognise that for many, it can be a difficult or "tricky" period. Whether due to the loss of a loved one, financial pressures, or personal challenges, it is okay if you aren't feeling festive. Please remember to reach out for support if it is needed.

For free and confidential mental health support and resources during the school holidays contact:

Kooth (for young people aged 10-25 years) www.kooth.com

Qwell (for adults aged 18+) www.qwell.io



We look forward to seeing everyone refreshed and ready for the spring term on Tuesday 6th January 2026

Gardener Ben is back!

And talking about some lovely stuff from Life Skills

As part of the hobbies topic in life skills, Eatflix came to Percy Hedley school when 5LA and 5RD enjoyed an afternoon cinema experience like no other. With the tables set with candles, fairy lights, napkins and Christmas crackers, we turned the lights down low and watched Home Alone 2 while enthusiastically dining on movie themed snacks for example cheese pizza, filthy animal mocktails and pigeon poop (Rocky Road). The food was delivered by staff at allocated timed stamps throughout the film. All the students enjoyed their experience and would most certainly want it to be repeated in the future





Lovely stuff in post-16 with Gardener Ben & the Team



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

It has been a productive term for the BfL team

Throughout the term, we have been actively involved in a wide range of initiatives aimed at supporting both staff and students


Our work has included delivering comprehensive staff training sessions, providing ongoing support to class teams to enhance student engagement, and assisting parents and carers in liaising with external agencies to ensure the best outcomes for our students

These efforts reflect our commitment to fostering a positive and collaborative environment across the school community

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

 **Call:** 0191 216 1811

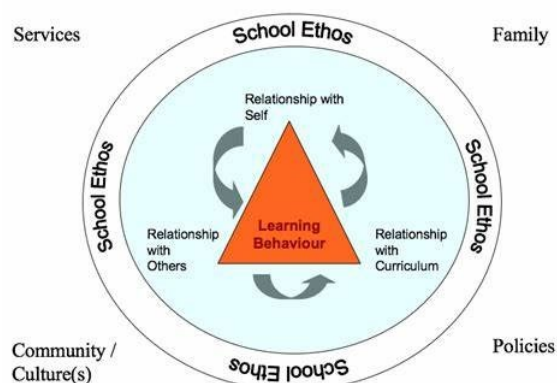


Figure 1: Behaviour for Learning conceptual framework

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

The festive season has brought lots of excitement and learning opportunities for the children, and our Christmas activities have supported all areas of the EYFS through play, exploration and creativity

The children have enjoyed a range of Christmas-themed activities this week. We have enjoyed festive stories, songs and rhymes. "When Santa got stuck up the chimney" being a favourite during song bag at lunch time

Lots of creative Christmas activities allowed the children to get messy and the room to be covered in glitter along with the staff.

Our outdoor area has continued to be an important part of our children's play and learning, this week we have climbed, balanced, ran, jumped and spun to burn off excess energy

All children have shown enthusiasm, curiosity and resilience as they explored new experiences. The foot spa still continues to be a firm favourite as you can see from the children's faces

We look forward to continuing to build on these experiences as we move into the new year and term. Come on a trip with us next year and we have a "ticket to ride", lets see where the journey takes us and how.



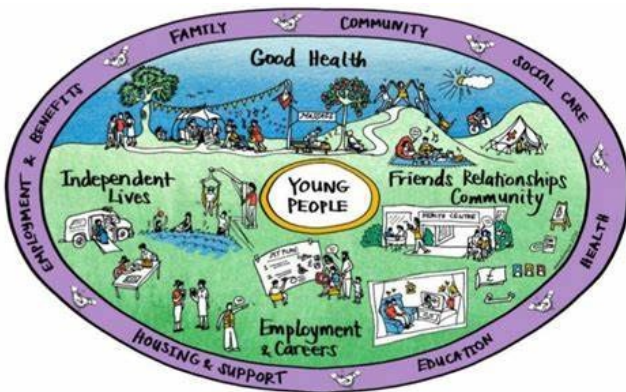


Hope everyone has a lovely Christmas, from
The Ducklings



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!

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

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

6.5.26 - Making decisions: Mental Capacity Act, deputyship & Lasting Powers of Attorney

10.6.26 - Supporting Independence: Travel and Independent Supported Living

We're very keen to help you make the best decisions around planning for the future. These forums are a great place to have informal discussions, ask questions & find out more. Our Family Liaison Officer (Eileen) and Careers Officer (Kat) are always happy to offer support and guidance. We look forward to meeting & planning with you over the coming year



School Lunches

Please find the menus here: [School Meals - Percy Hedley School](#). 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, Holiday contacts & information



Aylisha is our Safeguarding Officer, Rebecca is the DSL. Tracy and Corin round out a great DSL Team, with others like Carla, Lizzie & Vicky involved too in other aspects of safeguarding

As we approach the Christmas holidays our aim this week is to share information of agencies who may be able to offer support for our parents/carers and young people during this time.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse can happen to anyone. Children are now classed as victims of Domestic Abuse whether they have witnessed it or not.

How to make a silent 999 call

If you're in danger, call 999 and try to speak to the operator if you can, even by whispering. You may also be asked to cough or tap the keys on your phone to answer questions.

Call 999 from a mobile

If you don't speak or answer questions, press 55 or tap when prompted and your call will be transferred to the police. The police will usually be able to find your location. If you don't press 55 or respond, your call could be ended.

Call 999 from a landline

If you don't speak or answer questions and the operator can only hear background noise, they'll transfer your call to the police.

If you replace the handset, the landline may remain connected for 45 seconds in case you pick it up again.

Calling 999 from a landline automatically gives the police information about your location.

For further support and advice visit around Domestic Abuse please visit the below websites:

[Home \(myharbour.org.uk\)](https://myharbour.org.uk)

[ManKind Initiative – Supporting Male Victims of Domestic Abuse](#)

[Home – Women's Aid \(womensaid.org.uk\)](https://womensaid.org.uk)

Mental Health

Mental health is a subject that many of us find difficult to discuss, primarily because of fear of saying the wrong thing and making matters worse.

Please see a list of resources available below:

YoungMinds- [YoungMinds | Mental Health Charity For Children And Young People | YoungMinds](#)

Has a wealth of resources on their website, as well as providing dedicated crisis services. The YoungMinds Crisis Messenger provides free crisis support every day of the week, at any time or day or night. You just need to text YM to 85258. All texts are answered by trained volunteers with support from experienced clinical supervisors.

SHOUT - [Shout: the UK's free, confidential and 24/7 mental health text service for crisis support | Shout 85258 \(giveusashout.org\)](#) provides free, confidential, 24/7 text message support in the UK for anyone who is struggling to cope and anyone in crisis. You can: text SHOUT to 85258 and the service is free on all major mobile networks. You'll then be connected to a volunteer for an anonymous conversation by text message. This is not an NHS service. It's a free, confidential service available 24/7 run by a charity called Mental Health Innovations.

Papyrus- [Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention | Prevention of Young Suicide \(papyrus-uk.org\)](https://papyrus-uk.org) Papyrus (Prevention of Young Suicide) provides advice and support for young people who feel like they want to take their own life, all advice is confidential. The helpline HOPELineUK is available on 0800 068 41 41 text available on 07786209687.

The Mix- [Get Support – The Mix](#) The Mix provides a free confidential telephone helpline and online service that aims to find young people the best help, whatever the problem. Can be contacted via telephone on 0808 808 4994 for free, lines are open 11am-11pm every day. Can also be accessed online.

Childline- [Report Remove | Childline](#) Childline provides a confidential telephone counselling service for any child with a problem. It comforts, advises and protects. Telephone number is 0800 1111. Is also free and can have an online chat with a counsellor via their website.

Samaritans- [Samaritans | Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy | Here to listen](#) Samaritans are an organisation that you can ring at any time day or night. They'll help you and listen to how you're feeling. Contact number 116 123.

E-Safety

We know that children are likely to have an increased amount of screen time on their electronic devices over the Christmas holidays. If our parents/carers need further information regarding parental controls etc please the online safety section of our school website [Online Safety – Percy Hedley School](#)

Other agencies available for support are:

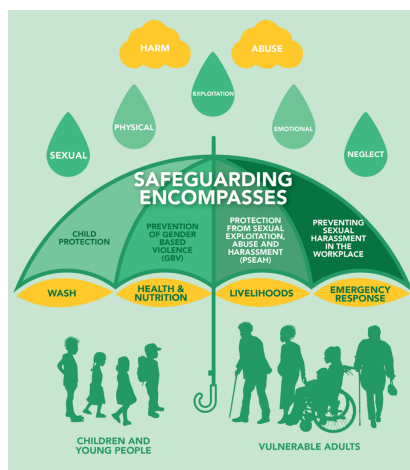
- Police, call 999 in the case of an emergency or 111 for non-emergencies.
- Children's Services (social services) contact the front door at your local authority to report a concern about a child.

Should you need any support during the Christmas holidays a member of our safeguarding team will be available.

Please contact Aylisha.Holland@percyhedley.org.uk

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 r.fletcher@percyhedley.org.uk or aylisha.holland@percyhedley.org.uk 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.

[Find out about Online Safety at PHS here](#)

[View the online safety blogs here](#)



No-Spray School



We'd like to remind everyone that we're 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.

Roll-on deodorants & water-based sprays are absolutely fine to use. Thank you for your support in keeping our school a safe place for everyone

Attendance!



Attendance Matters



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)

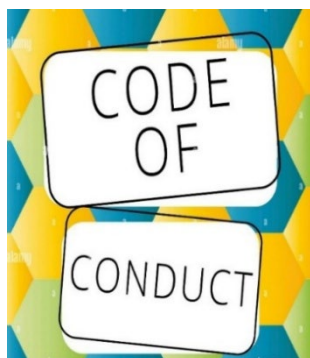
A telephone call to the school office before 9.30 on the first day of absence if the absence was unplanned (e.g. illness)

Email to class teacher or PHSattendance@percyhedley.org.uk 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: [Parent and Carers Area – Percy Hedley School](#). 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 & all sorts. Great to have you guys on board, you're such an important part of the school

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 & 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 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-at-the-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

Masie!

Teamwork!



Our Star of the Pathway is Masie for her fantastic teamwork. She has been a superstar during the morning routine, greeting her peers and helping to complete the register. Masie has also been extremely helpful when consulting on the textures used to decorate the Christmas gift bags that her class sold at the Christmas fayre. Well done, Masie! **Masie the CHRISTMAS STAR!!!**

ELTBA

Thomas and Leo!

Teamwork & Respect!



Our Eltba Stars of the Week are Thomas And Leo from 3HR for amazing teamwork and respect while selling the STEM Christmas crafts at the Christmas event. CHRISTMAS STARS!



APPROPRIATE ACCREDITATION

POST-16!

Love our Sixth Form!!!

Resilience

Jayden really stepped out of his comfort zone at work experience. He was handling cash and serving a lot of people. He has also had his work experience extended. Very well done!!

Logan has also been a Star at work experience and had his placement extended. Great stuff!!

Brandon has excelled with his walking this week. He beat his personal best and did 5 laps. Well done!!!

Leighton has coped really well with all the festivities. He has also been coming in even though he has been feeling ill. Brilliant!!

Respect

Kristian has been very polite and independently held doors open for staff. What a STAR!!!



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

Happy Christmas signing!

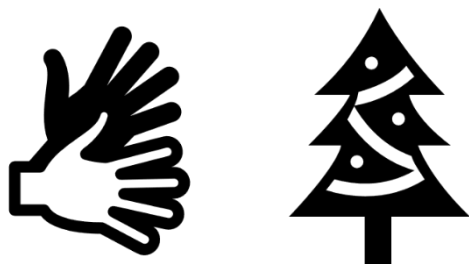
Wishing Everyone a very Happy Christmas!



A big thank you from me for all the brilliant signing in school this year!

<https://youtu.be/ZCdFK9T1Gag>

Have a wonderful Christmas break!



Keep signing!

Julie





Finally.....

And SANTA WAS HERE! I'M LEAVING THESE IN THIS WEEK!



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