

Percy Hedley School's

Whole School Blog

News, STARS, Andrew The Airman & a Survey - from John & the PHS Team

Friday 30th January 2026

Hello all,

How was your week? It's been busy here, with the Keswick Residential still away as I type this, quite a few educational trips out, some sport, projects about countries, work experience & all sorts. There's some great stuff in the blog today about a range of issues – reading, PSHE, online safety, PfA. And there are some fun things too, like info about a silent disco, football, Makaton, Ducklings and all the stars of the week! It's also excellent to hear about what the nurses have been up to each week – I'm enjoying that!

It would be great if you could find a few minutes to do Hannah's survey in the PfA section, and there a few other dates & things to be aware of too. And I've redone the bit about mobile phones & social media as I know many of you are interested in that area

We're halfway through the school year now – which seems incredible – and starting to look at what's happened already, and what we need to do for the second half of the year. In the meantime, I do hope you have a lovely few days at the weekend and are warm & cosy. Here's to the second half, and the end of January! See you soon and thanks for your support, as always

All the best

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

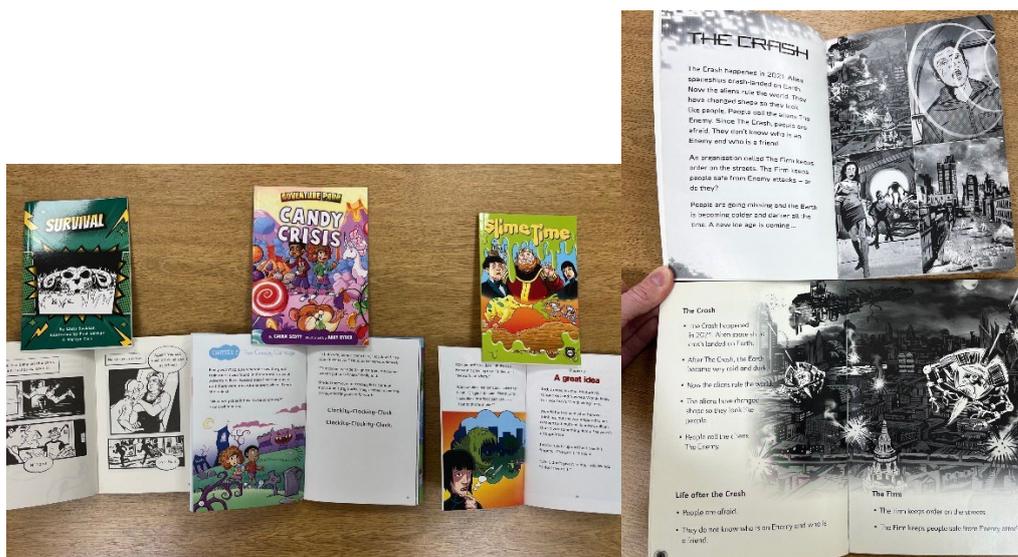
Literacy

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!





This week the Literacy Team attended an online meeting of a 'Phonics Network' set up specifically for SEND schools. We meet termly to share what we've been working on, developments or issues, and it's always a really interesting few hours (especially for those of us who like to geek out about reading!)

This time a few schools were asked to share what they do to help engage older students with reading, and we shared some information about the different 'hi-lo' reading resources we have. 'Hi-Lo' refers to 'high reading interest - lower reading age', essentially books written on topics that an older student group might like but using less text and simpler words. Many of the reading books published to help early readers are written to interest students in Reception or Year 1 - so it's no surprise that a student in key stage 3 or key stage 4 might turn their nose up at them!

We've chatted many times about how crucial it is that students are motivated to read for them to keep trying at something that is tricky for them, and this is where our 'Hi-Lo' or Guided Reading books are so important. Whilst some of them might seem gross, dark, or straight scary to certain members of the Literacy Team (definitely Becky!), we've seen amazing change in willingness to practise reading when students want to know what happens next in some of these books! We've included some examples to show you the different levels of text and content that is covered

It was great to be able to share these resources at the Phonics Network meeting and hear what other schools do. If there's anything here that you think your child or young person might be interested in please let their class team know and we can look into this further

Happy Reading!

Some dates for your diaries this Spring, as the Literacy Team get their planning hats on:



National Storytelling Week 2nd - 6th February - Soundtrack your story

'Everyone has their own musical story - whether it's in the songs we love and the music we dance to, through British Sign Language and the rhythms we feel, the soundscapes of everyday life, or the soundtracks we hear in films and games. Music connects us to words. It helps us express who we are and how we see the world.'

Not long to wait for this one - this is a fab one for our school and ensuring everyone can join in!



World Book Day - 5th March

World Book Day has come around again, with the added momentum of the National Year of Reading! Parents and carers will receive a letter shortly about the celebrations this year

Happy Reading!





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. This week Elliott, a physio here, is going to talk about what is available locally

Rebound Therapy: What is rebound therapy?

Rebound therapy is a therapeutic use of a trampoline to support physical, sensory and emotional development. It is delivered in a structured and carefully supported way by trained staff members, with activities tailored to each child's individual needs and abilities.

Here at PHS we value rebound therapy not just for the physical gains it can offer, but for its ability to meet children where they are, supporting participation, independence and wellbeing in a joyful and inclusive way.

The wonderful thing about rebound therapy is incredibly versatile and inclusive for all our students who are medically able to access this wonderful resource!

For our wheelchair users rebound provides a unique movement experience which is difficult to replicate elsewhere. The gentle bouncing and graded movement can help improve their postural control by developing head and trunk stability and improving overall muscle activity and strengthening.

Rebound can also support respiratory function by encouraging deeper breathing, chest expansion and even aids in the clearance of secretions.

For our ambulant students rebound also provides ample opportunities for our students to develop balance, coordination, core strength, cardiovascular fitness and even motor planning. The structured bouncing sequences, stopping and starting or following movement patterns can support motor planning through sequencing, attention and even improve individual body awareness.

Across the school any of our children who seek high sensory input, rebound offers powerful vestibular and proprioceptive feedback (knowing where your body is in

space) which often can improve focus and increase our students' readiness to learn afterwards.

Overall many children find the rhythmic movement calming, supporting their relaxation, regulation and overall emotional wellbeing. All key aspects to living a healthy life.

But MOST importantly...Rebound is loads of FUN!!! Our students really get wonderful enjoyment and engagement in movement, build their confidence in movements and offers motivating activity to increase positive experiences around physical activity.

Here is some of our students showing us how its done:

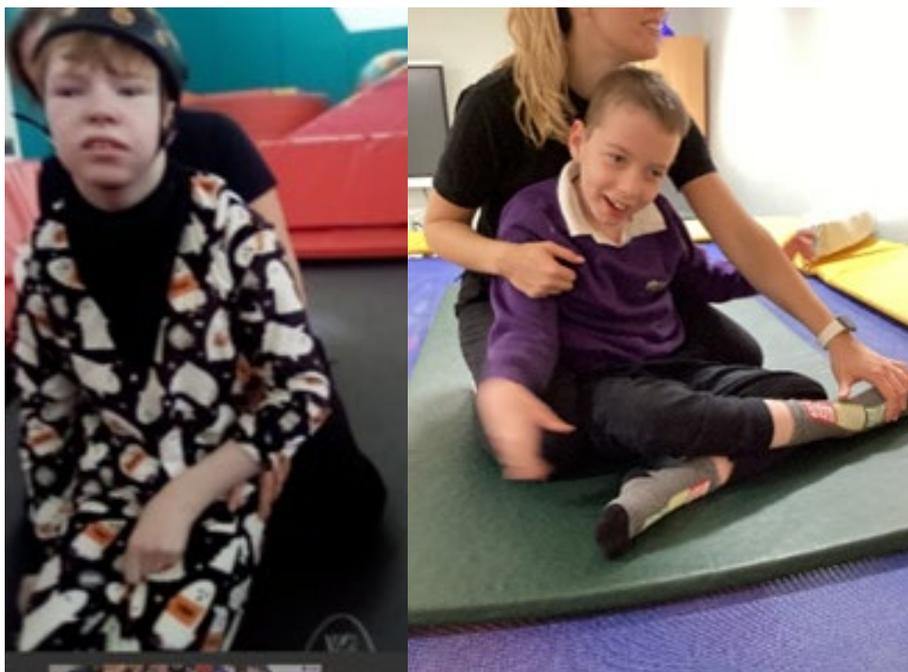
Retal in Lauren's class has been working hard with her physio Nina to improve her posture, balance and control whilst on the trampoline



Here we can see JoJo in Beth Edwards is working hard on his postural control sitting over the positional roll maintaining his balance and reaching



Next we have Ellis from 3RC and Michael from Beth's class have been doing some good work on their crossed leg sitting balance and head control



Finally, we see Zac from 3HR showing us how he develops his shoulder strength rolling over the peanut ball reaching for beanbags developing not only his motor control but shoulder girdle strength and fine motor coordination in joint sessions with his Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapists – showing us how the Transdisciplinary approach can be embedded in fun activities!!

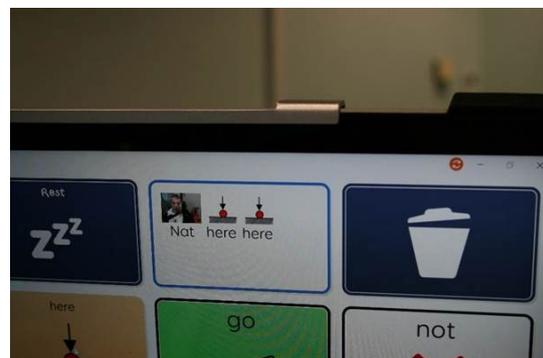


Personal Development & Wellbeing

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. There are some lovely bits this week to look at

Wellbeing

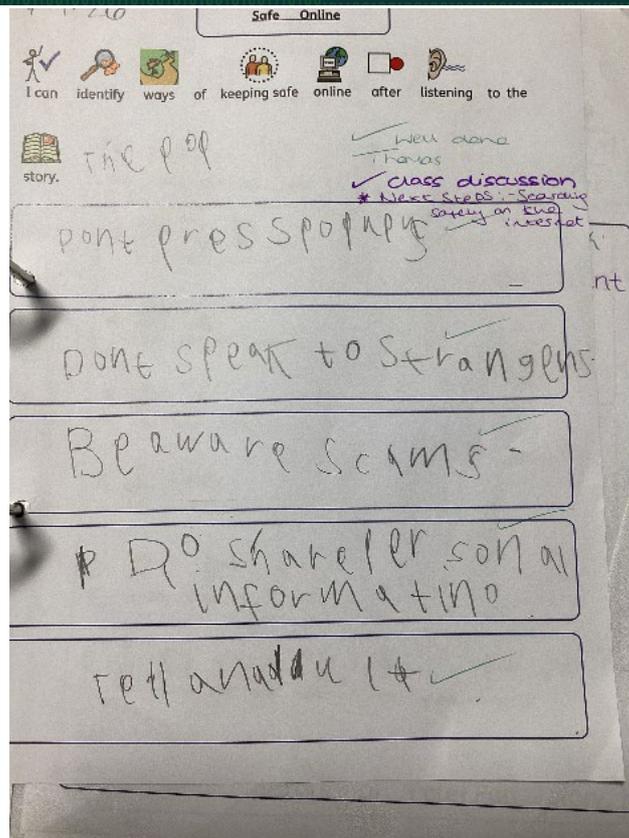
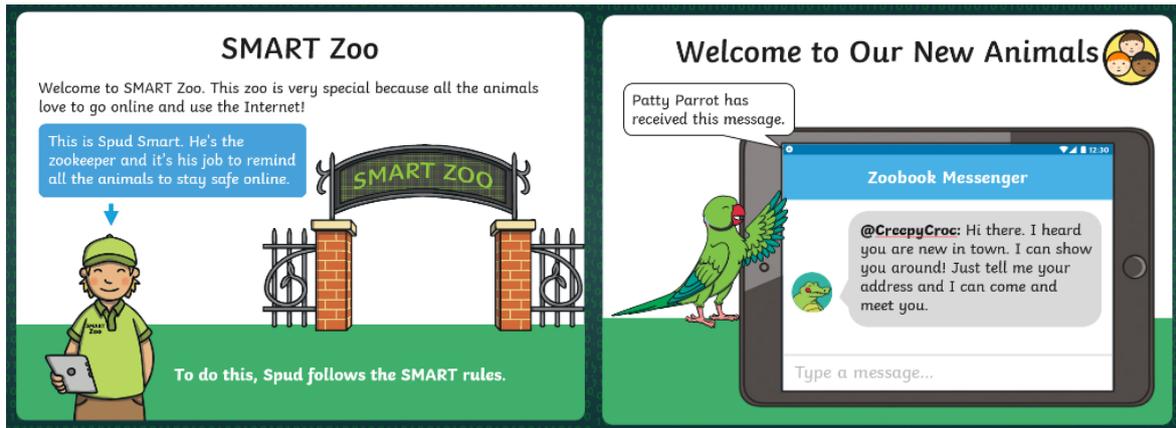
Jay and Nat have loved 'getting the gang back together' for their social communication group. Jay used his VOCA to tell everyone that "Nat is here"



Online Safety

In 2HR, we have been looking at internet safety in line with the curriculum focus as well as Safer Internet Day on 10th February 2026. Students have identified ways of staying safe online including the SMART (Safe, Meet, Accept, Reliable, Tell) acronym! Students particularly enjoyed group discussions about the SMART Zoo and looking at 'Creepy Croc's behaviour and identifying what they would do next!!

Well done, 2HR!



PSHE

This month in 4MM PSHE lessons we have been discussing different parts of our Perma model. We have completed Positive emotions, engagement and this week relationships. We enjoyed watching presentations, videos and modelling what these emotions look like. We have all taken turns deciding what the photographs are showing and given our own opinion.

Information about Perma

The PERMA model, developed by Martin Seligman, is a framework for understanding wellbeing and happiness. It consists of five core elements:

Positive Emotions: Experiencing joy, gratitude, and other positive feelings

Engagement: Being deeply involved in activities that challenge and fulfil you

Relationships: Building strong, positive connections with others

Meaning: Finding purpose and significance in life

Accomplishment: Achieving goals and feeling a sense of success

Focusing on these areas can enhance life satisfaction and resilience



Wellbeing - Resilience Days! Belonging!

Andy, Nicola, Nat, Emma & the Wellbeing Team have arranged the next Resilience Day – so important and popular with us here. I'm not sure about the date (!) but the topic is one of the best: Belonging. Let's hear what they've got planned for us in a couple of weeks

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY: FRI 13TH FEBRUARY - SILENT DISCO



Hi everyone! We're getting ready for a day of connection and community on Friday 13th February, as we celebrate 'Children's Mental Health Week' and our next school 'Resilience Day!' The theme this time is 'Belonging', a value that we hold at the very heart of our school, and we'll be spending the day taking part in activities and considering how we all fit together.

The main event will be a silent disco. A perfect metaphor for belonging, as it allows us to share a fun and collective experience while respecting everyone's individual preferences and sensory needs. We can't wait to see everyone finding their groove on the dance floor! Check the blog again next week for more details on what we have planned for the day!



PE with Nathan!

PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Participation League (Boys)



Owen! In burgundy!

This week some of the post-16 boys took part in the Participation League and produced their best performance of the season so far. They showed excellent effort, teamwork and positive attitudes throughout, putting into practice the skills worked on in lunch clubs

Games are usually played 6–8 a side, and although we only had four players this week, the boys showed they can work with anyone and made others feel part of the team. On this occasion, another team kindly allowed a few of their players to join us, which really highlighted the boys' teamwork and inclusive attitude

A special mention to Owen for showing great communication and strong defending during the games

A great performance and a real step forward — well done to all involved



Therapy Star of the Week!

Amy has been looking at this this week and nominated a fine young gentleman who has done some lovely work! I bet it's fun as it always is with him and his class – let's hear what it is!



Therapy Star of the Week!



Archie!

Archie has been an absolute superstar in both class *and* therapy sessions this week. He has made fantastic progress with his communication skills and very much enjoys sharing his love of Shaun the Sheep with adults in school. In his speech and language therapy session, Archie enjoyed working on his speech sounds and use of cued articulation to name all his favourite characters from the show



Well done, Archie the Therapy STAR!!!



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, as well as some fabulous pictures!





This week we have been exploring a new Days of the Week and Weather session, which the children have enjoyed. Each day is now linked with a colour, for example, Friday is a blue day. We have been identifying the day together and then choosing a blue resource to explore, such as slime, bubbles, and playdough. Alongside this, we have been listening to a Days of the Week song.

We have also continued our learning around the story Duck in the Truck. The children have been deepening their understanding of the story and its structure by making predictions about which animal might help Duck next. As part of this, within our provision, we used toy trucks to crush different cereals and explored the marks and patterns vehicles make in playdough. A lot of the cereal might have been eaten along the way!

In sensory cooking, we made delicious fruit smoothies. The children chopped bananas and strawberries and carefully measured orange juice before putting everything into the blender. Everyone loved the process of making the smoothies... although trying them wasn't quite as popular. We also embraced the wet weather this week, heading outside to play in the rain and jump in puddles.

It's been a fun filled week in Ducklings class!



Lauren's Class Trip!

Let's hear from Lauren about a nice day out! Great pictures too!



This week 2LT/SH went on a trip to Hive Bowling in Cramlington. What a day we had!

Bowling was a great opportunity for the students to work on their physical targets, independence and (most importantly!) have fun!

Alex was extremely focused on the pins when pushing the ball down the ramp. Rupert thought the sound of the bowling ball hitting the floor was hilarious! Lizzie enjoyed the staff cheering her on. Amelie was very independent at pushing the ball down the ramp (and the ramp!) Vivie thought it was funny when the staff tried to bowl! And our winner was Retal! It was a perfect day!



Nursing News! – A New Addition!

The school is all about teams working together for the good of the pupils, and we have a lot of different disciplines and types of people working here. It's really good that we have nurses, and I'm delighted that we are hearing from them every week now. Let's see what they've been up to this week – Vicky is going to let us know





Throughout January, our nursing team have been working behind the scenes with staff in preparation for our school residential trip which has taken place this week. It has taken a lot of time and organisation to coordinate and ensure all medications; documentation & equipment are correct and ready for the trip. It is well worth all the hard work when we hear and see the students having such a great time



Go Nurses!



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

 **Call: 0191 216 1811**

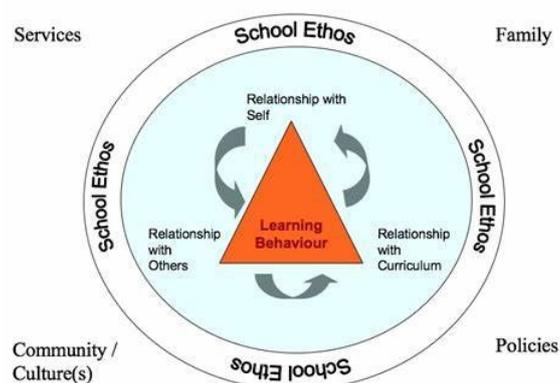


Figure 1: Behaviour for Learning conceptual framework



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 Survey: Understanding your child's needs and outcomes

As part of our development work on person-centred reviews, we are asking you to help us find out a little more about how best to support your children and young people in understanding their own needs and outcomes

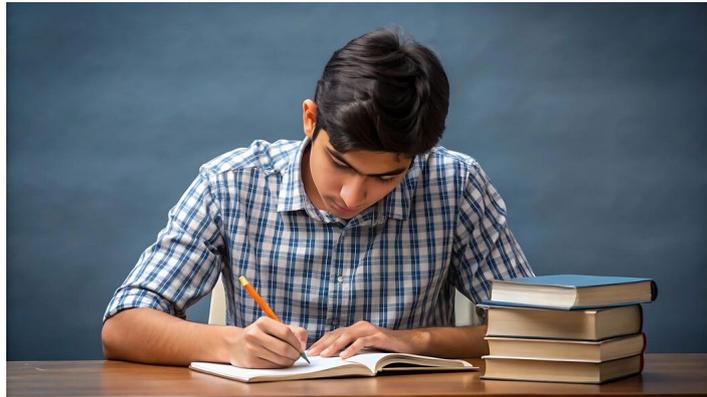
We would really appreciate it if you could respond to the survey we are sending out to all parents/carers. We're asking every family across the school, so while it may seem like these are concepts or ideas that your child is too young for, your feedback is still very much relevant: it helps us shape our offer from EYFS to P16

You can find the link to the survey [here](#). It will only take about ten minutes to complete, and any feedback is useful. As always, thank you for your continued support

[Parent Survey: Understanding Your Child's Needs and EHCP – Fill out form](#)



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!

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, *social media again!*



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

Children's relationships with mobile phones and social media

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and the Department for Education have this week announced a national consultation on children's use of technology.

The consultation will look at options including raising the digital age of consent and the age for the use of social media, implementing phone curfews to avoid excessive use, and restricting potentially addictive design features such as 'streaks' and 'infinite scrolling'.

Immediate action announced includes an expectation that Ofsted will check school mobile phone policy on every inspection, with schools expected to be phone-free by default. Due to this we will be reviewing our guidance within the school and will be sharing this with you shortly.

There will also be screen time guidance produced for parents of children aged 5 to 16, which is in addition to guidance for parents of under-fives that will be published in April. When we have this published we will share this with you as well.

If you would like further information around this the press release can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-drive-action-to-improve-childrens-relationship-with-mobile-phones-and-social-media>

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

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

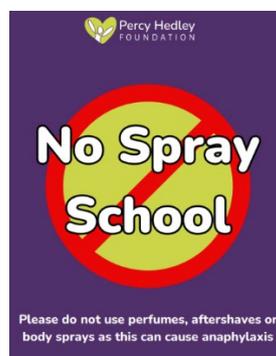
[View all online safety blogs here](#)

[View all information about online safety at PHS here](#)



No-Spray School

Just a reminder 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)

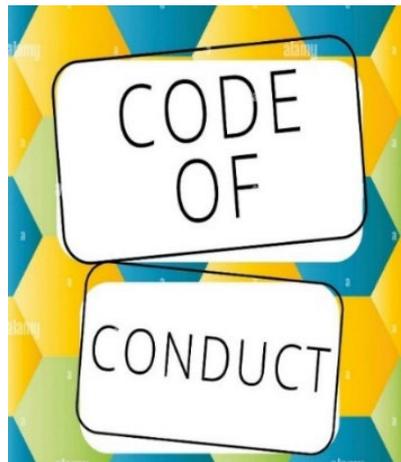
Email to class teacher or PHSattendance@percyhedley.org.uk before 9:30 on the day of the absence'

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, so please do have a read – they aren't used very often. Thanks for your support with it – generally but also in most things 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. You're such an important part of the school. All parents, carers & 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 & training for parents, carers & staff. We meet half termly. 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



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!



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

Jackson!

Resilience!



Jackson walked all the way to the sports hall in his walker and then practised standing independently. He was also amazing at stretching to put beanbags into a net whilst standing with a little support behind him. He also went in the stander and was standing up really tall!

Well done, Jackson – that really is STAR behaviour!



ELTBA

Emilia, Rosie & Sinead!

Teamwork!



Our ELTBA stars of the week in lower school are Emilia, Rosie and Sinead in a transdisciplinary session decorating cakes. They showed respect and teamwork working together to tidy up. **THREE STARS!!!**



APPROPRIATE ACCREDITATION

A great week here in KS4!

Resilience

Kayden for following a recipe during DT that was outside his comfort zone. He was able to ask for help when he needed it and persevered through a challenge! STAR!!!

Respect

Jess for communicating very respectfully in the community! STAR!!!

Teamwork

Harry for enthusiastic participation in assembly! STAR!!!



POST-16!

Love our Sixth Form!!! This is the latest from Lisa!

Resilience

Casey B coped incredibly well with a very difficult situation. She was great at her work experience too. What a STAR!!!

Rosie worked really hard in Maths and English. Great work!!!

Owen has been amazing, coping well with timetable changes and the bad weather.

Excellent!!!

Leighton worked really well in STEM. Well done!!!



Andrew has been super resilient at his work experience. He works as a Superfleet Checker on the mini-buses with Paul. He turns up rain or shine. Even last Friday's rain didn't stop him. What a Super STAR Andrew the Air Man is!!!



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

Makaton signs of the week 26th January

28th January is International Lego Day!



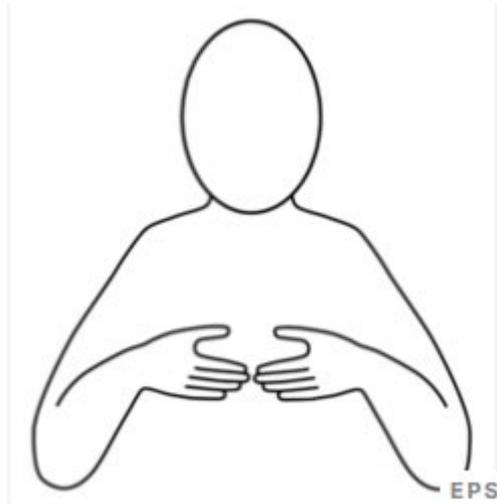
We love Lego and all kinds of building bricks in school and Lego is used by therapists in Lego Therapy.

Here are some signs for bricks and building activities.

Here is my video demonstrating the signs:

<https://youtu.be/ljCTtXS4ERM>

Brick (house), toy bricks, to build.



EPS

brick (house)

Mime holding
child's bricks



toy bricks



to build/ construct

Lego play time is a great time to model colour signs too. Here are The Singing Hands with all the colour signs:

https://youtu.be/80EC7QcPFzg?si=SPUcYudLM6hz3_bC

What can you build this week? Do you know the sign for the thing you've built?

Have a lovely week!



Keep signing in 2026!

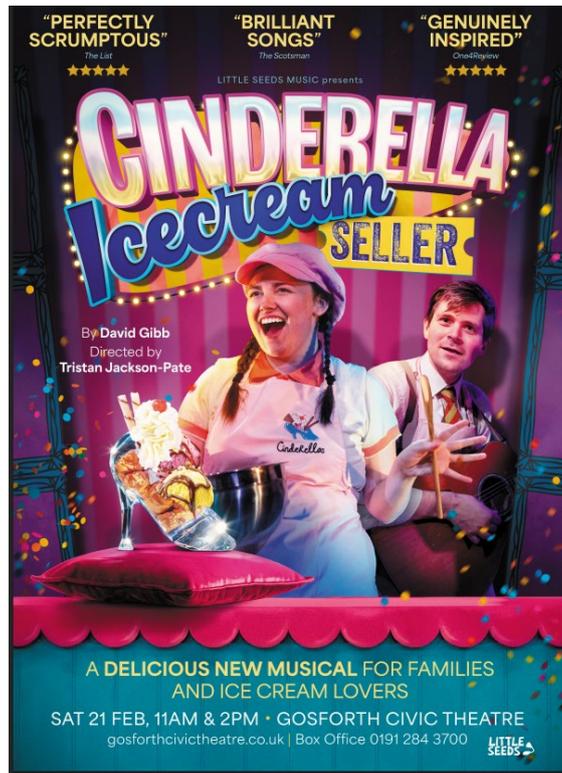
Julie





And finally

We thought you might like to be aware of this if you weren't already – looks fun!



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

Our Key Drivers

Communication, Wellbeing, Independence

