

Percy Hedley School's

Whole School Blog

News, Stars, Brian the Therapy Star, the Egg Competition & some Wellbeing tips - from John & the PHS Team

Date: Friday 24th April

Welcome back to the summer term – my fave! I do hope that the Easter break was kind to you, with its mixed weather and promises of chocolate! It's nice to get a break at the end of the winter. We're glad to be back again for the summer term, and of course the summer term has more trips out and outdoor activities generally, whilst also being a time that we have to think about next year, whether that's going to be with us or not for all the pupils. Transition days, visits, plans & reviews are often focused on this. It can be an anxious time for some at times, but it's also good to make plans....

There is also the This Is Me Festival coming up on the 10th July, Prom on the 3rd – and that funny Bank Holiday they always put in in May, on the 4th. There are a lot of other things too, so please do keep an eye on the website, this & Eileen's blog, and any messages home

Otherwise, thanks for sending your child back in this term, good to see a few of you already, and all the best for the next few weeks & months. Thanks for your support – take care!

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

School Council!

Let's hear from Amanda about what's been happening with the School Council!

"We meet every two weeks & discuss all sorts of important projects. We listen to what the students want & try our best to make this happen"

EASTER EGG COMPETITION

Before the Easter break the Student Council were busy organizing the Easter Egg competition. We had so many entries and it was really hard for our Judge (Paul, who is one of our School Governors) to decide a winner. They were all egg-cellent and a lot of effort went into them all. Well done everyone!

Well done to our winners

Early Years	George
Lower sch	Matthew P
Upper sch	Teddy B
Engagement	JoJo
P16	Ella Rose

Even the staff got involved, so well done Andy, with his entry





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!



Readmio

As everyone settles back into school, it's been great to see more classes get a chance to explore the new library tablets. On the blog Before the Easter holidays we discussed one of the apps we have ready called 'BorrowBox', which is free for all library members across the north east (which mean you can sign up and access at home easily!)

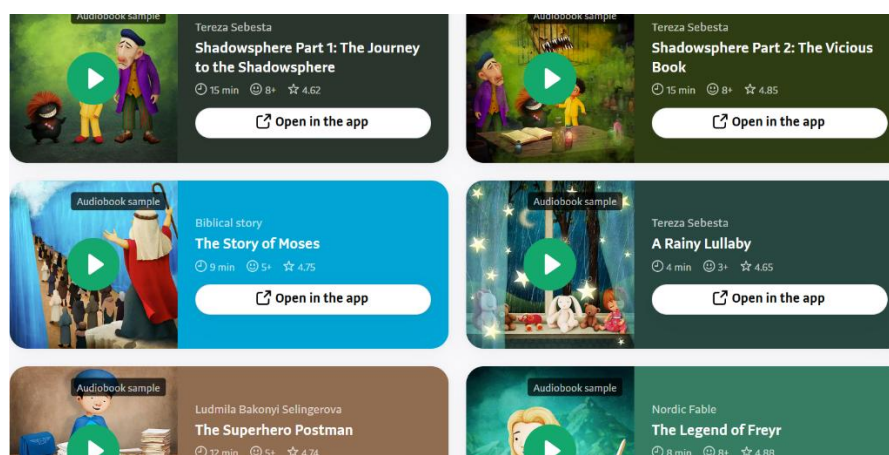
This week we're going to talk about an app which we have been very kindly gifted access to, and this one is called 'Readmio'. Readmio is a digital library designed for reading aloud, so different to some of the other story apps which use animation or images, this one focuses on the text - and sound effects! The app listens to the reader's voice reading the story out loud and automatically plays sound effects at key points through the story. They have a wide range of stories

for different topics, interests and ages and it does truly feel a little bit like magic!



Designed originally to make bedtime stories a little more special for everyone involved, we can use Readmio for staff to read aloud to students or for students themselves to read and get the feedback of the sounds as they go through the story - novel or not, I know a lot of staff have enjoyed playing around on this one!

There is also the option of simply listening as an audiobook, with music and sounds relevant to the story too



We found Readmio when researching our library, and when we contacted them for a quote they very kindly gave us free licenses for all 10 of the library tablets. They had looked at our school website and liked what we do - so a very big thank you to Nina and the team at Readmio for their generosity!

If this sounds like something your child or young person would like, maybe mention to them or their teams to look into it on their next library visit. Can't wait to share some feedback in the future!

Happy Reading & Listening!



#



Healthy Living



Everything that is in the world of Healthy Living: physical development, including physio, hydro, MOVE, PE, HI, VI, OT & other key areas for us, including Outdoor Learning & many other aspects. Steph oversees this & one of our priorities this year. This week, it's Ash again with a cool thing!

COMMUNITY ACCESS

We know that every PHS child is unique, and finding the right activity can sometimes take a bit of trial and error. The good news is that we are committed to supporting our families understand what is available within the communities of the North East to continue to support our student's overall wellbeing and improved healthy lifestyles.

We return to our healthiness focus this new term reviewing services available and this time we look to South Tyneside!!

South Tyneside has a range of inclusive and accessible activities available to support children and young people, along with their families. These services focus on play, wellbeing, social connection and practical support - all

the great things to support our Percy Hedley Students outside of school! Starting off with support for our PHS families of South Tyneside:

South Tyneside Family Hubs across the borough which provide a welcoming space for SEND children and their families. Services include stay-and-play sessions, parent support groups, and early development and wellbeing activities.

Find out more:

<https://sendlocaloffer.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/10791/South-Tyneside-Family-Hubs>

South Tyneside SENDIASS

An independent service providing advice and support on SEND matters, including help with EHCPs and signposting to local services. Drop-in sessions are also available at libraries and community venues

<https://www.southtynesidesendiass.co.uk/>

Thinking about some of our EYFS students with Early Years & Sensory Play (0–5 years)

Learning With Play is inclusive play sessions designed for young children with additional needs or developmental delay, including those awaiting assessment. Activities include sensory play, songs, messy play, movement and outdoor exploration. Sessions take place at Family Hubs across South Tyneside, including Bede, Jarrow and

Hebburn.: <https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/17094/Learning-With-Play-SEND>

SEND Sensory Sessions

Targeted sessions offering a calm and supportive environment for sensory exploration and parent-child interaction. Ideal for helping children regulate and engage through tailored sensory experiences.

<https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/26816/SEND-Sensory-Session>

If you're looking for something a bit more creative and social:

The Kayaks: Family Activity Sessions

Weekly inclusive sessions offering arts, crafts, games and opportunities for social play. A relaxed and welcoming environment for SEND children and their families. Held at Mortimer Community Centre in South Shields.

<https://wellbeinginfo.org/services/the-kayaks/>

Or perhaps wanting more physical activity options and exciting opportunities:

South Tyneside Activities Directory

A comprehensive and regularly updated directory of SEND-specific and inclusive activities, including sports, play sessions, holiday clubs and wellbeing opportunities. Families can search by age, need and location.

<https://sendlocaloffer.southtyneside.gov.uk/>

Adaptive Surfing (South Shields)

Some of our PHS have attended the amazing adaptive surfing service and have really enjoyed the experience! These adapted surfing sessions are designed to support children and young people with additional needs, promoting confidence, physical activity and enjoyment in a safe, supportive setting.

<https://www.southshieldsurf.co.uk/accesible-adaptive-surfing>

If something here sparks your interest, we encourage you to reach out to providers directly to discuss your child's individual needs. We hope this helps and that you can enjoy some fun in your local area!"



South Tyneside Council



+ Personal Development & Wellbeing

One of the best things about the school and one of the most important for our pupils, PDW covers PSHE, Careers, Social Moral Spiritual & Cultural Issues, Online Safety, Behaviour, Wellbeing(!) & similar areas. Jo pulls it all together – let's hear what the current priority is

PSHE

The overall topic across school this half term will be “Changing and Growing”, details of which area your child will be focussing on can be found below:

- ✚ *KS2: Changes during puberty (primary curriculum)*
- ✚ *KS3: Puberty (secondary curriculum)*
- ✚ *KS4: Healthy and Unhealthy Relationship Behaviours*
- ✚ *P16: Long Term Relationships and Parenting*

At PHS we use the PSHE Association SEND Framework curriculum which allows for our pupils to access statutory age-appropriate learning at an appropriate assessed developmental stage. If you are interested in viewing lesson resources being used, please contact your class teacher, or myself on j.ferguson@percyhedley.org.uk. I am available to attend coffee afternoons also if you have any questions or concerns in relation to this area of the curriculum.

Healthy Living

We want to help children learn healthy habits while they are at school, and we would really like your help. This short survey asks a few questions about what you think healthy living means. Your answers will help us understand what is important to you as parents and carers, so we can make positive changes together.

Healthy Living Survey – Fill in form



Message from the Wellbeing Team!



Here's Andy! (Who let's not forget was an egg competition winner! See higher up the blog!)

A quick message from the wellbeing team!

*Welcome back! As we head into the final term of the year, it's time to lean into that positive spring energy. We've spoken to several students this week about how difficult it's been getting out of bed after a two-week break and so we wanted to say that **it's completely normal to feel this way**. That said, here are 4 tips to help you stay focused and energised!*

- 1. The 10-Minute Tech Reset: Ditch the phone, head outside, and sit in the sun. Let the Vitamin D do the heavy lifting for your mood while you disconnect from the notification.*
- 2. The "Main Character" Walk/Wheel: Plug in your favourite playlist and take a lap around the block. Using that extra daylight to move your body is a cheat code for lowering stress*
- 3. Al Fresco Brain Dump: If the pressure is building up, take a notebook outside. Tackling a problem or venting your thoughts feels a lot less heavy when you're not trapped between four walls*
- 4. Stick To Your Routine: Start winding down an hour before you plan to go to bed - turn off your screens, read a book or listen to music and have a hot drink. This will tell your brain and body that it's time to get some rest*





PE with Nathan!

PE is great here and very important for a lot of the students – in fact all sort of movement is. It's always good to hear from Nathan! What's been happening this week then?

PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Athletics in PE in Lower School



Emelia throwing the javelin!

This term in PE is Athletics, one of the main sports that plays an important role in Lower School PE, allowing students to practise and improve the fundamental skills of running, jumping and throwing. These are the key physical elements of athletics and provide a strong foundation for many other sports

Through a range of activities, students develop speed, agility, balance, coordination, strength and control. Running tasks help to improve stamina and pace, jumping activities build power and balance, and throwing challenges strengthen technique and coordination

Examples demonstrated in PE lessons include running relays, adapted javelin and long jump activities. These activities give students the opportunity to apply their skills in a fun, engaging and supportive environment, while also building confidence and enjoyment in sport

All students participated fully this week and approached the lesson with enthusiasm. Special recognition goes to Emilia, who put in extra effort to improve each of the skills and willingly volunteered to help tidy the sports hall equipment after the lesson

Athletics also encourages students to challenge themselves, work cooperatively and take pride in their progress. By taking part in these activities, students not only improve their physical fitness but also develop perseverance, sportsmanship and a positive attitude towards PE



Chris Carr's Class!

Chris' class are settled into their new place now, and have a lovely new person in their class too. I'm always excited to see what they've been doing...



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. Kate is going to give us the news,

as well as some fabulous pictures! Let's have a look and a read, and try and match the pictures to the stories...



We've had a fantastic start to the summer term! It has been so lovely to see how quickly the children have settled back into their daily routines and we've already shared lots of lovely learning experiences together



*This week, we have been exploring the story *The Hungry Caterpillar* alongside learning about minibeasts. The children have really enjoyed listening to the story and taking part in a range of sensory activities to bring it to life. We used a torch to represent the bright moon and explored different textures and smells linked to the foods in the story, such as orange scents, crunchy apples, two blown-up balloon pears, and even some purple plum sauce!*



We also watched a fascinating slow-motion video showing a caterpillar hatching from its egg and transforming into a butterfly. The children were amazed by this process, using words like “spin,” “leaf,” and “wings,” and wanted to watch the video multiple times



Inspired by this, we created our own butterfly pictures. The children painted one side of a butterfly, folded it over, and pressed it down to reveal a beautiful symmetrical pattern on the other wing. This was a big hit, and some children chose to repeat the activity!

In our ELS learning, we have been focusing on the letter "g." The children explored objects that begin with this sound, practised forming the letter, and worked on spotting it. Overall, it has been a fantastic first week back in Ducklings class



Therapy Star of the Week



Neil has nominated Brian this week! Marvellous! Let's hear why from Neil and see some pictures





First week of summer term and Brian has already planned and participated in an exercise programme to develop his core strength. Well done, Brian!

THERAPY STAR!!!



Ben's Gardening Club!



Now the weather is better Ben has started to get out more with Gardening Club – they do loads of great work, it's fun – and educational too



Nursing News!

The school is full of different teams working together for the good of the pupils, and we have a lot of different disciplines & types of people working here. It's really good that we have nurses & HCAs



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, Nat, Sarah & Andrea this year to make a really important team for the school. Let's hear a lovely message about culture from Aylisha


The BfL Team has spent time looking closely at behaviour information from the Spring term
This is an important piece of work because it helps us understand what is working well in school and where students may need a little more support

By reviewing this information, we can plan the right training for staff, make sure our policies are effective, and continue to create a calm, positive and supportive environment for all students

If you have any questions or queries please don't hesitate to contact the BfL Team

 aylisha.holland@percyhedley.org.uk

 c.orr@percyhedley.org.uk

 **Call: 0191 216 1811**

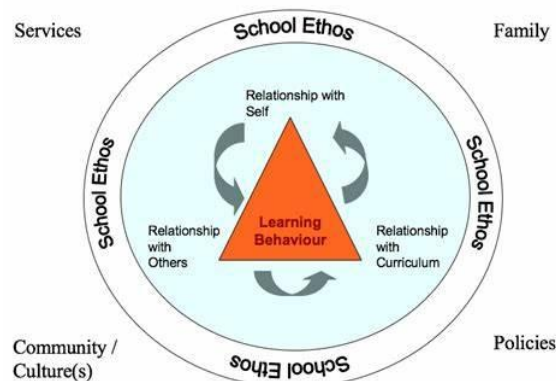


Figure 1: Behaviour for Learning conceptual framework



Preparation for Adulthood with Hannah

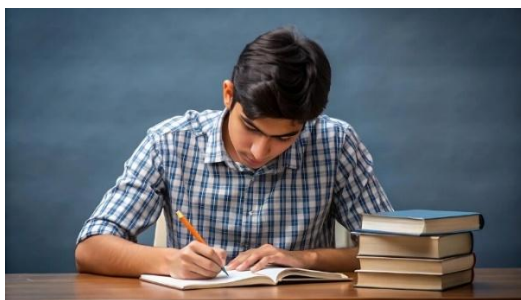
PfA is a priority on the School Development Plan this year

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!



Exams!

Let's hear from Kat who has the task of organising everyone's exams! Quite a job!



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, being audited in Early Years safeguarding & keeping up to date



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. This week, Rebecca is giving us a quick guide to an updated government document that's come out. Let's have a read!



This week, the safeguarding team will be meeting with our Early Years safeguarding consultant as part of a regular safeguarding audit. This audit helps us check that we are

fully meeting all safeguarding requirements and doing everything we can to keep children safe.

Working Together to Safeguard Children

A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children



The safeguarding team has also taken part in a webinar to learn about the recent updates to the Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance (2026).

These updates help ensure that children are supported earlier, families are listened to, and safeguarding decisions are clear, fair and child-focused, helping schools and services work together to keep children safe.

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

If you would like support or advice about online safety, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



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 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. Here's Kelly with an important reminder

Hello everyone, just a reminder that holidays during term time will not be authorised. Families are expected to arrange all holidays outside the school year to avoid unnecessary disruption to learning and missed teaching hours.

Please also ensure that GP, dental and other non-urgent appointments are booked outside the school day.

If your child does need to attend an appointment during the school day — or if you need to collect them early for any reason — an absence request form must be completed. These forms should be submitted in advance, and you will be asked to complete one on arrival if this has not already been done. Forms can be collected from the school office, sent home with the students in paper form or sent via email, whichever is most convenient for you to submit.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping us maintain strong attendance and ensure accurate records for all students

A brief reminder about how to contact the school for reporting an absence

Parents & carers have a 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

- *A note in the school diary if the absence is known in advance eg medical appointment*
- *A telephone call to the school office before 9.30 on the first day of absence if the absence was unplanned, eg 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!



Hello parents/carers & families

In January 2024, with your support and contributions, Percy Hedley school successfully achieved this award. The accreditation lasts for three years; therefore it is now time to gain your opinion about whether you have seen any improvements in the quality of communication with school/ staff during this time. Key points you made were:

- *Regular communication updates on pupil progress*
- *Yearly events calendar with regular updates*

- *Communication between home & school in a range of formats, phone, email, letter, text, weekly school blogs, home/school diaries, termly newsletters*
- *A range of times & days when coffee event/ activities take place*
 - *Online opportunities to attend these events*
 - *Online training for families*

In order to gain your feedback I will be sending out a brief survey in a range of formats, with the hope that one of the formats will make this request a quick process. This information will help the LPPA steering group set outcomes for the coming year. Once the data from the survey has been collated, I will share this on the school blog, which hopefully will be of interest to you.

We are currently updating our steering group as having representatives from across school ensures we capture opinions & evidence from as many parents as possible. Thank you in advance

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

Lizzie!

Resilience!



Our LSTE Star of the Pathway is Lizzie! She has shown fantastic resilience in her physical skills, extending the time she stands and rolling independently onto her side to explore sensory stimuli. STAR!!!!!!!!!!



ELTBA

Josh!

Teamwork!



ELTBA star of the week is Josh for showing great teamwork during playtime and making sure everyone got a turn when playing basketball. STAR!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



APPROPRIATE ACCREDITATION

Some great folks in KS4! And the greatest this week is...

Leon!

Resilience

Leon for doing so well at the careers event yesterday! He tolerated the visit really well, pointing to which stalls he wanted to go to, and he used his VOCA to communicate to the people at the stalls what colour sticker he wanted

Excellent work, Leon – STAR!!!



POST-16!

Love our Sixth Form!!! It's a great time to be a student with lots of exciting things happening

Resilience

Callum has had an excellent first week back. Very well done!!! STAR!!!

Drae has worked really well in English, doing some wonderful rhyming work. His handwriting has been amazing too. Fantastic!!! STAR!!!

Dom has had a very positive first week back – brilliant, Dom, well done. 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

Makaton signs of the week 20th April

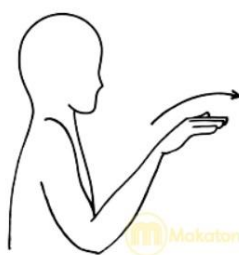
Gardens and Parks

Now that the summer term is here and the weather is warming up, we can spend more time outside. 🌻 🌻 🌳 🌻 😊
It's time again to revisit the signs for gardens and parks.

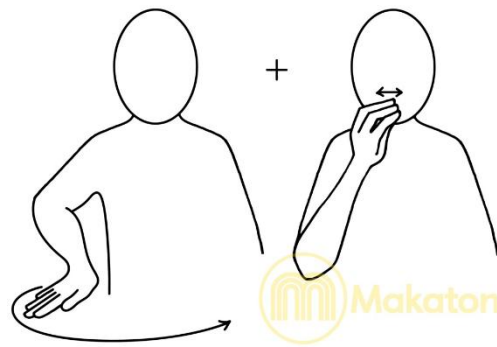
Here is my video:

<https://youtu.be/tqGZstKbo9g>

Here are the signs:



outside

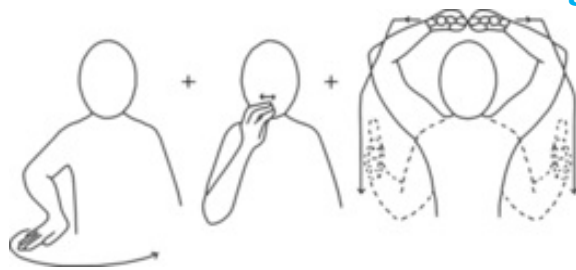


garden

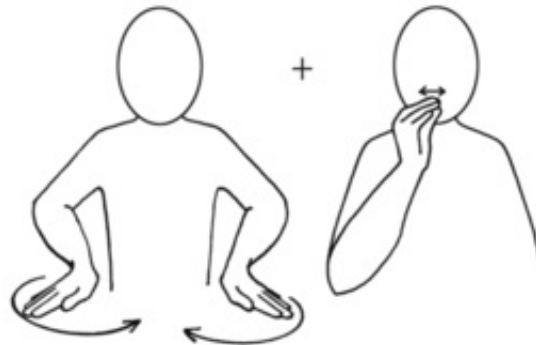
Use one or both hands as appropriate



gardening



garden centre



park

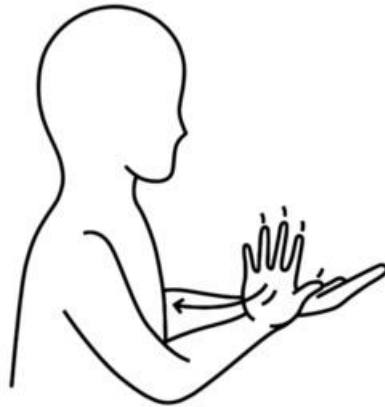


a plant

Dominant hand, slight wave
from side to side



tree



grass

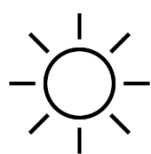
Here are the Singing Hands singing and signing about digging their garden:

<https://youtu.be/OzYEAYr4Alg?si=kw6VII4RC8bl7pyu>

Here is Mr. Tumble singing and signing about a worm at the bottom of his garden:

https://youtu.be/AqchPrhezxQ?si=1_xODCnBaR-r0HfG

Fingers crossed for some warm weather to practise these signs outside!



Keep signing!



Julie



And finally...please be aware!



We would like to make parents and carers aware of a trend currently circulating on TikTok, which encourages young people to put "squishy" toys (soft, foam-like or gel toys) into the microwave.

This can cause burns, explosions or fires. Please remind children never to microwave toys or copy online challenges

And really finally.....it's coming around again.....



The invitations

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

Our Key Drivers

Communication, Wellbeing, Independence

