

Percy Hedley School's

Whole School Blog

News, Stars, My Journey My Future, Virtual Reality & Hallowe'en! – from John & the PHS Team

Friday 23rd October 2026,

Hello everyone, Happy Friday!

Well, here we are at the end of the first half term. It's always a very tiring one I think for everyone because so much is new so much needs to be learnt or got used to at least! People have coped very well, and thank you for your part in that, in terms of adapting and coping. I do also think that you get a lot of the effort that you put in at the beginning back during the rest of the year, and I'm sure that will be true too

MY Journey My Future was a great start – there are quite a few bits about it today from Louise, Hannah and Laurie today, and it was really nice to see so many parents & families there – thanks for coming! Louise already wants to do it again in the summer, and then every year after that – so it looks like a thing now!!!!

There are lots of other lovely things in today, and I've tried to make it so that there is something for everyone – a bumper crop for half term. Have a lovely week, hopefully in the autumn sunshine and we'll see you in ten days, when we start – the run-up to Christmas! Blimey!

Anyway, click on any of the usual links, other blogs and websites if you want to keep in touch with those things – otherwise thanks for your support and see you again soon

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

Attendance

The latest data from the Attendance Team

147 PUPILS	16/10/26
Current Week	90.75%
Year to date	90.03%
PA – attendance 50-90%, current week	9.52%
PA – attendance 50-90%, average	21.09%
SPA – attendance 0 - 50%, current week	6.8%
SPA – attendance 0 - 50%, average	4.76%
Unauthorised absences	0.62%
Unauthorised absences average	1.28%

We're now in the final week of our eight-week half term! Our attendance data has a slight reporting lag, so this week's update reflects figures up to the end of last week. Weekly attendance was 90.75%, taking our year-to-date attendance to 90.03%

We've also received the latest DfE attendance data this week. This has a longer reporting lag and currently covers the period up to and including Friday 9 October. The great news is that PHS continues to track above the national average for state-funded special schools, with attendance of 88.74% compared with 87.96% nationally, and year-to-date attendance of 89.91% compared with 88.24% nationally

This is fantastic news and something to be really proud of. Given the distances many of our pupils travel each day to get to school, it makes this achievement even more significant. A huge well done and thank you to all our pupils and parents for the continued effort and commitment

After this long half term, it's definitely time for a well-earned rest! We hope all our pupils and families have a relaxing and refreshing half-term break and return recharged for what promises to be another busy and exciting few weeks. The next half term will bring plenty of learning alongside all the fun and festivities of the run-up to Christmas, and we can't wait to welcome everyone back

School Council News

"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"

The Student Council makes a difference in our school!

It's great to have such a good School Council, who are actually making a difference! It really fits in with our ethos and the vibe of the school too. Thanks to them!



Our School Council Board!



Literacy

Becky, our Literacy Specialist Lead, leads a team that improve all aspects of literacy, including writing, oracy, reading, phonics, books & the library! Let's catch up with what the latest is from Becky

**GO
ALL
IN.**

National
Year of
Reading
2026

NON-FICTION NOVEMBER!

A bit of forward planning and dates for diaries today, as after half term we'll be kick starting 'Non-Fiction November', joining in with the national campaign from the 'Federation of Children's Book Groups'

This year's theme is 'Reading is an Adventure'. It will be encouraging children and young people to use non-fiction books in the outside world – not just to read them, but to use the information. This could be reading a book about bugs and then going on your own bug hunt, reading about a skill and trying it, reading about a place and visiting it! The topics for this year are: Bugs, Animals, People, Places, Nature, and Adventures at Home

This experiential learning is very much what we are about - can't wait to see what classes get up to!

Next half term we will also have local author Jodie James coming in to school to meet students and begin our writing project, and there'll be all the lovely festive literacy events that come at the end of term but we best not mention those just yet



Happy Reading & Happy Half Term!

Happy Reading!



Physical Development



Everything that is in the world of 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 always a priority! Heddy's up this week!

Understanding Sensory Processing

Every second, our brains receive a constant stream of information from the world around us and from inside our own bodies. Sensory processing is the way our nervous system takes in these sensory signals, organizes them, and turns them into appropriate physical, emotional, and behavioral responses.

In Occupational Therapy, we look at how sensory processing affects a person's ability to participate in daily activities—or "occupations"—such as eating, sleeping, dressing, playing, learning, and socializing.

The 8 Sensory Systems

While we usually learn about the classic 5 senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell), OT recognizes 3 hidden senses that play a crucial role in daily movement and self-regulation:



Sensory System	What It Does	Example in Action
Tactile (Touch)	Detects pressure, texture, temperature, and pain through the skin.	Feeling comfortable in certain clothing fabrics.
Visual (Sight)	Processes colors, shapes, light, and visual spatial awareness.	Finding a specific toy on a cluttered shelf.
Auditory (Hearing)	Filters, identifies, and interprets sound waves and volume.	Focusing on a parent's voice in a busy supermarket.
Gustatory (Taste)	Identifies sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and savory flavors.	Distinguishing between different food preferences.
Olfactory (Smell)	Processes scents, linked closely to memory and emotions.	Detecting smoke or enjoying the smell of dinner.
Vestibular (Balance)	Hidden Sense: Senses gravity, head position, motion, and movement.	Knowing you are swinging or leaning back in a chair.
Proprioception (Body Position)	Hidden Sense: Receives feedback from muscles and joints about force and movement.	Knowing how hard it is to press down with a pencil without snapping the lead.
Interoception (Internal Body)	Hidden Sense: Senses internal bodily signals and physical sensations.	Recognizing feelings of hunger, fatigue, pain, or a full bladder.

How Sensory Differences Show Up

Everyone processes sensory input differently. However, when sensory information is over- or under-interpreted by the brain, daily life can become overwhelming or exhausting. OTs generally view sensory patterns in two main ways:

1. Over-Responsiveness (Sensory Avoiding / Sensitive)

- *What it looks like: The brain receives sensory signals at a very high volume, causing quick overload.*
- *Common signs: Covering ears at loud noises, distress over clothing tags or seams, extreme pickiness with food textures, or avoiding playground swings.*

2. Under-Responsiveness (Sensory Seeking)

- *What it looks like: The brain needs much more sensory input to feel alert, focused, or grounded.*
- *Common signs: Constantly moving or fidgeting, crashing into furniture or jumping, touching everything in sight, or not noticing when their face or hands are dirty.*

How Occupational Therapy Helps

When sensory challenges interfere with a child's ability to thrive at home, school, or play, an Occupational Therapist steps in to help. OT support usually includes:

- *Creating a "Sensory Diet": Designing a custom, proactive schedule of movement, deep-pressure, or calming activities throughout the day to keep the nervous system regulated.*
- *Environmental Adaptations: Making simple changes to surroundings, such as using dim lighting, noise-canceling headphones, or alternative seating (like wobble stools).*
- *Building Skill & Tolerance: Gradually helping children explore new textures, movements, or environments at a safe, gentle pace.*
 - *Empowering Families: Educating parents and teachers to reframe behaviors—seeing a meltdown not as "bad behavior," but as a reaction to a sensory overload*

Key Takeaway: Sensory behaviors are usually a child's way of communicating how their brain is experiencing the world. With the right support and environmental adjustments, we can help every child feel safe, understood, and regulated



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 from Louise F about the event this week



My Journey My Future

Louise F would just like to say a huge thank you to everyone who attended the “My Journey, My Future” event on Tuesday, particularly everyone who looked after our exhibitors

The afternoon was very successful; preparations are already underway to make this an annual larger scale event in the Summer Term. The next event will include a wider range of providers from different regional local authorities and will be combined with a whole school parental coffee afternoon and our transition day

Feedback from parents, students and exhibitors have given us so much to consider and I would love to share with you the following comments made by providers

“Thank you for a lovely afternoon 😊”

"Snack box, amazing idea!"

"Thank you so much for having us, it was a great event."

"Fab event, well organised. We left feeling very well looked after, Thank You!"

100% of the exhibitors have agreed to return to future events which is brilliant feedback!!!

Please check out the whole school blog and family liaison page for the latest updates on our whole school events

Kind regards

Louise





Great stuff!

Jo Ferguson

Personal Development Lead

j.ferguson@percyhedley.org.uk

Thank you for your continued support. By working together, we can help our young people develop the confidence, resilience and independence they need to achieve their full potential

If you have any questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact me at j.ferguson@percyhedley.org.uk, or speak to your child's class teacher



Wellbeing!



Connect, Keep Learning, Be Active, Take Notice, Give

Wellbeing is a Key Driver at PHS. This year we've increased both the size of the team and the space they have for the children. Let's hear about the latest exciting things that are going on there



It has been a busy week in the wellbeing zone. This week we introduced some new lunchtime clubs.

Lego club and Board games club have been a great addition. We've also added an extra Cuppa Club day, as it was so popular.



Thank you to those you have sent us feedback of 5 ways to wellbeing, happening at home. Please continue to send your lovely things to us.

Either send to class teachers or the wellbeing team.

percyhedleyschoolwellbeingteam@percyhedley.org.uk

Over the half term we would love to see any evidence of *Connecting*. This could be spending time with friends or family; Going for a walk together, maybe out Trick or Treating with friends, playing a board game or eating a meal together





PE

PE is great here and very important for a lot of the students – in fact all sorts of movement. They've already made a great start to the year, so let's see what Nathan & Richard have for us!



Pars of the Week!



BTEC Sport Students Try Golf for the First Time

As part of their BTEC Sport studies and exploring new outdoor sports, Bradan, Noah and Josh enjoyed their first experience of playing golf. 🏌️

The students learned the basic skills of holding a club, aiming at a target, and developing their swing technique. They showed great enthusiasm, listened carefully to instructions, and grew in confidence throughout the session.

It was fantastic to see them trying a new sport, developing their skills, and enjoying an exciting outdoor learning experience. 🧑🏆 🧑🏆 🧑🏆



The Marvellous Early Years Ducklings!

We have a great Early Years class, The Ducklings, with a great area to learn & play in. Kate shares with us each week what they've been doing! Hope you enjoy the words and pictures



We've had a very spooky week in class getting ready for Halloween!

This week, we read We're Going on a Pumpkin Hunt and explored lots of exciting items linked to the story, including a light-up ghost balloon, sticky spider webs (silly string) and a toy bat. We also played instruments to the rhythm of the story which we were very good at. At the end of the story, we found our pumpkin and used our hands and spoons to explore what was inside. Some of us loved pulling out the pumpkin seeds and feeling the inside of the pumpkin, while others weren't quite so keen on the gooey texture!

Throughout the week, we have also enjoyed exploring spooky gloop and jelly bath with eyes, pumpkins and spiders hidden inside. Our most popular activity was hammering golf tees into pumpkins, which helped us develop our fine motor skills.

We finished the week with a fantastic Halloween party! We enjoyed games including apple bobbing, pass the parcel and wrapping mummies (using toilet roll to wrap up our friends and staff!).

We've had such a lovely first half term together and it has been so nice getting to know all of the children. We hope you have a fantastic half term. Happy Halloween!



Spooky goings-on with the Ducklings!!!

Carr's Stars are back!



We have had a fantastic final week before half term and have loved sharing our story, *Room on the Broom*. We enjoyed dressing up as the different characters and re-enacting the story together.

We became phonics detectives, hunting for the missing beginning sounds in the characters' names, and in maths we used cubes to measure and compare broomsticks to find out which was the longest.



Our Halloween-themed activities included blowing paint through straws to create splatter monsters and thinking about ways we could be kind and helpful to the characters in the story. We also explored the inside of pumpkins. We loved the wet, squishy texture but were not quite as keen on the smell!

We are so proud of how well everyone has settled into their new class and routines this half term. To celebrate all their hard work, we enjoyed a well-deserved movie and some popcorn.

We hope all our families have a happy, safe and relaxing half term break! 🍁 🍂 🌟



4MM/HT Braves Percy Hedley's Spooky Pumpkin Patch

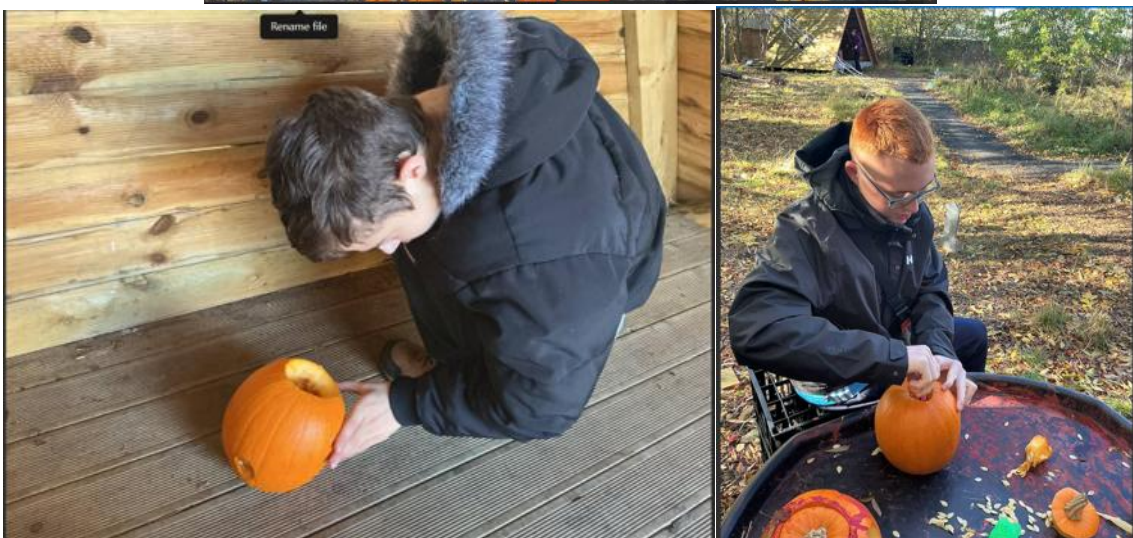
As part of their World Around Me topic, Autumn, 4MM/HT have been exploring seasonal holidays and celebrations. Today, they bravely entered Percy Hedley's Spooky Pumpkin Patch!

They carefully made their way past spooky ghosts and giant spider webs before reaching the pumpkin graveyard, where they explored the different pumpkins and each chose their own.

The students thought carefully about their designs before drawing them onto their pumpkins. They were then supported to safely use a range of tools to scoop out the insides and carve their creations.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the activity and showed fantastic creativity and determination. The students were very proud of their finished pumpkins, and they all looked brilliantly spooky!



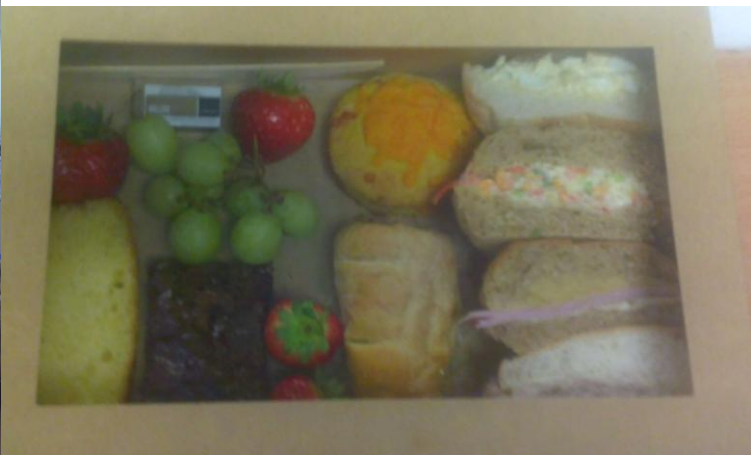




The Hospitality & Food Tech group with Laurie

What a great piece of work this was!!!! Let's hear from Laurie

The Hospitality and Food Technology groups worked hard to create snack boxes for the careers event. They baked a delicious selection of treats, including cheese scones, lemon drizzle cake, and brownies. The students showed excellent teamwork and food preparation skills throughout the project. The snack boxes were extremely popular with visitors and vendors. Everyone loved the tasty treats, and the boxes were a great success at the event



5LA and 5LWC had a fantastic time visiting Brockbushes for a pumpkin-picking trip.

The students enjoyed exploring the pumpkin patch, searching for the perfect pumpkins to take home. Everyone had fun spending time outdoors, learning about how pumpkins are grown and harvested. The visit gave pupils the opportunity to develop their social skills, make choices, and experience a seasonal activity within the local community. Smiles and laughter were seen throughout the day, making it a memorable and enjoyable experience for all involved



Pumpkin Patch Kids!



Rich's Trips!

Richard's class love doing some of their learning outside! What have they been up to this week?

Monday Morning

As part of our maths learning this week, Class 5RDM visited the bowling alley to help plan a maths activity that uses numbers in a real-life setting. Students enjoyed taking part in games of bowling while practising their counting skills, recording scores, and collecting data. They worked hard to keep track of their points, compare results, and discuss different ways to present their findings, making maths both fun and meaningful

Wednesday Morning

For our Humanities Geography trip, students visited Richardson Dees Park to develop their map-reading skills. Working together, they followed maps to locate different points around the park, using landmarks and directions to help them navigate. We may have only got slightly lost once or twice, but everyone showed great determination and teamwork to find their way! After a busy morning of exploring, the students were very happy to enjoy a well-earned hot drink before heading back to school.





Great trips with a great class!



Therapy Star of the Week!



This week, with Neil! Who is nominating.....



DANIEL G!



Independence!

Daniel has taken a great interest in basketball and has joined a club outside of school where he practises each week. Within school Daniel has been participating in basketball club during lunchtime on a Friday and modelling great teamwork and respect. He supports and



encourages other students to develop their skills and confidence and has helped to increase their participation in physical activity. Within physiotherapy he uses basketball as a driver to develop his gross motor skills. Importantly, Daniel recently attended an interview with the Newcastle Eagle Basketball Club and after impressing the staff has secured himself a work experience placement where he will support with coaching players. His interviewer remarked "I met Daniel today and he was lovely. We look forward to having him with us after the half term". Well done Daniel for all your hard work and dedication!



Innowalk with Michael!

Michael was lucky enough to try out the Innowalk at school today. He waited patiently while Abi and the Innowalk team adjusted the equipment to his measurements and ensured he was comfortable, well-supported and safe

We began at a very slow pace to allow Michael to become familiar with the movement. He appeared relaxed throughout, smiling as he experienced the walking motion. This demonstrated exploration as he engaged with this new piece of equipment and the sensory feedback it provided

As the session progressed, the speed was gradually increased. Michael continued to appear comfortable and relaxed, with his body tone suggesting he was at ease and enjoying the experience

We set the step counter at the start of the session. Michael successfully maintained his participation and demonstrated persistence, completing an extended period of supported walking. His smiles and relaxed demeanour indicated that he found the

experience enjoyable and motivating

Overall, Michael had a very positive first experience with the Innowalk and responded well to the movement, showing excellent engagement throughout the session



Well done, Michael, Innowalk Star!



Halloween VR!

Don't know about VR? You're behind the time! See what these guys have been doing!



In 2/3HR we have been using the VR headset. They had lots of fun exploring Halloween activities. The class favourites were the Day of the Dead and Haunted House. Spooky!!!!



Gardening Club with Ben!



Or, Horticulture News, if you want to be posh! Anyway, great things are happening in this area of school, so let's hear Ben's latest update



Loving Horticulture News/Garden Club!



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!



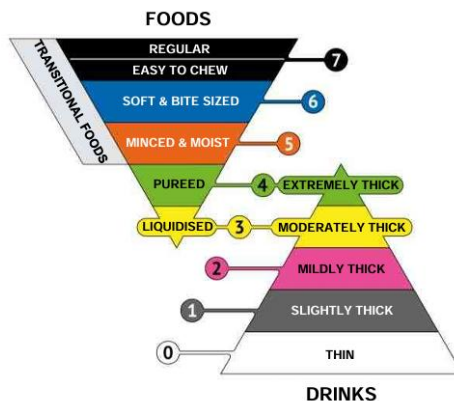
Eating, Drinking & Swallowing – with Jennie! Part Three!

Jennie is our Dysphagia Lead, working across the Foundation and co-ordinating the work of the Dysphagia Group of Speech & Language Therapists

Jennie is planning to explain what IDDSI is over the first few weeks of this new part of the blog, and then include some recipes, top tips etc as time goes on. Excellent!

Let's hear again from Jennie in this new section and see what it's all about this week!

Eating, Drinking and Swallowing (Dysphagia)



Across the world we use the same words to describe food and drinks that have been modified because someone has eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties. This means that we all understand each other and the food or drink is the same no matter where you go or who makes it.

The dysphagia trained Speech and Language Therapists carry out assessments to work out what the safest foods and drinks are for our students and our excellent kitchen team make the food to the right consistencies.

Each week we will focus on a different level to explain what it all means, so we can work together to make sure we get it right for our students.

Any questions for the dysphagia SaLTs the email address is PHS.salt@percyhedley.org.uk

Level 4 Pumpkin Recipe

With half term coming up you might be looking for things to do with pumpkins. Here is a recipe for all the family, that just happens to be level 4 pureed consistency. If anyone in your family needs this (or any other IDDSI consistency) please test the food before serving to make sure it meets all the requirements of the level they need.

Any questions for the dysphagia SaLTs the email address is PHS.salt@percyhedley.org.uk

Pumpkin Soup (serves 6)



Ingredients

Pumpkin – 1kg, peeled, deseeded, and cubed

Olive oil – 2 tbsp

Butter – 1 tbsp

Onion – 1 large, chopped

Garlic – 2 cloves, minced

Carrot – 1 medium, diced

Vegetable or chicken stock – 1 litre (4 cups)

Double cream – 100ml

Fresh thyme – 1 tsp (or ½ tsp dried)

Ground nutmeg – a pinch

Salt and freshly ground pepper – to taste

(Optional: add a small potato for a thicker texture or a dash of curry powder for a spiced version.)

Instructions

1. Peel and cube the **pumpkin**, chop the **onion** and **carrot**, and mince the **garlic**.
Set aside.
2. Heat the **olive oil** and **butter** in a large pot over medium heat. Add the **onion**, **garlic**, and **carrot**, cooking for about **5 minutes** until softened but not browned.
3. Add the **pumpkin cubes**, **thyme**, **nutmeg**, **salt**, and **pepper**. Stir to coat the vegetables in the oil and herbs.

4. Pour in the **stock**, bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer gently for **20–25 minutes**, until the pumpkin is tender and can be easily pierced with a fork.
5. Remove from heat and allow to cool slightly. Use a **blender** to purée the soup until smooth and creamy then strain it through a fine sieve.
6. Return the blended soup to the pot, stir in the **cream**, and warm gently for a few minutes without boiling. Adjust seasoning if needed.
7. Serve and enjoy. Check the consistency for anyone who needs a modified diet. Level 4 pureed foods should be thick enough to be eaten with a fork! If it's too thin, reduce the cream and add mashed potato

Any questions for the Dysphagia SaLTs the email address is PHS.salt@percyhedley.org.uk



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 to make a really important team for the school

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

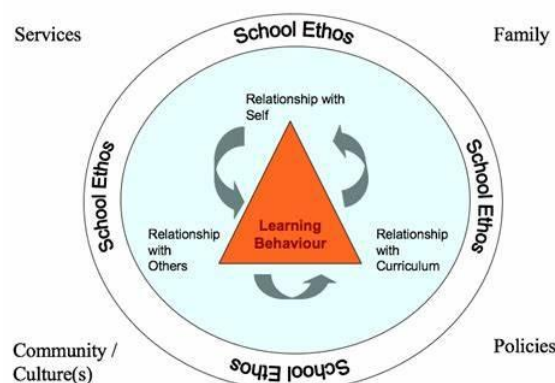


Figure 1: Behaviour for Learning conceptual framework



Preparation for Adulthood with Hannah

PfA is a priority for the us and always will be. Hannah & the PfA Team use this space to tell us what they've been working on, and it's always central to our mission



Thank You for Joining Us at My Journey, My Future

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us for our recent My Journey, My Future event

It was wonderful to see so many parents, carers and family members come together to explore the opportunities, support and pathways available to our young people as they prepare for adulthood. The conversations throughout the event reinforced the importance of working together to help our students achieve their goals and aspirations for the future

We would like to give special thanks for all the hard work in organising and coordinating the event and the wider school team for their support in making the afternoon such a success, from sharing their expertise with families to helping students access the event

A particular highlight of the event was the fantastic catering provided by our students. Their professionalism, enthusiasm and attention to detail were on full display, and we are incredibly proud of the contribution they made to the evening

If you attended, we hope you found the event informative, helpful and reassuring. We're planning to run another similar event next year, so keep your eyes peeled for detail.

To continue supporting families on their Preparing for Adulthood journey, we're pleased to signpost you to our newly refreshed Parent Carer PfA Resource Page on the school website

The page brings together information, resources and useful links relating to the four PfA outcomes

Employment

Independent Living

Community Inclusion

Remaining Healthy

We'll continue to add new resources, updates and information about future events, so we encourage you to visit regularly.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support and for everything you do to help your young person make great progress towards their goals.

Visit the Parent Carer PfA Resource Page

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:](#)



Mobile Phones in schools!

We've been working on a new policy to reflect what's going on in the country about this, and what the government is telling us

Please do have a read

Rebecca is happy to answer any questions about it at all

Get Rebecca on r.fletcher@percyhedley.org.uk

Mobile Phones in School procedure

To maintain a safe, focused and supportive learning environment, all students must hand their mobile phones to a member of staff at the start of the school day. Phones will be stored securely and returned to students at the end of the school day.

The school recognises that many students rely on mobile phones for their journey to and from school. Students may therefore bring their phones to school for transport and travel purposes, but they must be handed in immediately upon arrival.

Exemptions and Reasonable Adjustments

The school acknowledges that some students may require access to a mobile device during the school day as part of their individual needs. Reasonable adjustments will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may include:

- Medical needs, such as the management of diabetes through mobile phone-linked monitoring systems.
- Communication needs identified within an EHCP or other support plan.
- Therapeutic interventions recommended by healthcare professionals or therapists.
- Activities that support Preparation for Adulthood outcomes, where mobile phone use has been identified as an appropriate tool to develop independence, travel training, communication skills or community access.

Any exemption must be agreed by the school in partnership with the student, parents/carers and relevant professionals. Arrangements will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate and supportive of the student's needs.

Use of Phones Under an Agreed Exemption

Students with an approved exemption may only use their phone for the specific purpose agreed with parents/carers, a medical plan and the DSL. Where this is the case parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss the exemption and an individual contract will be in place to safeguard all pupils and staff. The school reserves the right to review, amend or withdraw arrangements where use is no longer appropriate or where there are safeguarding concerns.

Unauthorised Use

Students must not use mobile phones during the school day without prior authorisation. Unauthorised use, including photography, recording, messaging, social media access or gaming, may result in the phone being confiscated and further action being taken in line with the school's behaviour policy.

This approach reflects current Department for Education expectations that schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default, while making appropriate adjustments for pupils with SEND, disabilities or medical needs.



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



Exams with Kat!

Welcome to all returning students and new students that joined new class teams.

With the new academic year under way, the exams team is starting the full year cycle once more. Updating details, preparing the years schedule of qualifications, and setting up support and information for teaching staff and students. Updated regulations have been circulated by JCQ (Joint Council of Qualifications) which will be available on the Percy Hedley website under the exams section



Safeguarding – this week, support during the holidays



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. Let's hear about this week's important topic from Rebecca

Support during the holidays

Ahead of the half-term we want our parents and carers to feel supported. Please see information below of agencies who may be able to offer support around the following:

Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse can happen to anyone. Children are now classed as victims of Domestic Abuse whether they have witnessed it or not.

For further support and advice visit:

[Home \(myharbour.org.uk\)](https://myharbour.org.uk)

[ManKind Initiative - Supporting Male Victims of Domestic Abuse](#)

[Home - Women's Aid \(womensaid.org.uk\)](https://womensaid.org.uk)

Mental Health

Mental health is a subject that many of us find difficult to discuss, primarily because of fear of saying the wrong thing and making matters worse.

Please see a list of resources available below:

YoungMinds- [YoungMinds | Mental Health Charity For Children And Young People | YoungMinds](#)

Has a wealth of resources on their website, as well as providing dedicated crisis services. The YoungMinds Crisis Messenger provides free crisis support every day of the week, at any time or day or night. You just need to text YM to 85258. All texts are answered by trained volunteers with support from experienced clinical supervisors.

SHOUT- [Shout: the UK's free, confidential and 24/7 mental health text service for crisis support | Shout 85258 \(giveusashout.org\)](#) provides free, confidential, 24/7 text message support in the UK for anyone who is struggling to cope and anyone in crisis. You can: text SHOUT to 85258 and the service is free on all major mobile networks. You'll then be connected to a volunteer for an anonymous conversation by text message. This is not an NHS service. It's a free, confidential service available 24/7 run by a charity called Mental Health Innovations.

Papyrus- [Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention | Prevention of Young Suicide \(papyrus-uk.org\)](#) Papyrus (Prevention of Young Suicide) provides advice and support for young people who feel like they want to take their own life, all advice is confidential. The helpline HOPELineUK is available on 0800 068 41 41 text available on 07786209687.

The Mix- [Get Support - The Mix](#) The Mix provides a free confidential telephone helpline and online service that aims to find young people the best help, whatever the problem. Can be contacted via telephone on 0808 808 4994 for free, lines are open 11am-11pm every day. Can also be accessed online.

Childline- [Report Remove | Childline](#) Childline provides a confidential telephone counselling service for any child with a problem. It comforts, advises and protects.

Telephone number is 0800 1111. Is also free and can have an online chat with a counsellor via their website.

Samaritans- [Samaritans | Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy | Here to listen](#) Samaritans are an organisation that you can ring at any time day or night. They'll help you and listen to how you're feeling. Contact number 116 123.

NHS- If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, call **NHS 111** and select **Option 2** for urgent mental health support. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for adults, children and young people.

E-Safety

We know that children are likely to have an increased amount of screen time on their electronic devices over the summer holidays. If our parents/carers need further information regarding parental controls etc please the online safety section of our school website [Online Safety - Percy Hedley School](#)

Other agencies available for support are:

Barnardo's - <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-parents-and-carers/keeping-children-safe-online>

Police, call 999 in the case of an emergency or 111 for non-emergencies.

Children's Services (social services) contact the front door at your local authority to report a concern about a child.

Should you need any support during the summer holidays our safeguarding team will be available.

Citizens Advice

Free, confidential advice on:

Benefits and Universal Credit

Housing issues

Debt and money management

Employment concerns

Family and relationship matters

This can be particularly helpful during the summer holidays if families are experiencing financial pressures.

Foodbanks and Community hubs

Many communities across the Northeast have foodbanks and community hubs offering:

Emergency food parcels

School holiday food provision

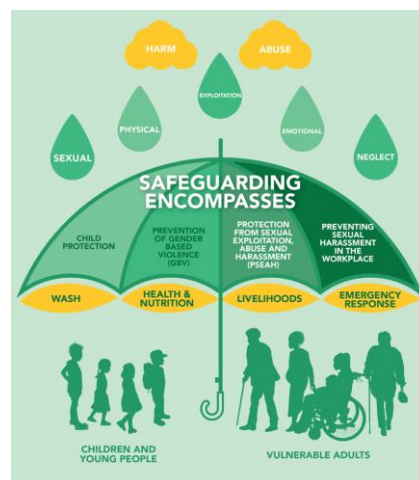
Cost-of-living support

Advice and signposting to local services

Families can search for their nearest foodbank through The Trussell Trust or their local authority website

Please contact our Safeguarding Officer for any support you need during the half term: Aylisha.Holland@percyhedley.org.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 – this week, age checks online

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, so let's hear from Lizzie

Here is the Online Safety blog this week- [Online Safety blogs - Percy Hedley School](#)

The theme is on 'Com Groups', otherwise known as online harm groups. These are networks of individuals who use online platforms to manipulate, pressure, threaten or exploit others. Our guys could be very vulnerable to these groups so an important one for parents to know about!

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

*The school day begins promptly at **9:00am**. Any student arriving after this time will be marked as late unless there is a pre-arranged appointment and an absence form has been submitted in advance*

If you have any questions, please contact Kelly.richardson@percyhedleyschool.org.uk

Thank you, as always, 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 to kelly.richardson@percyhedley.org.uk

Thanks for your support and partnership in this crucial 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. Benefits include insurance for events, links with their partners & training for parents, carers & staff. The meetings are half termly

We held our meeting on Wednesday and here are some of our plans:

School photos. We hope to have these done next half term. It will be dependent on staff availability.

Summer Fayre 2027. We have set the date for Saturday 26th June 2027. This will be from 11:00-14:00 and we will share more information next year!

Santa's Grotto and wrap gifts. We will transform our outdoor learning pod in readiness for MOVEing in a Winter Wonderland which will be on Tuesday/Wednesday 15/16th December. Parent volunteers are needed for Monday 14th December to help with decorating. FoPHS will provide gifts for all students as we have done for the last few years. Parents will be invited to see the fantastic winter wonderland too.

100 Club. Last year the numbers subscribing reduced to 47 and, whilst it raised £282 for FoPHS winners received £23.50. We are looking for an alternative, or a way of reaching more people and will update.

Christmas cards. Most students have designed their own card and these have been sent to IQ, the company we use. You will receive an order form and will need to order online after half term. We hope you love them.

The success of FoPHS depends heavily on the support of our school community. We recognise the challenging cost of living and impact on families. We appreciate all support of families, donations, volunteering your time and your suggestions.

If you are new to school and still working through information, please see the links below for 2 newsletters about our activity over the last 2 years.

[FoPHS Updates 2026](#)

[FoPHS Updates 2025](#)



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!



Dear Families

*A questionnaire was sent out yesterday to all parents/carers via email from the school office as part of our work towards the **Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA)***

*The LPPA team would be very grateful if you could spare approximately 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire and return it by **Monday 19th October**. This will allow us sufficient time to collate and analyse the responses, which will help inform our future priorities and objectives.*

Responses may be submitted anonymously; however, if you choose to include your child's name, this will help us identify specific areas of school where further improvements or support may be beneficial.

Thank you in advance for your time and support. Your feedback is invaluable and plays an important role in helping us continue to strengthen our partnership with families.

Have a good weekend.

Tracy and the LPPA Team

If you prefer to contact me on an individual basis my email address is:

t.smithson@percyhedley.org.uk

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



AND NOW...



STARS OF THE WEEK!

THAT REFLECT OUR SCHOOL VALUES!



PRE-FORMAL!

Hayden!

Resilience!

Hayden has made fantastic progress in his communication.

His growing confidence in using a range of symbols has helped him become more resilient during activities, enabling him to remain engaged and persevere when making requests. Hayden consistently uses his communication symbols to express his wants and needs, showing determination and resilience by sticking with interactions until he is understood



Hayden!



SEMI-FORMAL PATHWAY STAR OF THE WEEK!

EVIE!

Teamwork!



Evie has had a fantastic first half term in her new class. She has made great progress in her listening, participation and positive attitude to her learning. Everyone is very proud of her!

Well done, Evie! STAR!!!



Lisa's POST-16 STARS!!!

We love our sixth form! Let's hear who's been great down there this week? Let's see! Oh, and what's that at the end...?

Resilience

Dan has had a fantastic introduction to work experience at Newcastle Eagles. Fantastic!!!

Patrick for counting in multiples of 2s, 5s and 10s. Amazing!!!

Bobbie for having such a positive attitude, even though he has been ill. Well done!!!

Respect

Mattie for congratulating a peer for an achievement. Wonderful!!!

Dom for being so friendly and welcoming to a new student. Well done!!!

Respect and teamwork

Charlie for being an absolute star on the PE community trip. He was so helpful and polite. Awesome!!!

Ellie for including a peer in activities. Fantastic!!!

Wait! It's a rare Hatrick! Who could it be?

Respect, Teamwork and Resilience

Kayden for working so hard to cater for the careers event. Triple 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. We 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

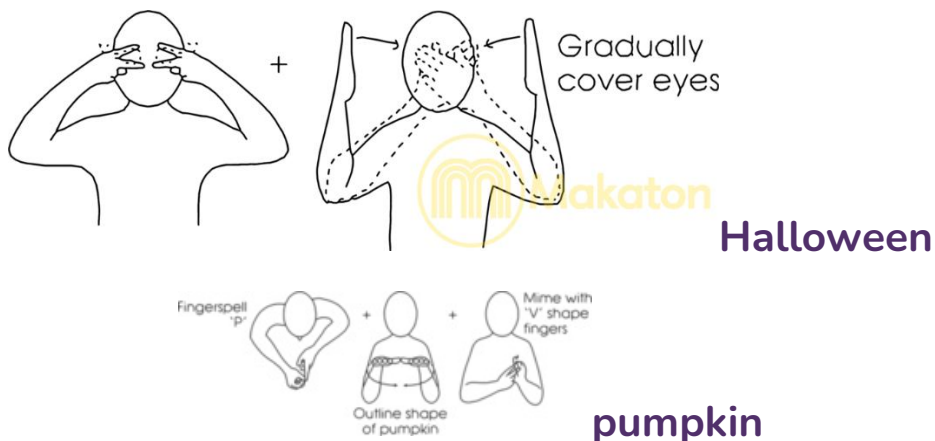
Makaton Signs of the Week 19th October

Halloween Signs

Halloween, pumpkin, ghost, spider, skeleton

Here is my video from last year:

Here are the signs:





ghost



spider

Skeleton sign is on the video only

Singing Hands have a lovely Halloween video here with additional signs:

Have a spooooky week!



Julie

Keep signing!



Julie



Percy Hedley School

My Journey My Future

Providers Event

Tuesday 20th October 2026

From 2pm - 6pm

Percy Hedley School, Killingworth

Please RSVP to:
l.finlay@percyhedley.org.uk

We are delighted about our whole-school event on **Tuesday 20th October** which offered the opportunity to meet a range of education, training and social care

providers, explore future pathways and ask questions regarding options and support available beyond school

It is increasingly important for young people and their families to explore a range of potential pathways and understand the different opportunities and support available from a variety of organisations. With the current challenges surrounding the availability of suitable placements and funding for young people with special educational needs across the region; particularly within Post 16 and Post 19 provision, early awareness and consideration of alternative options can play an important part in planning for the future

We understand that planning for your child or young person's future beyond Percy Hedley School can sometimes feel challenging. Our PfA Team were available throughout the event to provide information, offer guidance and answer any questions

We hope that the event provided families and young people with a valuable opportunity to explore the options available, make useful connections with providers and feel better informed when considering future pathways and next steps

e.robinson@percyhedley.org.uk or l.finlay@percyhedley.org.uk on (0191) 2161811

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

Our Key Drivers

Communication, Wellbeing, Independence

