

NEWSLETTER

FRIDAY 16TH JANUARY 2026



Preparation for life's journey

Dear Families,

We have hit the ground running this term with lots of new and exciting changes. One of these is our new star system where children who show excellent learning behaviours such as perseverance or who have particularly challenged themselves have their name put into our weekly raffle where they can win a prize. One of our school values is 'Aim High' and we really want our pupils to feel motivated and inspired throughout the school day. Well done to everyone who has been entered into the raffle so far! Our behaviour and anti-bullying policy has also been updated and can be found on our website.

We have also been encouraging everyone to take care of our school environment. Our new classroom monitors are taking responsibility for leading their class and the winners every Friday wins the 'Golden Dustpan' award! Although it is a bit silly, the children absolutely love the competition!

Have a brilliant weekend,

Faye Herron and the Gresham Village School & Nursery Team

BEECHES HOUSE POINT REWARD DAY PHOTOS

They had a great time with Miss Neylon this morning playing board games together!



WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN...



PUFFINS?

In Puffin Class, we have had a very busy start back after Christmas. In English, we have started our new book, *Grandpa's Gift*. We have been focusing on identifying nouns and adjectives in our reading and writing. We have also been learning about the four different types of sentences. In Maths, we have begun our new unit on Geometry. We have been exploring both 2-D and 3-D shapes. The children have been learning about the properties of shapes, including vertices, faces and sides. They have especially loved getting the 3-D shapes out and exploring them practically. In Science, we have started our new unit on Using Materials. We have been learning about wood, metal, plastic and glass. We even went on a materials hunt around the school, which the children really enjoyed. In PSHE, we have begun our Zones of Regulation lessons. We have explored the four zones—red, yellow, blue and green—and discussed how we might feel in each zone. In R.E., we have been loving our topic on Hanukkah, learning about Jewish traditions, the Torah, the story of Hanukkah and making our own Menorahs. In P.E., we have started our Gymnastics unit, the children have loved being taught by Mrs Dunnett, and a reminder that P.E. will now be on Wednesdays.



STARLINGS?

Starlings have had a fantastic start to the term. We thoroughly enjoyed our two Science Days, where the children learned all about the human skeleton, including muscles, joints and bones. Daily story time continues to be a highlight of the day, and the children are very engaged by our current class book, *Charlotte's Web*. They often ask us to keep reading when we have got to the end of the chapter, particularly when we reach a cliff-hanger!

Across all subjects, we are placing a strong focus on presenting work neatly and thoughtfully, and the children have really embraced this, challenging themselves in many ways. We have also just begun our new Geography unit, *Rocks, Relics and Rumbles*, where we are deepening our understanding of the Earth by exploring different rocks and fossils. I am very much looking forward to seeing what next week brings.

WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN...



SKYLARKS?

Skylarks class have had a good start back, having settled in well to their class and respective year groups. They are improving their behaviours for learning and standards of presentation so need to continue on this upwards trajectory. We focused on art on the first three days back, learning how atmospheric perspective affects landscapes. The children created lovely pencil sketches then went on to use watercolours for their final landscape. Our new geography unit is called 'Misty Mountain, Winding River.' We are learning about rivers, physical processes of erosion, transportation and deposition, not forgetting the good old oxbow lake! In maths we have begun our second unit on multiplication and division. Year 4s are doing their multiplication check in June, which will come round quite quickly, so please encourage them to practise at home on the White Rose 1 minute maths app, or on www.timestables.co.uk. Year 3s can practise too - they should focus on 2s, 4s, 8s, 3s, 6s, 5s and 10s. In English, we are writing a story based on 'Stone Age Boy.' We will be focusing on past tense, description, fronted adverbials and comparative adjectives. Our science unit is states of matter, where we are learning about solids, liquids and gases.



GOLDFINCHES?

What a fantastic start to the Spring term. Once again, I am incredibly proud of Goldfinches class and their attitudes to learning. We have already completed our art unit on 'Line, Light and Shade', with some fantastic outcomes, and we are well into our 'Sow, Grow, Farm' Geography unit. We will be visiting Manor Farm in March so we can see what we have learnt being applied in real life. In English, we are going to be writing our own ancient Chinese myth, using inspiration from our class text 'Kai and the Monkey King'. A big **congratulations** to our 'Aim High' award winners this week and Goldfinches class also won the highly honourable Golden Dustpan and Brush! This is awarded to the tidiest classroom and Goldfinches won by a landslide. Great job team. Keep up the good work.

WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN...



KESTRELS?

Kestrels have made a strong and enthusiastic start to 2026, returning to school with a positive and mature attitude — it has been a pleasure to see. Our learning has fitted perfectly with the freezing winter weather. In English, we have been writing about the incredible explorer Ernest Shackleton, focusing on his remarkable journey aboard the *Endurance* and the challenges he faced in Antarctica. In Geography, we have been exploring the Polar Regions, using maps to locate them and learning about their climate and wildlife. Our Art work has been inspired by the Inuit people of Northern Canada, particularly the artist Kenojuak Ashevak, and we have enjoyed creating our own printed designs using stencils. In Science, we have been learning about electricity, building and testing series and parallel circuits while solving problems and investigating different components.

FOREST SCHOOL



Check out this amazing team work from our Forest School sessions this week!

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about DIGITAL DEVICES & WELLBEING

Children aged 7 to 14 now spend roughly 3 to 5 hours a day on phones, tablets, consoles, and computers. That much screen time has parents and educators worried – not just about the hours logged, but about online safety and the knock-on effects on mental health. This guide brings together practical, expert-backed strategies so adults can nurture healthier digital habits and help young people thrive both on and offline.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

SLEEP DISRUPTION

Excessive screen time, especially before bed, can interfere with melatonin production and delay sleep onset. Children may struggle to concentrate or regulate emotions due to poor sleep hygiene linked to late-night device use.

ONLINE PEER PRESSURE

Social media platforms expose children to unrealistic standards and peer validation loops. Likes, comments, and follower counts can influence self-worth and lead to anxiety or risky behaviour to gain approval.

CYBERBULLYING EXPOSURE

Children may encounter bullying through messaging apps, games, or social media. This can be persistent and anonymous, making it harder to detect. Victims often feel isolated and reluctant to report incidents.

REDUCED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Time spent on screens often replaces outdoor play and physical activity. This sedentary lifestyle can contribute to obesity, poor posture, and reduced cardiovascular health.

EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION

Fast-paced digital content can overstimulate young brains. Children may become irritable, impatient, or struggle with boredom and emotional control when not engaged with screens.

PRIVACY AND SAFETY RISKS

Children may unknowingly share personal information or interact with strangers online. Without guidance, they may not understand the long-term consequences of digital footprints or unsafe online behaviour.

Advice for Parents & Educators

SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Establish screen-time limits and device-free zones, e.g. classrooms and dinner tables. Use parental controls and co-create a digital use agreement with children to encourage accountability. Trying a visual schedule or timer app can help children understand and stick to limits.

MODEL HEALTHY HABITS

Children mirror adult behaviour. Demonstrate balanced device use, take regular screen breaks, and prioritise face-to-face interactions to reinforce positive behaviours. Making a habit of putting your phone away during meals and conversations can show that real-life interactions come first.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DIALOGUE

Create a safe space for children to talk about their online experiences. Ask open-ended questions like, "What did you enjoy online today?" to build trust and awareness. Try setting aside 10 minutes each day for a digital check-in where children can share what they've seen or done online.

PROMOTE DIGITAL LITERACY

Teach children how to evaluate online content, recognise misinformation, and understand privacy settings. Empower them to think critically and act responsibly in digital spaces. You could use real-life examples from the news or social media to help children practise spotting fake information.

Meet Our Expert

Adam Gillett is Associate Vice Principal for Personal Development at Penistone Grammar School and works on a secondment one day a week for Minds Ahead, which works with schools on improving their mental health provision.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College