

Percy Hedley School's

Family Information and FOPHS News Friday 22nd May 2026

That was a relatively short penultimate half term as we head into a week off. I hope that in the last few weeks you have found some activities of interest and appropriate to your family. If not, have a look back. I try to find something different each time I do these blogs.

School closes today for half term. It reopens to students on **Tuesday 2nd June**. There is a staff training day on Monday 1st June.



What's coming up?

Wednesday 10th June 9.30-11.00: Parent Forum; Preparation for Adulthood (PfA).

Thursday 11th June 9.30-11.30: Bookable drop in with Family Liaison.

Friday 19th June: Student Council Father's Day Sale

Monday 22nd June 9.30-11.00: Social Coffee morning.

The drop-in sessions with me are an offer to parents/carers who want to discuss non class related matters. This includes but is not limited to...

[Letter regarding the events](#)

Join the FoPHS 100 Club!



School Calendars

[Term dates 2025-26](#)

[Term dates 2026-27](#)

[Events calendar](#)
[2025-26](#)



Free School Meals: Important update:

Changes to Free School Meals effective September 2026.

We have reviewed the impending changes to eligibility to Free School Meals (FSM) whereby any child in a household on Universal Credit will be entitled to a free school meal.

A new system will be in place from 1st June.

There will be 2 categories:

Targeted FSM: This is for those meeting the existing threshold; Annual household income (recorded on your Universal Credit statement under deductions) is £7400 per annum or less. This is £616.67 per month maximum.

Expanded FSM: This is the new category covering households who are claiming Universal Credit where the household income is above that of Targeted FSM.

Changes to processes: We will liaise with North Tyneside after 1st June to confirm as there is a form which will be available from the Department for Education on that date. Here is what we know:

Those who were eligible under EVER 6 (were eligible for free school meals within the last 6 years) will only be eligible under the new categories.

Transitional protections: those who were transferring from legacy benefits (Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance) to Universal Credit will be eligible under the new categories.

Evidence must be provided annually and NOT as with the current system at the end of each key stage.

Please be assured that we will work to ensure that every eligible child receives a free school meal, but we must state that if evidence is requested and not provided, we will be unable to provide a free school meal.

I will liaise with North Tyneside about the vouchers currently provided to eligible families. This will be after June 1st.

We expect to have communication from North Tyneside after this date.

[Here is a link to the government information:](#)

Student Council.

They will be holding a Father's Day sale on Friday 19th June and would greatly appreciate donations of gifts to sell. A reminder that we cannot sell alcohol to children, and we are a nut free school. Donations can be sent in for the attention of Amanda Waugh.



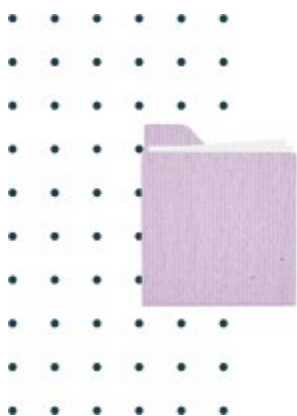


Online Safety Information:

The link to the Online safety information can be found on the school website under the heading "Parent and carers area", then "online safety" from the dropdown menu.

[View the online safety blogs here](#)

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



Here is some useful information on why you should make a claim for credit only ESA (or Universal Credit/LCWRA). I have many conversations with parents about this scenario. If a parent is claiming Universal Credit and the young person remains in education or moves to college both child benefit and the disability elements will continue until their 20th birthday. However, if a parent is relying on these payments to support their young person.

Credits only ESA claims

If you have a young person who is likely to remain in full time, non-advanced education past the point where they drop off your UC claim, claiming UC in their own right is not just a case of sticking a claim in....because they're in full time education.

Being in full time education is usually an automatic disqualification from claiming UC, unless certain exemptions apply.

One of these exemptions is having an award of LCW/LCWRA aswell as PIP/DLA.

A route to get the LCW/LCWRA award in place prior to claiming UC is to make a credits only ESA claim. There's no payment involved but the claim is handled in the exact same way a paying ESA claim would be. The assessment process is the same, the LCW/LCWRA award holds the same weight here.

This means when your YP comes off your claim they'll be in a position to make their own UC claim having already established LCW/LCWRA previously, on the ESA claim.

You'll need a fit note, if the YP has an appointee the appointee will need to claim via the helpline (not online - see photo for phone number) & then you follow the instructions & complete the paperwork when requested to do so.

I've given some links below, about claiming & some great resources from Contact also, who I would strongly recommend getting in touch with for support if needed.

If your YP has an appointee, then Contact go over the fact that as they won't have work commitments, claiming UC whilst in full time education shouldn't be an issue (even without an award of LCW/LCWRA), because them being on a course of education can't be incompatible with work related requirements....because they don't have any work related requirements, because they have an appointee. This would probably need support from Contact or another similar organisation as whilst this is logical, arguing it to UC might be another matter.

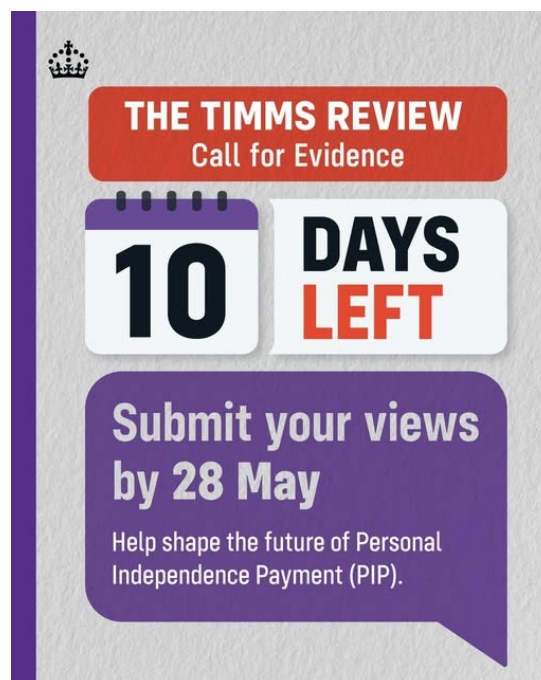
**And a reminder, the assessment period that the 31st August after your YP's 19th birthday falls in for you is the first AP you'll see there being no child element or disabled child element (if applicable) on your award. UC will not ever, never ever pay for a YP past this point. What UC consider to be a qualifying young person & what Child Benefit do differ.

Department for Work and Pensions - DWP

There is not long left to share your views on the future of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) as part of the Timms Review.

The Call for Evidence will close on 28 May 2026.

Find out how to take part and share your views: <https://ow.ly/IRNU50ZOWrp>



I.P.S.E.A

I shared this webinar information recently; it was free of charge. Here is information for those interested to access the webinar recording:



Our webinar 'Understanding home to school/college transport' is now available to view on our website.

It will explain the law and guidance regarding home to school or college transport, including:

- ◆ Where to find the law and guidance regarding home-to-school transport
 - ◆ Who is eligible for home-to-school transport
- ◆ The different entitlement for children and young people of different ages
 - ◆ Key points from the latest guidance
- ◆ Where to find further support and challenge decisions

[Watch now](#)





Newcastle United Foundation:




Newcastle United Foundation works with students in our school and has done for many years. Here is some information about half term courses:

Returning this May half-term, Holiday Courses are open to boys and girls of all abilities.

 Tuesday, May 26 – Friday, May 29

 9am – 3.30pm daily

 Berwick, Ashington, Gosforth, Wallsend

- ✓ Learn new skills and make friends
- ✓ Take home a Newcastle United medal
- ✓ Enjoy fun games and small-sided matches
- ✓ Led by friendly, experienced coaches

Spaces limited, book now

Want more information? Check out...

[Website: What We Do](#)

[Facebook Page](#)



May Half Term Holiday Activities

Activity sessions for children with SEND and additional needs.
Relaxed & friendly sessions full of sports, games and activities to get involved in.
Siblings are welcome too!

Tuesday 26th May
10am-12nn
Nissan Sport & Leisure Complex, Sunderland, SR5 3NS
Ages 8 years plus
£4 pp

Wednesday 27th May
Wheelchair Basketball
5-6pm
Blyth Sports Centre, NE24 5BT
Ages 8 years plus
£4 pp

Thursday 28th May
10.30-12.30pm
Cedars Academy, Low Fell, Gateshead, NE9 6QD
Ages 8 years plus
£4 pp

SEND Fun Session:
join us for soft play, sensory room, climbing and swings, role play area and outdoor space.

Thursday 28th May
1-3pm
Cedars Academy, Low Fell, Gateshead, NE9 6QD
Ages 4-10 years
£5 pp

Book now:
<https://smilethroughsport.com/whats-on/>

 @smilethroughsport
  @smiletsport

Smile Through Sport

🎉 May Half Term Holiday Activities 🎉

With the half term holidays next week, check out our activity sessions below...

👉 activity sessions in [#Sunderland](#) and [#Gateshead](#), as well as a wheelchair basketball session in [#Blyth](#) for those age 8 plus.

👉 fun session in [#Gateshead](#) for those age 4-10 years.

[Book here](#)

Tim Lamb Centre

See below; this was shared on our Facebook page as soon as I saw it.

We have a fantastic opportunity for football lovers!! Thursday 28th May. Stadium tour and Pizza.

Unfortunately, places are not guaranteed but any nominations made today/tomorrow will be put forward. A valid membership is required. Parents must attend the full session.

Please email Joanna@pathways4all.co.uk

I have included 2 posters with details of their half term activities

What's On 

Tim Lambs Childrens Centre 

May Half Term

25th - CLOSED Bank Holiday
 26th - Stay & Play
 27th - An Animal Encounter - *booking required*
 28th - Stay & Play
 29th - Bouncy Castle
 30th - Stay & Play
 31st - Stay & Play

Please note we will be open for stay & play 10am - 4pm on the days of entertainment - no booking required.



 *Pathways 2 Nature*



Wednesday 27th May 10.30-14.30 (school holiday staffed session every Wednesday)

£30 per session

Staffed sessions In Our Tipi Area, Meet, feed and groom our animals. Join in our Nature arts and crafts. Unfortunately we do not have staffing for Itol support. A valid membership of at least 6 months is required. Ages 7+

SEN Support Space:

Providing Inclusive recreation across Gateshead and beyond.

Registered Charity no. 1209770.

[To receive event info sign up here:](#)





[Here is the link to their Facebook page:](#)

I've found this poster on their page; there may be more in the coming days.



West Northumberland Family Hubs


What's On this half term holiday - May 2026



<p>Prudhoe Family Hub</p> <p>Tuesday 26th May Baby Stay and Play (ages 0-18 months) 10-11am</p> <p>Wed 27th May SEND Safe Space (All ages, additional needs and disabilities) 9.30-11.30am</p> <p>Thursday 28th May Family Stay and Play (All ages) 10-11.30am</p> <p>Friday 29th May Family Stay & Play at Eastwoods Park (All ages) 10-11.30am at Eastwoods Park, NE42 5DX</p>	<p>Haltwhistle Family Hub</p> <p>Tuesday 26th May Go Outside & Play at Walltown Country Park Greenhead, CA8 7HZ (All ages) 1-3pm</p> <p>Wed 27th May SEND Safe Space (All ages, additional needs and disabilities) 1-3pm</p> <p>Thursday 28th May Buggy Walk (All ages welcome) Meet at 1pm outside the Warm Welcome, Haltwhistle Methodist Church Hall, NE49 0AX</p>	<p>Hexham Family Hub</p> <p>Tuesday 26th May Calm Stay and Play (All ages, additional needs and disabilities) 10-11am</p> <p>Wed 27th May Family Stay and Play (All ages) 10-11am</p> <p>Thursday 28th May SEND Safe Space (All ages, additional needs and disabilities) 9.30-11.30am</p> <p>  Find us on Facebook & Instagram @WestFamilyHubs</p>	<p>Bellingham Family Hub</p> <p>Thursday 28th May Family Stay and Play at the Park (All ages) 10.30-11.30am at Bellingham Jubilee Play Park, NE48 2JS (Weather dependant)</p> <p> Become a Family Hub Member! Scan the QR code or visit nland.cc/threg</p> <p> Find us online! Scan the QR code or visit nland.cc/familyhubs</p>
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The Owl Tree Community Nest

 Step into the farmyard for a magical sensory storytelling adventure with our friends at [Star Bright Arts](#) 

Their Farmyard Friends Sensory Story Party is packed with interactive fun, using movement, sensory play and Makaton to bring stories to life in a relaxed and inclusive space. Designed for children of all ages and abilities, it's a lovely chance to explore, play and connect together 

📍 At The Owl Tree Community Nest, NE3

📅 Thursday 28th May

🕒 Sessions at 10am & 11.30am

💷 £6 per family

📖 [Book here in Upcoming Events:](#)



Singing Hands

I have been asked to share the information below.

Suzanne and Anna from the Singing Hands are coming in to school on Thursday 4th June to lead a day of songs, music and Makaton signing!

. We will be enjoying a range of songs including action rhymes, Disney songs, songs from musicals and pop songs!

We will be sharing our new signed school song too!

Julie Goldblatt has asked me to share with parents who might like to take their children along to the private event.

“We are reaching out from The Special Lioness to ask whether you would kindly be able to share our poster for our upcoming Singing Hands event with your families and community.

Singing Hands will be joining us on 6th June from 11am–12pm at Barley Mow Village Hall. The event is open to the whole family and promises to be a fantastic experience for children and adults alike.

Tickets can be purchased through our website www.thespeciallioness.com.

This is something not to be missed, Singing Hands very rarely come up North, and we have been lucky enough to secure one of those rare opportunities. We know it is going to be an amazing session and would love as many families as possible to have the opportunity to attend”.

Singing Hands

THE SPECIAL LIONESS

We are proud to bring you a private exclusive show from Singing Hands

6th June 2026 @11am
Barley Mow Village Hall,
Bedford Avenue, Birtley
DH3 2AJ

THIS IS GOING TO BE VERY POPULAR SO GRAB YOUR TICKETS QUICKLY!!

£12 PER PERSON

www.TheSpecialLioness.com

SCAN ME!

Stephenson Steam Railway; Wallsend

Join us for Teddy Bear Train Rides on Monday 25 May 🐻 Jump on board with your furry friend on Monday 25 May and enjoy puppet shows and plenty of fun down in the Woodland Walk!

🎫 Tickets on sale now, from £7

Find out timings and more: <https://shorturl.at/GWjwm>



Nobles Funfairs

🌈 Low Noise Sessions at Northmoor's Giant Funfair 🌈


We know how important it is for everyone to feel welcome at the fair.


For so many people, the funfair is a place full of excitement, lights, music and memories, but we also know that, for some children and adults, the noise and busy atmosphere can feel a little overwhelming.

That's why we introduced our Low Noise Session last year, giving visitors with sensory sensitivities, autism, additional needs, or anyone who prefers a calmer setting the chance to enjoy the fair in a way that feels right for them. 💙

Last year was busier than we expected, and while it was amazing to see so many people benefit from it, we also understand that crowds can still feel overwhelming.

So this year, we're doing it twice to try and make it even more enjoyable and accessible.

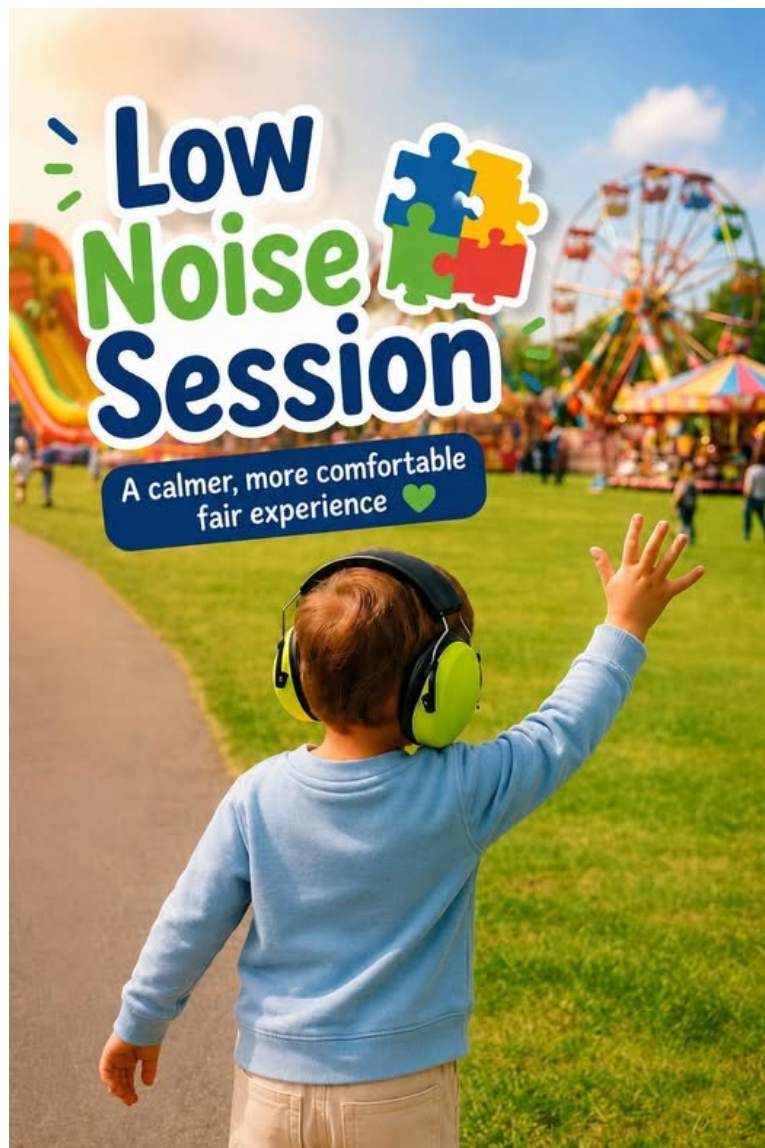
 Tuesday 26th May 2026

 Thursday 28th May 2026

 1pm until 2pm on both days


During these sessions, the music will be turned right down to help create a calmer and more relaxed fairground experience.

Northmoor's Giant Funfair is taking place from Saturday 23rd May to Sunday 31st May 2026 at North Moor Lane Field, behind Farrington Social Club, Sunderland, SR3 1TJ.



North East Family Fun

Here is a list of things to do over half term. They are not SEN/accessible specific but may still be of interest.

30+ FREE Days Out for May Half Term 

23 May : FREE Whitley Bay Carnival

23 May : FREE Teddy Bear's Picnic Day at Ridley Park, Blyth

23 May : FREE Create a Seascape Collage at Oriental Museum Durham

23 May : FREE Classic & Vintage Vehicle Rally at Hopetown Darlington

23 & 24 May : FREE Entry Amble Puffin Festival

24 May : FREE Buddha's Birthday Activity Day at Oriental Museum Durham

24 May : FREE Vintage Wares & Wonders Day at Hopetown Darlington

25 May : FREE 1940s Day at Hopetown Darlington

26 May : FREE Storytime for Under 5s at Great North Museum

26 May : FREE Tractor Day at Darlington Town Centre

26 May : FREE Manga Drawing Class for Teens at The Word

26 May : FREE Emergency Services Family Fun Day at Rising Sun Country Park Centre

26 May : FREE Activities with Newcastle United Foundation at Metrocentre (including PS5, Soft Darts, Table Football, Indoor Golf & Table Tennis)

27 May : FREE Outdoor Play for Under 5s at Segedunum Roman Fort

27 May : FREE Sketches & Scribbles at Great North Museum

27 May : FREE Museum Detectives at Oriental Museum Durham

27 May: FREE Teddy Bear's Picnic at Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens with Teddy Crown Making, Nature Trail, Seed Planting & Nature Crafts

27 May : FREE Kite Making at The Word

27 May: FREE Cereal Disco, Storytime, Play & Learn, Mark Making & Daytime Disco
Trike Performance at BALTIC

27 May: FREE Activities with Newcastle United Foundation at Metrocentre
(including PS5, Soft Darts, Table Football, Indoor Golf & Table Tennis)

28 May : FREE Plant your own Seeds & Museum Trail at Stephenson Railway

28 May : FREE Korean Paper Flower Making Workshop at Oriental Museum Durham
(8+)

28 May : FREE Make a Coat of Arms at the Museum of Archeaology Durham

28 May : FREE Garden Crafts at The Word

28 May : FREE Wildlife Friendly Gardening Workshop at Wharton Park

28 May : FREE Cereal Disco, Sewing Bees & Mark Making at BALTIC

28 May : FREE Dino Day at Ridley Park, Blyth

28 May: FREE Activities with Newcastle United Foundation at Metrocentre
(including PS5, Soft Darts, Table Football, Indoor Golf & Table Tennis)

29 May : FREE Moss Troopers Storytime at Great North Museum

29 May : FREE Skewer Sculpture Making at Oriental Museum Durham

29 May : FREE Make an Insect Feeder at Land of Oak and Iron

29 May : FREE Cereal Disco, Gardening Club & Mark Making at BALTIC

29 May : FREE Activities with Newcastle United Foundation at Metrocentre
(including PS5, Soft Darts, Table Football, Indoor Golf & Table Tennis)

30 May : FREE Pond Dipping at St Nicholas Park Gosforth

30 May : FREE Decorate a Paper China Tea Bowl at Oriental Museum Durham

30 May : FREE Emergency Services Day at Darlington Town Centre

30 May : FREE Cereal Disco and Drawing Tables at BALTIC

31 May : FREE Eid Celebrations at Darlington Market Hall

31 May : FREE Cereal Disco and Book Swap at BALTIC

[Visit their Facebook page here for other ideas:](#)



Committee:

Chair: Hannah Fuller (staff)

Vice Chair: Nicola Berriman (parent)

Treasurer: Ros Holden (parent)

Secretary: Catherine Trobe (staff)

Family Liaison: Eileen Robinson (role specific school appointment)

Fund-raising link: Rosie Quinn (staff)

As we did not have a parent present willing to take on the Chair role, Hannah, who has been Vice Chair for the last 2 years was proposed and voted in. The role of Chair is normally a 2 year one and we thank our outgoing Chair Ollie for his support over the last 2 years.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 8th July. As we tend to have more parents available in the morning, this will be from 9.45-10.45. Please come along and share your thoughts and suggestions. The final 6 of 12 100 club draws will be done too.

We are happy for people to join for the remainder of the year and the last 6 draws which will be done in July. For £12 you will receive 2 numbers. If you elect to pay by BACS or QR code please let me know so that I can track in finance.

[Join the 100 club here](#)

Facebook page:

This is a closed group for family and friends of Percy Hedley School, where you can share news and updates about school life. It is not for external professionals who may be working with families. To join, you need to answer the question stating your link with school.



Please note: this group is for sharing news and updates about school life and is not intended to discuss any issues around individual students, and as such all comments are moderated.

If you have a particular issue or concern, please contact school directly on 0191 216 1811.



Quote of the Week

Here is my quote for the end of term:

People who say they sleep like a baby don't usually have one.

Leo Burke



Contact details

Eileen Robinson: Family Liaison Officer
Email: e.robinson@percyhedley.org.uk
Telephone: 0191 2161811 ext. 3260.

