

Friday Flyer

Friday 16th May 2025

Headteacher Update

I'm sure we can all remember the feeling of preparing for and sitting exams from when we were at school; the nerves, apprehension and then sheer relief when they were over. Well, this week, our Year 6 children have had their first taste of statutory tests as they undertook their SATs each morning from Monday to Thursday and I couldn't be prouder of them. I don't need to see the results to know that they have worked diligently all year and, whatever the outcome, they have done themselves proud. They handled this week with maturity and kept the tests in perspective, understanding that while it was important to try their best, the SATs are only part of the picture and do not measure all of the other amazing things about them. They thoroughly deserved their ice creams yesterday afternoon and a day of treats today! With perfect timing, the children were given their leavers' hoodies after the final test and they will proudly wear them for the next half term until they move on to high school.

Mrs Frame has asked me to share with you some information about [The Late Shows Culture Crawl](#) which is a series of arts events happening in Newcastle and Gateshead this evening and tomorrow. There looks to be some great opportunities for families to explore our local art scene and it would be well worth a glance through the list to see if something takes your fancy. Art, and the arts more generally, form an important part of our school life and curriculum. As I walk through school with visitors, whether colleagues from other schools or parents, there are two things they all say without fail:

1. They can't believe how calm such a big school is.
2. They are blown away by the children's artwork on display.

I myself am also frequently blown away by the children's artwork as it far exceeds anything I would ever be able to accomplish! We are so fortunate to have Mrs Frame teaching art to children from Years 1 to 6 as she brings her own talent as a fine art graduate to all of her lessons so the children have expert teaching week on week. When we talk to the children about their learning, they regularly tell us that art is one of the subjects they enjoy the most and both their work and their articulation of their learning would confirm that they have excellent knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject. In fact, last week we had a visitor in school to talk to pupils about their learning and she left saying she had discovered things about art from the children that she had never known before - and she has inspected a lot of schools! I had the privilege of visiting Ponteland High School this week as part of their Y6 transition offer and we were treated to a tour of the art department where the final portfolios of the GCSE and A Level students were on display. The standard was incredible and so I know that the foundations Mrs Frame is nurturing with our primary school pupils will be further developed as they move through Ponteland High.

I hope everyone has a lovely weekend - enjoy the sunshine!

Claire Johnson



Safeguarding & wellbeing

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MINECRAFT



Still the best-selling game of all time, Minecraft is a bastion of creativity and community, with hundreds of millions of players building and crafting in its almost endless world. The popularity of Minecraft among gamers of all ages means it's important to remain informed about the game, including how to play it safely and whether it's suitable for the children in your care. That's why we've created this guide explaining the risks associated with Minecraft and how to ensure a purely enjoyable gaming experience.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

SCARY ELEMENTS

While Minecraft can be seen as a kind of 'digital LEGO', certain game modes include creatures accompanied by eerie sound effects. These can be a bit too frightening for some younger players, potentially leading to distressing in-game combat and other encounters – although the combat is quite basic and free from any real depiction of violence.

GRIEFING

Some players in Minecraft take pleasure in deliberately damaging or destroying another person's creations. This behaviour, known as 'griefing', is a form of bullying – it intentionally ruins someone else's experience by erasing hours of their work and forcing them to start over. Many public servers regard griefing as a serious offence and often ban those who engage in it.

ADDICTIVENESS

Minecraft's focus on creativity means that, as with any creative endeavour, it can be easy to get carried away. If your child is finding it difficult to manage their time because they're drawn in by Minecraft's gameplay loop of resource gathering and building elaborate projects, it could have a knock-on effect on their social interactions and schoolwork.

PUBLIC SERVERS AND COMMUNICATIONS

With public servers being so easily accessible in Minecraft, it's highly likely that children will end up chatting with strangers through the in-game text chat. Some servers even place an emphasis on social interaction, actively encouraging communication between players. While there's nothing inherently wrong with this, it does carry certain risks. In addition to the concerns around speaking with strangers online, players who host their own servers may have their IP addresses exposed, posing a further security concern.

ADDITIONAL PURCHASES

Minecraft is available as a free trial on a variety of devices; however, the full game requires a one-off purchase. After that, players have the option to buy additional cosmetic upgrades or subscribe to Minecraft Realms. Realms is an entirely optional subscription service that allows users to run their own private server to play with friends. Without proper supervision, younger players may end up making unintended or excessive purchases.

Advice for Parents & Educators

CHOOSE THE RIGHT MODE

Selecting Creative or Peaceful mode allows children to play Minecraft without having to contend with enemies. It's also a great way for you to get used to playing the game with them, since the difficulty level is far lower. This allows you to work together on a long-term project, creating something special without the threat of enemies and creatures attacking you or damaging your building.

HOST A PRIVATE SERVER

The easiest way to find a safe server for children to play on is to make one yourself. Hosting a server prevents strangers from finding it, unless they've been given its address and password. A private server also lets you control who's allowed to enter and – if necessary – ban anyone who shouldn't be there. This is the closest equivalent to parental controls in Minecraft. Hosting a private server, however, will cost a monthly fee.

TALK ABOUT STRANGERS

At some point in their lives, almost everyone will make contact with a stranger online. Talking to children about online safety, therefore, is essential – as is having a plan for dealing with any hostile or difficult people. It's important that a child knows never to tell a stranger about themselves online and that they should come to you straight away if they do encounter a problem.

RESEARCH CONTENT CREATORS

Much of Minecraft's early stages can be an exercise in frustration for players who don't know where to start. Thankfully, there's a wealth of material online and in video format to help you learn the basics. Just be mindful that some of this content may not be appropriate for children, so you should consider watching it yourself first.

PLAY MINECRAFT WITH YOUR CHILD

As a creative building tool, Minecraft makes it great fun for children to team up and construct vast buildings accompanied by imaginative landscapes, much like working with LEGO or model kits. Playing in a game mode that includes enemies can encourage critical thinking and teamwork; however, you should consider which game mode is appropriate for the child in your care.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Gaming Editor at the Daily Star, and has worked in games media for more than 8 years. A long-time gaming enthusiast, he is also a parent and therefore a keen advocate of online safety for children of all ages.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College



Attendance for this week is summarised below

Nursery (Acorn)	84.8%	Year 3 (Pine)	98.0%
Reception (Chestnut)	95.0%	Year 4 (Alder)	93.5%
Reception (Pinecone)	96.3%	Year 4 (Yew)	96.7%
Year 1 (Holly)	90.0%	Year 5 (Oak)	93.9%
Year 1 (Ash)	98.7%	Year 5 (Beech)	93.4%
Year 2 (Sycamore)	95.7%	Year 6 (Elm)	96.0%
Year 2 (Willow)	98.7%	Year 6 (Birch)	100%
Year 3 (Maple)	97.1%	Whole school Cumulative from Sept	95.9%

98% - 100%	Excellent Attendance
95% - 97.9%	Good Attendance
92% - 94.9	Caution (below national)
90% - 91.9%	Cause for concern
Below 89.9%	Persistent Absence - Serious Concern

Absence Procedures

If your child is ill, please keep them at home until they are well enough to return to school. **Please notify us by phone call or email before 9.15am** if your child is to be absent, and continue to inform us on a daily basis if they continue to be ill.

We have a continual focus on attendance and punctuality and this is of the utmost importance in your child's education. Please remember that our school gate closes at 8.55am as this is when our lessons begin. Anyone arriving after this time is classed as late and will miss valuable learning opportunities which take place immediately after registration, such as phonics.

What does the Government say about school attendance?

At KS2, pupils who attended school nearly every day in Year 6 (with an attendance rate of 95-100%) were 1.3 times more likely to achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths compared to pupils who only attended 90-95% of the time. **This means missing just 10 days of year 6 reduced the likelihood of reaching the expected standard by around 25%.** Pupils who attended nearly every day were 1.8 times more likely to achieve the standard than persistently absent pupils who only attend 85-90% of the time (relating to 4 -6 weeks more time in school).
DfE report: [Link between attendance and attainment, March 2025](#)

Can you help our PTA?

PONTELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL PTA



Ways you can help...

EMPLOYER

Are you employed by one of the biggest employers in the North East who offer Grant Match Fundraising? Could they help you help your School? Or will they allow you paid time away from work to help with fundraising events? Chat to your HR department today to see if there's a way to help!



ACCENTURE
PROCTOR & GAMBLE
NISSAN
SAGE
GREGGS
BARBOUR
DELOITTE
VIRGIN MONEY
BELLWAY
NORTHERN POWERGRID
VERTU
...AND MANY MORE



TIME

Do you have time available to help plan, organise, set up, clean up and be a volunteer at our many fundraising events throughout the year? We appreciate any available time, even if just for one event. Please contact us on pontelandpta@gmail.com

MONEY

We understand that time is not something everyone has to offer and we are often asked about the ability to make regular or one off cash donations to the PTA as an alternative. Should you wish to do so please reference 'Donation' along with your name to the Ponteland Primary PTA account:
Acc no: 20669059
S.C: 20-59-61



SKILLS

Do you have a skillset that could help the School PTA? Marketing, PR, Graphic design, finance, events planning, social media and so many more skills are valuable to us. This may be offered as your time or as feedback to what you see and experience from the PTA.

"WHEN PARENTS ARE ENGAGED AND TAKE PART IN SCHOOL AFFAIRS, IT CREATES A POSITIVE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS"

Pontelandpta@gmail.com

This week in Nursery

This week we listened to the story The Dandelion Seed before heading to the field to pick some dandelions. We found that dandelions have nectar in them, which is like sweet sugar juice. We decided to take our dandelions back to class and make our very open dandelion juice. We were not sure about its taste....but we gave it a try!



PIC • COLLAGE

This week in Reception

We continued to work on our core text, Yummy, focusing on Little Red Riding Hood this week. We have enjoyed retelling the story, role playing, making get well potions for granny, making maps of the forest and creating wanted posters for the big bad wolf.



This week in Year 1

In Maths this week Year 1 have been rounding up their learning of grouping and recognising signs of multiplication and division.

Year 1 have really enjoyed expressing their maths knowledge by choosing their own resources to solve reasoning problems. Reasoning problems can often look very tricky but we have been picking them apart to find out what we need to know and solving them using a variety of resources - and very impressively - using their mental maths methods!

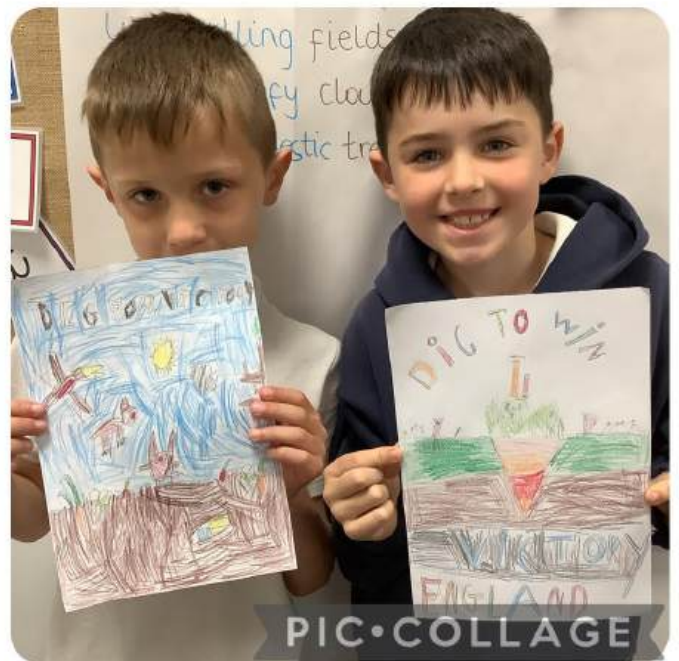
We have also been doing some maths retrieval to ensure that previously taught maths is brought back to the surface by creating a maths carousel within the classroom. Myself and Mrs Rogers have been so impressed with how much learning the children have been able to quickly utilise and recall!



Mrs Rogers and Miss Storey

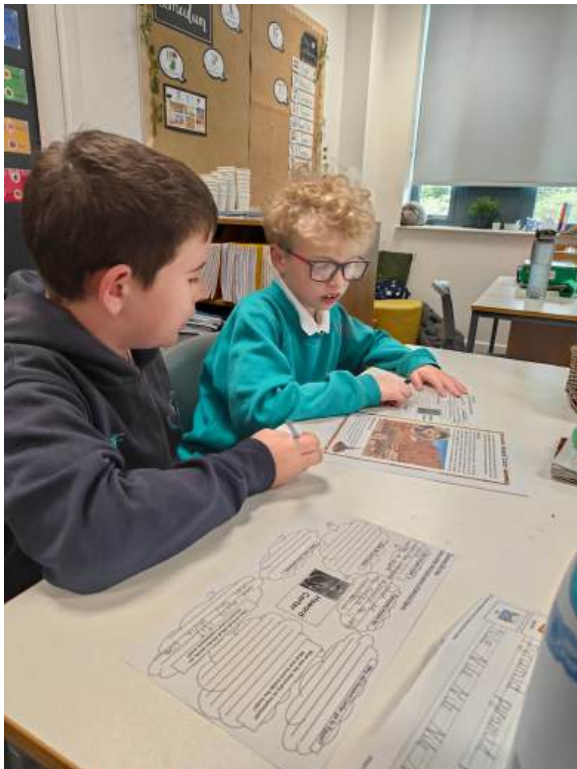
This week in Year 2

In their history lessons, Year 2 have been learning about World War 2. This week's lesson taught us about rationing and the foods which were and weren't rationed in the war. Learning about the importance of people growing their own vegetables led us to design our own 'Dig for Victory' posters.



This week in Year 3

In Year 3, we have continued to enjoy our learning about 'Life in Ancient Egypt'. This week we learnt about Howard Carter, an archaeologist who made some significant discoveries which have shaped the world's understanding of Ancient Egypt and the Pharaohs. We considered how amazing it would be to make a discovery like his but also how different our understanding might be had he *not* made this discovery. We used our reading skills to retrieve information about Howard and record notes about his early life, career and his discovery of Tutankhamun.



Miss Mears and Miss Choudhury

This week in Year 4

This week, the children have been developing their cricket skills and have been playing, 'Diamond Cricket'. The game is a pacey game where children can put their bowling, fielding and batting skills to the test whilst continually evolving in their roles. The children have shown great resilience, knowledge and listening skills in PE and this weather isn't too shabby for enjoying outdoor PE!



Miss Davis, Mrs Maccoy and Mrs Bell

This week in Year 5

Races, Runs, Rounders and Rallies

This week, we visited Ponteland High School with other schools in the Pele Trust, for a Year 5 sports festival.

The event was planned and run by sixth-form students studying sports, and everyone got stuck into tennis, cricket, rounders, and a mini sports day.

It was a great chance to visit the school, meet new faces from other Pele Trust schools, and try out some sports activities. Everyone had a brilliant time!

Mr McCourt and
Mr Tailford



This week in Year 6

They've done it!! Our amazing year 6 cohort have finished their SATs and Mr Orme and Miss Allan couldn't be prouder of their hard work, determination, resilience and kindness to one another. As we have told them many times this year, the SATs are just a snapshot of them on that particular day and don't demonstrate how creative, funny, sporty and talented they truly are. They are a wonderful bunch of young people who should feel very proud of their achievements. Year 6 2025.



Dates for your diary in 2025



12th May - 15th May 2025	KS2 SATS Week
22nd & 23rd May 2025	PTA Pre-loved Uniform Sale. Before and after school. Cash/card/Donations
23rd May 2025	Frozen Friday - Icepops sold after school (50p each, cash only)
Wc 26th May 2025	Half Term
2nd June 2025	School resumes
3rd June 2025	Year 6 - Northumberland Zoo Trip (Packed lunches needed)
13th June 2025	Dress Down Day - for donation for childrens / adults fair tombola
20th June 2025	Dress Down Day - for donation for our adults bottle pull
20th June 2025	Summer Fair 3.15pm to 5.00pm
25th June 2025	Year 1 - Gibside Trip (Packed lunches needed)
23rd - 27th June 2025	Year 6 France Trip
1st July 2025	International Joke Day - £1 per entry winner announced for best joke
9th July 2025	Year 5 Movie night after school
Sat 12th July 2025	Wine & Cheese Tasting. Parents/Carers only. £25 per ticket. St Mary's Church Hall.
18th July 2025	Last School Day. Close at 1.30pm
1st September 2025	Teacher Training Day
2nd September 2025	School Resumes

Opal Needs You!

The children thoroughly enjoy exploring the different zones of OPAL and it has really enhanced our playtime experience. If you are having a clear out, we would love to take some of your old equipment off your hands. If you have any of the following items, please bring them to the school office after the Christmas break:

- Wellies
 - Waterproofs
 - Barbies/dolls
- Shop items: till, fruit and veg baskets etc**
Metal pots and pans Children's Gardening Tools
Dressing up items

- Toy trucks/cars



Ponteland Primary School is committed to keeping all children safe. Our staff regularly participate in safeguarding training and are fully aware of how to keep our pupils safe and what signs to look out for. Our pupils know they can share any concerns and we have robust policies and procedures in place which underpin safeguarding. It is our paramount priority to keep all children healthy and safe.

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads are:



Mrs Johnson (Head Teacher)
Lead DSL



Mrs Wright (Family & Behaviour
Support Adviser) Deputy DSL



Miss Dinning (Deputy Head Teacher)
Deputy DSL

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- 2 Sign up and search for Ponteland Primary School PTA
- 3 Your favourite brands donate between 0.5-15% to us whenever you shop with them, with no charge to you

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vikings

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Uber Eats



PRE-LOVED SCHOOL UNIFORM



Do you have school uniform in good condition that your child no longer wears but could be worn by someone else in the school community?

Please donate your pre-loved, wearable uniform via the donation basket in reception.

Looking for uniform?

All items washed and ready to wear. Please contact pontprimaryuniform@gmail.com to let us know what you're looking for, including sizes!

Voluntary contributions to the PTA welcomed.

Money box at reception or bank transfer:

Ponteland Primary School Parent Teacher Association

**20-59-61
20669059**



