

# Friday Flyer

Friday 5th December 2025

## Headteacher Update

Excitement is mounting in school for our Christmas performances next week and we have a very wide range of shows this year, from the traditional nativity, to the Dickens' classic Christmas Carol, to a brand new creation from our very own Mrs Bell - a Geordie nativity titled 'Howay in a Manger'! While the style and format of each performance may differ, what they all share is the effort the children (and staff) have put into creating productions to kickstart your Christmas spirit. It's no accident that our school value for December is collaboration as so much of it goes into creating, rehearsing and performing the Christmas shows as you'll see next week. The performances are as follows:

	9.15am	2.00pm
Monday		Y5 & 6 'Bah Humbug'
Tuesday	Y5 & 6 'Bah Humbug'	Y1 & 2 'It's a Miracle'
Wednesday	Y3 & 4 'Howay in a Manger' Nursery's sing along (10am)	Nursery's sing along
Thursday	Reception 'The Sleepy Shepherd'	Y3 & 4 'Howay in a Manger'
Friday	Y1 & 2 'It's a Miracle'	

On a different note, I wanted to tell you about an interesting meeting I and the other Pele Trust Headteachers had this week with Generation Focus, an organisation supporting schools in spreading the message from the ['Smartphone Free Childhood' parent campaign](#) which you may have seen on both the national and local news recently. We learned some frightening statistics around the dangers of smartphones for children and also that in their research, SFC has found that the vast majority of parents are reluctant to give their primary-aged children a smartphone but feel pressured to do so to prevent their child from being the only one without. I'm sure lots of our parents can relate to that sentiment. We're planning to explore whether this is something Pele Trust parents would like to become involved with and I will be in touch soon with further information. For now, the take-away message from the meeting was to ask parents to consider holding off buying a smartphone for Christmas and instead invest in a different piece of technology or a non-smart mobile phone which doesn't pose the same risks to children. If this appeals to you, then a comprehensive guide to child-friendly alternatives to smartphones can be found [here](#).

Best wishes

Claire Johnson

## Safeguarding & wellbeing

Last week I shared a guide to help you put parental controls on any new devices. If you're keen to reduce screentime over Christmas, this guide may be of interest to you.

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 of many issues which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [nationalcollege.com](http://nationalcollege.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

# 12 Top Tips for Children and Young People to Enjoy a TECH-FREE CHRISTMAS

The Christmas holidays are tailor made for families to enjoy relaxed quality time in each other's company – but with distractions like pinging phone notifications, the lure of games consoles and online Boxing Day sales, that can be more difficult than it sounds. Staying off our phones, laptops and tablets, however, can really help us to appreciate the things that genuinely matter at this special time of year. Follow our 12 top tips for a tech-free festive season... Yule be glad you did! Merry Christmas!



### CHRISTMAS CRAFTING

Get out the paper, glue and scissors and have a go at hand-making cards or gift tags. You could also create your own decorations to add a uniquely personal touch to the Christmas tree.

### WALK IN A WINTER WONDERLAND

Delight in the great outdoors with some gentle walks over the holiday. The family can all wrap up warm as you add to your step count and savour the crisp winter air together.

### NATURE QUEST

Try a scavenger hunt in the garden or your local park. Challenge yourself and your family to find natural treasures that are symbolic of this time of year – like holly or pinecones, say.

### BE A SEASONAL CHEF

Get the whole family working together in the kitchen for some Christmas cooking. Choose a recipe and whip up a festive feast that all of you can enjoy.

### CAROL KARAOKE

Sing your hearts out with a Christmas carol karaoke night. Pick out your favourite tunes and enjoy a musical celebration with family and friends.

### ENJOY A CHRISTMAS STORY

Christmas is a perfect time for sparkling stories. Get cosy and lose yourself in a brilliant book, from Dickens to Dr Seuss or a more modern favourite by Chris van Allsburg or Tom Fletcher.

### WANDER DOWN MEMORY LANE

How about making a scrapbook filled with your favourite memories from Christmases gone by? Unleash your creativity while you enjoy reliving those magical holiday moments.

### SNOWY SCULPTURES

If we're fortunate enough to get a white Christmas this year, make the most of the opportunity by having a family snowman-building competition!

### TRY REFLECTIVE JOURNALLING

Jot down your thoughts, feelings and reflections on the holiday in a notebook or diary – you could also list some of your main goals for the new year.

### GAMES NIGHT GALA

Dive into some old-school fun with a tech-free games night. Classic board games and card games have stood the test of time for a reason!

### WRAP IT UP

Take time to get inventive with some luxurious gift wrapping. Break out the wrapping paper, ribbons and bows to make parceling up those presents into a creative adventure.

### GOODWILL TO ALL

You and your family could spend a day volunteering – perhaps at a food bank or helping a local charity. After all, kindness and thinking of others are part of what Christmas is all about.

### Meet Our Expert

Melita Ahmed design and deliver the UK's only specialist postgraduate mental health qualifications. They also provide coaching and support to education organisations and local authorities – empowering school leaders and staff with the knowledge and skills to bring their settings into inclusive communities where the mental health of pupils isn't just a nice-to-have.






#WakeUpWednesday

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### Attendance for this week is summarised below

Nursery (Acorn)	84.3%	Year 3 (Pine)	98.0%
Reception (Chestnut)	99.7%	Year 4 (Alder)	95.8%
Reception (Pinecone)	92.7%	Year 4 ( Yew)	97.3%
Year 1 (Holly)	97.3%	Year 5 (Oak)	92.9%
Year 1 (Ash)	96.6%	Year 5 (Beech)	94.7%
Year 2 (Sycamore)	97.0%	Year 6 (Elm)	96.1%
Year 2 (Willow)	94.0%	Year 6 (Birch)	86.9%
Year 3 (Maple )	89.7%	Whole school Cumulative from Sept	95.8%

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](#)

## This week in Nursery

Over the last couple of weeks nursery have been visiting soft play to work on the Prime Areas of the Early Years Curriculum. We have listened well as we have walked to the soft play, used our social skills to play and interact with our peers and our motor skills to challenge ourselves. Thank you to the PTA for funding our visits!



PIC•COLLAGE

## This week in Reception

This week we have had special visits from some new elf friends! Marzipan and Violet appeared in Reception this week and have been watching all of our hard work! We then wrote all about them at job time and showed them how amazing we are at writing! We tried really hard to include capital letters, finger spaces and full stops! We also learnt all about the Nativity story in preparation for our Nativity performance next week. We can't wait to blow all our grown ups' socks off!



## This week in Year 1

### Historic Live Assembly from Antarctica!

This week Year 1 children took part in an unforgettable event — joining 5,000 schools worldwide for the **first ever** live school broadcast from Antarctica. The session was led by Rob Swan, the legendary polar explorer who has travelled to Antarctica over 40 times, and is the first person in history to walk to both the North and South Poles.

As part of the 2041 School Programme, students were encouraged to become “Champions of the Antarctic” by learning about clean, renewable energy and why we must protect Antarctica forever. The year 2041 is when today’s young people — the 20- and 21-year-olds of the future — will play a leading role in deciding how this last great wilderness is preserved.

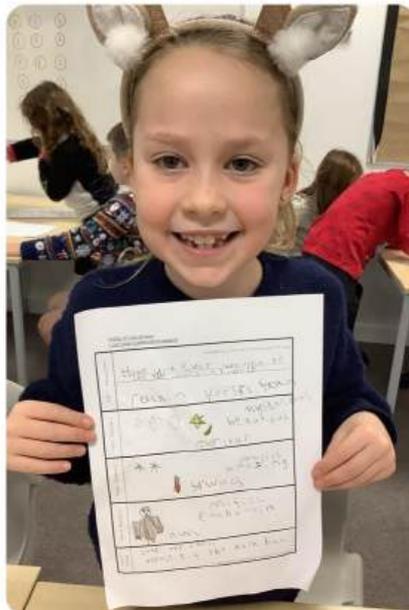
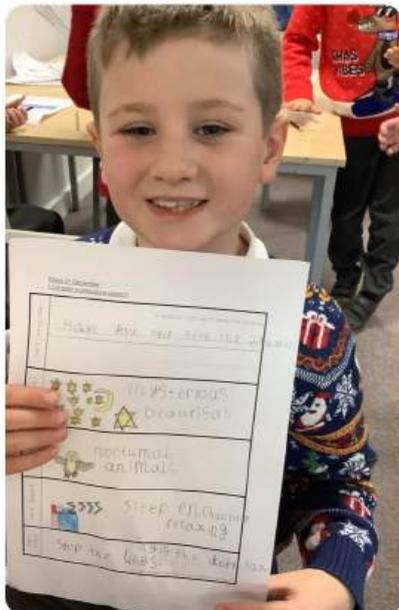
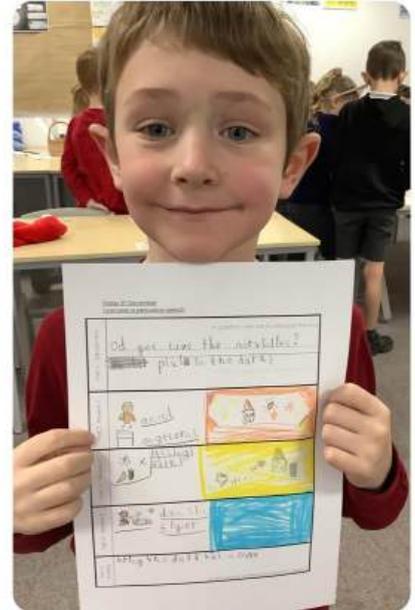
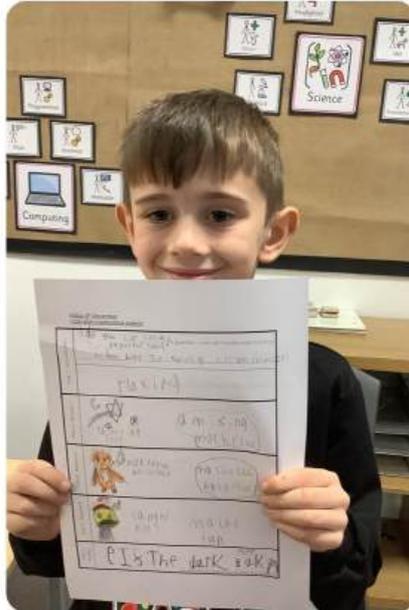
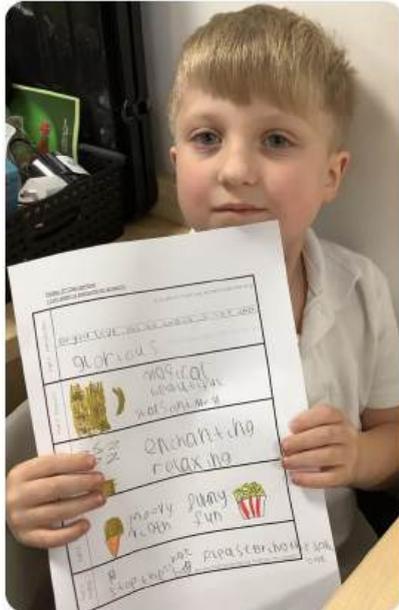
Rob reminded us that protecting Antarctica starts with small choices we make every day:

- Turn off lights and devices when they’re not using them.
- Walk, scooter, or cycle to school when possible to reduce pollution.
- Look after clothes, toys, and school items so they last longer and don’t need replacing as often.
- Reduce waste by reusing, repairing, and recycling.
- Appreciate nature and understand that every small action helps the planet.



## This week in Year 2

Year 2 has been planning persuasive speeches this week in preparation for writing them next week. We've thought about persuasive vocabulary that would help us and used reasons and rhetorical questions to help. This week's plans will help us with our writing next week.



## This week in Year 3

This week, with the start of December, Year 3 was full of festive cheer! Alongside the excitement, we've been very busy practicing for our upcoming LKS2 Christmas performance next Wednesday and Thursday, the children are doing brilliantly!

In English, we started reading an exciting new text, 'The Borrowers'. The class absolutely loved discovering where all their 'missing' classroom items have been disappearing to! Following this, we explored acrostic poems and focused on how to *perform* poetry, using our voices and expressions to convey emotion and meaning.

We've had a wonderful week of learning and performance preparation, and we can't wait to welcome you to watch our performance next week!



## This week in Year 4

### Festive Feeling!

Year 4 have been absolutely loving the build-up to Christmas. Today's Christmas Jumper and Fair Day has brought so much excitement into school — the children have come in sparkling, colourful jumpers and have really enjoyed the festive atmosphere. Their enthusiasm has been growing day by day as we get closer to the holidays.

We've also been busy practising our Christmas performance, *Howay in a Manger*, and the anticipation has been brilliant to see. The children have thrown themselves into rehearsals, learning lines, songs and actions with so much energy and pride. There's a real buzz in the classroom, and everyone is looking forward to sharing all their hard work with families as Christmas approaches.

Miss Davis and Mrs Bell



Mrs Bell & Miss Davis

## This week in Year 5

### Present-ing Our Ideas

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

It was great to see the children in their Christmas jumpers today. They all looked very festive, and they are definitely excited about Christmas - the growing variety of jumper designs is a sight to behold!

In English, we have been exploring discussion texts. We participated in an interesting debate before writing our texts to answer the question: *Has Christmas just become all about receiving gifts?* We had some fantastic ideas...



Has Christmas become all about gifts?

In this balanced argument there will be lots of true facts. <sup>christmas</sup> Christmas for the young it's all about presents. But it used to be about Jesus' birth and Christianity but now <sup>no</sup> anybody celebrates it.

On one hand, lots of kids only like Christmas because of the gifts. Kids don't care about anything but presents presents and more presents. All of the ads and social media is all about toys. <sup>secondly</sup> Secondly, shops make it all about toys and Black Friday is close to Christmas. Likewise kids write long lists and it makes the parents get feel like they have to get it for the children.

On the other hand, people say it is about not just the gifts but spending time with people say that is the best gift possible. Also it has become a popular choice to have Christmas dinner. A different perspective is that it is better to give than receive a tradition is to put up Christmas decorations and to have a laugh and it's not about spending a <sup>so</sup> much money.

After considering evidence from both sides my conclusion is Christmas hasn't become all about gifts and presents and I personally think it should stay that way. Because I enjoy spending time with my family and having a laugh.

Has Christmas become all about presents and gifts?

Many people believe that Christmas is a time about spending time with families and friends but then on the other hand people think that it is all about money and gifts. Actual though Christmas was all about the celebration of Jesus's birthday and spending quality time with the people you love, not the money. So this argument will tell you all about the reasons for and reasons against.

Firstly, tons and tons of shops start advertising so early it is sometimes before the start of November and they do it just to make money. Secondly, families always spend away too much money on people they never spend on or don't need. Another reason is that children put away too much on their Christmas lists that if they don't get one thing they wanted they are ungrateful and then ~~say~~ get in a tantrum. But then a lot of people just talk about the gifts not the experiences and things like Christmas dinner.

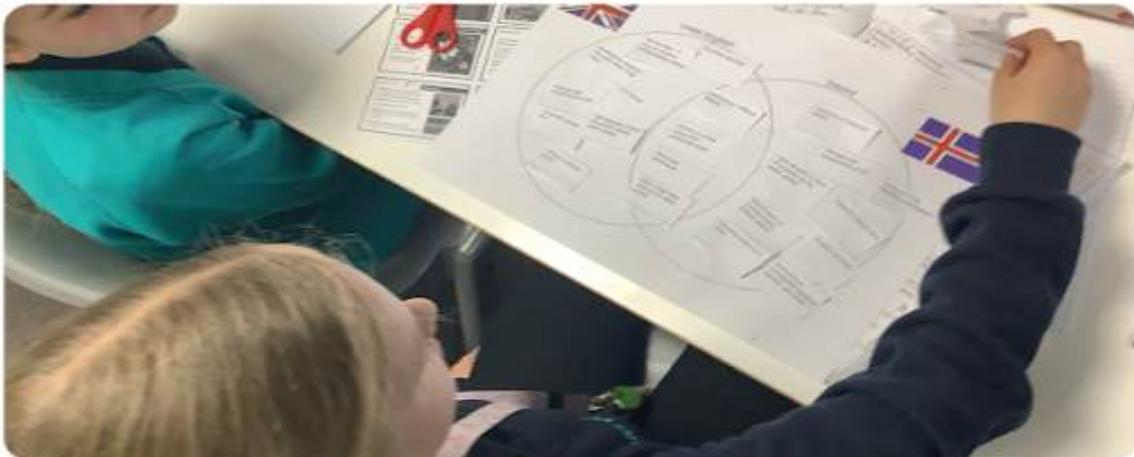
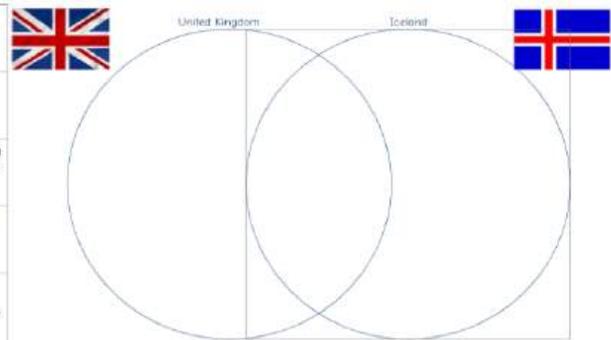
On the other hand, many families would go out to Christmas light shows, seeing Santa and Christmas dinner. Although lots of people give to charities they also give gifts but for them it isn't all about gifts. A different point of view is that families and friends go <sup>to</sup> other and spend quality time together. Some people will go to Grandparents houses that they may not see for much longer but others might.



## This week in Year 6

As we delve further into our Geography topic, we spent our last lesson comparing the countries of Iceland and the UK. We looked at things like energy production, forms of government, climate, natural geographical features and location to compare the two countries. We sorted facts into a Venn Diagram and found many differences as well as a number of similarities. Having spent some time looking at many of the amazing geographical features, lots of the children are keen to visit one day to see the amazing country for themselves.

32 active volcanoes	Temperate climate zone	Is an island nation	Education begins at 5 years	Is found in the Northern Hemisphere
Currency is sterling pound	Education begins at 6 years	Uses Greenwich Mean Time during winter months	Democratic government	Average high temperature of 15°
Majority of energy comes from geothermal power	Is in Europe	No active volcanoes	Average high temperature of 25°	Dominated by farmland and urban areas (large cities)
Experiences 4 different seasons	Approximately 8 hours of sunshine during winter solstice	Majority of energy comes from natural gas	Subarctic climate zone	Currency is Icelandic Krona
Over 21 hours of sunshine during summer solstice	Uses a single time zone for the whole country	Dominated by un-segregated highlands (glaciers, lava fields)	Approximately 4 hours of sunshine during winter solstice	Approximately 17 hours of sunshine during summer solstice



## Dates for your diary in 2025



Mon 8th December 2025	Year 5 & Year 6 Christmas Performance - 2pm
Tue 9th December 2025	Year 5 & Year 6 Christmas Performance - 9.15am
Tue 9th December 2025	Christmas Lunch & Christmas Jumper Day with uniform Year 1 & Year 2 - Christmas Performance - 2pm
Wed 10th December 2025	Year 3 & Year 4 - Christmas Performance - 9.15am
Thur 11th December 2025	Reception Christmas Performance - 9.15am Year 3 & Year 4 - Christmas Performance - 2pm
Fri 12th December 2025	Year 1 & Year 2 Christmas Performance - 9.15am
Thur 18th December 25	Pele Trust Christmas Choir Concert at St Mary's Church in Ponteland - Performance starts 1.45pm.
Fri 19th December 2025	School breaks up for Christmas break - School finishes at 1.30pm
Mon 5th January 2026	School Resumes
Wed 14th January 2026	Year 5 trip to Robinwood. Return Friday 16th January.

## 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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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**

**20669059**



