



# Newsletter

February 2026

Welcome to 2026. The first half term ends with a bang, as usual, following our joyful and accomplished annual school production. Grease was an absolute delight. As ever, we could not be prouder of students and staff for their dedication, professionalism and sheer talent. Well done all! On a sadder note, this week we see two members of staff leave PHGS after 10 years' service for new ventures. Thank you and good luck to Tracy Whitworth from our Catering Team and Louise Couperthwaite, in Curriculum Support. Keep in touch!

Turning to current challenges in education, you will undoubtedly be aware that the government and DfE are currently campaigning to impose a ban on under-16s' access to social media platforms to protect young people from unregulated, addictive activity. For the past year, parents and headteachers in our local primary schools have been working with Prince Henry's to try to garner greater support for a smartphone-free childhood. Being part of these discussions has been enlightening in understanding the pressure on parents, with many children in primary schools insisting that they 'need' a phone in Year 7 at PHGS. Delaying the inevitable has become a real focus and the emotional, social and physical effects of extended screen time has been thought provoking. It is clear we need to do more to raise awareness and establish safer working practices to safeguard our children. If Steve Jobs and Bill Gates famously restricted their children's access to technology, we need to listen. With depression, behavioural problems and deterioration of eyesight in adulthood as very real side effects of over-use of screen time, we need to do more. Ironically, programmes such as Adolescence and Waterloo Road, both of which have featured past students of PHGS, have been sobering in highlighting the very real (even if fictitious) dangers. It could happen here.

Alongside this debate comes the hot topic of Artificial Intelligence. Only last week, Mr Hunt and Mr Wharton led assemblies on the safe and responsible use of AI as part of Safer Internet Day events. We aim for all students to be aware of the possibilities and pitfalls of AI use to support learning, and to maintain critical thinking as a core skill when studying. Students have also been reminded that conversational dialogue with a computer does not provide the emotional support that an actual conversation with those that care for them would. At Prince Henry's, we aim for all students to:

1. be responsible, safe and honest users of AI / technology
2. learn and study with integrity
3. flourish and achieve with the support of technology.

A copy of the assembly presentation for those interested can be found [here](#).

Our AI Policy ensures that all students and staff are embracing technology in the way intended and to enhance quality, not detract from or replace learning. Whilst it is true that staff can take advantage of tools to mark work where appropriate, this is only possible where nuance does not form a part of answers, and it cannot be relied upon for the majority of work completed. Exam boards and businesses worldwide have embraced AI (and have similar policies to guide use), but we all have to protect ourselves, and our students, from not applying it sensibly and the possible fallout.

As ever, we are keen to hear your views and want to share our approach if you have concerns. Tomorrow (12<sup>th</sup> February) is our termly SLT Open Access Evening from 4.30pm to 7.00pm, and we are devoting the first half hour to an open forum clinic with our IT leaders from 4.30pm to 5.00pm. From 5.00pm to 7.00pm, there will be the usual drop-in session with me to discuss any issues you wish to raise on a first come, first served basis in my office upstairs in the Science block. We do hope to see you in order to continue open, healthy and supportive dialogue.

Best wishes

Sally Bishop  
Headteacher

We are delighted that we are one of the schools to have been nominated as **Yorkshire Secondary School of the Year** as part of 'My Local Awards 2026'. If you would like to support us, you can submit your vote [here](#).

## Key Stage 3 news

A short half term has meant no let up for what Key Stage 3 students have managed to pack in! **Year 7** have begun their form group charity fundraising challenge as they plan a range of activities to push that total up for two great causes in Endometriosis UK and Sarah Jackson Community Wish.

**Year 8** students are beginning a form group project looking at how news organisations operate and the threat of disinformation. They will be submitting their final work to the BBC Young Reporter project.

**Year 9** students have approached both their exams and the Options process with great focus and maturity. It has been pleasing to see them demonstrate that they are well set to make the step up to their GCSE studies in the near future.

This week, we have also enjoyed acknowledging the high number of credits, excellent Attitude to Learning and students meeting school values in the final assemblies of the half term. Please do get in touch with your child's Year Manager should you have any questions or concerns.

Mr S Day  
Key Stage 3 Director

## Key Stage 4 news

**Year 10** students have settled well into their GCSE programme, and we are really pleased with the progress they are making. Progress Report 1 showed that the majority of students in this cohort have an excellent Attitude to Learning. Parents and carers will receive the second Year 10 Progress Report after the half-term holiday. This report will indicate your child's current progress, Minimum Estimated Attainment (MEA) and predicted grades.

**Year 11** students will complete additional trial examinations in English, Maths and Science during the week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> February. A copy of the timetable and other details sent out by Mr Wharton can be found on our website [here](#). On Friday 27th March, students will have the chance to discuss their predicted results with teaching staff and check whether they meet the entry requirements for their chosen sixth form courses. This process aims to focus students on the upcoming exams and motivate them towards even greater achievements.

Exam timetables (once published), study guides, revision tips and revision timetables can all be found on our website [here](#).

Mr S Knight  
Key Stage 4 Director

## School uniform



As we reach the halfway point of the year, it may be a time when items of school uniform are being replenished. Please can we ask that you ensure that any items purchased meet our uniform requirements.

This is especially important with expensive items such as shoes, skirts and trousers, as errors may prove costly to correct. Please see our website [here](#) for a reminder of the full uniform requirements.

Mr S Clarkson  
Deputy Headteacher: Behaviour and Attitudes

Term Dates for 2026/27 can be found [here](#).

## Personalising the curriculum



The **Year 9** Options process draws to a close this Friday (13th Feb), when students are expected to have submitted their completed Options form online. Thank you for supporting your child through this process and I hope that you have had the information you need to aid your child in their choices. There will be an opportunity to provide feedback on this process at the end of this week.

**Year 11** students who are considering furthering their education in our sixth form are currently undergoing interviews with the Senior Leadership and Sixth Form teams.

It is our intention that both Year 9 and Year 11 students will receive written confirmation of the availability of their choices by Easter.

Mr O Wharton  
Assistant Headteacher: Exams, Assessment and Innovation

In this term's **Inside Story** blog post (which can be found on our website [here](#)), Deputy Headteacher Stephen Clarkson explains the information considered and the processes which are followed when making the call to close the school if faced with inclement weather, such as a snow day. Hopefully, this won't be needed anytime soon, but it gives an insight into a topic which always gets people talking!

## Sixth Form news

What an action-packed half term it has been for our Sixth Form community! Our brilliant Senior Student Team has been hard at work, pouring energy and enthusiasm into organising fundraising events for our chosen charities, with plenty of competitive spirit and laughter anticipated for this week's Staff vs Students Quiz.

Our **Year 13** students have been busy preparing for life beyond Prince Henry's with a hands-on and highly practical Future Focus Day. From mastering essential life skills (like ironing clothing!) to relaxing through yoga, budgeting wisely, and learning how to apply for Student Finance (applications open in March), the day was packed with valuable experiences to help them feel confident about the next stage of their journey.

Not to be outshone, our **Year 12** students have had an equally rewarding half term. Many have been giving back to the school community through volunteering in Sums Club and paired reading with younger students. It has been wonderful to see such positive and supportive relationships developing with younger year groups.

This week, we are hosting a Higher Education Information Evening for Year 12 students and parents/carers with a focus on applications to Oxford, Cambridge, and highly competitive courses such as medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science (Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February). A second, broader Higher Education and alternatives evening will take place on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March, with invitations to follow after the half-term break.

Finally, it has been an uplifting time for members of the Senior Leadership Team, who have enjoyed meeting our enthusiastic Year 11 students as they consider joining the Sixth Form next year. These conversations have been a pleasure, showcasing the maturity, ambition, and excitement our future sixth formers already bring.

Mr M Johnson

Assistant Headteacher: Post 16 Learning

**SIXTH FORM**

We are proud that the vast majority of students at Prince

**#Free2Bme**  
**@phgs**

Henry's help to create a respectful culture where everyone can learn without fear of bullying or discrimination.

Nevertheless, schools across the country have reported an increase in the use of prejudice-based language over the past couple of years, and, sadly, we have also seen a rise at Prince Henry's. Therefore, as well as the ongoing work which we do to educate about the importance of respect, we have reviewed how we sanction this type of behaviour. As a general rule, students who use discriminatory language will, in future, spend time in Reflection.

Please reinforce with your child the importance of using respectful language at all times and remind them of the upset which can be caused if they use slurs such as racist, sexist, homophobic or disablist terms, even if used as so-called 'banter'.

Finally, please also encourage your child to 'speak up' if they are the victim of, or witness, this type of behaviour.

Mr C Lillington

Assistant Headteacher: Community and Ethos

## Positive Discipline update

A reminder that parents/carers are immediately informed each time that a **Red incident** is added. Any five (or subsequent multiple of five) Red incidents in a fortnight will lead to an after-school detention. On average, this is triggered by just 4% of the KS3/4 population each fortnight. It is great to see that the majority of our young people understand the importance of working with staff to help them make the best progress possible.

With **Yellow incidents**, parents/carers are only alerted when the sixth incident in a group (e.g. Lateness, Uniform) is reached in a half term, which will also trigger a detention. Yellow incidents can be viewed on the Arbor Parent App (which has been accessed by 98% of parents) at any time.

The recently introduced exception to this is for Home Learning incidents. Although these continue to be Yellow incidents, you will receive a notification whenever your child fails to complete a piece of Home Learning. This is to enable you to be aware and help us to address this with your child, hopefully to avoid further incidents being added. Indeed, since this was introduced, there has been a 20% reduction in the number of Home Learning incidents added.

Thank you for supporting your child to meet our high expectations. We know that working together helps them to flourish and achieve.

Mr S Clarkson

Deputy Headteacher: Behaviour and Attitudes

## Attendance matters: Home visits

For students to flourish both personally and academically, it is vital that they are in school as much as possible. Consistent attendance ensures that learning is uninterrupted and that every child has the best opportunity to succeed.

We understand that absences can occur for a variety of reasons, but maintaining strong communication during these times is essential. **It is normal practice for us to conduct home visits when there is a period of absence.** These visits are not only about checking in - they also allow us to explore whether there is anything we can do to support your child to return to school. We hope this provides reassurance that, even when a child is absent, they remain very much on our minds.

By working together, we can help every student stay engaged and avoid falling behind. If you have any concerns about attendance or need support, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Mr L Wilson

Assistant Headteacher: Safeguarding and Wellbeing



## Forthcoming dates

### Holidays

#### Close

Fri 13 Feb 2026

Thurs 02 Apr 2026

#### Re-open

Mon 23 Feb 2026

Mon 20 Apr 2026

### Events

12 Feb 2026

12 Feb 2026

23 Feb 2026

02 Mar 2026

19 Mar 2026

25 Mar 2026

27 Mar 2026

02 Apr 2026

SLT Open Access Evening

Year 12 Higher Education

Information Eve (early applicants)

Year 11 Core trial exams start

Year 13 Trial exams start

Year 12 Higher Education and

Alternatives to HE Information Eve

Year 8 Progress Evening (online)

Year 11 Predicted Results Ceremony

Prince Henry's Bands' Night

## Travel to school by car

A reminder that for safety reasons, due to the high volume of young people moving through the gates, parents/carers must NOT be using the school car park to drop off/pick up students at the start/end of the school day. Please follow the guidance found [here](#) on where to drop off your child safely in the local area, saving yourself time and helping the environment.

Exceptions may be allowed where a child has a temporary mobility issue, provided this has been agreed with your child's Year Manager and the vehicle details logged with the staff on duty.



## Online safety



In each edition of our half-termly Newsletter, we are including one of the UK Safer Internet Centre's 'top tips' for parents/carers. Visit their [website](#) for further useful guidance.

### Tip 3: Know your child's socials

- ◆ Speak to your child about the social media apps that they are using. If you are unable to test the app yourself, research the functionality of the platform to check you are happy with the way it will be used.
- ◆ If your child is interacting with generative AI, check that they understand they are not in conversation with a real person, no matter how social or emotional the interaction feels. Remind them of where they can go to for support to meet these social and emotional needs.
- ◆ See more information on social media platforms [here](#).

Mr O Wharton

Assistant Headteacher: Exams, Assessment and Innovation

## Careers news

As advertised in our previous Newsletter, the Leeds Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair takes place on **Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026** at Leeds First Direct Arena (1.00pm – 7.00pm). This free event offers a fantastic opportunity to speak with major employers from a wide range of sectors and to find out more about apprenticeship levels. Book your free place [here](#).



Prince Henry's Grammar School

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