



Parent Bulletin

Principal **Dr A T Fowler**

Issue 14: w/c Monday 15 December 2025 – Week 1

Dear Parents and Carers

As we approach the last week of term, we start to look forward to the end of term and the Christmas holidays. In this bulletin, you will notice a focus on resources and potential sources of help over the holiday period.

For many children – most, we hope – the Christmas holidays are a joyous time, and something to which they look forward. We know that this is not the case for every child, however, nor for every parent or carer. Our pastoral teams see and respond to increasing numbers of anxious children as the holiday approaches. Please talk to your children about the holiday period – be realistic with them, don't promise everything will be perfect (it rarely is, even though we all try our best), but tell them what they can do and how they can help. Be practical and pragmatic. Children love to be involved; most want to please and will do what they can; and they have a keen intuitive sense for how we are really feeling.

Thank you for your generosity in supporting our shoe box appeal for the Gateshead Foodbank, in partnership with the Trussell Trust. Huge thanks and congratulations to Thomas Lane in our sixth form, for organising and coordinating this appeal. I know that Thomas will have gained a lot of valuable experience and practical skills from this work, and I know that it will make a real difference to families across Gateshead.

At school, we are digesting the messages we received from our team of Ofsted inspectors. Looking back at all the notes I took, it was a very positive overall picture, and we are starting to plan in more detail the next steps that inspectors discussed with us. Although the inspection did not tell us anything we didn't already know, it was good to have such a firm validation of our self-assessment and to recognise how well we know our school. Inspectors encouraged us to continue to move forward on our areas for development, which focus on consistent and excellent teaching and learning. Parents and carers – through the parent survey – were especially positive about the ways in which our school looks after its students, how they feel safe (87% agreed or strongly agreed) and how well the school makes sure its students behave well (86% agreed or strongly agreed). 85% of parents would recommend this school to other parents. All these figures are significantly improved since our last inspection in 2022. There are some messages for us to work on, particularly around how well we communicate with you as parents and carers, and in becoming more consistent in how we support students with special educational needs.



Parent Bulletin

Principal **Dr A T Fowler**

In this final week of term, we are balancing serious work with more light-hearted activities. Our Year 7 students enjoyed the pantomime at the Theatre Royal in Newcastle yesterday afternoon. Many thanks to Mrs Jacobson and Miss Bowman for their superb organisation of this popular trip. On Tuesday we have our Christmas show, *Singin' in the Snow* (as an aside, I am relieved that snow is not in the weather forecast). Christmas lunch is on Wednesday. On the last day of term, we will once again be organising a range of activities for our students, including rewards assemblies and a festive celebration. We have arranged for school buses to come earlier: students will be dismissed for their Christmas break at 1pm on Friday 19 December.

With all good wishes,

Yours faithfully

Dr Andrew Fowler
Principal



Young Carers

The next young carers drop in will take place on **Tuesday 16 December** at lunchtime. The venue has changed to **COM35** (Mr Caves classroom). Mrs Glass will run the drop in. Students are encouraged to attend to use the computers and to complete a short survey that has been emailed to them, the focus of which is: how can we further support them in school.

The date has changed due to school Christmas lunch being on the Wednesday. Duty staff will be made aware of the date change and students can still use their pass to gain entry to the building.

If you believe your child has a caring role for someone they live with please contact me on mglass@lordlawson.academy so I can further support in school and also make referrals for external support.

Mrs M Glass
Cover Supervisor/Young Carers Support

Local Resources for the Community

In Birtley we are lucky to have a number of resources open to the community, many of which do invaluable work throughout the year, but especially at Christmas.

Two of these are Barley Mow Village Hall and Birtley Community Centre. Both of these organisations run a variety of activities, clubs and support services throughout the year, staffed by teams of dedicated volunteers.

So, if across Christmas you would like to try Taekwondo, learn to play a musical instrument, go to a Bingo session, or you are looking to volunteer to support the important work in your community around:

- **Food Poverty**
- **Signposting the right help to those who seek it**
- **Providing activities for younger people**

Then visit their websites using the links below and get involved in your local community.

[Birtley Community Centre](#)

[Barley Mow Village Hall](#)

Mr A Rayner
Assistant Principal

Year 11: Subject Parents' Evening

The year 11 subject parents' evening will take place on Thursday 22 January 2026.

As in previous years, appointments will be made by parents/carers using the SchoolCloud platform, but the appointments will take place in-school in-person.

In advance of this information, please advise the admin team if you think you may have changed your email address since the last time you used SchoolCloud. This is important, as the details we hold for you on our systems are the details you will need to login to SchoolCloud. Any changes can be sent to: lordlawson@lordlawson.academy – please ensure you quote your child's name and tutor group in the subject header.

Mrs S Wakefield
Office Manager

How to Support your Child with Maths Homework

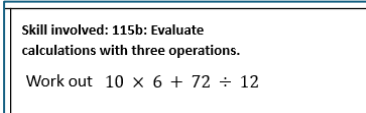
In Maths, students are set homework on a weekly rotation: one week will be **paper-based tasks**, and the next will be **online homework using Dr Frost Maths**. Both types of homework are closely linked to the topics being taught in class.

Paper-Based Homework

Each paper homework sheet has two parts:

- **Retrieval Practice**

These short questions help students revisit and retain key skills from previous learning. Each question has a **Dr Frost skill code** printed next to it (see image below), so students can easily find extra support online if needed.



- **Topic Practice**

This reinforces the new learning completed in lessons that week. The majority of these will also have a **Dr Frost skill code**

Using Dr Frost Maths for Support

If your child needs help with a question, they can:

1. Enter the **skill code** into the Dr Frost Maths search bar
2. Select the relevant topic
3. Click the **video icon** for a clear, step-by-step explanation

They may also find the previous skill number useful, as it often provides the foundation for the current topic.

OR NARROW DOWN	VIDEO	DIFFICULTY	RECENT ACCURACY
☐ 115: Exam Practice: Order of operations (no powers and roots)	Example	1-4	
☐ 115a: Evaluate calculations with two operations.	Example	1	
☐ 115b: Evaluate calculations with three operations.	Example	2	
☐ 115c: Evaluate calculations with brackets and at least 3 operations.	Example	3	
☐ 115d: Evaluate calculations where operations are within a fraction.	Example	3	
☐ 115e: Add operations to expressions to make a target value.	Example	4	
☐ 115f: Add brackets to the expressions to make a target value.	Example	4	

Additional Help in School

We also offer homework support sessions in school for any student who would benefit from a little extra guidance:



Room Ma25



Lunchtime: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

Mrs D Jackson

Subject Leader - Mathematics



Usworth Squadron: 2214 Air Cadets

2214 (Usworth) Squadron ATC was formed in 1941 on the site of RAF Usworth, a former Royal Air Force Station in Washington, in the North East of England.

The unit is currently recruiting ahead of their open evening on Tuesday 6 January 2026.

If you are in years 8 – 11 and are interested in what the Air Cadets can offer you, with a wide range of activities available including, but not limited to: flying, gliding, nationally recognised qualifications and international trips, then click on the link below to find out more about the unit and the Royal Air Force Cadets in general:

<https://www.2214squadronatc.co.uk/>

Careers Team

AGED 12-17?

**2214 (USWORTH) SQUADRON ARE
RECRUITING
WHAT COULD YOU DO THIS WEEKEND?**



Flying & Gliding



Target Shooting



Parade & Drill



**Camps in the UK
& Overseas**



Duke of Edinburgh



AT & Fieldcraft

...AND SO MUCH MORE!

CONTACT US OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO GET INVOLVED!



0191 537 4370



adj.2214@rafac.mod.gov.uk



2214squadronatc.co.uk

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Singin' in the Snow: Academy Christmas Talent Showcase

Tuesday 16 December 2025, 7pm.

There are limited tickets remaining for our 2025 Christmas Talent Showcase, Singin' in the Snow.

Tickets are £6.00 each (non-refundable) and can be purchased from the academy reception during the hours off 8.30am and 3.30pm. Please ensure you have the correct cash amount as we do not have a facility to provide change.

A reminder that this is a **one evening only** performance event, so purchase your tickets soon to avoid any disappointment of a sell-out show; with over 100 students performing in the showcase, we are expecting tickets to sell out quickly!

If you require any adjustment or assistance for access or seating in the main hall please contact Miss Brown directly via email at sbrown@lordlawson.academy once tickets have been purchased and Miss Brown will aim to support your request.

Singin' in the Snow promises to be a joyous and festive evening. Thank you for your continued support towards Performing Arts at Lord Lawson, and we look forward to welcoming our audience on Tuesday 16 December, 7pm.



Year 11 GCSE: Dance, Drama and Music – Friday evening revision/creative rehearsal sessions

The after-school, Friday evening revision and creative rehearsal sessions we offer our year 11 students, are an opportunity for students to further develop their performance work and to discuss revision for theory work. The sessions run from 3.20 to 4.20pm.

Please note the final Friday 12 December is that last evening session for this term, and this is for GCSE Dance and GCSE Drama. There will be no after-school sessions on the last day of this term, Friday 19 December.

If you have any queries regarding Performing Arts at Lord Lawson please contact me via email at sbrown@lordlawson.academy and I will be more than happy to assist you.

Miss S Brown

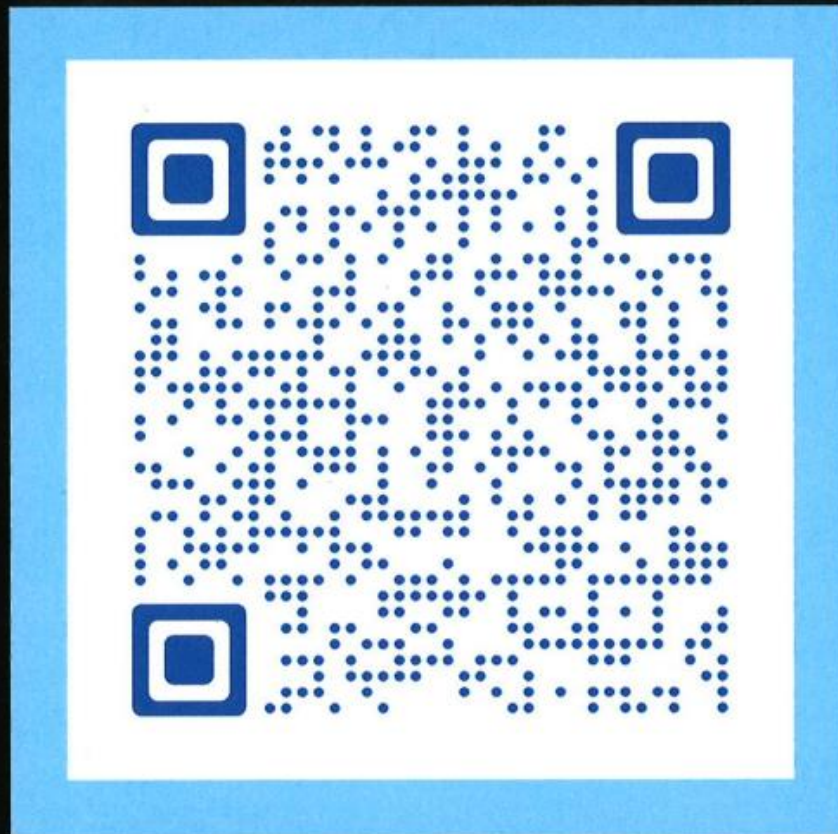
Subject Leader – Performing Arts



Lord Lawson
SIXTH FORM

APPLY NOW!

Scan the QR code below:



WE GROW WE LEARN WE SUCCEED

TOGETHER.

Online Safety Newsletter

December 2025

AI Chatbots and companions

A simple search of "AI Chat" within the App store highlights the number of AI apps already available, many are rated as 18+ so it is important to speak to our children about them and the risks associated with them. Examples of AI chatbots that your child may have heard of are Character.AI (18+) and My AI from Snapchat (13+).

What are the risks?

- Over reliance on AI companions, for example they may replace 'real life' friendships or over reliance on using them for homework or problem solving.
- Exposure to inappropriate content.
- Privacy/data risks.
- Misinformation as not all information shared is correct and can be biased.

How can I protect my child?

- Check age ratings of any apps or websites that your child accesses.
- Discuss the risks of AI chatbots with them and have open conversations about why they may be using them.
- Set up appropriate parental controls on their devices/broadband.
- Chat to your child regularly and ensure your child knows that they should talk to you or another trusted adult if anything concerns them.

Further information

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/blogs/ai-chatbots-and-companions-risks-to-children-and-young-people>

New Technology

As some children may be receiving new technology or related games at Christmas, here is a quick reminder of the importance of setting up appropriate parental controls.



Games/Consoles

- Check age ratings: look at the PEGI rating of any new games. *Remember, PEGI rates the gameplay so whilst it is important to review age ratings, you must also check to see if it has any communication elements.*
- If a game does allow your child to communicate with others, then adjust or disable the settings as appropriate to your child.
- On the device itself, set up applicable controls such as restricting spending limits. Follow the links below to find out how to set up Parental Controls for popular devices here:

Xbox: <https://www.xbox.com/en-GB/family-hub>

PS5: <https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/support/account/ps5-parental-controls-spending-limits/>

Nintendo Switch: <https://www.nintendo.com/en-gb/Hardware/Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls/Nintendo-Switch-2-Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls-2873385.html>

Tablets/Smart phones

Set up parental controls on the device to prevent purchases, restrict content viewed and adjust privacy settings. Furthermore, remember to check any apps your child requests to check that they are suitable for their age. Follow the links below to find out more:

iPhones/iPad: <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/105121>

Android Device: <https://support.google.com/googleplay/answer/1075738>

Further information

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>

The Safety-First Smartphone

The Other phone is a new smartphone, which includes "SafetyMode" software. The software automatically blocks nudity, profanity, and bullying language in real time. You can find out more here: <https://otherphone.co.uk/>.

Smart Phone Free Childhood also list some alternatives that you could consider here: <https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/alternatives>.

Please note, that the inclusion of these models does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation. While these devices may provide a 'safer' alternative to traditional smartphones, there are still potential risks associated with children using any type of phone.

Online Grooming

What is Online Grooming?

Online Grooming is when an adult builds a relationship online to manipulate or exploit a child.

How does Grooming take place

Groomers may use fake profiles to pretend they are someone they are not, for example younger than they really are or pretend to be a person of influence. They will use flattery to bond and build a friendship with your child. They may use online games or social media to initiate contact but then encourage your child to switch to a different app to chat privately, usually on an app that doesn't offer parental controls.

What should I do?

- Use appropriate parental controls.
- Set privacy settings.
- Chat to your child regularly about what they do online and who they speak to. Talk to them about how people may not be who they say they are and show them how to use any blocking or reporting tools on the apps/websites that they use.

What should I do if my child is being groomed?

- If you think your child is in danger, then contact the police immediately.
- Save any evidence that you may have.
- If you are worried about online abuse or the way somebody has been communicating with your child online, then you can contact CEOP (<https://www.ceop.police.uk>). Once a report has been placed, a Child Protection Advisor will get in touch to help you.

Further information

There is a lot of information available online. The following links provide a comprehensive overview of this subject, as well as the details of who you can contact for further advice and support:

- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/types-of-abuse/grooming/>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/online-grooming/>

Signal Private Messenger

Signal is rated as 13+ on the App store. It is a messaging app, where users can text, send voice messages and photos plus participate in group chats and calls. There are no parental controls currently available. As with all messaging apps, the risks can include bullying and viewing inappropriate content. Find out more here: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/chat-apps/>

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date released 01.12.25. The inclusion of any links does not imply any affiliation with or endorsement of the linked websites, documents, or videos, nor are we claiming any ownership

Nudify Apps

Have you heard of Nudify apps? Users upload a picture or video to a Nudify app and AI creates the nude image. This is obviously horrifying. Bark provides further information as well as what to do if this should happen to your child.

Find out more here:

<https://www.bark.us/blog/nudify-ai-apps/>

How to deal with online scams

Parent Zone have published an article on how to deal with online scams as well as how to prevent them from happening. You can read the article here:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/how-deal-online-scams-parent-guide>

Calm Zone

Childline have an area on their website full of activities, tools and videos to help you let go of stress. It includes yoga videos, breathing exercises, calming videos and games. It also includes information on how to get further support should you need it. Find out more here:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm-zone/>

Would you like to read this newsletter in a different language? You can use the translate tool on our web version: <https://www.knowsleyclcs.org.uk/deceember-2025-secondary>

Calendar Dates and Upcoming Events for the Autumn Term

Date

Event

Friday 19 December

Last day of term for staff and students – school finishes at 1pm

Monday 5 January 2026

Staff and students return to school at 8.40am