



SUMMER TERM 2026

Pastoral and Safeguarding Newsletter

WHITBURN COFE ACADEMY

Electronic Device Pouches Launch – HUGE Success



Following the updated guidance from the DfE in February, our roll out of the use of mobile phone pouches has been a huge success and so worthwhile. From the get-go the students have risen to this new norm, and we are already seeing the benefits of this with better and improved communication and interaction of students at break and lunchtimes; with lots of them playing games and chatting to one another. Coupled with this is the lack of interference in classes and corridors of students being glued to their phones. All in all, a welcome addition which can only bring benefits to all.

PSHE Overview - Term 3

In our timetabled PSHE lessons in KS3 and KS4 our students have been learning about a whole host of topical, real life situations and scenarios:

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Economic wellbeing – Budgeting/Critical consumer	Economic wellbeing - entrepreneurialism	Relationships	Making healthy choices	Making healthy choices- organ donation, vaccines and health clinics
Relationships	Economic wellbeing – banking and finance	CEOPS – online blackmail	Health and wellbeing	Festivals and drugs risks
British Values	Health and wellbeing – Drug misuse	Gambling	Gangs	
UK Law and justice	CEOPs – Online behaviours/nude images	Personal safety	CEOPS – online blackmail	

SRE talks – Years 9 and 10

David Messenger who is the Sexual Health Outreach Lead from South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust came into school to provide students, from Years 9 – 10, with talks on Sexual Health. The sessions covered everything from learning about the realities around sex, learning about genitalia, human reproduction and methods of contraception.

Year 7

Ford Castle

In May, 80 students packed their bags and headed off for an adventure on our annual year 7 trip to Ford Castle in Northumberland. Ford Castle is an outdoor activity centre where our students took part in various activities including Zip Wire, Archery, Axe Throwing and Rifle Shooting. The students represented Whitburn Academy brilliantly with impeccable manners and really giving every activity their all. They even allowed the staff to get (some!) sleep. Well done to those students involved.



Tees Barrage

This week, a group of thirty year 7 students had the opportunity to spend the day at the Tees Barrage to take part in several water activities including kayaking, white water rafting and paddleboarding. There were a lot of soggy students by the end of the day but a great time was had by all!

Year 8

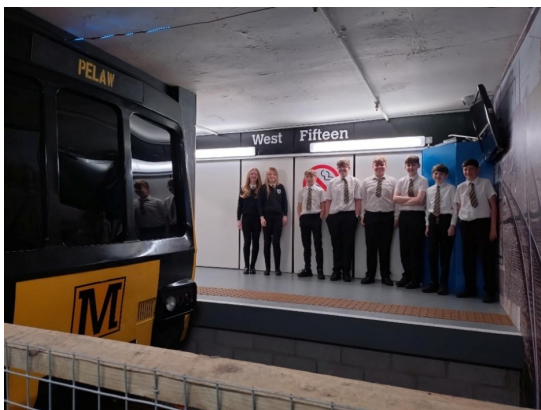
Paris Residential

94 students made the journey to Paris in April, where they had a fantastic time exploring the city and visiting Disneyland. Some of our students had never crossed the Chanel by ferry, and this was an exciting part of our journey, however the highlight was definitely Disneyland where students spent the day exploring the park and experiencing thrilling rides. Students were so impeccably behaved for the duration of the weekend and they all had a fantastic time.



SafetyWorks!

All year 8 classes had the opportunity to visit SafetyWorks! in Newcastle throughout May and June. Here they took part in interactive and immersive sessions discussing important issues such as rail safety, knife crime and drug use. Sessions were run by various services including RNLI, the Fire Department, Police and Nexus. SafetyWorks! staff commented how polite our students were and how well they engaged in sessions.



Celebrating Achievements

Students who have finished the year with zero negative behaviour points and attended school every day for all lessons took a walk along to Minchella's to enjoy an ice cream treat for doing so amazing this academic year. The staff at Minchella's expressed how lovely and polite Whitburn students always are.



Special Feature: Sextortion

What is sextortion?

The meaning of sextortion comes from the combination of 'sex' and 'extortion'. It refers to someone threatening to share or distribute intimate images unless the victim takes a certain action. Victims of the blackmail threats might know the perpetrator. However, they can also be a stranger. The perpetrator might demand that the victim share more images or send money.



Sextortion scams usually fall into these two categories:

Image sextortion: the purpose of the extortion is to obtain indecent images of an individual.

Financial sextortion: the purpose is to gain financially. With financial sextortion, victims pay money to stop the perpetrator from sharing images more widely.

Remember that in some sextortion scams, children and young people believe the perpetrator is someone their own age. They will genuinely believe they are talking to someone who is interested in them and who wants to get into a relationship with them. The following changes in your child could suggest they have experienced online sexual coercion or extortion. However, it's important to recognise that some of these signs could relate to other changes.

- Your child might appear withdrawn, worried or unhappy compared to their normal.
- They might stop using their phone or mobile device. Or, they might seem worried when a message appears.

Why a young person might share nudes

Not all children who share nudes do so because they feel coerced. In some cases, they might want to. However, this is often because they believe they might get something in return. This could include getting a modelling job, money, gift cards, a new mobile phone or other 'gifts'.

How to help children and young people

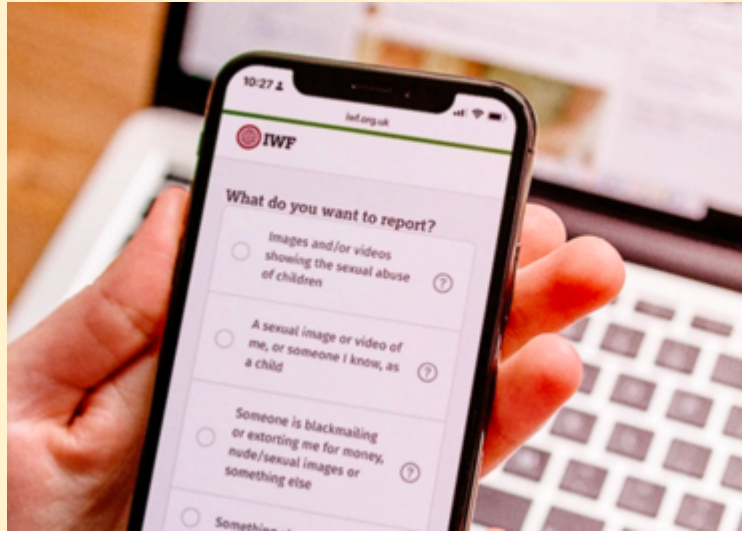
- Do not blame your child. Your child is not to blame. The criminals behind the blackmail are at fault and use very sophisticated means to trick and convince young people.
- Don't pay or engage further with the person asking for money.
- Don't delete the images, videos or messages if you still have them. They could be useful for the police, and we may be able to stop them being spread further online - see [Report Remove](#).
- Contact the police. It's important that law enforcement is aware of what's happening.
- Support your child without blaming them. Engaging in a peaceful and honest conversation is a helpful approach for you and your child to understand what's happening in a supportive manner. Although these kinds of discussions can be overwhelming, it's important to let your child know that you're asking questions because you care about their well-being and want to help. Reassure your child that your intention is not to punish them – sometimes children hesitate to share their concerns because they worry their internet access or device will be taken away. You

can get support, advice and help for yourself from the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 or advice from the police.

- We recommend stopping all communication with anyone who is potentially blackmailing, threatening or sexually extorting your child. If they have been communicating on an app, there should be in-built tools to block and report the user. [Report Harmful Content](#) offers helpful advice.
- You can help by speaking with the designated safeguarding lead at your child's school – if your child agrees.

Further support:

[Take it down:](#) This is a service for anyone to remove online nude, partially nude or sexually explicit photos that were taken before they were 18.



Awards

Our recent Celebration Assemblies have been a wonderful opportunity to recognise and applaud the outstanding achievements of our students. From academic success and sporting accomplishments to creative talents, acts of kindness, and positive contributions to school life, every achievement reflects the dedication, resilience, and outstanding character of our young people. It has been inspiring to see so many students celebrated for their hard work and commitment, and the assemblies have been filled with pride, encouragement, and well-deserved applause. We are incredibly fortunate to have such talented, thoughtful, and determined students here at Whitburn Academy, and every member of staff is immensely proud of all they have accomplished. We look forward to celebrating many more successes together throughout the next academic year.

Year 9

Breakfast with Mr Crowe

In May eight of our students were invited to breakfast with the Principal to enjoy bacon sandwiches and pastries with a view of the sea in Mr Crowe's office. Students were chosen by staff based on their individual achievements within school.



Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award

67 Year 9 students began their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award. They all had to complete three sections of the Bronze DofE Award: skill, volunteering and physical and complete training days and an expedition.

Students learned new skills and made new friends too.

The staff supporting the students were very complimentary of their manners, attitude to team work and determination to complete tasks.

Well done to everyone that completed the award!



Paws for Thought Fundraiser

In May we held a fundraiser on the last day of the half term for Paws for Thought animal charity. Money was raised by letting students wear their own clothes for a £1 donation and paying to take part in activities or buy refreshments.





Year 10

Year 10 Take on the Thrills of Alton Towers!

Our Year 10 students enjoyed an action-packed trip to Alton Towers, with an early start that tested even the most enthusiastic of thrill-seekers! Setting off at 5.30am, some students were amazed to discover that there really are *two* half past five's in a day! Despite the long hours, students were fantastic throughout the trip, showing excellent behaviour, maturity, and representing the school brilliantly. The day was filled with excitement, laughter, and plenty of unforgettable moments, with thrills, spells, and ice creams in abundance. From the rides to the atmosphere of the park, students embraced every opportunity to have fun while continuing to uphold the fantastic reputation of our school.

The trip was a brilliant chance for students to relax, enjoy themselves, and build memories together before heading into their mock exams the following week. We are incredibly proud of how they conducted themselves and the positive impression they made.





New House Captains

Here at Whitburn we have four main houses (Sixth Form have their own). These are Bamburgh (red), Tynemouth (blue), Lindisfarne (yellow) and Durham (purple). Each form class is assigned a 'house' and student and tutors become a part of this mini community. This term we said a farewell and a huge thank you to our reigning house captains as the year 10 students, soon to be year 11, stepped up to take the reins and lead their house into the next academic year.

Prefect students went head-to-head on a campaign trail to win this title, making posters, producing a video and canvassing votes around the school.

We had a week of House assemblies where every member of each house was given the opportunity to choose who they believed could lead them to victory. Victory is announced at the end of Sports Day, and it is fair to say that the competition is real.

We welcome our new House Captains and wish them well in their new leadership role.



Head Students and Democracy Day

Our Prefects have shown great ambition and commitment by putting themselves forward and applying for the prestigious role of Head Student. Each candidate took part in a rigorous interview process with three members of the senior staff team, challenging themselves to step outside their comfort zones and demonstrate their confidence, leadership skills, and passion for representing the school community. Head Boy and Girl were then selected by their peers on Democracy Day, reflecting the trust and respect they have earned from fellow students. They will now work closely with the senior prefect team, sharing student voice and helping to shape school life. The senior teams first exciting responsibility will be organising the Year 11 prom for next year, a fantastic opportunity to make a lasting contribution to the school.



Year 11

Leaver's Ball (Prom) Beamish Hall

This term we waved goodbye to our wonderful Year 11s. After finishing their GCSEs, students celebrated in style at their leavers ball which was held at Beamish Hall. It was a brilliant evening, and Beamish Hall staff went out of their way to commend the manners and conduct of our students. We wish this year group lots of luck for their GCSE results day and in their new chapters. We hope to see many familiar faces in September at our sixth form.





Student Voice

Mental Health and Well-being

Healthy Minds were recently welcomed by Whitburn to host an 'Our Voice' pupil participation session. This provided young people with a valuable opportunity to share their views on the mental health support currently available in schools, including what is working well, what could be improved, and what they would like to see more of in the future.

The feedback gathered will now be carefully reviewed by Healthy Minds to help shape and strengthen the support offered to schools going forward. We hope to continue running similar groups, ensuring that the voices of young people remain central to the ongoing development of our service.



Home Learning Survey

All students in Years 7-10 had the opportunity to share their views on home learning. Results from the survey have been shared with students via their Tutors but can also be viewed here:

Year 7 and 8 Survey Results:

[Year 7-8 Home Learning Survey – Results](#)

Year 9 and 10 Survey Results:

[Year 9-10 Home Learning Survey – Results](#)

Main findings suggest that:

- Most students are spending 1-4 hours a week on home learning with older students more likely to spend longer on home learning.
- Students across year groups rate their effort with home learning positively.
- Older students feel home learning more positively impacts their grades and/or understanding with 16% stating it 'very often' has a positive impact.

Student Council, Form Representatives and Ambassadors

We would like to thank the 2025-2026 Team for their contribution and actions this academic year. In September the roles of form representatives, school council and ambassadors will be open for applications.



Sixth Form

One of the best things we do each year is to gather stories from our alumni to put together our Alumni newsletter. This is already issue 9 – where has the time gone?! Our tenth year group left us a few weeks back and we have again encouraged them to stay in touch. If you know any former Sixth Form students, encourage them to read this and get in touch so we can include them next time.

This is ***not just a sixth form thing!*** Many of our staff laid the foundations in Key Stage 3, or supported students through difficult moments during their main school years, or inspired them to choose a subject in their Year 9 options, or fuelled their passion during the GCSE course. Some staff have of course taught them A-Levels, supported the students through Sixth Form and discussed their applications with them.

The success of these students is a reminder of what we are all contributing to as a big team. We are enhancing young people's life chances. We are laying the foundations for future success.

Yes, it can be frustrating at times. Yes, it is hard work. Yes, we are ready for a break.

But when we read these stories, we all reach the same conclusion: that we wouldn't swap it for anything else!

We are delighted to share [our 2026 Alumni Newsletter](#) with you all.

Whitburn Sixth Form Alumni News

OUR LATEST GRADS...

- Thanks to the following who have shared news of their graduation this past year
- If you missed the print deadline, drop us a line and we would love to include you next year!



Name	Class of	Graduates from	In (subject)	Next Steps
Al-Basyouni, Raneem	2020	University of Sunderland	PGCE Further Education & Skills	Hoping to do a PhD in Education or Law
Ali, Jasmine	2023	University of Sunderland	BA Primary Education (KS2)	Seeking permanent position. Volunteering in local school

Reading Buddies – Y7 and Y12

Throughout the year, year 7 students have been reading aloud to year 12 students every Tuesday morning in form time. The programme focused on increasing the year 7s' confidence reading aloud as well as developing leadership skills in the year 12s. Some of the specific feedback comments are below and indicate the programme was, as it was last year, a huge success. 62.5% of those students who completed the feedback felt their confidence in reading aloud had improved.

Staff feedback:

'All of the 6th formers who worked in room 9 were brilliant – there every week. Kind and friendly to the Year 7's they had. It was a lovely, focused atmosphere in the room. Really enjoyed Tuesday mornings!'

'All the year 12s in my room made a fantastic effort to build a good rapport with their reading buddies and tried to actively make the experience enjoyable.'

Year 7 feedback:

'I think he did a good job at making reading buddies fun.'

'Thank you for helping me! You have really boosted my confidence!'

'I appreciate how he helped me and still kept it enjoyable.'

'They're good at not being judgy even if I act 'strange' or 'different' and make reading out easy.'

Year 12 feedback:

'I liked getting to know my reading buddies and doing something I wouldn't usually choose to do.'

'It helping me build confidence when talking to those in other year groups.'

'I gained lots of skills through things such as teaching them new words and explaining parts of the book to them.'

'I enjoyed getting to know my buddies as well as seeing them progress further in their reading skills.'

This scheme is being studied by South Tyneside Teachers Reading Strategy as an example of best practice in this area and will contribute to the Open University's Reading

for Pleasure research. We expect findings to be published on the OU's website. Thank you to Ms Dickenson for her work leading this programme.



Special Feature: Water Safety



Mrs Rush and the Pastoral Team have once again been delivering assemblies to all of our students to educate about the danger of open water. Water safety is important for children of all ages and awareness is essential to prevent accidents and drownings.

Approximately 46% of drowning deaths are among children under the age of 14 with the majority of these occurring in June, July and August due to the warmer weather.

Even the strongest of swimmers can get into difficulties in the water outdoors. It is essential that children know about water safety and are supported to recognise and manage risks, including resisting peer pressure and understanding what to do if they, or their friends, get into trouble in the water - even very young children can learn how to be safe near water.

Being a strong swimmer may not save you if you fall into cold water. Knowing how to behave can save lives.

Learn the Water Safety Code

- Stop & Think
- Stay Together
- Call 999
- Float

Unseen dangers

From the safety of a beach/river bank, water can look extremely inviting. But every year young people get into trouble as a result of dangers they cannot see.

- Low water temperatures can cause the body to go into cold water shock and can claim your life in minutes, even if you are a strong swimmer.
- It's difficult to estimate the depth of the water. It may be much deeper or shallower than expected and cause serious harm if jumping in.
- There are often no suitable places to get out of the water due to steep slimy banks.
- The ground shelves away very steeply so you can quickly become out of your depth.
- There is no way of knowing what lies beneath.
- Reeds and other plant life can get tangled around your limbs and keep you in the water
- Mud makes it difficult to walk even if you can stand up.
- Litter and waste such as pipes, shopping trolleys, sharp metal or broken bottles can trap your feet as well as cause injury.
- Swimming in open water can expose you to serious disease such as Leptospirosis (Weil's disease).
- There may be hidden currents. Water that looks calm and still may be hiding a rip-tide which can be very strong and pull you into the sea
- Low water temperatures cause the body to go into cold water shock and even hypothermia.

Know how to fight cold water shock

If you were to fall into cold water, you are likely to be confused and frightened and your natural instinct will be to fight the water – to swim hard. But the cold water will make you gasp uncontrollably, your heart will beat really fast, you'll lose energy quickly and breathe in lots of water, and eventually your muscles will become paralysed. You need to fight your instincts.

Float to live - be a starfish

If you float on your back you can keep your airways clear, control your breathing and allow the cold water shock to pass. Then you can call out for help, and you will have a much better chance of surviving.

Knowing what to do if someone else gets into danger

Never get into the water, even if you are a strong swimmer. Instead:

- Stay calm. Always think before you act.
- There may be other people around, so shout for help as loudly as you can.
- Dial 999 and ask for the Fire & Rescue Service. Explain your location clearly – use road names, bridge numbers and describe any landmarks. Use What3words if you can.

- Keep an eye on the person, keep talking to them and stay near them. Encourage them to float on their back in a star shape.
- If you can, throw a safety line or rope to them. Otherwise lie down to make yourself more stable and use a tree branch, stick or an item of clothing to reach out to them.
- If your dog goes into the water, don't jump in after it. Instead, encourage it to swim to the edge.



ATTENDANCE

We all know the importance of attendance; we can only educate our students if they're here in school and there's an abundance of evidence to prove the link between great success and great attendance. For yet another year, we're recognised by the Department for Education as being top of the table out of all 8 borough secondary schools with the highest attendance by a clear mile. We rank 3rd out of 21 similar schools nationally. This is no surprise to us; our students are happy here at Whitburn and show us year after year just how much they have to offer and how much they want to be here.

ATTENDANCE LEAGUE WINNERS



The competition heats up every year, where each week, Form Groups battle it out for the best attendance to earn points. Every half term, the winners from each year group receive breakfast in their Form room. All points go towards our Houses ready for Sports Day and this year, **Durham** made sure they were triumphant attendees, meaning they'll add the most points to their final Sports Day total – but will it be enough to steal the show and break Lindisfarne's streak?

This year's final Attendance League winners are 7W with a massive 146 points!

They joined all of our 100% attendance students for a full break service, on the house. Our 100%'ers were entered into a raffle prize draw to win vouchers for Five Guys, Nandos and Greggs.

Have a fantastic summer everyone! And remember, you've got to be in to win – see you all in September!



Sports Day 2026

Congratulations to **DURHAM** who are **SPORTS DAY CHAMPIONS** for a record **SIXTH** time!

Such a fantastic event, led by our PE department, which encapsulated what Whitburn are about – community, drive and passion! A truly remarkable and glitter/paint filled day which everyone enjoyed – well done Durham!

Final Scores...

- 1st - Durham - 573 points**
- 2nd - Lindisfarne - 559 points
- 3rd - Bamburgh - 524 points
- 4th - Tynemouth - 509 points





We hope you all have a restful summer break and look forward to seeing the students back in school on **Thursday 3rd September at 8.55am.**

Excellence for All

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