

Percy Hedley School's

Whole School Blog

News, Stars, Assistive Technology, South Shields Surfing! & Panathlon - from
John & the PHS Team

Friday 8th May 2026

Hello again everyone

Only a four-day week this week! But still lots to talk about. I hope you had a good long weekend – it isn't that long until the next one either! There have been some lovely trips out this week – check out the surfing at South Shields, and some independent travel stories. And it's been great that some School Council wishes have been being translated into reality

Please do see if you have the time to fill out the Health Living Form so Jo & the team can look at what you say and work well on it. I know it can be a pain sometimes, but it does help us when you find the time to get us some feedback

It won't be long before we're arranging transition days for those moving classes or even moving on, and that can be a time of anxiety for all of us, so we'll be planning those as well as we can. Although it can be a difficult time thinking of changes, it can be exciting to look forward too

All the best anyway, and thanks for your support – all these summer-type times and activities are coming around now – so lots to talk about!

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!



Last 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!



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

We've mentioned a lot about different ways we can all read on this blog (multi- modal reading), and the different ways we support students to develop their reading (our reading cohorts) but another area that the literacy team are focusing on this year is the use of technology to support literacy

The Department of Education states 'Assistive Technology (AT) includes all products, services and systems that improve the health, functioning and independence of individuals'. We like to think about this as any piece of technology or tool that makes it easier for someone to do something! This could be a physical device or tool, a piece of software, or an app - anything that makes a task or life in general a bit easier - it's about overcoming barriers

Assistive Technology is definitely not limited to literacy, but there is a lot out there to support individuals with literacy and communication difficulties, and a lot of 'accessibility features' built into phones, tablets and computers now that everyone can make use of. Tools that can

change colours or size of text, read text out loud and allow you to dictate your message are standard on most devices and web browsers, and can be lifechanging for someone with literacy difficulties - but there's a lot more out there!

We're aware that this is an area where many of us can feel out of depth as technology continues to change and develop so quickly, and so it's essential that we're investing in the technology that's available for our students and continuing to learn as we go. I can't mention changing technology without mentioning Artificial Intelligence (AI) as it's difficult to escape from just now - but as a school we are carefully considering how we can use AT & AI safely and responsibly to best support our students and continue to improve their outcomes

This is going to be a big project over the next few years, and we'll be arranging parent training sessions to share the work we're doing through the next academic year. In the meantime if you have any particular questions or queries please get in touch with your child or young person's class team or email Becky on r.finn@percyhedley.org.uk



Becky Finn



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!

HYDROTHERAPY

Hydrotherapy is a fun way for our PHS students to engage and really enjoy exercise because the water helps them move more freely and comfortably. For our students following the MOVE programme, hydrotherapy can also be a great way to build confidence, strength, and independence.

The warm water supports the body and reduces pressure on joints and muscles. This can make movements such as walking, stretching, balancing, or reaching tasks feel easier than they do on land. Our student' can practise important MOVE skills in a safe and encouraging environment while also enjoying play and social interaction.

Look at our ELTBA students enjoying a group uno game in the pool!!



Our therapists have adapted the game to represent different activities such as pushing off the poolside like Toby and Wren!!



Hydrotherapy sessions can also be designed around each students' individual goals.

Activities may include floating games, supported standing or stepping, gentle exercises, or group activities that encourage communication and teamwork. These sessions can help improve physical development, coordination, and emotional wellbeing. Here we see Alessia working on improving her floating and developing her standing skills on the steps!



One of the best things about hydrotherapy is that it combines therapy with enjoyment. Students often feel relaxed, happy, and motivated in the pool, which can make learning new skills more exciting and rewarding. Look how happy Toby is

getting to spend last few minutes independently floating in with his float collar for support.



Through hydrotherapy and the MOVE programme working together, children are supported to achieve greater participation in school, at home, and in everyday life



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

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

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?



Surfin' PHS!

Throughout the end of the Spring term and into the Summer term, as part of PE, we took several students each week to the beach to experience adapted surfing 🌊🏄

What an amazing experience the students had being outdoors, enjoying the fresh sea air, the sound of the waves, people spending time together on the beach and the overall positive atmosphere around them

The sessions gave students the opportunity to experience surfing in a supportive and inclusive environment, helping to build confidence, communication, balance and resilience whilst having lots of fun in the sea riding the waves

It was fantastic to see so many smiles, laughter and memorable moments shared across the sessions. The students represented the school brilliantly and should all be very proud of themselves 🙌

Here are just some of the pictures taken over the weeks to date 📷





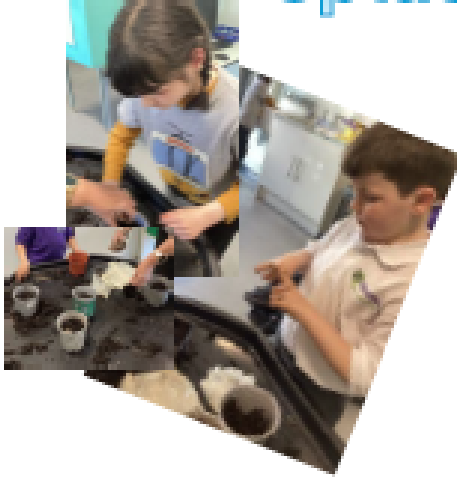
Surfing is the source, man!



Chris Carr's Cool Class!

Always excited to see what this great group have been doing...what's the news?

Growing plants and splashing about!



This week we became little gardeners as we investigated planting bulbs and seeds. We looked carefully at pictures and sequenced the instructions before getting busy with soil, pots, seeds and bulbs. The children loved getting their hands messy while planting and talking about what plants need to grow big and strong. We know we will need to look after them carefully by giving them plenty of water and sunlight. Once our plants are ready, we are excited to replant them in our school garden to help provide food for the bees!

Another highlight of the week was making our own play dough. The children gathered the ingredients, including flour, salt and water, before choosing their favourite colours to create their own special dough. Once it was ready, we celebrated with a very fun play dough disco! Squeezing, squashing and rolling the dough into different shapes is a fantastic way to build hand strength, helping to support mark making, drawing and early writing skills.



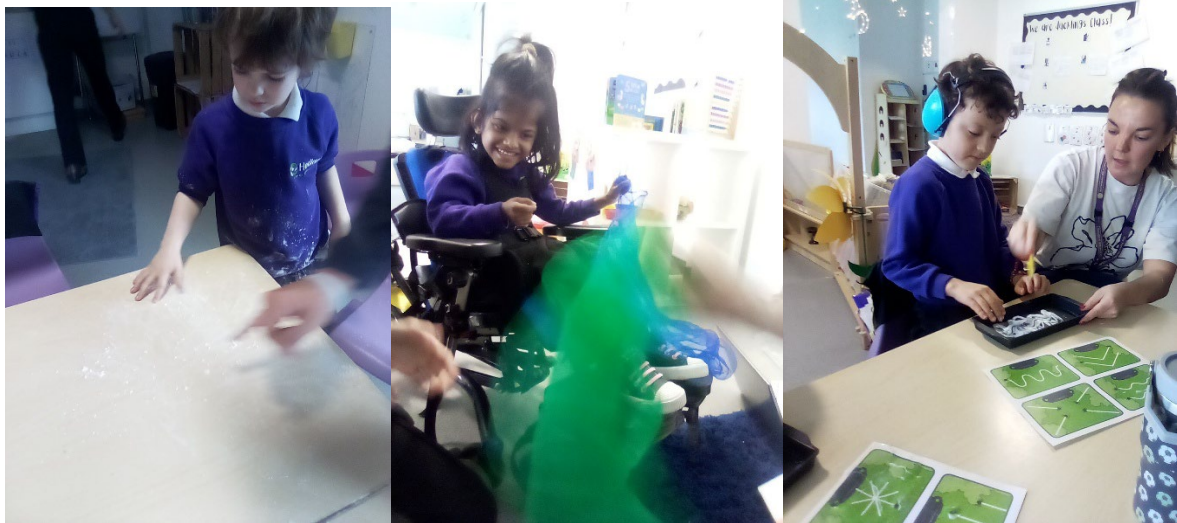
We also had lots of fun exploring capacity using a variety of containers, cups and jugs. The children enjoyed filling and pouring water while comparing different amounts and ordering containers from empty to full. We used lots of mathematical vocabulary such as "more" and "less" during our investigations. The best part was the excitement and laughter when the cups overflowed, and water splashed everywhere. Learning can be messy sometimes!





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. Let's play matching the pictures to Kate's story of the week too! Cheers, Ducklings!



This week, we have been reading *Aaaarrgghh! Spider!* and exploring the story through a range of sensory-based activities. We listened to music and used scarves to dance like the spider, used wipes to “clean” ourselves just like the spider, and crunched paper to imitate the spider eating its food



The children have also been very creative, making their own spider webs by wrapping string and adding glitter to create a sparkly effect, inspired by the webs in the story. They also explored sensory “sticky web” play using conditioner, where they created marks and patterns to represent the spider's movement



We have continued to enjoy the recent sunny weather, particularly during our outdoor water play. Some of the children explored the water using their hands and feet, with some choosing to sit in it to cool down!!



In ELS, we have been focusing on the letter 'c'. The children explored objects that begin with the sound 'c' and practised letter formation in a variety of engaging ways. A favourite activity was forming the letter in icing sugar (with a few sneaky tastes along the way!)



Therapy Star of the Week

Lena's Post-16 Class – Charlie, Jayden, Laiton, Logan!

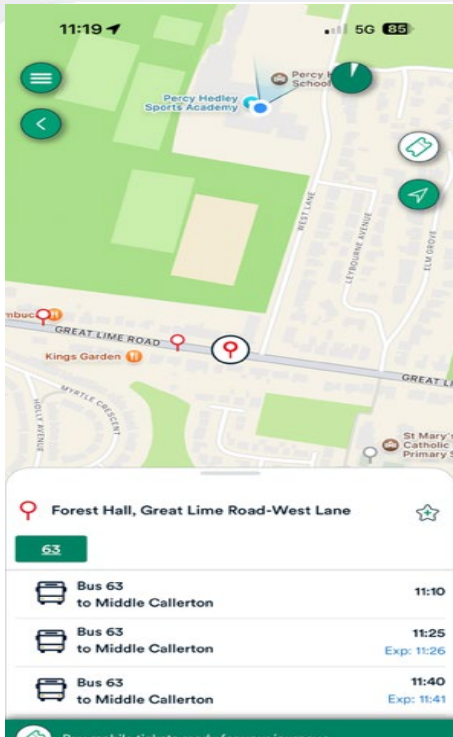
Independent Travel



This week's therapy stars are a group of students from Lena's class in P16 - (Charlie, Owen, Jayden, Laiton, Logan)

They have been working on their travel skills in a weekly travel group where they are practising using the stagecoach app on their phones in the community to track and locate the bus to the departing bus stop on Great Lime Road

The students can access the app, find the bus stop and suggest the time that the bus is due to arrive. They can also track the bus along the desired route to ensure that they get off at the correct stop. The students visit Chillingham Road weekly to practise their travel skills and whilst there, they have also utilised the opportunity to visit a range of diverse coffee shops to practise their functional money and communication skills. So far the students have enjoyed tasting a range of different drinks including Turkish coffee, iced teas and hot chocolates. Well done 6LWC!



Rebecca has worked with these students to remove any barriers they might face to being able to travel independently, an important skill for life! Well done guys!

Therapy STARS!!!



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



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**

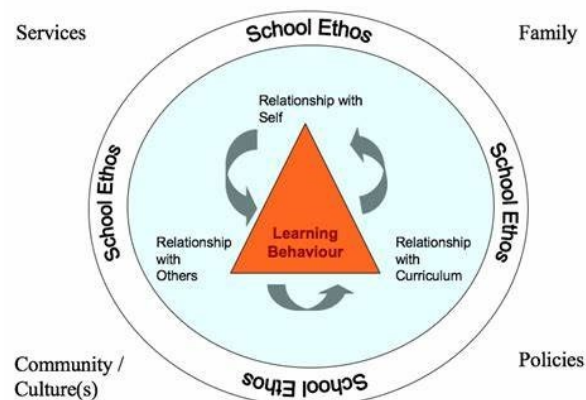


Figure 1: Behaviour for Learning conceptual framework



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



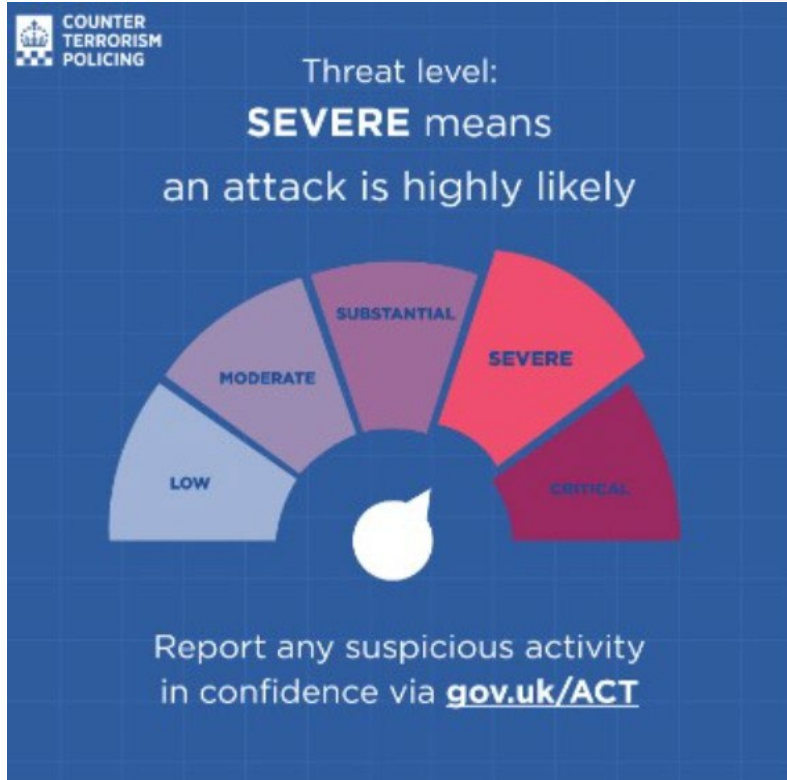
Safeguarding – this week, Vigilance!



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 we have completed a briefing with Northumbria Police due to the change in the national threat level. The threat level has recently increased from substantial to severe, following the recent antisemitic attacks, and the war in Iran

For school this means reviewing our Prevent policies and risk assessments in line with the work being completed by Northumbria Police and ensuring that we are confident with our invacuation and evacuation policies and procedures. Therefore we may need to complete drills for these again in the near future



In the UK there are five levels of threat

low - an attack is highly unlikely

moderate - an attack is possible but not likely

substantial - an attack is likely

severe - an attack is highly likely

critical - an attack is highly likely in the near future

How are threat levels decided?

The [Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre \(JTAC\)](#) including MI5 is responsible for setting the threat level for the UK from terrorism. Threat levels are kept under regular review

In reaching an assessment on the appropriate threat level, several factors are considered. These include

Available intelligence. This will often involve making judgements about the threat based on a range of information, which is often fragmentary, including the level and nature of current terrorist activity, comparison with events in other countries and previous attacks. Intelligence is only ever likely to reveal part of the picture.

Terrorist capability. An examination of what is known about what a terrorist could do based on previous attacks or from intelligence.

Terrorist intentions. Using intelligence and publicly available information to examine the overall aims of the terrorists and the ways they may achieve them including what sort of targets they would consider attacking.

Timescale. The threat level expresses the likelihood of an attack in the near term. We know from past incidents that some attacks take years to plan, while others are put together more quickly. In the absence of specific intelligence, a judgement will need to be made about how close an attack might be to fruition.

What does this mean for you?

Vigilance is vital regardless of the current national threat level. Sharing national threat levels with the general public keeps everyone informed. It explains the context for the various security measures (for example airport security or bag searches) which we may encounter.

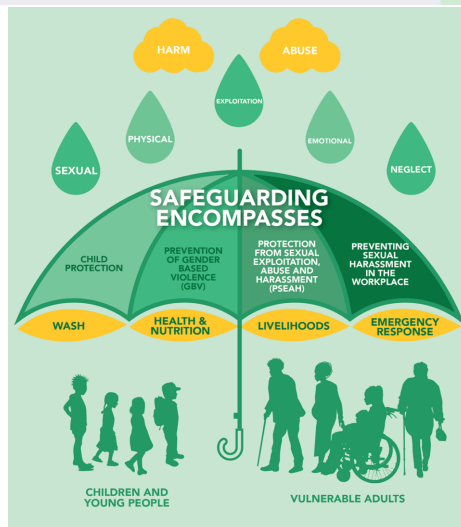
Changes to threat levels in themselves do not necessarily require specific responses from the public. They are a tool for security practitioners and the police to use in determining what protective security response may be required. If you are a business/site looking for advice and guidance - or even a general member of the public - go to the [NPSA website](https://www.npsa.gov.uk) or [ProtectUK](https://www.protectuk.gov.uk) for further support and guidance.

If you have information about possible terrorist activity, you can call the Anti-Terrorist Hotline confidentially on 0800 789 321. For warnings about urgent threats (for example, a possible bomb threat) please call 999.

More information about the threat levels can be found at: <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/threats-and-advice/terrorism-threat-levels>

<https://www.northumbria.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/t/terrorism-in-the-uk/current-threat-level-UK/>

As ever if there is anything that the DSL Team can help with, or if you have any queries or questions at all, then please don't hesitate to contact r.fletcher@percyhedley.org.uk or aylisha.holland@percyhedley.org.uk for anything like at all that you think is, or even may be, related to safeguarding



Safeguarding is a lot of different things!

Online Safety

The 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!



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!



AGM:

The FoPHS is required to hold an AGM by Parentkind, who support PTA's/Friends of organisations nationally. Advance notice has been given, with all members invited to nominate themselves or others for officer roles. Mine is a school appointed, role specific one.

Our AGM will take place on **Wednesday 13th May from 9.30-11.00**. We warmly welcome you to join us in person or online. You will hear the Chair and Treasurer reports (the reports are for the year up to August 2025) which are an overview of what we've achieved this year and our current funds. The first 6 draws for the 100 Club will be done. A letter has been sent out. 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)

[Here is the link to the letter:](#)

[Here is the TEAMS link for those who wish to join online:](#)

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

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

John!

Resilience!



John showed real resilience—
staying engaged and
continuing with our Hand
Skills activity with support.
Fantastic effort!

Well done, John the STAR!!!



ELTBA

Ellis and Chloe!

Teamwork!

The wonderful Ellis Lake and Chloe Kinghorn from 3RC did an amazing job representing their school at the latest 'Panathlon' event being held in Walker Dome



Together, and with students from all across school, they formed an extraordinary team and showed us all some brilliant examples of teamwork

Fabulous STARS!!!



APPROPRIATE ACCREDITATION

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

Teamwork

Teddy, Patrick, Joshua, Logan, James, Edward, Aurora, Zakaria, Ayaan, Shaye and Conrad for representing our school at this week's panathlon event!

Panathlon STARS!!! Woo-hoo!



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

Katie for always having a lovely positive attitude

Jack has been very helpful assisting peers and staff

Bobbie for having a wonderful attitude. He is always helpful and just gets on. He is great!!!

Resilience

Kristian has been producing some great maths work

Rosie has been working really well at physio

Andrew has worked really well in English

Lucas cycled 15 laps of the school yard without stopping. That`s 1½ miles. Amazing!!!

ALL STARS!!!



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 4th May

This week is Deaf Awareness Week

Deaf Awareness Week - RNID

Deaf Awareness Week 2026

Deaf Awareness Week (4-10 May) is a chance to recognise the experiences of people who are deaf or have hearing loss.

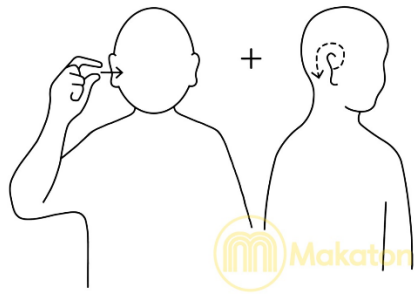
From visiting the shops to catching public transport, everyday communication can create invisible obstacles – but small, simple actions can make a big difference.



We support many students with hearing impairments in school. Here are some useful signs:



deaf/hearing impaired



 hearing aid



Bent V shape index
and middle fingertips
placed behind ear



cochlear implant



to hear



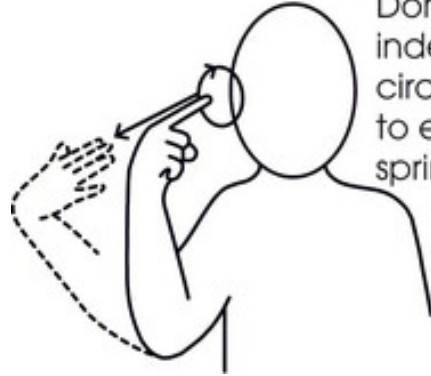
to listen

two fingers
are slightly
apart

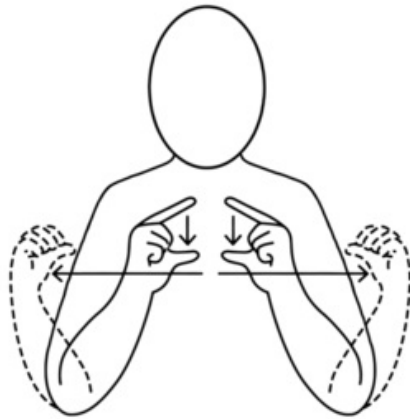


to look

Dominant
index finger
circles close
to ear, then
springs open



loud



quiet/soft (sound)

Keep signing!



Julie





And finally...



The invitations

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

Our Key Drivers

Communication, Wellbeing, Independence

