

# Friday Flyer

Friday 16th January 2025

## Headteacher Update

The big news this week has been our Y5 residential at Robinwood outward bound centre. The Robinwood trip is a real rite of passage and something which the children look forward to with great anticipation as they move through school. This year, as ever, the trip has lived up to the hype and our Y5 children have had a fantastic experience. Every year when I hear about the adventures the children have had, I always reflect on how many of our school values are developed through experiences such as Robinwood: resilience and effort as they embark on brand new, and sometimes daunting, activities; kindness, empathy and collaboration as they encourage and support their friends to try new things; and responsibility as they organise themselves each morning and evening, sometimes for the first time without their parents. Thank you to Mr McCourt, Mr Tailford, Mr Armstrong, Miss Davis and Mrs Kenyon for taking the children and looking after them so well this week. I'm sure their families are looking forward to getting them back almost as much as the Y5 parents are looking forward to getting their children back this afternoon!

You have probably heard in the media this week that Keir Starmer is considering an age limit for social media, much like the policy that has already been passed in Australia. In a Friday Flyer before Christmas I shared with you some information about the ['Smartphone Free Childhood' parent campaign](#) and lots of parents have told me this is something they are keen to support. On that note, SFC has prepared an [email](#) with an automatic link which parents can send to their MP to add their voice and support to protect children from content which is not age-appropriate for them.



Best wishes,

Claire Johnson

## Safeguarding & wellbeing

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one issue of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

# 12 Top Tips TO SUPPORT MENTAL WELLBEING THROUGH NATURE Online and Offline

'Nature' is a superb choice as the theme of this year's Mental Health Awareness Week, as there's clear evidence that getting access to nature is excellent for our mental health. With Covid-19 restrictions beginning to ease, it's the perfect time of year to rediscover the natural world and give ourselves a calming, uplifting treat. You don't have to drag the family on a four-hour hike, either – just 10 minutes each day in the garden, in the local park or your nearest green space could really help. Here are 12 suggestions for ways you can benefit from nature ... both online and off.

## ONLINE

## OFFLINE

### 1 Give something back to nature

A swift internet search should bring up details of any local conservation projects you could volunteer for, or litter-picking events that you could enrol the family in. It doesn't have to be a long-term commitment: most schemes are grateful for every bit of help!

### Ditch the phone

Now the weather's improving, go for a walk in a green space nearby. If you're already familiar with your chosen route, you could always leave your phone at home to be completely free of the usual distractions and notifications.

### 2 Tranquil streams

Search your preferred music player for some soothing natural sounds. A few minutes' gentle audio of rainfall, ocean waves or birdsong are all great ways of unwinding at the end of the day to get you ready for an excellent night's sleep.

### 2 Put down some roots

Planting flowers, shrubs, herbs or vegetables can be extremely rewarding. Not only does it help us to connect with nature – it also provides an ongoing project to draw pleasure from. If your home doesn't have a garden, no problem: a window box will do the job just as well!

### 3 Give geocaching a go

If you've not heard of it, geocaching is a modern twist on the traditional treasure hunt. Participants look for items hidden in outdoor locations, using a GPS-enabled device like a mobile phone or tablet. We'd recommend that an adult accompanies young adventurers!

### 3 A different kind of tweet

Most gardens in the UK attract a wonderful variety of birds, and just watching them for a few minutes can be immensely therapeutic. There are some excellent apps and sites to help you name any species you don't already know or even play a game: identifying bird song, like bird song bingo!

### 4 Share what you see

While you're out exploring nature, take a photo or video of anything you find that inspires you. Not only will it be a nice memory for you to look back on, but you could also share it safely on social media and maybe motivate others to engage with the natural world!

### 4 Feed your feathered friends

Hang a bird feeder where you can easily see it from a window. Then enjoy the feelgood factor of a satisfied avian visitor perching where you can see them. For something more advanced, you could try building a nesting box to fix onto a fence or under a windowsill.

### 5 Watch the stars

Looking at the night sky can be incredibly calming. There are some comprehensive stargazing websites and apps to help you locate and recognise different stars. It can take 20 minutes or so before you can see stars fully in the dark, even on clear nights, so allow your eyes time to adjust.

### 5 Park your worries

If you're lucky enough to live within easy travelling distance of a park, you'd benefit from using it. Whether it's to play ball games, get on your bike, walk the dog or just get some fresh air into your lungs, the potential bonuses for mental health are enormous.

### 6 Wildlife on the web

A Google search will bring up lots of sites that stream webcam footage of nature. From seals to barn owls, rabbits to badgers, you can get an intimate, heart-warming view of all kinds of animal communities from inside the comfort of your own home.

### 6 Art and soul

Younger children will enjoy drawing or painting animals or nature scenes, or writing a poem or song lyrics about nature. For extra art or crafting fun, you could collect natural materials – leaves, feathers, tree bark or seeds, for example – to use in your creations.

### Meet Our Expert

Anna Bateman is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department for Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



Sources: <https://nihforest.org/corona-virus-lockdown-we-need-nature-now-more-ever/> | <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/article/call-to-wild/> | 'Mental Health and Nature', Mind, 2018



### Attendance for this week is summarised below

Nursery (Acorn)	94.4%	Year 3 (Pine)	95.0%
Reception (Chestnut)	98.7%	Year 4 (Alder)	97.7%
Reception (Pinecone)	90.7%	Year 4 ( Yew)	96.0%
Year 1 (Holly)	98.3%	Year 5 (Oak)	93.2%
Year 1 (Ash)	98.3%	Year 5 (Beech)	98.3%
Year 2 (Sycamore)	99.3%	Year 6 (Elm)	96.1%
Year 2 (Willow)	98.3%	Year 6 (Birch)	96.5%
Year 3 (Maple )	95.7%	Whole school Cumulative from Sept	95.5%

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](#)



PONTELAND RFC

# THIS IS WHERE YOU BELONG!

**JOIN OUR PONTELAND YOUTH RUGBY TEAMS  
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**TRAINING EVERY SUNDAY**

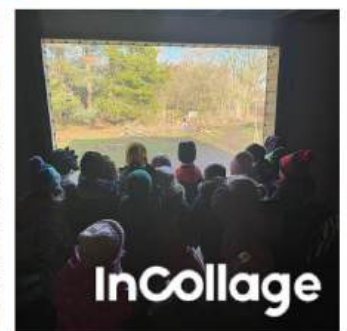
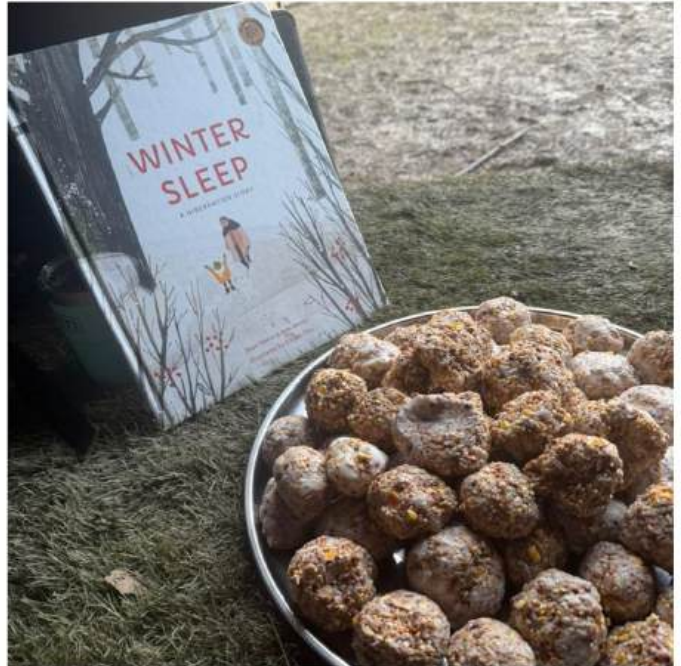
**ALL AGE GRADES**

**INTERESTED?**

FIND US ON  OR EMAIL [INFO@PONTELANDRFC.CO.UK](mailto:INFO@PONTELANDRFC.CO.UK)

## This week in Nursery

Last week, it was a bit too chilly for our Forest School adventures, but we didn't let that stop the fun! The children had a wonderful time learning all about how our animal friends stay cosy in the winter. We spent our time crafting special bird feeders, and we were so excited to finally bring them to the woods this week. After reading the story *Winter Sleep*, we carefully chose the perfect spots to put our treats. We can't wait to head back next week to see which hungry birds have been visiting!



## This week in Reception

This week, Reception have read the story *The Polar Bears Home* and we have learnt all about how polar bears survive in the Arctic. We learnt all about global warming and how this is affecting the Arctic. We then compared the Arctic to Ponteland and looked closely at atlases to see if there were any similarities and differences. In job time we also created bird feeders which we hung in the forest to make sure that our wildlife in the woods have enough food for the winter!



## This week in Year 1

Year 1 have had a very busy week! In Maths we have been continuing our understanding of counting on from 10 and finding more and less than a number using different resources. In Literacy we have written response letters to Carl, from our core text, Up, and we have suggested different ways that he can stop himself from feeling lonely.

In History we have been learning about the 1960s and the differences between then and now. We have had discussions about the moon landing, Barbie and Dr Who, and even England winning the World Cup! In Science we have been exploring our outside spaces and spotting signs of the seasons, discussing what season is upcoming and what changes we can expect in the weather.

To finish off our week we had a visit from Madame Humes who read a French story to us, introduced us to another new song, and we even had a go at acting it out!



## This week in Year 2

As scientists, we have begun to learn about the habitats of local wildlife, as we explored the woods. We found worms, beetles, birds and some flowers and we discussed how things might be different when we explore in Spring or Summer. In the classroom, we used inspiration from our core text, Tin Forest by Helen Ward, to create our very own tin forest. We discussed how we will describe it when we begin retelling the story in our own words.



## This week in Year 3

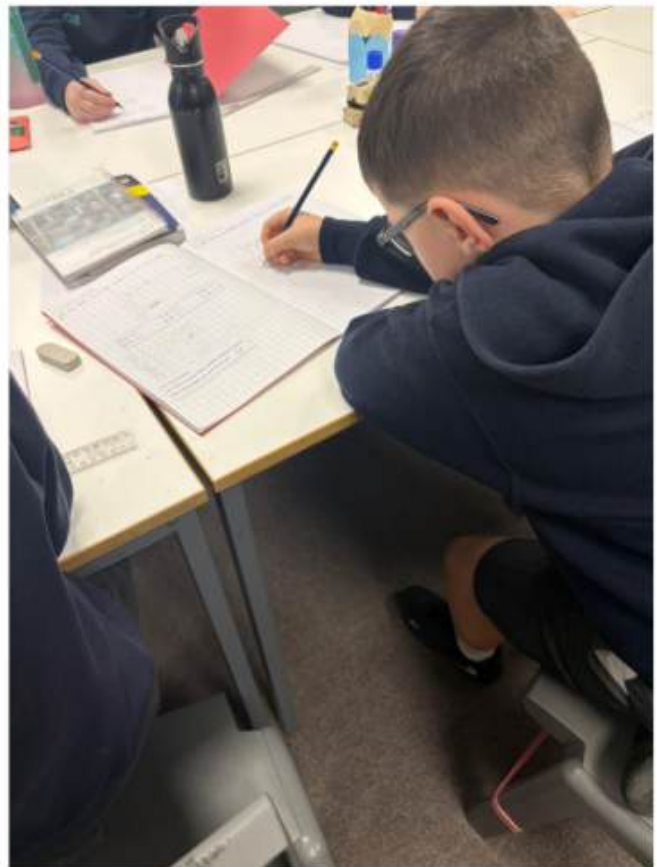
It has been another action-packed week of discovery in Year 3! In Science, the children learnt how to read food labels, which sparked some insightful class discussions about what truly makes a healthy, balanced meal.

Our Geography lesson took us across the globe to South America, where the children used their atlas skills to carefully identify and label the countries on their own maps. In Maths, we reached a major milestone by completing our unit on multiplication and division! A huge well done to everyone for their perseverance and hard work! Finally, in English, the classroom has been full of "gorilla fact machines" as we began planning our non-chronological reports. The children have been busy researching fascinating details about gorilla diets, habitats, and the dangers they face in the wild, and we are looking forward to seeing their final reports come to life next week.



## This week in Year 4

Year 4 have been working incredibly hard on consolidating their multiplication and division knowledge, focusing on using a range of methods with confidence and accuracy. It has been lovely to see their determination and growing fluency in lessons. Regular timestables practice at home makes a huge difference, and just a few minutes each day can really help boost confidence and support the fantastic progress they are making.





## Dates for your diary in 2026



Wc Mon 16th February 2026	Half Term Break
Mon 23rd February 2026	Teacher Training Day
Tue 24th February 2026	School Resumes
Thursday 5th March	World Book Day and PPS Colour your Future Day
Easter Break 2026	School closed on Friday 3rd April 2026
Mon 20th April 2026	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
  - Toy trucks/cars
- Shop items: till, fruit and veg baskets etc**  
**Metal pots and pans Children's Gardening Tools**  
**Dressing up items**

## After School Club Needs You!

We would love to take any of these off you:

- Loom Bands
  - Complete Jigsaws
  - Chess Sets
  - Dolls House Furniture
- Beads**  
**Lego & Duplo**  
**Knex**



## 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!



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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](mailto: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](mailto:Pontelandpta@gmail.com)



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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# 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](mailto: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**

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