

Ponteland High School



EXPLAINING THE JARGON

National Curriculum

The National Curriculum is a blueprint used by schools to ensure that teaching standards are consistent across the country. It is a framework provided by the government so that all school children are taught in a way that is balanced but also challenges them.

Key Stages

Your child's progress through the school system is measured in Key Stages, which are as follows:

• **Key Stage 3**: Years 7-9

• **Key Stage 4:** Years 10-11

• **Post-16:** Years 12-13

GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education)

GCSEs are taken by the majority of students at the end of Year 11, usually following two years of study. GCSEs are graded as 9-1, with 9 being the highest grade.

DfE

The government's Department for Education. www.education.gov.uk

Ofsted

Ofsted is an official body that inspects schools in England which are mainly or wholly state-funded. Ofsted inspectors produce school-specific reports meant to improve standards of achievement and quality of teaching, as well as providing independent information to parents and the wider public.

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Pastoral

This relates to the responsibility and care of students' emotional well-being and development.



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WELCOME



Welcome and thank you for choosing to send your son/daughter to our school. As a parent of two young daughters I am acutely aware of the importance and time given in the selection of the right school for your child and I am confident you will be pleased with your choice of Ponteland High School. Our students make our school special, they are enthusiastic, talented and motivated to do well and I am confident your child will contribute much to our school community.

I believe strongly in celebrating the individual talents and abilities of all students, both in the classroom and through wider enrichment opportunities. Our staff will work hard to get to know your child as an individual, in order to develop an educational experience around the clear foundations of happiness, feeling safe and secure and exceptional achievement in school.

My ambition for the school is to continue to develop an environment where great teaching develops the academic and personal growth of all students, through a progressive and engaging curriculum that challenges and inspires all students. In order to achieve this ambition, we need all students to take pride in our school by demonstrating a clear commitment to learning, excellent behaviour and positive interactions with staff and one another. I hope you recognise these important aims and will support the school in helping us achieve them. The relationship

between home and school is a core foundation of a successful school and I am committed to establishing strong relationships between the school, all parents/carers and students.

I have the highest expectations for all of our students in academic work and our teachers will provide engaging and challenging lessons. We know through experience that some of the most memorable moments in school happen outside of the classroom therefore I would encourage all of our new students to participate in the wider school enrichment programme to create both enduring friendships and memories that will last a lifetime.

I am looking forward to working closely with you and your son / daughter in the weeks, months and years ahead to create a memorable and enjoyable school experience for your child. I am immensely proud of our school and I hope your children will feel the same pride as the newest members of our school community.



JEST AN

Stefan McElwee Headteacher

CONTACTING THE SCHOOL

There will inevitably be occasions when you feel the need to contact school; we welcome calls about your child's progress or well-being, and will do our best to deal with your query as quickly as we can.

If your child is not at school because he or she is ill ...

Please contact School Reception as soon as possible and ring in every day that your child is absent.

Tel: 01661 824711 Ext 243

Press 1 to report Lower School Absence

Email: attendance@ponthigh.org.uk

(If your child is absent and we have not heard from you by 11.15am, we will contact home)

If you have a concern about your child's welfare, e.g. behaviour at school, attendance, detentions, a concern at home ...

Your first point of contact should be your child's Pastoral Leader or Pastoral Manager on 01661 824711

From September 2025, these are:

Year 7: Mrs H Hartley (Ext 240)

Mr P Coulson (Ext 253)

Year 8: Miss L Cowell (Ext 257)

Mrs L Mordey (Ext 202)

Year 9: Mrs H Richardson (Ext 218)

Ms J Murray (Ext 228)

Year 10: Mr C Benn (Ext 349)

Ms M Andrews (Ext 264)

Year 11: Mrs E Lee (Ext 266)

Mrs S Huntley (Ext 241)

Pastoral Leaders and Managers move with students through Year 7-11, then return to Year 7.

If you are concerned about a particular subject your child is studying ...

Contact your child's subject teacher (this may well change each year).

If you would like to discuss the matter further, please contact the Pastoral Leader in the first instance.

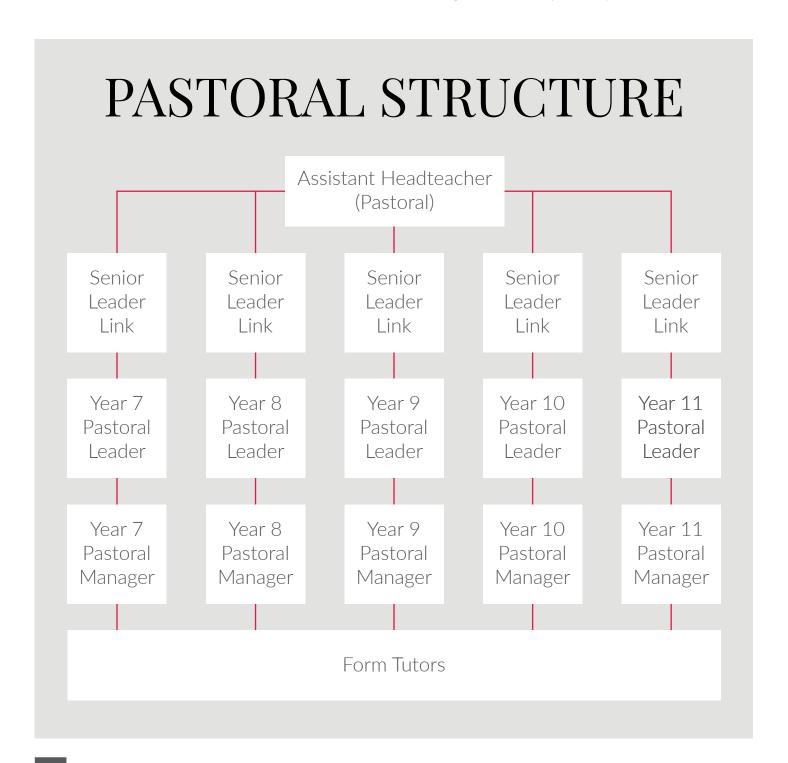
For more serious concerns please contact Mr W Close-Ash, Assistant Headtacher



PASTORAL SUPPORT YEARS 7 – 11

This diagram shows the structure of the pastoral system at PHS. Our teams have the experience and expertise needed to help develop students' emotional, physical and social wellbeing.

The Pastoral Leaders and Managers support the Form Tutors with all pastoral matters such as attendance and punctuality, behaviour and rewards, in a way that ensures the well-being of all students. They are also available at break and lunchtimes for students to talk to, and for parents to speak to by phone or arrange a scheduled meeting in school, if they have any worries or concerns.



RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Code of Conduct

We have two basic school rules that ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the school; these are displayed in every classroom and are non-negotiable

- 1. Always do as you are asked by a member of staff
- 2. Listen attentively, in silence, when a member of staff is talking

In addition we expect our students to demonstrate the principles of respect and responsibility at all times.

Yourself

- Respect yourself by making the most of your skills, talents and abilities
- Accept responsibility for improving as a learner and for your behaviour as a member of our school community

Other People

- Respect everyone's right to learn, work and achieve
- Accept responsibility for helping and encouraging others to improve and succeed

Our Environment

- Respect the environment we all share, both within school and outside
- Accept responsibility for protecting and improving your surroundings

Behaviour and Discipline

At PHS we work hard to ensure all students are well rounded individuals who have a sense of respect for themselves, their families, their peers, their teachers and the wider community.

We are deeply committed to the safety and well-being of our students. We believe that education has a major role to play in combating negative behaviour and enabling all young people to achieve their potential.

We also believe that education must teach young people of the need for tolerance and to respect and celebrate differences in our local, regional, national and global communities.

We encourage our students to be open-minded, and try to present them with a variety of positive images and role models. We will help our students to recognise the contributions made by different groups in society. We will not discriminate against each other by our use of language.

Rewards and Sanctions

The behaviour, discipline and safety of students are a responsibility shared by all staff. We expect our students to have the highest standards of behaviour and show respect for others at all times, and we reward this appropriately.



We aim to reinforce good behaviour, hard work, effort and concern for others by recognition and praise, whenever or wherever it occurs. Strong relationships and mutual respect between staff, students and their peers are actively encouraged and supported.

Rewards include:

- Student of the Month (Tutor Group)
- Student of the Month (Subject Areas)
- Verbal praise and immediate recognition
- Other awards as organised by subject areas and Pastoral Teams, e.g. Celebration of Achievement assemblies
- Certificates for good attendance
- Letters of praise for good effort/behaviour grades/ specific acts

Behaviour issues in lessons are dealt with in the first instance by the classroom teacher. If the matter cannot be resolved it will be taken further by the relevant Raising Achievement Leader/Raising Achievement Deputy.

If behaviour issues are persistent or occur across a number of subject areas then the Pastoral Leader/Manager will intervene.

Very serious matters will, if necessary, be dealt with by an Assistant Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher.

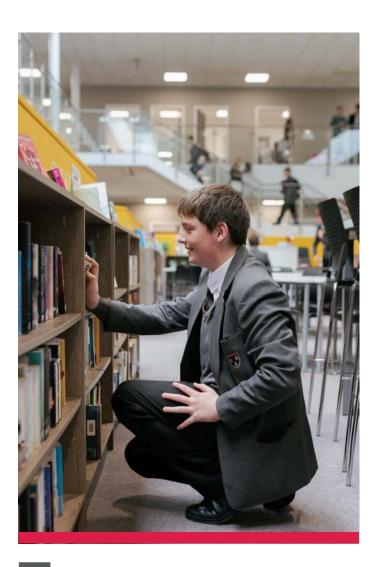
RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

A student will face the following set of consequences if he/ she chooses to continue to behave in an inappropriate or unacceptable way:

- Verbal warning
- Break-time and/or lunchtime detention (students will be allowed time to eat, and use the toilet, if they have a detention over break or lunch time)
- After-school detention (we have a legal right to keep students after school for detentions, but parents will usually receive 24 hours' notice if we have to impose this sanction)
- Report card This will monitor the student's behaviour and engagement on a daily basis. Parents will be informed and involved in this process
- On tow Students are taken out of lessons and isolated; senior staff will supervise them.

They are also supervised during break and lunch time

- Behaviour contracts
- Fixed term and permanent exclusions





Bullying

Ponteland High School has a firm Anti-bullying Policy. This is available from the School Office, and can be viewed at www.ponthigh.org.uk

We take bullying in any form extremely seriously, and appreciate that it does cause stress and anxiety for everyone involved.

We encourage students who are bullied, or are involved in bullying, to talk to someone they trust. This may be:

- parents or a family member
- a teacher
- the school nurse
- a friend who could pass on information for them

We ask parents to support us by encouraging your child to talk to his/her Form Tutor in the first instance concerning any form of stress or worry, and then their Pastoral Leader or Pastoral Manager, if necessary.

"Cyber-bullying" is when a child or teenager is threatened, harassed or targeted by another child or teenager using the internet, interactive and digital technologies, social media or mobile phones. We treat this as seriously as any other form of bullying, and take as many precautions against it as possible, including computer security measures.

RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY



Smoking/Vaping

Ponteland High has an Anti-Smoking Policy aimed at discouraging students from starting to smoke, and encouraging students to stop smoking if they have already started. This policy also includes 'vaping' or use of e-cigarettes.

Smoking or vaping anywhere on or near the school site is not permitted. Any student who is found smoking, in possession of cigarettes/vapes, or in the company of a smoker, will face a sanction; this would usually be an afterschool detention. The student would be advised to make an appointment with the school nurse to discuss ways of giving up smoking. Continuing to break the anti-smoking policy could lead to a fixed-term exclusion.

Drugs

We consider drugs to be a very serious issue, and have a detailed Drugs Policy which aims to:

- enable students to make informed, sensible choices
- keep the school free of drugs at all times.

Drugs are defined in this policy as, "any substance which is illegal to possess or to sell. It also includes substances which are not illegal, but which are used by young people to create mood and behaviour changes, e.g. alcohol, solvents, glues, aerosols, tobacco and over-the-counter and prescription drugs."

We work closely with an agency called 'Sorted!' to provide information and support to students and staff.

- Sorted! is a multi-agency outreach substance misuse service that operates throughout Northumberland.
- It provides treatment and care to young people under the age of 18 who experience problems because of their use or misuse of substances (legal and illegal drugs, alcohol, and solvents, over the counter and prescription medicines).

Sorted! acts in the best interests of the young person, giving factual, non-biased information and advice about substances.

The telephone number for Sorted! is 01670 500150

Restricted items

Please note the following items must not be brought onto the school site and if a student is found in possession of them they will be confiscated, with an appropriate sanction applied.

- Illegal substances, e.g. drugs
- Cigarettes, lighters, matches, e-cigarettes
- Alcohol
- Knives, razors and similar sharp items
- Laser pens/pointers
- Any other item that might cause offence, nuisance or danger to others
- Large sums of money

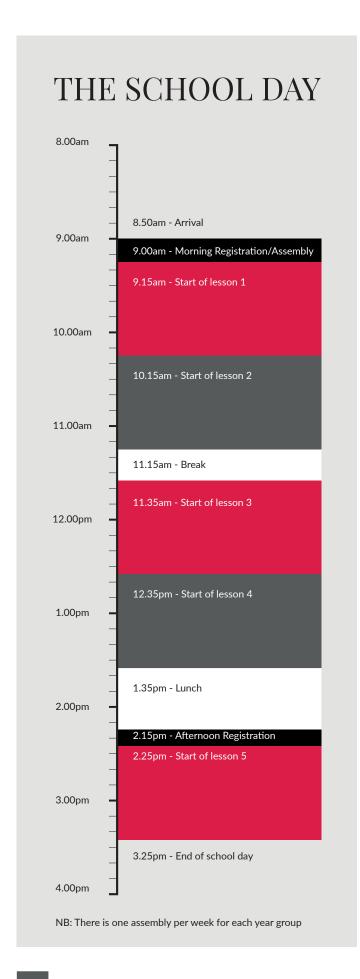
Mobile Phones

Mobile phones may be brought to school, but must stay switched off/silent during the whole of the school day. In essence, they may be 'on site but out of sight'.

If phones are visible, misused or interrupt learning (on the first occasion) they will be confiscated and returned at the end of the school day. If the problem occurs a second time they will be confiscated and then parents will be asked to collect the phone from school in person.

School will not accept responsibility for the loss or theft of a phone.

LIFE AT PONTELAND HIGH SCHOOL



Timetable

The school operates a two-week timetable, which means that the lesson patterns change every other week, e.g. Week 1: Period 1 on a Monday might be English, but in Week 2 it might be Science.

Morning Break

Break-time is 20 minutes long, so students have plenty of time to catch up with friends who may be in different classes. A selection of snacks is available from the dining street.

Students are not allowed to leave school during break or lunch.

Lunch

Lunch break lasts 40 minutes. Only Sixth Form students are allowed to leave school during lunchtime.

In the dining hall, students can choose either a full school meal or a snack-type lunch; the food is cooked in our own kitchen. Packed lunches can be eaten in the dining hall or in one of the designated social areas. Fresh drinking water is available from the drinking fountain in the dining hall at no cost, and students are encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day. Students can bring their own bottled water but should not bring energy or fizzy drinks to school.

Attendance

At PHS we know that excellent attendance is critical, as there is a direct link between students' attendance and their achievement and progress levels. Every day your child is absent will impact his or her education and future success.

Students' attendance is recorded electronically during am/pm registration times and at the beginning of every lesson.

Attendance rates that fall below 90% (19 missed days; almost 4 weeks) over the school year give serious cause for concern. Attendance rates below 90% affects your child's chances of success by a drop of 1 grade at GCSE across all subjects.

With this in mind, we have an ongoing whole school focus on good attendance for all students across the school. Page 9 highlights our monitoring system. You will note that attendance has been broken down into a series of categories linked to a set of interventions that tutors and the Pastoral Team will manage. These interventions are of a supportive nature and include simple conversations about the importance of good attendance or short sessions examining ways of improving attendance.

LIFE AT PONTELAND HIGH SCHOOL



We recognise that many of our students maintain the very highest levels of attendance and we aim to celebrate this further through contact with you. There are times, however, when attendance begins to slip and we will look for your support to promote the importance of good attendance.

You can help us and your child by doing the following:

- If your child cannot attend school due to illness, you should contact school attendance by telephone, lower school option 1 or ext 243 or email attendance@ponthigh.org.uk.or via schoolsomms
- Take family holidays only during the school holiday periods. From September 2013 we have been unable to authorise these due to a change in legislation.
- Make medical/dental appointments outside school time, where possible
- Discuss any problems concerning attendance with your child's Form Tutor, Pastoral Leader or Pastoral Manager.

Students arriving late

Late students must report to Reception to sign in. We will contact parents if this happens on a regular basis.

Students leaving school early

You should contact school by telephone, email, letter or a note in the Student Planner, if your child needs to leave early. A student must not leave school for any reason, without first reporting to Reception and officially signing out. All students must be collected from reception - students will not be allowed to leave the main reception unaccompanied.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING PROGRAMME

Pastoral Team Procedures

The table below indicates the procedures required for each group of students within school in relation to their attendance in school. Attendance is shared with students on a weekly basis and each student receives a coloured sticker for their planner to highlight their current position. The system is monitored and managed by a Deputy Head Teacher, supported by the Pastoral Team for each year group.

Green - Excellent

% Attendance 98 - 100%

Pastoral Team Action

- Attendance celebration
- Half-termly PM (Pastoral Manager) letter home
- PM certificate in rewards assembly

Orange - Good

% Attendance 95 - 97.9%

Pastoral Team Action

- Half-termly PM letter home
- PM certificate in rewards assembly
- Tutor verbal praise

Aqua - Caution

% Attendance: 92 – 94.9%

Pastoral Team Action

- Tutor verbal encouragement
- Iutor mentoring
- Tutor contact home (phone call/letter) when appropriate (record to be kept)

Yellow - WARNING

% Attendance: 90 – 91.9%

Pastoral Team Action

- Target group for PM mentoring
- PM letter to parents when appropriate (record to be kept)

Red - SERIOUS CONCERN

% Attendance: 89.9% or below

Pastoral Team Action

- First day response and PM/EWO (Education Welfare Officer) parental interview for 85%
 - 89.9%. 85% and below EWO higher level intervention
- Fast track procedures where appropriate (dependent on circumstances)

Responsibility of Pastoral Managers

Please use the colour coded data sheets you have received to:

- Identify and target students in the AQUA, YELLOW AND RED categories and organise the relevant action.
- You may need to adapt positive letters home for the GREEN and ORANGE students.
- Discuss the YELLOW students with your Pastoral Leader to decide on next steps including mentoring if appropriate. A letter of concern for these students may be needed.

Illness/Medicines in School/Allergies

If a student becomes ill at school they must go to Reception. We will then contact you.

If we cannot reach you, we will make appropriate medical arrangements.

Please make sure you let us know of any changes to your emergency contact details on a regular basis so that our information is up-to-date and correct. Please advise us if your child has any medical conditions.





Lost property

All items should be labelled. Any valuables brought in by a student are the responsibility of that individual; the school will not be liable for any loss or damage.

Lockers

Lockers are available for students and can be hired for a key deposit of £5 which is refundable when the key is returned to school. If the key is lost, a £3 fee will be charged to cover the cost of a replacement.

Travel Arrangements

Northumberland County Council has a statutory duty to provide free home-to-school transport, or where appropriate, pay the cost of such transport, for students who live more than three miles away from their designated catchment area school by the nearest available route.

Where spare seats are available on home-to-school transport vehicles contracted by the County Council, children who are not entitled to free transport may be allowed to travel on a fare-paying basis.

For more information about school transport, go online at: https://bit.ly/2wrhnAs

Parents, schools, transport operators and the County Council all have an interest in the behaviour of children on school transport. Drivers, operators and any escorts will liaise with us as appropriate on behavioural problems. School rules still apply while students are on school transport.

Bikes

We provide a bike parking area, but we cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage to bikes while on school premises. Students must provide their own locking device.

Parking

We have 2 spacious car parks with over 450 parking bays, which are available for dropping off and collecting students. If you are parking elsewhere, please show consideration for residents and other road users. Vehicles are parked at the driver's own risk.

Travel Policy

We have recently updated our Travel Policy in line with the upcoming move to the new school site; it can be viewed online.

UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE



UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE

School uniform and PE kit can be purchased from our supplier Michael Sehgal & Sons Ltd. Please visit their website for more details www.michaelsehgal.co.uk

Boys

- Grey school blazer with school badge
- Grey V neck pullover with school badge
- School tie (worn properly)
- Plain white shirt (tucked into trousers)
- Flat front or pleated black trousers (see item 1) Black shoes (see item 2)

Girls

- · Grey school blazer with school badge
- Grey V neck pullover with school badge
- School tie (worn properly)
- Plain white shirt (tucked in)
- Flat front or pleated black trousers or School skirt with logo (see items 1 and 3)
- Black low-heeled shoes (see item 2)

Dress Code

1. Trousers

No denim, canvas or linen material trousers. No cargotype. No leggings.

2. Shoes

Sensible, black, polishable shoes must be worn. No boots.

3. Skirts

Skirt must be the compulsory school skirt with logo, purchased from our supplier, Emblematic.

4 Relts

No wide or coloured belts with large buckles or logos.

5. Jewellery

The only jewellery permitted is a watch, one signet ring and one pair of studs in the ears (not expanders or plugs). No other facial or body piercing is allowed in school.

6. Make-up

No make-up, nail varnish or lipstick – if it's visible, it's too much. No false eyelashes or false nails.

7. Hair

No extreme hairstyles, e.g. shaved razor-cuts or Mohican style, no unnatural colours, blocks, stripes or extensions.

8. Outdoor coats

Coats should not be worn indoors.

9. Bags

All students should have a suitable rucksack or bag, so that they can carry all the books and equipment they need for the school day. Bags should be marked or labelled with the owner's name.

NB: Due to the fast changing nature of fashion it is impossible to provide an exhaustive list of inappropriate items. We aim for our students to look smart and take pride in their appearance; should you have a query about an item then please contact school prior to making your purchase.

Summer uniform

In the summer term, students will wear the normal school uniform (see previous page). However, jumpers will be optional for the final half term. Blazers and ties should still be worn; if worn, jumpers may be removed in lessons at the discretion of the class teacher. At all times shirts should be tucked into trousers/skirts.

Any breaches of the school uniform policy are likely to result in a sanction. We may need to contact parents for the student to go home to change, or work away from other students, if this is not possible.

PE Kit - Boys & Girls

Students will have an option from a selection of items to wear in PE.

PE Kit

- Black t-shirt
- Black shorts/tracksuit bottoms or sports leggings
- Black ¼ zip midlayer or hoodie
- Sports trainers (different from school shoes) must be worn
- Football studded boots to access the field and 4G pitch
- Optional items such as base layers, gloves are allowed to be worn in the winter months



STUDENT SUPPORT

Google

Google for Education

At Ponteland High School we use Google for Education as our prime IT platform. Google has the benefit of being cloud based, meaning that it is more secure and resilient enabling us to work more flexibly than before. Google for Education has offered new and exciting ways for staff and students to work both independently and collaboratively and feedback from students has been very positive.

Every student at Ponteland High has his or her own school Google account. This comprises unlimited storage on Google Drive, a school GMail and Calendar account and access to Google Docs, Slides and Sheets, which is Google's equivalent of Word, PowerPoint and Excel. Students will be taught how to access their Google accounts at the start of the year and will learn how to make the most of them to support their learning both in school and at home.

Relevant teaching resources will be made available to students via Google Drive or Google Classroom and the versatility of Google means that your child will be able to access his or her school account from any device (and most are compatible with Google) and in any location.

Chromebooks

A Chromebook is a device which runs Google Chrome as its operating system. The device starts up in seconds, offers thousands of apps for productivity and creativity and has a battery life which can last for more than 10 hours. We use Chromebooks in school in many lessons and whilst they are not a mandatory piece of equipment parents may wish to consider purchasing a HP Chromebook for your child's personal use at school and at home.

School Gateway

School Gateway enables us to text or message via an app if we need to send an important message about your child (we will of course try to contact you by phone in the first instance if the message is urgent).

School Gateway also enables you to make online payments for trips and dinner money.

In order to make use of the online payments service you will need to create a School Gateway account. Smartphone users can download the School Gateway App from their app store and we would encourage you to do so as this is the quickest and most effective way to use the service. If you do not have a compatible Smartphone you can create an account at the School Gateway website at www.schoolgateway.com

In order to link your account to your child the email address and mobile number that you use to register must match the contact information you give us for our school records.

You can, of course, continue to pay for trips and dinner money with cash; however we hope that you will find

online payments to be more convenient. Due to the charges we incur when we deposit cheques into the school bank account, we no longer accept cheques, except in exceptional circumstances.

Student Voice

Student Voice covers a range of activities and initiatives that allow students to contribute to the running of their school and wider communities. They can voice their opinions, display their creativity and become a key part of their school.

Student voice activities bring many benefits as individuals develop a variety of personal skills and qualities that are highly valued in the workplace and in further education.

Benefits of Student Voice Activities

Personal Skills: Democratic understanding, logical thinking, ability to compromise, debating, teamwork

Personal Qualities: Confidence, independence, creativity, empathy, maturity

Atmosphere: Mutual respect, meeting students' needs, happiness, enjoyment, motivation

Relations: Respect, staff/student empathy, sharing vision, valuing education, understanding

Our students are involved in many activities, such as department review surveys/focus groups, conducting interviews as well as a monthly meeting with the Headteacher, which is based on a random selection of our Students of the Month. We encourage all of our students to get involved in such activities.

Pastoral Leaders are largely responsible for organising Student Voice activities, and interested youngsters are invited to join in various activities through assemblies, tutor periods and notices.

Curriculum Support

Ponteland High School believes that all students are entitled to access the full curriculum and should be supported to achieve their very best.

Students are defined as having an additional or special educational need if they require specific curriculum support to ensure their learning, emotional or physical needs are met and they can access the full curriculum.

Our Curriculum Support team is dedicated to meeting the needs of every student who may require extra support in any given area.

Students with a special educational need including those with Education & Health Care Plans are supported to work to their full potential and are taught in mainstream classes by qualified teachers.

THE HOME-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP

Students are supported by a team of Curriculum Support Assistants across the full curriculum. Parents of students with special educational needs requiring curriculum support are invited to discuss any concerns that they may have with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), Mrs Robinson, before transfer to the school, at termly reviews, or at any other time throughout their child's school career.

PHS Library

The Library provides a stimulating learning environment to support students. It has space for study and discussion.

Our Librarian, Mrs Briggs, is on hand to offer support and advice on any of the services available. Every PHS student is automatically enrolled as a member of the library throughout their time here, enabling them to borrow books and magazines, and have access to a wide range of reference materials.

Working with parents

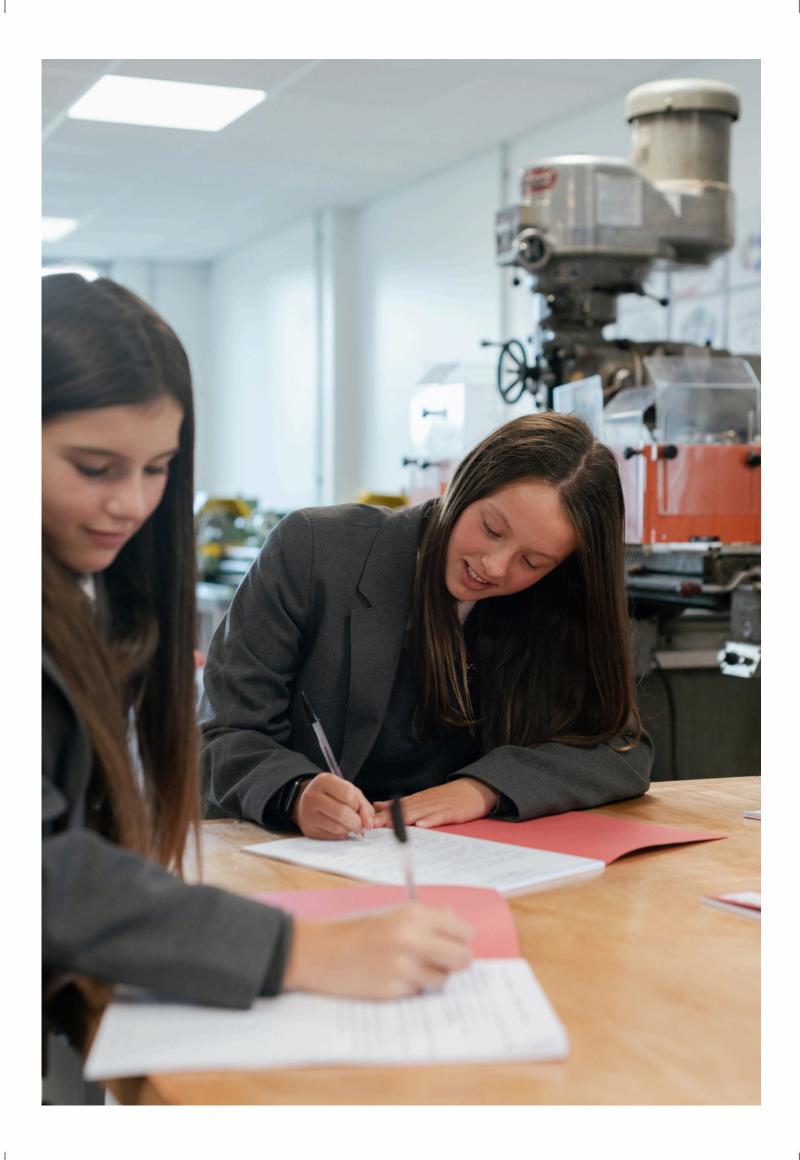
Children achieve more when school and parents work together, and parents understand what the school is trying to achieve and how they can help. If young people see that their parents are enthusiastic about education, they are far more likely to view school in a positive light, and be more receptive to learning. With the right information from us, it is hoped that we can support you to help your child become an enquiring, discriminating, compassionate, confident, capable and creative learner.

All the research tells us parental involvement in a child's education is a more powerful force than family background, size of family and level of parental education. In particular, research tells us that the parental involvement that has the most impact on their youngsters' educational development is the quality and range of conversations parents have with their children. That is why we see parents as vital partners in their child's education.

Our Weekly Bulletin for Parents is intended to provide a regular information update. It will be sent out electronically every Friday afternoon. The email bulletin details information for the week ahead and also highlights important upcoming dates and activities for you to note.









Aiming for our students to be happy, feel safe and secure, and achieve exceptionally well

