

Percy Hedley School's

Whole School Blog

News, Stars, Nurses! Mental Health Week! Hindu Temple Visit! & Smile Through Sport - from John & the PHS Team

Friday 15th May 2026

Hello again everyone

Fabulous to see some of you in school this week – thank you so much for coming. I know it's hard for some to get here for lots of reasons, but it really is great when we're able to interact in person, and it enriches our work the closer we can work with parents & carers on a range of issues

This Is Me is coming up soon, which is our terrific festival that happens every July – Jo & the team are planning that now

And of course the Prom isn't very far away either – take a look at the poster at the bottom of this blog

Some really interesting and exciting trips out and news this week – have a look at the Smile Through Sport and the trip to the Hindu Temple for starters. We've had a few technical issues this week across the company – some articles will have to go into next week's blog but that's OK! Take a look at Eileen's blog too, or read about the FoPHS or anything else on the website

Otherwise, we have one more week until half term and then the final half of the year, where some of the time will be planning for September and so looking at transitions of some kind for most pupils. But also have a lovely weekend. I hope you get to do what you want to do. Thanks again for your support

Cheers

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

School Council!

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

"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"

Great News! The School Council asked for more seating in the playground. This seemed like a good idea so the lovely FoPHS have agreed to help with buying what the students wanted. Watch this space and we'll show more. Thanks to all – the School Council & the FoPHS!



The other week the Student Council had a lot to discuss at the meeting. We agreed we would like to source some 'Leavers Hoodies'. We will send a letter home soon

We are also starting to collect any unwanted gifts you may have for our Father's Day Sale. This will be on Friday 19th June. The funds will be used around school; we are going to try and raise some funds for some outdoor seating for our main yard area

Lastly, Andy from the Wellbeing Team came to ask for some help to arrange a Talent show for our next Resilience Day which is 22nd May, we will be making some posters and making a schedule for the show



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!



BEING A WRITER

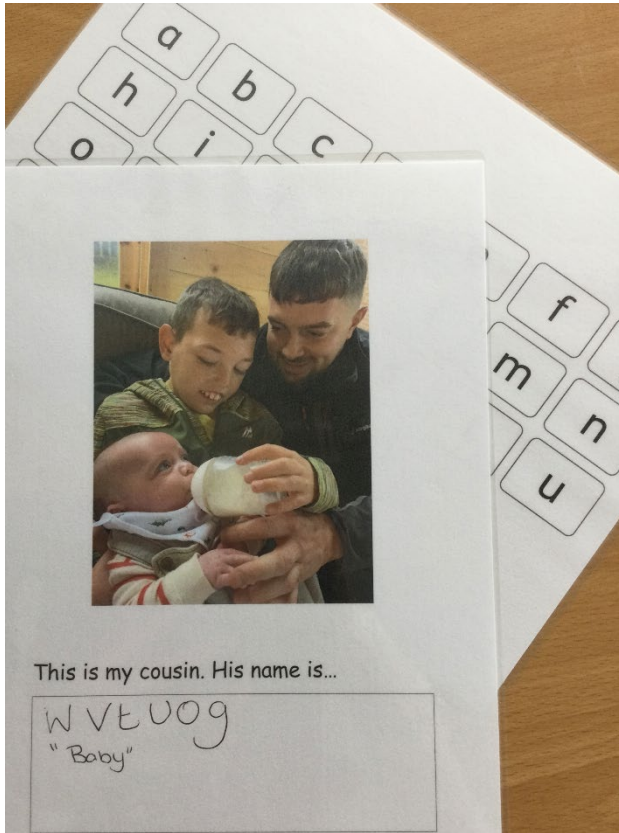
This week the literacy team have been all about writing - we delivered training to the ELTBA & Appropriate Accreditation LSAs all about writing, and we attended a network meeting of other special schools on the topic of writing, sharing our developments and learning from other schools

There are SO many skills woven into being able to write, and the work around writing may look very different in different classrooms - however it is all leading towards communication and independence. We have mentioned before on this blog about 'broadening the idea of writing' and being open to many different routes to writing (for example: mark making, drawing, handwriting, typing, dictating - to name just a few) and we have a lovely example to share this week of just that!

JoJo has been developing his understanding that he is a writer, and that the marks he makes have meaning. This is such an important step in writing development, as his Teacher Beth explains:

JoJo loves to mark make and write in lots of different mediums. He especially loves to draw pictures for his Mum and sister and write his name on them and write cards for his family on special occasions. Today he shared news with his class about feeding his new baby cousin. He was asked to write the baby's name, JoJo calls him "Baby". He chose the letters and the adult wrote them down. When he had finished spelling he told the other adults in the class that it said 'baby'. He also wrote his

name for his new coat peg this week. He was able to tell the adults that it said 'JoJo'. He is very proud of his writing, and rightly so!



JoJo has shown here that he understands that print has meaning. Whilst they are not the right letters to spell 'baby' it still reinforces his belief that is a writer and that his marks have meaning too - this is so important! The staff team modelled their spelling of the word so he is exposed to the letters and sounds in the word, and staff will continue to model in this way. We can't wait to see what he shares next, well done JoJo! Writing STAR!!!

Happy Reading & Writing!





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 & it's one of our priorities this year

LOCAL COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Finding the right activities and local support can feel challenging so we are here to continue our local community information to support your community access and encourage Healthy lifestyles. This week we look to Sunderland who has a growing range of inclusive services, groups and community activities designed to support children with a wide range of needs.

Sunderland SENDIASS

Sunderland provides independent advice and guidance for families of children and young people with SEND. They can support parents and carers with EHCP advice, understanding SEND processes and finding local opportunities available across Sunderland

Website: <https://sunderlandsendiass.co.uk/>

Breathing Space is a Together for Children funded initiative that provides valuable space, time and support for young people with additional needs who are at risk of suspension/exclusion. Breathing Space offers positive experiences and

opportunities to improve emotional wellbeing and support young people to remain in education.

Website: <https://www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/SEND>

Family Hubs & Social support

Sunderland Family Hubs

Family Hubs across Sunderland provide supportive spaces for families to access advice, wellbeing support and inclusive activities. Many hubs offer SEND-inclusive stay and play opportunities, early development sessions and family support services aimed at helping children thrive while supporting parents and carers too.

Find out where the local hubs are: <https://www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/family-hubs>

Grace House

Grace House supports children and young people with disabilities and complex needs through a wide range of specialist activities. Families can access sensory play opportunities, youth clubs, holiday sessions and family support services, helping children build confidence, friendships and independence in a safe and nurturing environment.

Website: <https://gracehouse.co.uk/who-we-are/>

Physical activities and healthy living

Active Sunderland provides inclusive physical activity and wellbeing programmes for children and young people of all abilities. These activities help encourage confidence, participation, movement and healthy lifestyles through disability sport, youth fitness and accessible wellbeing programmes.

Website: <https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/activesunderland>

The Active Sunderland Healthy Lifestyles Programme supports families with physical activity, healthy habits and even family wellbeing. The programme encourages children and families to enjoy movement and make positive lifestyle choices together in supportive and accessible ways.

Website: <https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/HealthyLifestylesProgramme>

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme offers free or low-cost holiday activities for children and young people, including SEND-inclusive provision.

Activities often include sports, creative sessions, games and food education, helping students' stay active, social and engaged during school holidays.

Website: <https://www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/HAF>

We hope these local services and activities help the families of our students in this local area discover more supportive opportunities to encourage and help healthier lifestyles!!



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



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?



Smile Through Sport!

On Wednesday, we were visited by Smile Through Sport, who delivered a fantastic workshop for students from our LSTE pathway. Students had the opportunity to meet Neil and Jenni, who introduced them to six different activities ranging from boccia skills to ten-pin bowling and parachute games.

The students had a fantastic morning listening to music, having fun, and competing both with and against each other. They were also delighted to receive medals and certificates at the end of the session — well done everyone!





Smile through Sport!

More Smile Through Sport – from Beth!





3BE all had a great time at the Smile Through Sport Event this week. Everyone tried at least one new activity! Our favourite activity was definitely the parachute games!



Chris Carr's Cool Class!

Always excited to see what this great group have been doing...what's the news?
Ooooooh, whales!!!! Excellent! What a class this is!



Under the Sea with The Snail and the Whale!



This week, our classroom was filled with wonderful animal adventures as we explored life under the sea! We were inspired by the beautiful story of The Snail and the Whale and discovered lots of amazing ocean animals along the way.

We had great fun exploring repeating patterns. We said the colours and shapes out loud to help us hear the pattern, then worked out what would come next to keep it going. We created repeating patterns in lots of different ways using animal toys, the interactive board, paint, and colourful shapes.



We put our measuring skills to the test by making some delicious raspberry ruffles. We carefully weighed out the ingredients and mixed the jelly and coconut together. They smelled wonderfully sweet! With a little help, we melted the chocolate and poured it over the top. Once it had cooled and hardened, we cut it into pieces and enjoyed sharing our tasty treats together.

Our classroom was transformed into a seaside sensory beach this week! We used our senses to explore rough sand, smooth stones, slimy seaweed, and cold water. We used lots of descriptive words to talk about what we could see, feel, and smell.



As part of our ocean animal topic, we enjoyed some exciting fishing games. We listened carefully to words, identified the first sound, and fished out the correct letter. We also rolled a dice, counted the dots, and caught the matching number to feed to our very hungry shark!



Early Years – The Ducklings!

It's always so good to hear about what Kate & the team have been doing with their week. Such a lovely class



This week we have continued our learning through our focus story "Aaaaargh, Spider!" The children have really enjoyed listening to the story and joining in with the repeated refrains, using musical instruments and props to bring the story to life. It has been lovely to see them beginning to anticipate what comes next and joining in more confidently



We have also been developing our fine motor skills by cutting along lines that spiders had “made”, including straight, wavy and zig zag lines. Some children also had a go at using pencils to follow and trace these lines, helping to build their control ready for early writing. In the creative area, we explored real pictures of spiders which sparked lots of interest. The children then used paint to create their own spider pictures, and we loved seeing all their different ideas



A real highlight of the week was making rocky road. The children did a fantastic job crushing the biscuits, mixing everything into the chocolate and decorating with marshmallows and sprinkles. They were very proud of their delicious creations



We also took part in a Mat Man session with Heddy. The children showed good listening skills as they built Mat Man. This helps to prepare them for early writing as they build and talk about different body parts. In ELS, we have been exploring voice sounds. The children loved joining in with “boing, boing” as they jumped like bouncy balls, “shh” with their finger to their lips and “ch, ch, ch” as they moved like trains



Therapy Stars of the Week

With Lori!

Ahmed and Michael!



Key Driver: Independence

Therapy Stars of the Week go to Ahmed F and Michael K for the fantastic progress they have made in developing their confidence and independence within the community

This term's focus has been on broadening community access and increasing flexibility when visiting new environments

Ahmed and Michael considered accessibility, travel routes, budgeting and time management, helping them to develop important functional life skills linked to independent living and active community participation

During a community visit, the guys successfully visited a café and independently ordered their own food and drinks. Afterwards, Ahmed chose to buy tea from a local halal shop, carefully managing his budget and ensuring he had enough time and money to catch the bus back to school

Experiences like these play an important role in helping students build confidence when accessing different places within the community, developing independence, problem-solving skills and a greater understanding of the services and environments around them

They've done this with Lori! Great work! Have a look at some pictures below. Well done boys – Therapy STARs!!!





Yum!



Hindu Temple Visit with Richard

On Monday students from 4MM 5LA and Richard's humanities class visited the ISCKON Hindu temple where they learnt a little more about the Hindu culture. Students were greeted by Kirtida who very kindly let us join her listening to prayers, asking questions, games, singing, dancing, drumming and finally trying on Hindu clothing. The students had a fantastic time





Take a look at the students joining in!



Parents Open Afternoon with LSTE Pathway

Kasia & Tracy hosted a lovely afternoon on Tuesday where parents came in – thank you for making the journey. Let’s hear what Kasia has to say about it and see some of Lauren’s pictures

A massive thank you to all the families who joined us for Learning Skills Through Engagement Pathway Open Afternoon on Tuesday! Your energy, smiles, and support made the day truly special. It was fantastic to see parents connecting with staff and students, and we loved sharing a glimpse of school life with you all. We can’t wait to welcome you back for more fun and learning together!



Love it when families visit!



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. Let's see what they're talking about this week

International Nurses Day 2026

It was International Nurses Day 2026 on Tuesday, 12 May 2026. This annual event falls on the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, and serves as a global moment to honour the dedication, skill, and compassion of nurses.

The theme this year is "Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives"

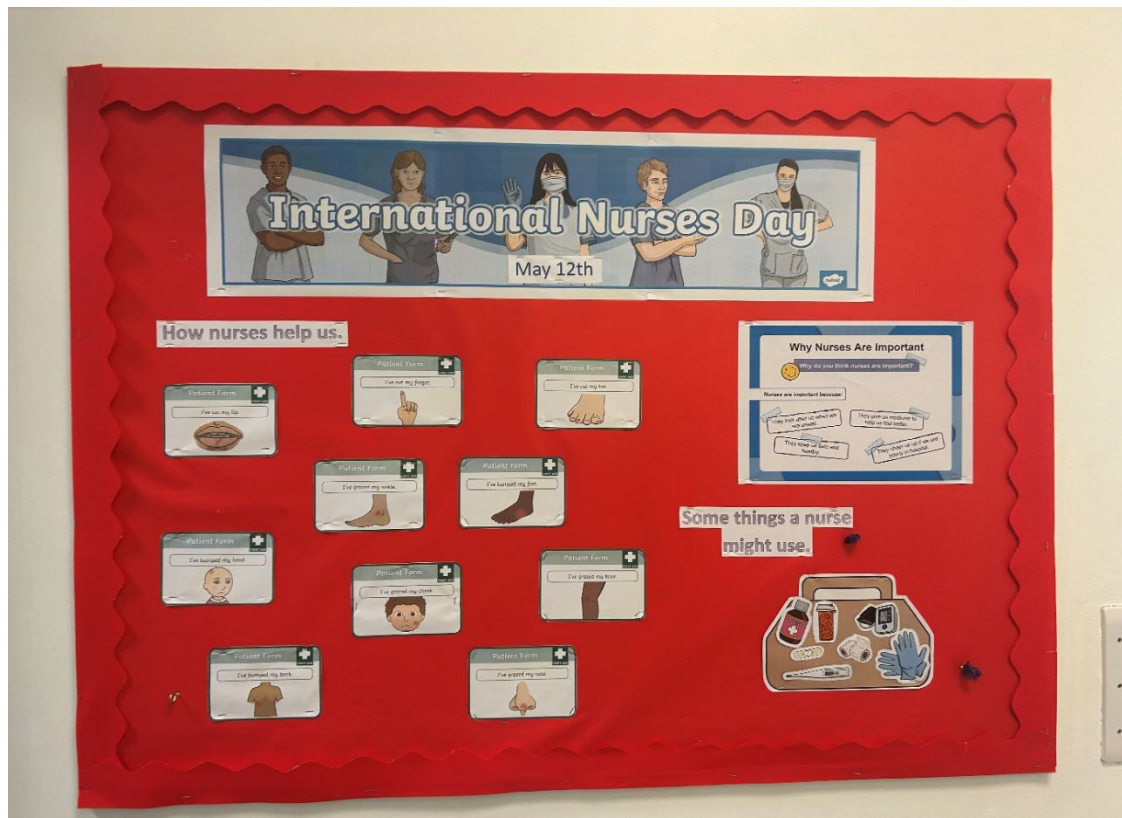
The theme is set by the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and focuses on the need to empower the nursing workforce. This includes ensuring nurses have safe working environments, encouraging nurses to take on leadership roles and influence healthcare policy. It also highlights how specialised education, and resources allow nurses to use their full skills to improve patient outcomes.

Why It Matters for Our School

School nursing is a skilled profession that combines science with caring.

International Nurses Day is an opportunity to highlight how as school nurses in Percy Hedley School we manage the health, safety, and wellbeing of our students every day.

Our notice board shows the role of the school nurse and how the nurses help our students.



Happy International Nurses Day



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

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**

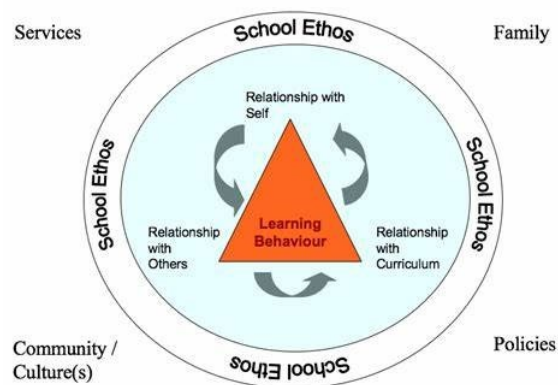


Figure 1: Behaviour for Learning conceptual framework



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!



The focus of our next Parent Forum on Wednesday 20th May is “Decision making for your young adult”

There will be a presentation covering

Mental Capacity Act

MENCAP signposting

Deputyship

Lasting Power of Attorney

Wills and Trusts

The aim of these meetings is to ensure that parents/carers are prepared as best they can be for their young people’s transition to adulthood and the changes that occur

The hybrid model is working well, enabling parents/carers who cannot attend in person to join in

If you have questions relating to any aspect of Preparation for Adulthood please speak with your class team or email:

PfA Lead: Hannah Fuller Hannah.fuller@percyhedley.org.uk, Careers lead: Louise Finlay l.finlay@percyhedley.org.uk or Family Liaison Officer: Eileen Robinson e.robinson@percyhedley.org.uk

Here is the link to our PfA resources: <https://www.percyhedley.org.uk/percy-hedley-school/preparing-for-adulthood-resources/>

If you wish to join the forum on TEAMS here is the link: bit.ly/4u3qeKK



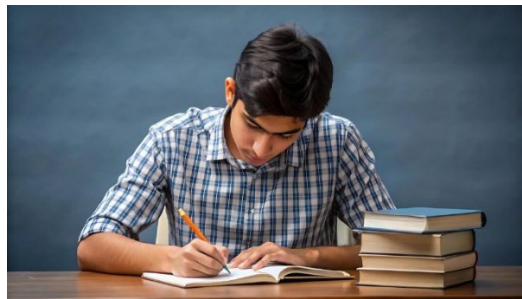
Exams!

Exams are going on at the minute!

We're very grateful to all parents, and admiring of all students, who are doing exams – not the nicest part of school, but important for some of our students for now and for the future. It's just about doing what's right for you

Well done to everybody involved with them, and thanks to all who administer, arrange, invigilate or help prepare their children for them in any way! Especially Kat!

Cheers and good luck to all!



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



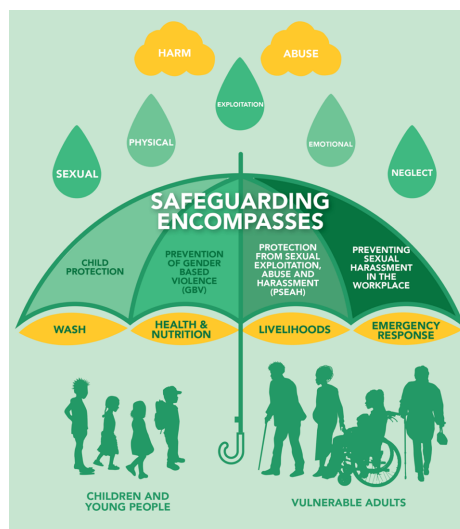


Safeguarding



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!

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.

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](#)



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

Since the start of this Summer term, we've had 11 requests for holidays during term time

This is a significant quantity

Just a reminder that these won't be approved under any circumstances. Being in school regularly makes a big difference to students' learning and progress, and time off during term can really impact that. We'd really appreciate it if holidays are planned outside of term dates. Requests during term time will continue to be declined. Please look to plan ahead and schedule those exciting family moments together around the set school holidays avoiding any unauthorised periods of absence.

Thanks for your continued support

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

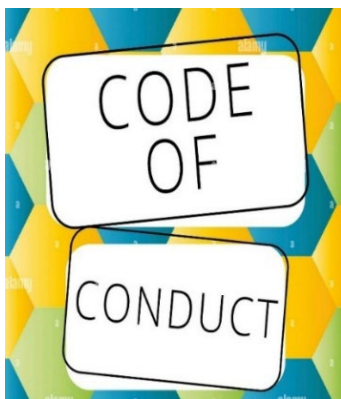
Email to class teacher or PHSattendance@percyhedley.org.uk before 9:30 on the day of the absence

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!



The current committee is

Chair: Ollie Teasdale (parent)

Vice Chair: Hannah Fuller (staff)

Treasurer: Ros Holden (parent)

Secretary: Tracy Smithson (staff).

Family Liaison Officer/co-ordinator: Eileen Robinson (staff)

Fund-raising link: Rosie Quinn (staff)

We held our AGM on Wednesday which was offered as in person or hybrid.

Further details will be shared next week.

The first 6 of 12 FoPHS 100 club draws were done and the winners are as follows:

27 - Paul Cummings

36 - John Suggate

33 - Nicola Berriman

12 - Hazel Whitney

29 - Amanda Stobbs

5 - Anne Telfer

47 numbers have been taken. Income for FoPHS is £282. Each winner will receive £23.50. We are happy for others to join for the remainder of the year, where £12 will get you 2 numbers.

Our funds remain healthy; as a result we have agreed to fund a request from the Student Council for 1 wheelchair accessible table and 2 x 3 seater benches for the playground. The student council has decided to manage their own funds going forward, so the ring-fenced funds will be transferred once I arrange the process with finance/SLT and Amanda Waugh. FoPHS will continue to support the student council with it's endeavours.

We have funded the Annual Metro pass and Education National Trust passes, both of which represent good value for money and enable our students to access the community.

We appreciate the support from parents and have a small cohort who volunteer at events. If you would like to discuss the FoPHS, share your ideas etc please contact me at e.robinson@percyhedley.org.uk

The link to the FoPHS information on the website is here: <https://www.percyhedley.org.uk/percy-hedley-school/parent-and-carers/pta/>

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. 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



Emma!

Teamwork!

LSTE Star of the Pathway is Emma for teamwork and using her switch to read stories to her classmates!

STAR Emma!!! Well done!!!



ELTBA

Sinead!

Resilience!

ELTBA star of the week is Sinead from 3LL/RM for showing great resilience in Computing she found the new topic coding difficult but kept persevering and completed it all!!!

STAR!!!



APPROPRIATE ACCREDITATION

Some great folks in KS4!



POST-16!

Love our Sixth Form!!! It's a great time to be a student with lots of exciting things happening. Let's hear from Lisa who has stood out – there are some good ones!

Resilience and Respect

Gracey used her Voca to tell Lisa all about her weekend. She was brilliant!!!
Excellent communication and lovely conversations. STAR!!!

Resilience

Dominic for an excellent trial shift at Tesco, Kingston Park. Absolutely amazing feedback from Adam the home department manager. Well done Dominic. What an amazing start! STAR!!!

Kayden for trying many different new foods in Food tech. STAR!!!

Faith for having an amazing start in her work experience placement. 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 11th May

Mental Health Awareness Week 11-17 May

Mental Health Awareness Week | Mental Health Foundation

This year's theme is 'Action'.

From the website:

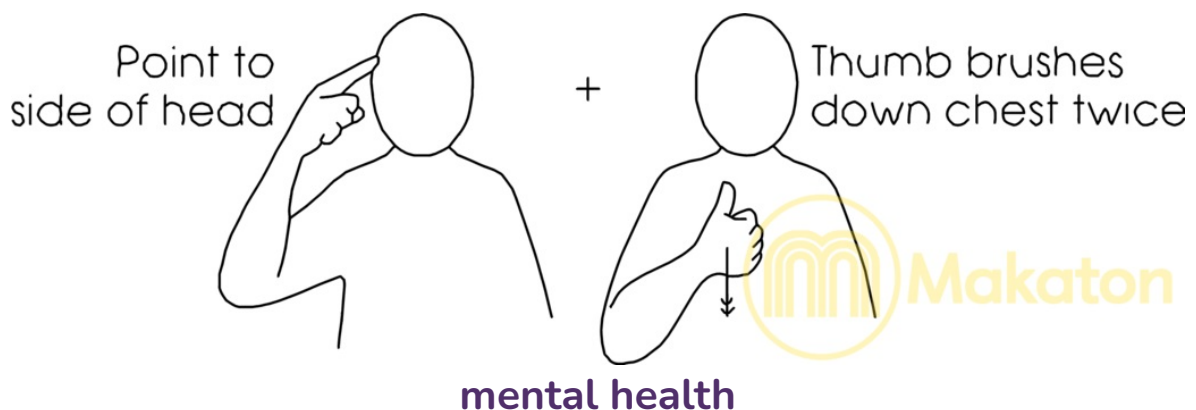
"This Mental Health Awareness Week we're asking people to join us in taking action to support good mental health. Even small actions can help us feel hopeful and less powerless. And while our individual actions matter, when we come together, we are even more powerful."

Mental health, okay, talk, listen, feel.

Here is my video:

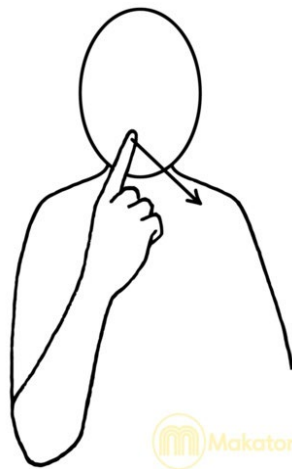
<https://youtu.be/jkvWu2C7CxE?si=4ekpj0iABpyEcl80>

Here are the signs:

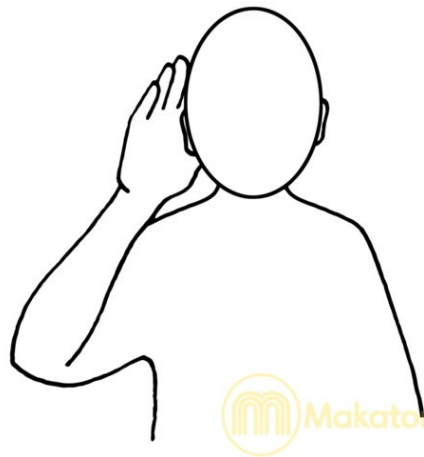




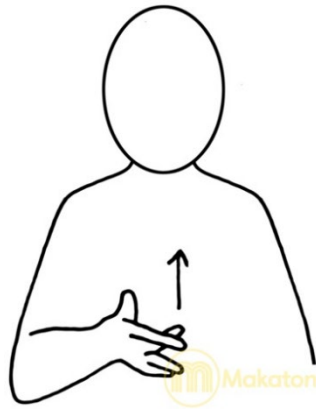
okay



talk



listen

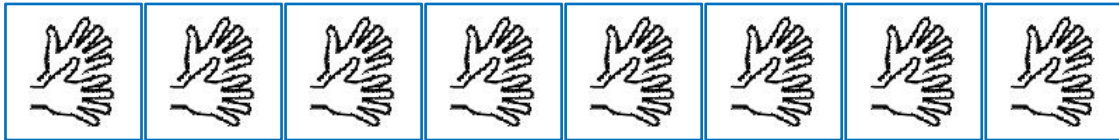


to feel (emotion)

Keep Signing!



Julie



And finally...



The invitations

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

Our Key Drivers

Communication, Wellbeing, Independence