



Parent Bulletin

Principal **Dr A T Fowler**

Issue 19: w/c Monday 2 February 2026 – Week 2

Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you to parents and carers of students in Year 13 for attending our parents' and carers' evening on Thursday. It was very good to see such a full turnout. Speaking to several parents and students during the evening and afterwards, it was evident that they greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet with teachers and pastoral leaders, to discuss progress, and to talk about the most effective ways to approach this last period of learning and consolidation before formal examinations begin.

Reflecting on these conversations, I recognised a familiar set of patterns, perhaps linked to students' different personalities. Some students approach their sixth form studies with a good understanding of the amount of work and time they will need to devote to each subject. Others seem to need the 'wake-up call' of formal assessments, spurring them on to organise themselves better and take seriously the challenge of the qualifications for which they are preparing.

I urge all our students, and not just those in years 11 and 13, to take advantage of the teaching, guidance and feedback they receive from their teachers in every lesson. Our knowledge of cognitive science and research confirms that learning is most effective when information is regularly and continually retrieved, reprocessed and used. Reading and writing play crucial roles in these processes. Retrieving and using information systematically means that our understanding develops and our long-term memories become more effective.

In this newsletter, among other information, you will find a notice about County Lines and criminal exploitation. When I was first appointed headteacher in East Kent, our country's police forces were just starting to become familiar with the ways in which organised groups of criminals distributed drugs. These lines of distribution run from ports and major cities, through established communication routes, hence the term 'County Lines,' because the routes were often similar to the old telephone networks, branching out from major population centres to smaller towns and villages. As the drugs are transported closer to the end users, a large informal network of couriers is recruited. Many of these are children.

More than a decade on, we now have a good understanding of the ways in which organised crime targets and exploits vulnerable children to deliver drugs. These methods are cynical and exploitative. Children are drawn into criminal networks through apparently innocent connections that are, in fact, cover for sophisticated grooming operations. Children who have had no previous involvement in criminal activity can be most at risk, because they do not understand or believe the dangers. They can become addicted, traumatised, or seriously injured. Lives are wrecked by these operations.



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In Birtley and the surrounding areas, we have evidence that these gangs are operating. We work closely with the Police and with other agencies to safeguard our children as well as possible. Please be vigilant around your child's behaviour and take the time to stay interested in their well-being, even where they appear to want more independence. Look out for any changes in behaviour or attitude over time, any new 'friendships,' any unexplained meetings or expensive goods. It can be hard to distinguish some of these signs from those of normal adolescence, but you know your children best – trust your instincts. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any concerns that you may have. Please also take advantage of the opportunity provided by the Ivison Trust on Thursday 19 March to attend a webinar giving more information about the local picture and to gain more understanding of where to turn for help and support.

With all good wishes,

Yours faithfully

Dr Andrew Fowler
Principal

Iverson Trust: Parent webinars on county lines and criminal exploitation

The Iverson Trust (formerly Pace) is a national charity dedicated to keeping children safe from exploitation by supporting parents and carers, disrupting exploiters, and working closely with the police and other family services. Their work is rooted in a trauma-informed, family-centred approach.

Throughout March 2026, the Iverson Trust will be delivering a series of live online webinars for parents and carers on county lines and criminal exploitation. These sessions are designed to help families understand:

- how exploitation happens
- how children and young people may be groomed
- the key warning signs to look out for
- where to access further advice and support

Each webinar includes information about the local picture, an opportunity to ask questions, and insight from a parent with lived experience. The North East session will take place on Thursday 19 March 2026. For more information and to book a place visit: <https://iversontrust.org.uk/webinars/>

Mr I Cooper

Deputy Principal – Pastoral Care and Inclusion

Performing Arts: Year 11 GCSE Dance NEA Dates and Details

There are two remaining GCSE Dance NEA's:

1. Duet/Trio Performance: Week 1 – Wednesday 11 (Group 1) and Thursday 12 February (Group 2)
2. Choreography: Week 1 – Wednesday 18 (Group 1) and Thursday 19 March (Group 2)

Students are aware of their groups for each exam, and that they will **only** attend one of the dates listed above. Please note that these are the current working groups and these details may change nearer to the dates.

The Year 9 dance leaders who have volunteered to dance in the choreography assessments will be off timetable on Thursday 19 March only.

Students will attend tutor period and then be off timetable to record their exams for the whole day. Once a student has recorded their piece they may return to timetabled lessons.

Students must arrive to school in full academy uniform and their hair fully tied back. They will then be required to change into bright coloured clothing for the exam recordings (as they did for the previous solo exam recording).

If you have any queries about this information please email me at sbrown@lordlawson.academy.

Miss S Brown

Subject Leader – Performing Arts

Library Updates

Reading Ambassadors

Our first meeting of the year has been a great success, and our Reading Ambassadors are already working hard on the very first edition of **LLOBA Literacy News**, which will be shared with parents, staff, and students.

This first edition will include:

- Tips on how to choose books effectively
- Ideas for getting the most enjoyment from reading for pleasure
- Quizzes and book reviews
- Practical suggestions to help parents (and teachers) support reluctant readers

In addition, our Reading Ambassadors are planning an exciting programme of events to celebrate both the **National Year of Reading** and **World Book Day**.

Student Librarians

Our Student Librarians are gaining valuable, hands-on experience in many of the daily tasks involved in running the academy library. Their responsibilities include:

- Helping to choose new book stock
- Preparing resources for shelving
- Supporting the circulation and return of books
- Shelving and organising resources
- Creating engaging library displays
- Assisting peers in choosing books and finding resources

This role helps students to develop strong organisational skills, digital literacy, and confident communication.

Our Ambassadors in the Academy

Both Reading Ambassadors and Student Librarians can be identified by the badges worn proudly on their school blazers. These fantastic role models provide an important student voice in promoting a love of reading across the academy.

We look forward to bringing you the first edition of our Literacy News.

If your child is interested in becoming involved, please encourage them to visit **Miss Dixon** in the academy library.

Miss B Dixon
School Librarian



Billy Elliot the Musical:

Congratulations to all 15 of our Billy Elliot female lead role auditionees. They each performed with professionalism and style during Wednesday's audition process, and they should be proud of their progress and achievements during a challenging series of activities.

The second round of auditions for this same group of Performers continues next Wednesday, 4 February, 3.20 to 5pm. We look forward to seeing more exciting performances from you next week, good luck!

A reminder that Performers who are **not** auditioning for lead roles will return to Performers **after half term** on Wednesday 4 March, 3.20 to 5pm.

If you have any queries about the Academy Production, Billy Elliot the Musical, or Performing Arts at Lord Lawson, please contact me via email at sbrown@lordlawson.academy and I will be happy to help.

Miss S Brown

Subject Leader – Performing Arts



Gateshead Health and Care Youth Academy

The Gateshead Health and Care Youth Academy has received the go-ahead to run from 13 – 16 of April 2026. This is an initiative that targets learners aged 13-18, from underrepresented groups, who are interested in careers within the health and care sector.

There will be volunteers from the local health and care sector in Gateshead delivering interactive sessions to provide insights into a variety of job roles and career pathways, highlighting opportunities beyond traditional roles such as general Doctors and Nurses.

The aim of the Academy is to showcase the diverse career options available and emphasise non-traditional routes into the health and care professions.

Students will engage in activities throughout the week that also enhance their soft skills, including communication and teamwork. Their lunch and travel costs will also be provided by the Youth Academy.

For further information or to book a place, please use the link below: https://medtribe.com/courses/gateshead-health-care-youth-academy?utm_medium=copy-link&utm_source=share-modal

Mrs C Braban

Careers and Enterprise Adviser



THE FUTURE SKILLS PROGRAMME: CAREERS IN STEM

For Yr 9 &
Yr 10/S3
and S4



Explore STEM careers in four key pathways during February half term!



What is involved?

- A comprehensive experience **delivered virtually in February.**
- **Live Q&A sessions with STEM professionals** in Net Zero futures, Digital AI futures, Health and Life Sciences, Engineering & Infrastructure and Manufacturing futures.
- **CV, applications and interview support.**
- Interactive panel **Q&A sessions with universities & apprentices.**
- Learn how to succeed in the workplace, including **how to ask questions, network and write professional emails.**
- Achieve the **Bronze Industrial Cadet Award.**

Dates

- 20 hours of study to complete flexibly over 5 days in February.
- Monday 16th – Friday 21st February.

Cost/Funding

- £50 (bursaries available, click [here](#) for bursary criteria and availability).

How to register or find out more

To register, please visit our website [here](#) or scan the QR code!



BLF FOOTBALL CAMP



BradleyLoweryFoundation®



in association with Jermain Defoe

Is your child aged between 5 & 14?
Do they love football?

Our football camps are designed specifically around the FA's 4 corner model, aimed to develop your child's physical, technical/tactical, psychological and social skills.

Delivered by UEFA licensed coaches and current Sport Lecturers.

FOCUSING ON:

- ✓ Skills & ball techniques
- ✓ Footwork Experiences
- ✓ Strategy & team building activities
- ✓ Fun games and tournaments



Dates:

24th, 25th & 26th February 2026

Times:

9:30AM to 3:30PM

East Durham College

Willerby Grove, Peterlee, SR8 2RN

Prices

£20 per day

£50 for 3 days

Participants need:

Indoor & Outdoor Footwear,
Packed Lunch and a Drink.

Register at

www.bradleyloweryfoundation.com

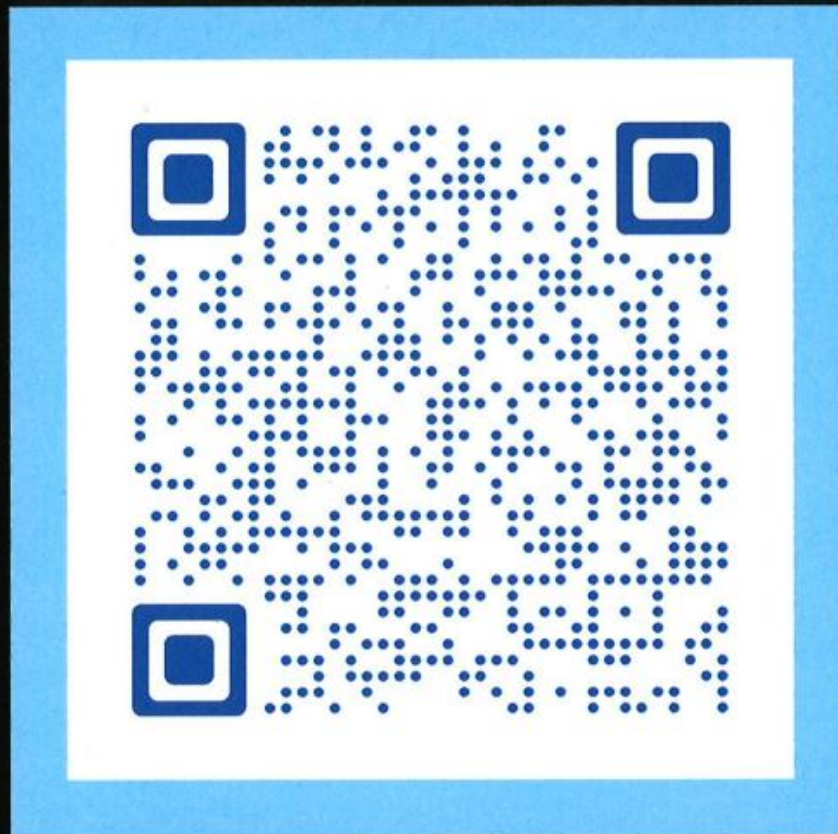




Lord Lawson
SIXTH FORM

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WE GROW WE LEARN WE SUCCEED

TOGETHER.



Online Safety Newsletter

February 2026

Screen time and resilience: A psychologist's guide

The BBC have published an article with an expert in parenting and child development, Dr Martha Deiros Collado. It includes tips and advice to help you in supporting your child online.

The article explores nine ways in which you can help your child to develop their media literacy skills, for example how to encourage your child to challenge what they see online and how to start conversations using real life examples, as well as how to develop healthy screen time habits.

At the end of the article, there are links to further articles that may be of interest to you, such as how to manage your child's online world without clashing.

You can find out more here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zwb3tcw>

Would you like to read this newsletter in a different language? You can use the translate tool on our web version: <https://www.knowsleycitylearningcentres.org.uk/february-2026-secondary/>

Using AI to alter images

AI image generator and moderator tools are widely available and often used by children. Whilst these tools can be used for creative purposes, we need to ensure our children are aware of the appropriate way in which to use them and the circumstances when they should not be used, even if harm is not intended.

What are AI image generator and moderator tools?

It is when Artificial Intelligence is used to create or modify images, for example it could be used to swap faces, change expressions or for more sinister reasons, such as to remove clothes. These images are often very realistic and therefore difficult to see that they are fake.

Privacy concerns and consent

If your child is using these tools, they need to be aware of potential loss of privacy and the importance of consent. They should know that they should only use images of other people with consent.

What does my child need to know about using these tools?

- Children shouldn't use AI tools to manipulate images of school staff. Even if the child's intention is not malicious, children should not use AI tools to create or edit photos of teachers under any circumstances.
- Manipulation of images of friends or other children – if you are using images of other people, then consent **must** always be sought.
- The tools should not be used to create images that can embarrass or hurt others - this is a form of online bullying.
- Copyright issues – who owns the copyright? These images could be reused by others, which can affect their own digital footprint.

What should I do?

- Chat to your child if they are using these tools and ascertain the reason why. Ask them to show you the images that they have created.
- Check the age ratings of any apps/websites that your child is using and set up appropriate parental controls.
- Develop your child's digital literacy by teaching them to recognise online risks and to behave responsibly online

Further information

- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-to-children-about-ai>
- <https://oursaferschools.co.uk/2025/02/18/understanding-image-consent-at-schools/>

TikTok

You must be over 13 years of age to use TikTok. TikTok is a social media platform for sharing and watching short video clips. If your child is using TikTok then make sure appropriate security / privacy settings are applied.

Account set up

It is important that your child enters their real date of birth as accounts are tailored by age e.g., Direct Messaging is disabled for accounts aged 13-15. In addition, advertisements are tailored by age. By default, accounts for people under 16 are set to private. You can read more about the other settings available, such as switching off comments and restricted mode here:

<https://support.tiktok.com/en/account-and-privacy/account-privacy-settings/privacy-and-safety-settings-for-users-under-age-18>

Family Pairing

Family Pairing allows you to link your own account to your child's account. You can then set controls such as restricted mode or tailor your child's 'For You' feed by selecting keywords that TikTok will use to filter out posts. You can find out more here: <https://support.tiktok.com/en/safety-hc/account-and-user-safety/family-pairing>

What do I need to be aware of?

- **Inappropriate content and themes:** whilst against guidelines, explicit and inappropriate content can be found on this platform, for example nudity/sexual content and hate speech. Some of the songs available to lip sync to may contain inappropriate lyrics/themes.
- **Challenges:** We often see viral challenges on social media, some of which can be **risky/dangerous**. Sadly, there are reports that children have died whilst attempting online challenges. Children may not yet have developed the skills and ability to critically analyse that what they see online is not always safe for them to replicate.
- **Stranger contact:** chat to your child about how people may not be who they say they are when online.

Refresh your feed

You can refresh your "For You" feed to update the content recommended: <https://support.tiktok.com/en/account-and-privacy/account-privacy-settings/refresh-your-for-you-feed>

Blocking and Reporting

Show your child how to use the safety features available.

Further information

- <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/tiktok>
- <https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/guardians-guide>

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date released 02.02.26. The inclusion of any links does not imply any affiliation with or endorsement of the linked website.



Balance screen time tips

Internet Matters have created simple tips to help you develop healthy online habits for your child. They also answer key questions such as "how much screentime is too much" and "is gaming bad for children." Access this information here:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/creating-a-balanced-digital-diet-with-screen-time-tips>

7 Steps to Good Digital Parenting

The Family Online Safety Institute have created seven steps to assist you as a digital parent. Find out more here:

<https://fosi.org/program/7-steps-to-good-digital-parenting/>

Children's Commissioner launches new guide for parents and carers

The Children's Commissioner has released a new guide to help you in managing your child's digital life. The guide was written with direct involvement from children.

It includes advice on setting boundaries such as no devices in the bedroom and how to chat to your child. You can find the guide here:

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/blog/what-i-wish-my-parents-or-carers-knew-childrens-commissioner-launches-guide-for-parents-and-carers-on-managing-childrens-digital-lives/>

Calendar Dates and Upcoming Events for the Autumn Term

Date	Event
Thursday 12 February 2026	Year 9 Parents and Options Evening 3.45 – 6.45pm (In-person event)
Friday 20 February 2026	Ski Trip
Friday 20 February 2026	Last day of term for staff and students – school finishes as normal at 3.20pm
Monday 2 March 2026	Staff and students return to school at 8.40am
Thursday 5 March 2026	Year 12 Parents Evening 3.45 – 6.45pm
Thursday 12 March 2026	Year 10 Parents Evening 3.45 – 6.45pm
Thursday 26 March 2026	Year 5 Open Evening 4.30 – 6.30pm
Thursday 2 April 2026	Last day of term for staff and students – school finishes as normal at 3.20pm
Tuesday 14 April 2026	Naples Trip
Monday 20 April 2026	Staff and students return to school at 8.40am