

Percy Hedley School's

Whole School Blog

News, STARS Winnie-the-Pooh Day & a PfA session next Wednesday - from
John & the PHS Team

Friday 16th January 2026

Hello all

Well, we're properly back into the term now, and it feels good to be back. Those first two weeks in January can be a bit tough with the post-Christmas come-down, but it's been as good a start as it could be really. I hope the start of the year has been Ok for you too

Do have a look at some of the dates for various things to do with Preparation for Adulthood, including one this Wednesday – there is some very useful information coming out of the PfA Group that I think many parents can benefit from. There's also some serious stuff in safeguarding and online safety....

But there are also lots of lovely STARS, some classroom activities, photos, Makaton and all the rest of it. As I say, it's been a lovely week, and I'm delighted that the term is underway and we're all cracking on now

All the best, thanks for your support and see you around, I hope!

John S

😊 from John & the PHS Team 😊

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

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!

THE YEAR OF READING!



2026 - The National Year of Reading!

If you've read this blog before you'll know that one of the student requests when we revamped our school library was access to a newspaper. We looked into a couple of different options, but it was really important that if we were going to have a 'child friendly' newspaper that it still looked and felt a 'mainstream' typical newspaper and it still covered potentially difficult topics but in an appropriate way. We chose a subscription to a weekly newspaper called 'First News', which targets students aged approximately 7-12 years. There's a lot of possibly worrying or upsetting news stories around right now, which makes our access to First News even more appreciated. We get weekly deliveries of physical newspapers and there's a daily news feed available online too, so our students have access to world news that doesn't look 'babyish' but also, we can trust!

This week the students in 3HB used old copies of First News in their English lessons, to learn about the different features of newspaper articles. They cut up articles, hunting for different examples of the key 'parts' of a newspaper story and placing it by the correct cone and heading. Harriet was able to capture their work to form part of their lesson next week and continue the learning. The Literacy Team were very happy to see library resources getting a second life and the students enjoyed a practical lesson!



Happy Reading!

MORE LIBRARY TALES! - this time from Beth





3BE loved their library session this week. You can see how engaged they are when they find a good book!



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



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

The RNLI

4KR learned about RNLI and how important their role is. The students discovered that the RNLI roles are filled by volunteers

The class used the words 'brave', 'caring' and 'strong' to describe these volunteers

4KR along with other class in upper school and P16, are planning to raise money for RNLI as part of their enterprise that is focussing on charities in our community.

Learn more here: <https://rnli.org/> and here <https://rnli.org/youth-education>





Therapy STAR of the Week

Alli! And Katie too!



In this week's OT session, Alli listened to an underwater sensory story and explored different areas of the sensory room. She loved being in the walking sling where she was able to chase and pop the bubbles with her feet. Alli worked so hard to make sure she got all those bubbles popped!

A special THANK YOU to Katie, a lovely student from post-16 who worked with Alli's OT during the session as part of her work experience. Katie was super helpful and Alli loved having you play with her. We think you would make a great therapist in the future. Keep being superstars Alli and Katie!

Abbi has been doing some lovely & creative Occupational Therapy, and it's great to have her tell us about it. Two STARs there, all round!



PE with Nathan!

PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Newcastle Foundation Boys Football Competition Update

This week, pupils represented the school in the Newcastle Foundation Boys Football Competition, demonstrating excellent commitment and great energy throughout the games.

The boys worked hard to apply the skills developed during Thursday lunchtime training sessions, including effective passing, movement, and strong defensive play.

Across the matches, they showed excellent organisation, communication, and determination, supporting one another both on and off the pitch.

There was a strong emphasis on respect and fair play, with pupils following rules, listening to instructions, and always demonstrating positive attitudes. Their conduct and teamwork were a credit to themselves and the school.

A special mention goes to Conrad, our newest member of the team, who has shown good commitment and a positive attitude in supporting the team's success.

The team's defensive commitment has been outstanding. This season, the boys have only conceded one goal, giving them the best defensive record in the league to date. This achievement reflects their self-discipline, cooperation, and hard work during training and competition.

Throughout the competition, pupils consistently demonstrated the school's values through teamwork, respect for others, enjoyment of physical activity, self-discipline, and excellent sportsmanship. All pupils involved should be extremely proud of the way they represented the school.

Well done to all pupils who took part — a fantastic example of the school's values in action



More PE Stars from Nathan this week – and what a great story about the school's values being in action! PE is great! Cheers Nathan and well done to all the boys in the football!



Early Years – The Ducklings!

It's so nice to hear about what the Ducklings have been doing each week, and to share in some of their experiences. The photos are always great too. This week Kate is going to give us the news!

This week, we have continued our learning around the story The Gingerbread Man. The children have enjoyed listening to the story and decorating gingerbread men using buttons and a variety of clothing items. We showed great independence during our cooking lesson, as we made gingerbread men again after practising the recipe last week.

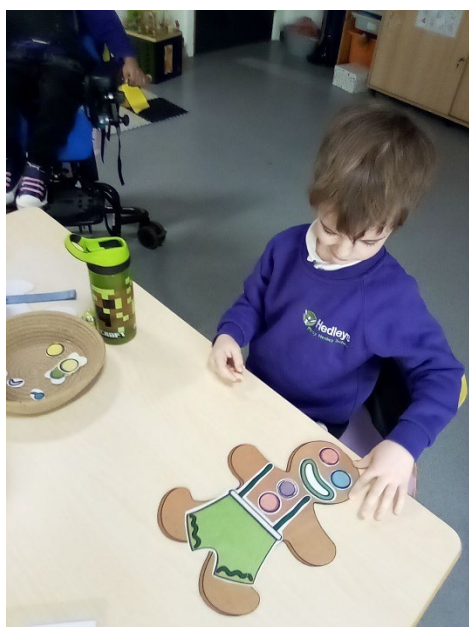
In maths, we have been counting from a larger group. Our number song helped us to take one gingerbread man at a time and place them onto a tray ready for baking! We also worked on number recognition by looking at a number and choosing the correct amount of gingerbread men to put on a tray to cook.

This week, we introduced the letter 'a' to the children. They enjoyed exploring objects that begin with this letter and engaged in mark-making activities. The children practised forming the letter 'a' using flour, as well as a variety of writing utensils.

Bike Club continued to be a big hit this week. The children showed good balance and improving manoeuvring skills as they rode the balance bikes around the cones.

We have had a fun and busy week in Ducklings Class and are looking forward to another exciting week ahead!





Chris Carr's Cool Class!

I can't wait to see what these guys are up to each week! What a great bunch they are! Looks good...!



A Very Hungry, Very Different Caterpillar Story!



After watching *Giraffes Can't Dance*, we had lots of fun sequencing the events of the story and learning more about the main character. To bring Gerald the Giraffe to life, we even created our very own versions of him using biscuits!

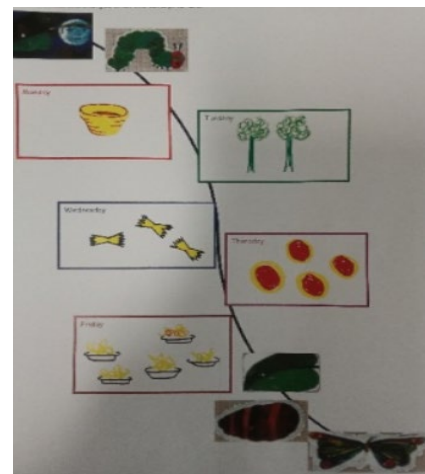
The children loved getting creative and thinking about how characters can be represented in different ways. 🦒 ✨



In maths, we've been learning the days of the week and talking about all the different activities we do on each one. The students have enjoyed sorting and plotting their weekly routines as they build their understanding of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Instead of munching on fruit, our caterpillar enjoyed a Yorkshire pudding, stretchy broccoli, bow pasta, big pizzas, and cheesy spaghetti! The children listened carefully to their friends and made sure everyone's ideas were included. 💡

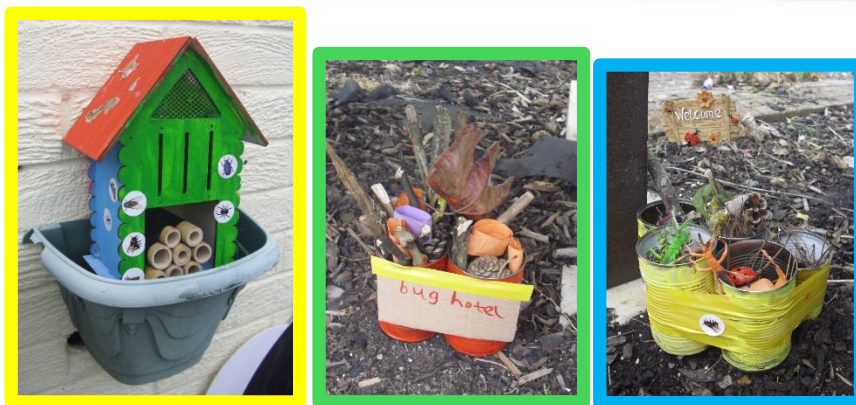
Why not take a look at our story map together at home and see if you can retell our yummy version of the story? 🍽️📖



Bug Hotels with Jenna!

The Garden & Crafts Therapy Group are kind of all Therapy Stars of the Week this week, as they've been doing this lovely work with Jenna. These post-16 students have been doing great work – let's have a look below, see what they've been doing, and hear from Jenna too





The Post 16 Gardening and Crafts Therapy groups have been working hard. They enjoyed creating bug hotels for our garden space. They foraged for their materials whilst enjoying lovely walks in the local nature and then got creative putting all their materials together to create a safe and inviting space and shelter for the insects in the garden, perfect for this time of year! Well done everyone! They look amazing and the bugs have been enjoying their new homes.




Behaviour for Learning

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

 **Call:** 0191 216 1811

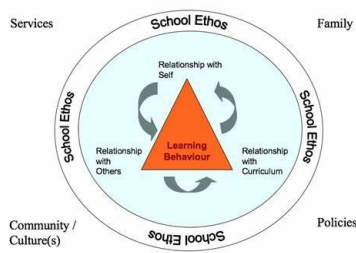


Figure 1: Behaviour for Learning conceptual framework



Preparation for Adulthood with Hannah

PfA is a priority on the School Development Plan this year

Let's hear below what Hannah & the PfA Team have been working on – PfA is one of our very biggest priorities! Hannah has dates for your diary too!



Parent Carer Forum – Social Care: Planning for the Future

We would love to welcome you to our next, next Wednesday, 9.30 – 11am (21.1.26) for our next Parent Carer Forum.

This time the focus will be on Social Care. If you do not already have social care involvement, it might be a good time to start thinking about the benefits and advantages of what it could offer.

The face of SEN is changing, nationally, and transitions, particularly those from Key Stage 4 onwards can be challenging. Having social care involvement can benefit you and your child during these periods, especially if there is a concern that your child's EHCP may be ceased, or if, for example, their college only offers a 3-day placement. Having a Social Care package can go some way to support smooth transitions from school into the next destination, wherever that may be.

Social Care involvement, can also be very helpful if you are experiencing difficulties of any kind which you are worried might escalate into a crisis. Early Help can

provide temporary extra support which could just be enough to help through a tricky time, for instance, an unexpected family illness, or a breakdown in a family care arrangement.

Whether you have a social worker or not, you are very welcome to come and discuss your ideas or share your experiences in a totally judgement-free zone!

More dates to look out for

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

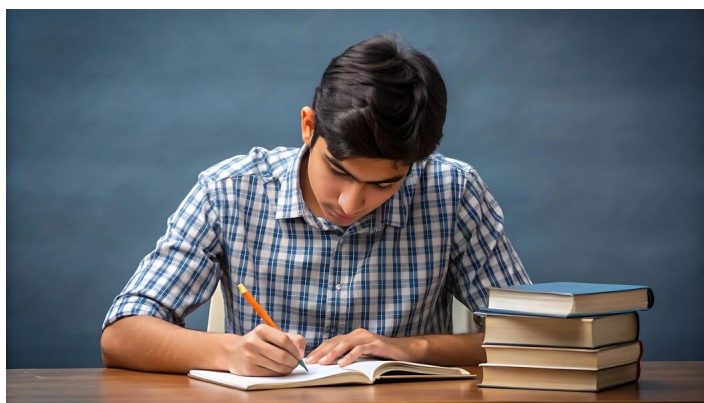
6.5.26 - Making decisions: Mental Capacity Act, deputyship & Lasting Powers of Attorney

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.



Exams!



Kat is our Exams Officer and works very hard getting everything right for everyone to do as well as they can with whatever they are doing. Here are a few words from Kat to get us thinking about all of this for the rest of the school year. Cheers Kat!

Happy New Year!

This year will bring many new opportunities to our students and work can continue to complete and accomplish old and new tasks/projects

The coming term will see all the entries registered for the summer exams series (GCSEs, ELCs) with the deadline just before February half term

Once this is completed, we can get organised in setting up the full exams timetable for the year, plus plan for more on demand qualifications in between

Candidates will learn, study and complete mock exams in the term that follows. Mock exams are compulsory and a contingency, set out by the JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications)

The GCSE summer contingency date is Wednesday 24 June 2026 – in the event of national or significant local disruption to the examination in the UK

Happy learning & stay safe everyone in this weather



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, the Child Protection Authority



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. Today, Rebecca has some information on the Child Protection Authority

The Child Protection Authority

The government and the Department for Education are currently consulting on the Child Protection Authority (CPA), this is a national body to improve child protection across the UK. The CPA is envisaged as an expert, accurate and decisive body that makes the multi-agency child protection system clearer, more unified and ensure there is ongoing improvements through effective evidence-based support for all children and young people.

This consultation seeks views on the CPA's proposed functions, governance, and interaction with existing bodies. They would like responses from children and families, alongside school staff, local authorities, inspectorates, professional bodies, and voluntary, community and statutory organisations involved in safeguarding.

If you would like to give your feedback it will help shape the future of child protection in England. The link can be found

here <https://consult.education.gov.uk/child-sexual-abuseexploitation-team/child-protection-authority/consultation/intro/>

Why your views matter

This consultation will be open to the public for twelve weeks. Alongside this consultation, the DFE will be working with children and young people as well as victims and survivors of abuse to seek their views on the proposals.

The Department for Education is inviting views from parents within the four main sections of the consultation on:

The overview, scope and design principles of the CPA

Proposals for how the CPA will provide leadership and oversight of the child protection system.

Proposals for how the CPA will provide system learning and support.

Proposals for how the CPA will drive system improvement in the child protection system.

Proposals for how the CPA will be structured and engage with other organisations.

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 – *The Children's Commissioner*

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

Here's the link for the Online Safety blog. There's a very useful guide for parents from The Children's Commissioner so we thought that this info was worth a blog post! Hope it's useful for you!

[Online Safety blogs - Percy Hedley School](#)

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



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)

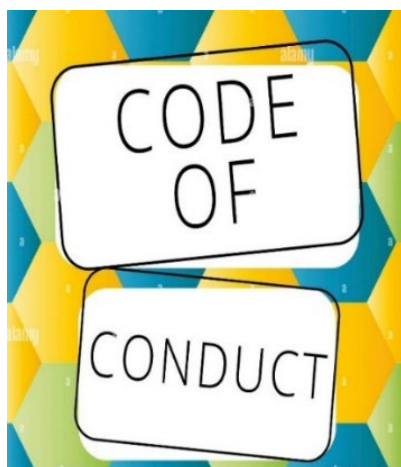
Email to class teacher or PHSattendance@percyhedley.org.uk before 9:30 on the day of the absence'

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!



Leading Parent
Partnership Award

2024-2027

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

Jack!

Resilience!



Our LSTE Star of the Pathway is Jack. He has shown fantastic resilience in his communication skills. Jack has been especially persistent in using switch and vocalisations to make sure his opinions are heard and understood. Well done, Jack – STAR!!!



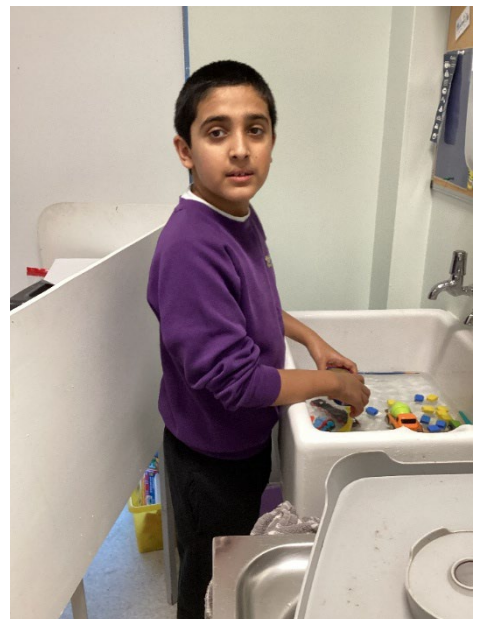
ELTBA

Heyan!

Resilience!

Our ELTBA star of the week is Heyan for showing resilience at swimming this was his first time swimming at the Lakeside there was some big changes but Heyan managed these and had a great swimming session

Heyan the STAR!!!





APPROPRIATE ACCREDITATION



POST-16!

Love our Sixth Form!!! Let's hear what Lisa has to say this week about the stars amongst our older students...

Resilience

Dan was a great mentor to his peers in basketball. He was so patient and very clear with instructions. Fantastic!

Phillip has been doing some excellent walking. He is working so hard and is very committed to improving his physical health. Well done!!

Gracie has been amazing in English. She has also been using her voca a lot and been fantastic at Hydro. Brilliant!!

Logan has been working really well in music and has been using his voca to communicate. Amazing!!

Josh worked really hard and completed his first English exam. Good Luck!!

Brandon smashed his personal best and managed to walk 10 laps of the school. Phew - very well done!!



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

Winnie the Pooh Day is 18th January!

This is the date of A.A. Milne's birthday



Here is a lovely BBC website with some info and activities:

[Winnie the Pooh Day 2023: How to celebrate the honey-loving bear! - BBC Newsround](#)

Just for fun here are some Winnie the Pooh related signs:

Teddy bear, pig, owl, rabbit, donkey, tiger, kangaroo, boy, love and of course honey!

Here are the signs:

Hands clasp
upper arms



teddy bear (Winnie)

Small circular
movement at
tip of nose

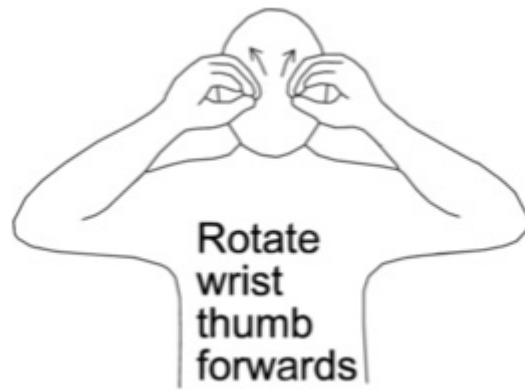


pig (Piglet)

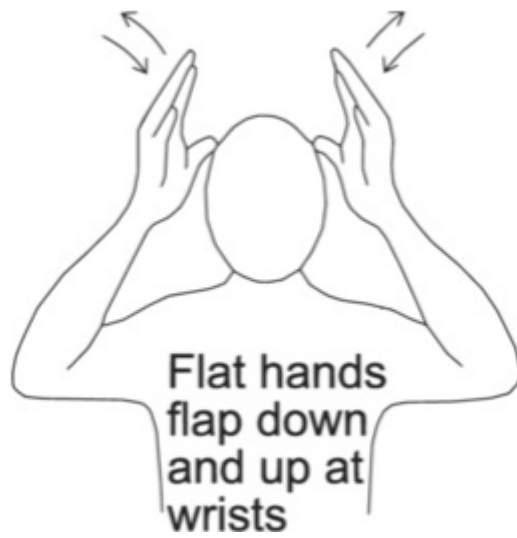
Waggle fingers
slightly



Rabbit



Owl



donkey (Eeyore)

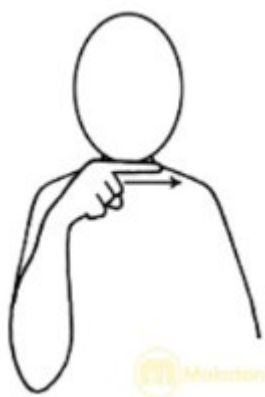


tiger (Tigger)

Formation
hops forward
twice



kangaroo (Kanga and Little Roo)



boy (Christopher Robin)

Tap top of hand
with index finger
and thumb



+

Scoop
honey
out



honey



love

Here is a compilation video for Winnie-the-Pooh which hopefully works and has most of the characters in it 😊

<https://youtu.be/iTEjzTKISA4?si=p0ENX932TnwFQTSQ>

Who is your favourite character?!



Keep signing in 2026!

Julie





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

Our Key Drivers

Communication, Wellbeing, Independence



