

# NEWSLETTER

## December 25

### HEADTEACHER'S ADDRESS...



Welcome all to The Pilgrim Christmas newsletter.

As we approach the festive season, it's a wonderful time to pause, reflect, and celebrate all the successes we've shared this term in our wonderful school. From impressive achievements in the classroom to moments of personal growth and challenge, there's so much to be proud of. As a staff team we are especially honoured to have won two awards recently at the Education Today ceremony in London. For the hard work and determination of both pupils and staff to be recognised in this way makes this term truly special.

Looking ahead, there's a sense of hope and determination for the new year. We're already thinking about the next steps on our journey together, and we can't wait to continue building on the strong foundations we've laid so far to best serve our community.

Wishing you all a joyful, restful Christmas break filled with love, laughter, and quality time with those who matter most.

Warmest wishes



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### Get in touch:

[enquiries@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk)

01522 682319

# GOVERNORS UPDATE...

Seasonal Greetings to everyone.

The Pilgrim Awards Evening was held at Amber Hill recently. Governors were represented by Tony, a long-standing Parent (and now Co-opted) Governor. Below is a copy of his presentation made at the end of the evening. His words convey so clearly how we feel as Governors so I make no apology for repeating it here. Be inspired!

## Awards Evening 2025

Good evening, everyone,

This is an honour for me, to be asked to speak on behalf of the governors, to stand before you to celebrate this year's group of young people — the students of our special school. I say Special School because when people ask me about me being a governor at Pilgrim I say that I am privileged to be able to be a small part of the progress and achievement of the pupils and of the commitment of the staff that make it our SPECIAL school.

Tonight, this room is full of special people; we not only celebrate your achievements, but your being here tonight is a powerful reminder of the strength, courage, and resilience that lives in each and every one of you.

Each day that our students come through the Pilgrim doors it is not always with determination. They may face challenges that others do not see or fully understand, but what shines through — more than anything else — is their resilience, their spirit.

To our students: You each have had your own Pilgrim journey. Whilst your education is important, learning to communicate in new ways, mastering a skill that once felt impossible, or simply sharing your laughter and kindness with others is equally vital, for these are the things that shape your character, and leave a lasting impact far beyond the classroom. I hope you grow to show everyone that ability is not a one-size-fits-all, you all model bravery and resilience.

To the families: Thank you for your unwavering love and your support for your child. This builds the foundation for everything your children achieve. You are their first teachers, their fiercest protectors, and their biggest cheerleaders.

To the teachers, assistants, and support staff: Your dedication transforms lives. You don't just educate — you empower. You don't just support — you give our students belief. You see the whole child, and you help them see all the positivity that is within them.

Tonight, we celebrate the milestones big and small. We applaud the steps forward, the hard-fought victories, and the quiet moments of growth. Because at Pilgrim, every effort matters no matter how small. Every voice is heard, and every child is valued.

We all hope that you take away with you everything you have learned not just from books and lessons but from the experiences that have shaped you and the challenges you've overcome, the friendships you have built and the strength and belief you have discovered in yourselves. Know that you are not defined by your limits, but by your potential.

Wherever your journey leads next please remember that: you were and always will be part of the Pilgrim family. Once again congratulations to each and every one of you. Pilgrim is proud of you.

# SAFEGUARDING...

## Safeguarding During the Christmas Holidays

As we head into the festive season, we'd like to remind our parents, pupils, and staff of the importance of staying safe and looking out for one another. The Christmas break is a wonderful time to relax and enjoy family activities, but it can also bring changes in routine, increased time online, and different social situations. Here are a few helpful tips to support safeguarding over the holidays:



### Stay Connected

Keep communication open. Encourage children to talk about their plans, feelings, and any worries they may have. Remember, that not everyone enjoys Christmas due to the sensory stimulation of lights and music, change in routine from people visiting or them having to go and visit, or just the festivities in general.



### Online Safety First

With more screen time likely, remind children to use devices responsibly. Check privacy settings, monitor age-appropriate content, and encourage them to speak up if something online makes them uncomfortable. You can get further advice on Online Safety including Privacy settings at: <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>

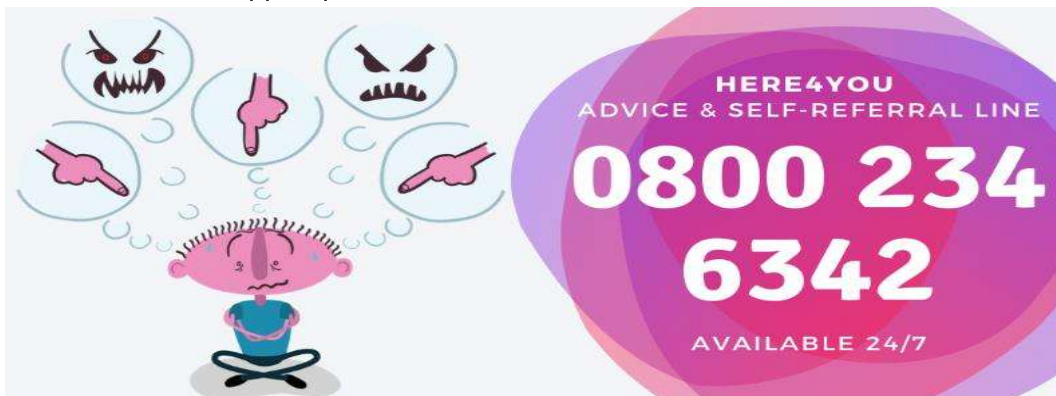
### Look Out for Each Other

Whether spending time with family or visiting friends, remind pupils to stay with trusted people, know safe boundaries, and recognise when to seek help.

### Safe Spaces

If routines change, make sure your child knows who they can contact if they feel unsafe. Important phone numbers, including emergency contacts, should be accessible.

For 24/7 Mental Health support please contact:



HERE4YOU  
ADVICE & SELF-REFERRAL LINE  
**0800 234  
6342**  
AVAILABLE 24/7

### **We Are Here to Help**

Although school will be closed during the break, safeguarding concerns can still be reported. You can contact **Children's Services on 01522 782111** or the **Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team on 01522 782333**.

Alternatively, if you or your child is deemed to be at immediate risk of harm, please call 999 or 101

Wishing all our families a safe, restful, and joyful Christmas holiday.

## ONLINE SAFETY...

The online world is constantly growing and evolving. Every day, we encounter new platforms, trends, memes, and digital terminology. While this rapid expansion brings many positives—such as enhanced communication, greater opportunities for socialisation, and improved digital literacy—it also introduces challenges.

Young people, in particular, may not always have the emotional maturity or experience needed to navigate these fast-paced online environments. As a result, misunderstandings can arise, conflicts may escalate, and in some cases, these interactions can develop into online bullying.

To support families in addressing these challenges, The National College has developed a comprehensive and practical guide for parents. This resource offers clear advice on recognising the signs of online bullying, strategies for responding effectively, and tips for fostering safe and healthy online habits at home. It serves as a valuable tool for anyone looking to better understand and support young people in today's digital landscape.

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about HOW TO COMBAT ONLINE BULLYING



Defined as "ongoing hurtful behaviour towards someone online", cyber-bullying makes its victims feel upset, uncomfortable and unsafe. In the digital world, it has numerous forms – such as hurtful comments on a person's posts or profile; deliberately leaving them out of group chats; sharing embarrassing images or videos of someone; or spreading gossip about them. Cyber-bullying can severely impact a young person's mental health – so, in support of Anti-Bullying Week, we've provided a list of tips to help trusted adults know what to look for and how to respond to it.



## 1. GET CONNECTED

Playing online games together with your child or connecting with them on social media (providing they're old enough) is not only fun but also an excellent way of establishing some common ground to discuss things you've both seen or done online – as well as keeping an eye on who your child is communicating with in the digital world.

## 2. KEEP TALKING

Regular chats with young people about their online lives are good practice in general, but they can also be an excellent refresher to help prevent cyber-bullying situations. Topics you might want to revisit include why it's important to only connect online with people we know and trust, and why passwords should always remain secret (even from our best friends).

## 3. STAY VIGILANT

Observe your child while they're using technology and just after they've used it. Are they acting normally, or out of character? Possible signs of a problem may include seeming quiet or withdrawn, jumpy or anxious, angry or repeatedly checking their phone. When you feel it's the right time, you may want to check in with them to see if everything is OK.

## 4. MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE

If an online bullying incident does occur, it may take a while before your child's ready to open up about what happened. Just gently remind them that they can always come to you with any problems – and that they won't be in trouble. You might also suggest a trusted family member they could turn to, in case they feel too embarrassed to tell you directly.

## 5. BE PREPARED TO LISTEN

When conversations about online bullying do take place, they're likely to be difficult, emotional and upsetting for both you and your child. Actively listen to your child while they're bringing you up to speed, and try not to show any judgement or criticism – even if they haven't dealt with the situation in exactly the way you would have hoped.

## FURTHER SUPPORT AND ADVICE

If you or your child need additional help with an online bullying issue, here are some specialist organisations that you could reach out to.

Ch@tline: talk to a trained counsellor on 0800 1111 or online at [www.childline.org.uk/get-support/](http://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/)

National Bullying Helpline: counsellors are available on 0845 325 5787 or by visiting [www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/cyberbullying.htm](http://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/cyberbullying.htm)

The NSPCC: the children's charity has a guide to the signs of bullying at [www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/) and can be reached on 0800 800 5000

## 6. EMPOWER YOUR CHILD

Depending on their age, your child might not want a parent 'fighting their battles for them'. In that case, talk through their options with them (blocking the perpetrator, deleting the app and so on), by allowing your child to choose the path they take, you're putting them in control but are also demonstrating that you're there to support them along the way.

## 7. REPORT BULLIES ONLINE

Cyber-bullying often takes place through a particular app, social media platform or online game. If this is happening to your child, encourage them to report the offender to the app or game in question – ideally with screenshots to support their complaint. Most games and apps have reporting tools specifically to stamp out abusive behaviour and protect users.

## 8. ENCOURAGE EMPATHY

Protecting themselves online is the priority, of course, but young people should also feel empowered to help if they witness other people falling victim to cyberbullying. Even if they don't feel confident enough to call someone out on their abusive behaviour online, they can still confidentially report that person to the app or game where the bullying occurred.

## 9. SEEK EXPERT ADVICE

Victims of online bullying frequently experience feelings of isolation and anxiety, a loss of self-esteem and potentially even thoughts of self-harm or suicide. If you think that an incident of cyber-bullying has affected your child's mental wellbeing, then seek psychological support for them. There are some useful contact details in the central panel below.

## 10. INVOLVE THE AUTHORITIES

If the nature of any online bullying makes you suspect that your child is genuinely in imminent physical danger – or if there are any signs whatsoever of explicit images being shared as part of the bullying – then you should gather any relevant screenshots of evidence and report the incidents to your local police force.

## Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



**NOS**  
National  
Online  
Safety®  
#WakeUpWednesday

# HOPE...

## UBUNTU

Ubuntu is one of our key hope words. If Ikigai reminds us of how we might find an individual meaning and purpose to life then Ubuntu reminds us of the importance of the communion we have with each other. Ubuntu stems from Bantu languages and is loosely and roughly translated as “I am because we are”. Ubuntu reminds us of our shared humanity. It is helpful to remember that we as human beings evolved from a web of proto-humans from central Africa. Then this group moved from central Africa to the rest of the world. In other words, we are all descended from one group and share one humanity. At any one time we all have a mitochondrial “eve” a common female ancestor!

If we are all interconnected, then our victories are common victories and our defeats are common defeats. We are part of a common community and are all connected – No man is an island. There is further thought; In western cultures we are taught the importance of the individual. We are taught the importance of individual achievement and agency. In other cultures communion and community is given a higher premium. Maybe hope works best when we gain agency through our communion with other people.



# TERM DATES...



## SCHOOL TERMS & HOLIDAYS 2025/2026

**Inset Days Tuesday 2nd & Wednesday 3rd September 2025**

### **Term 1**

Thursday 04 September 2025 To  
Friday 24 October 2025

**Inset Day Monday 3rd November 2025**

### **Term 2**

Tuesday 04 November 2025 To  
Friday 19 December 2025  
Bank Holidays: - Thursday 25 & Friday 26 December 2025  
Thursday 1 January 2026

**Inset Day Monday 5th January 2026**

### **Term 3**

Tuesday 6 January 2026 To  
Friday 13 February 2026

### **Term 4**

Monday 23 February 2026 To  
Thursday 02 April 2026  
Bank Holidays: - Friday 03 April & Monday 06 April 2026

**Inset Day Monday 20th April 2026**

### **Term 5**

Tuesday 21 April 2026 To  
Friday 22 May 2026  
Bank Holidays: - Monday 4 & Monday 25 May 2026

### **Term 6**

Monday 1 June 2026 To  
Wednesday 22 July 2026

# COMING UP...

Want to know what we have coming up in all our bases then head to our website. Below is a screenshot of one of our base's visual calendars. Our website displays calendars for all three of our sites, so if you want to know what's coming up across all locations, simply visit **Together at Home** and navigate to **Term Dates & Upcoming Events** to view them anytime.

## Upcoming Events

Below is information about upcoming events taking place across each of our three bases. Please scroll down to find information for the relevant base.

For further information about these events, please contact us at enquiries@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk

### Amber Hill

#### December 2025

- Tutor Time Key:**
- Pink - Hope
  - Green - Maths is fun
  - Peach - Votes for Schools
  - Red - DEAR
  - Purple - Words of the week
  - (If in Blue then this is a special one)
  - Wellbeing walk (WW)

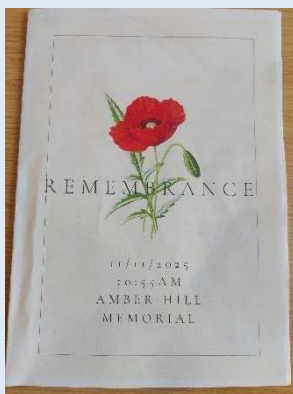
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1  WORLD AIDS DAY	2 (V)	3 Stamford College Visit	4	5 International Volunteer day
8(H)	9 Human Rights day	10 Grantham College Visit	11(WW)	12 (V)
15	16 (H)	17 Xmas Jumper day Kinema Trip 	18	19 (WW) Reading and attendance awards 
22 	23 	24 	25 	26 
29 	30 	31 		

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN OUR BASES THIS TERM

### AMBER HILL NEWS...

What a term it's been! It feels like the weeks have absolutely flown by, packed with learning, events, and plenty of excitement. We certainly hit the ground running in September! Students and staff have been incredibly busy supporting Year 11 through their mock exams (which came earlier than usual this year). A huge well done to our Year 11s for handling the challenge so brilliantly, and a big thank-you to everyone else who cheered them on along the way. Your support really made a difference.

On Tuesday 11th November 2025, our village community and the AH base came together for a truly heartfelt Remembrance service. Pupils, staff, families, and local residents stood side by side to honour those who served and sacrificed so much. Thoughtful readings were shared, and wreaths were laid with care as a symbol of gratitude.



Continuing the theme of remembrance, several of you took part in a moving and thought-provoking visit to the Holocaust Museum. It was a powerful experience that encouraged reflection and thoughtful discussion.

Many of you also stepped into the spotlight for our very first Pilgrim acting adventure—a creative reimagining of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*! Staff and students put their hearts into rehearsing and filming our own version of the play. Huge congratulations to everyone involved—such impressive Eunoia in action!

Our fundraising spirit has stayed strong too. We joined in with the Macmillan Coffee Morning and supported Children in Need—thank you for every cake baked, penny donated, and spotty accessory worn!

WOW Week brought even more excitement. We trekked across the Stourton Estate to spot the deer (and got absolutely soaked, but had a great time anyway!). On a return visit, we met the friendliest sheep and enjoyed making our very own Christmas wreaths—mud, laughter, and creativity galore.



As we wrap up this busy, joyful term, we'd like to wish all pupils, parents, and carers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Enjoy the break, stay cosy, and we'll see you in January!

# BAUMBER NEWS...

It has been a busy term in Baumber with numerous activities to support pupil engagement and personal development.

In September we hosted a Macmillan Coffee morning alongside other bases. Parents were invited to join us over lunch for a sample of the tasty cakes which had been prepared by pupils and staff and to stay and join us for Drop Everything and Read time. In total the school raised £232 – a fantastic contribution.

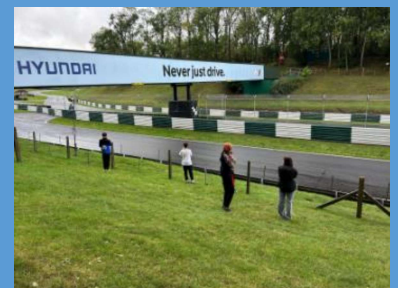
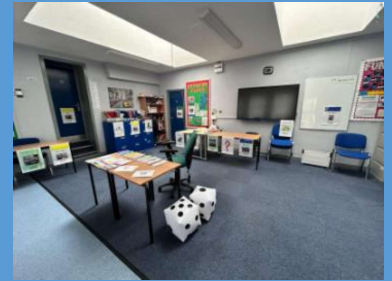
WOW has been as popular as ever with various sessions which started with a huge, personalised game of Giant Baumber Monopoly – I think the students enjoyed rolling the large inflatable dice the most!

We also included a visit to Cadwell Park, watching various category riders trying to improve their personal best times. It was beautiful walking around the circuit set in the hilly Wolds. We also had a visit to LIVES in Horncastle where we learnt how many doctors and health professionals volunteer their own time to man the LIVES vehicles. We were shown basic CPR skills and met Defib Dan, their mascot.

We had a session of cooking dinner for our families which saw some amazing dishes being made and they smelt delicious. For our end of term mini-WOW trip, we went to Skegness Laser Quest; it was great fun, and we all were rolling about laughing.

We had our annual Deer Safari at Stourton Estates touring the Deer farm and saw our favourite stag Winston; he is not shy and stood near us so we could admire him for a long time. We've been to Bransby Horse rescue, took part in games galore and finished off with some Christmas Crafts and a quiz. Truly a busy term but with lots of laughs and variety.

Year 11 meanwhile have been joining other bases to focus on careers and transition.





Dwayne is back from his brief holiday whilst we got the temperature right for him during the cold snap. He was missed by all and continues to enjoy regular baths and snacks.

Lunchtime clubs in Baumber tend to be built around board and card games as all pupils enjoy these but we are expanding to offer Mindful Movement, LGBTQ+ , Music and Newspaper club where our students can help in writing articles for the school newspaper.

Lessons are generally well-attended and pupils are making positive steps in their individual learning journeys. This year has seen us allocate teaching spaces to subjects rather than pupil groups and the movement breaks between lessons have been well received.

December has seen multiple Christmas crafts and a visit from Elfie the elf who greets us every morning with a new adventure.



# LINCOLN NEWS...

It's been another busy term at The Lincoln base for pupils and staff. The Yr 11s have sat their mock exams over a period of two weeks. The important messages from our staff to pupil family members/ carers are as follows: Firstly- well done for accessing as many mock exams as possible. Secondly- keep attending. Finally- Staff are here to support all of our pupils' next steps to achieve their individual goals. For them to do this, they need to keep attending well.

Make mistakes. Making mistakes is central to the learning process. Please pass this message on. At whatever point a pupil enters the school, there are still things to learn. This is where our staff come in. We will support every pupil pastorally and academically to achieve their best.

In other news...

Pupils have enjoyed a range of activities this term to broaden their horizons outside of the usual lessons/ academic learning. More detail can be found in the rest of the newsletter but there have been external speakers come in to give special tutor times, careers talks and trips, WOW activities and trips during our Wednesday afternoons as well as our usual Christmas activities and Cinema trip.

We hope that all our pupils have taken as much as they can from all of this. For this I thank the staff for supporting each and all of our pupils and the wider school community, including yourself and in supporting our ethos at The Pilgrim School.

And finally, a very merry Christmas to all of you.



WOW - This term we have been doing our community Christmas. We have been putting together Christmas gift bags, where we have made origami animals, bracelets and Xmas decorations.

We have made links with Ermine library where we will visit on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec to hand them out to the local community.

We are also going to make Christmas cards to take to the local care home and do some rock painting which we will then place in the community for people to find and move about and we will also be doing a food bank delivery on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec.



Children In Need - Well done Pilgrim School. Within the School we raised £73 for Children in Need by bake sales, charity donations and other means but the biggest School 'shout out' goes to our own Jane Flynn for raising £200 by running 5K for 5 days!! Well done Jane 😊



Gibb News – As the cold nights draw in, and we all look forward to Christmas, here is a picture of Gibb the tortoise pulling his polar bear friend towards Lapland, ready for the seasonal festivities.

Find a YouTube link to our tortoises' favourite band- The Bee Gees and their rendition of Silent Night (Barry, Robin and Maurice.....spot the bad joke here....)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0bK6dp16ac&list=RDL0bK6dp16ac&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0bK6dp16ac&list=RDL0bK6dp16ac&start_radio=1)

## HOME TAUGHT...

Our home students continue to shine! Each learner receives a unique, personalised package of support, and it's been wonderful to see everyone working so positively with their home teachers and pastoral support workers. You've been embracing every opportunity that comes your way — well done to you all!

A special shout-out to the students who took part in our Raspberry Pi coding project this term — fantastic effort and creativity!

Many of you have also been sitting mock exams this season, with some even travelling to a base to complete them. This shows real determination and *sisu*. We are incredibly proud of each of you, wherever you completed your mocks.

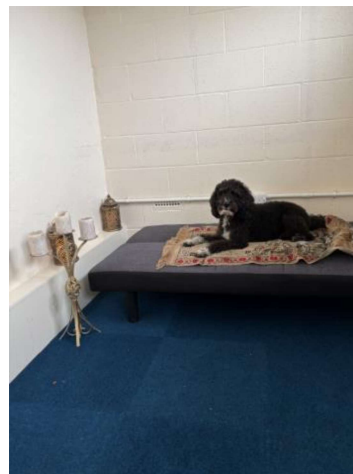
It was also brilliant to see some of our former Year 11 students at the Awards Evening. We were delighted that several of our home students received subject prizes — huge congratulations! And a very special well done to J, who received the overall Home Award. Your teachers are incredibly proud of you and all that you have achieved.

Wishing everyone a wonderful Christmas break and a very Happy New Year!

# OTTO'S NEWS...

We can't quite believe this is Otto's fourth year in school, having started his visits at just 4 months old in September 2022. He has certainly grown into his role and embraces all that school life offers. His love for footballs and food very much remains however! This term he has been involved in the usual school events and supported on wellbeing walks, with emotional regulation and greeting new pupils through the doors.

Making an acting debut in our Macbeth production



Sampling table cricket

Wishful thinking at our Macmillan coffee morning.

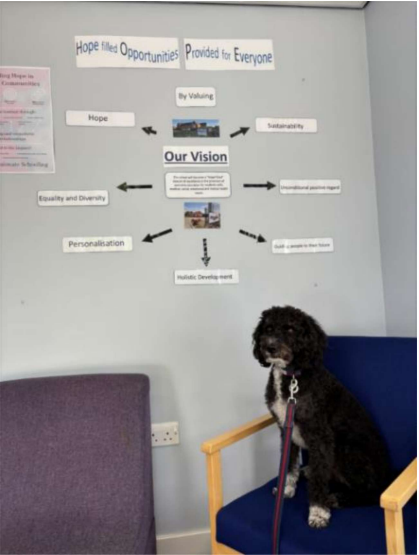


Awards Evening



Getting Christmas Ready

Leading the way on a wellbeing walk



Checking in our school values

## WORKSHOP SUMMARY...

This term, our students have had the opportunity to take part in a range of insightful and successful workshops. These have included:

- **Cybersecurity & Networking Engineering** – across all bases.
- **Cyber Crime** – in Lincoln and Baumber.
- **Positive Health** – held in Baumber.
- **Healthy Relationships** – also in Baumber, guiding students in building respectful and positive relationships.

These workshops have been incredibly valuable in supporting our students' personal, social, and technological development, and we look forward to continuing such engaging opportunities in the following terms.

# TOGETHER AT HOME...



## Together at Home

This section of our website has been designed to both increase your knowledge about what support is available to you and enhance our personal development offer in school.

Due to the bespoke and individualised nature of our school, some of our pupils don't get the opportunity to get involved in discussions and activities that take place in school. To help with this, we have devised some weekly activities, discussion points and resources that you can use together, at home. Have a look through the sub-pages of this section to find out more and get involved with the ones that spark your interest!

As always, feedback on how you find this page or any suggestions for what would be useful to include would be welcomed. Please get in touch at: [enquiries@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk)

### In This Section

CAREERS & POST-16 OPPORTUNITIES AND EVENTS

PSHE AT HOME

WEEKLY DISCUSSION TOPIC

FROM THE PILGRIM SEND TEAM

TERMLY READ

KAHOOT QUIZ OF THE WEEK

On our school website, you'll find a special area called "**Together at Home**" (located under *Pupils & Families*). This section has been created to support the bespoke and individualised needs of our pupils. We know that, due to the unique nature of our school community, some pupils may not always have the chance to take part in the full range of discussions and activities that happen in school.

To help bridge this gap, we have put together a selection of **weekly activities, discussion prompts, and resources** that you can explore **together at home**.

Here's what you can find each week:

- **Careers & Post-16 – Job of the Week:** A short spotlight on a different job each week to help spark ideas, ambition, and conversation about future pathways.
- **PSHE Discussion Topic & Resources:** Thought-provoking themes and supportive materials to encourage meaningful discussions at home.
- **Kahoot of the Week:** A fun, interactive quiz for pupils and families to enjoy together.
- **Additional Discussion Activities:** Extra talking points and simple activities to help build confidence, communication skills, and shared learning.

We encourage you to browse the sub-pages in this section and get involved with anything that inspires your child. Whether you explore one activity or try them all, every moment spent learning together at home makes a real difference

[The Pilgrim School - Together at Home](#)

## MEET THE ADMIN TEAM...



I am Helen the School Business Manager, pictured with my husband Guy who also works for the school. I have been working for Pilgrim School for over 16 years and have seen many positive changes to the school since I joined. My role involves managing the school's finances, recruitment and staffing. In addition, I oversee the Health & Safety and premises for the school. When I first started, we did not have any proper premises and worked out of temporary offices at Pilgrim Hospital. Prior to joining Pilgrim School I was in the RAF for 22 years in an Administration role. I have 2 grown-up daughters who live in Leeds and Manchester; we also have a Cockerpoo named Eddie. Outside of work I enjoy keeping fit, playing tennis and travelling abroad.

I'm Chloe, I am the administrative co-ordinator for the school. I plan and organise all the school trips and internal workshops. I also track staff CPD and book all staff training and courses, along with this I am the finance assistant so work very closely with our Finance Administrator, purchasing stock for school and working with finance systems. Alongside this I am the exams co-ordinator for our Lincoln base, ensuring a smooth run of the day-to-day exams. I have been working at Pilgrim for 9 years and started off as an apprentice Admin Assistant. I love working here and like to see the progression in the students throughout their time with us! Outside of work I like to spend time with friends and family. I love dance, holidays, city breaks and animals. I also like to spend a chilled day at home with my fiancé and 3 cats! I'm always up for a chat, so come and say hi.



Hi, I'm Becky, I'm the PA to the Head and an Admin Assistant here at Pilgrim. I joined the school after a career in Air Operations with the RAF, and although this is my first role in a school setting, I feel incredibly lucky to be part of such a meaningful, supportive environment. My role allows me to help keep things running smoothly behind the scenes, and I really enjoy being part of a team that makes a positive difference every day. Outside of work, life is kept busy by my two young children! I have a real passion for music, festivals, and travelling whenever the opportunity arises. I love sharing these adventures with my children—recently we camped together at a music festival, and last year we spent a month exploring Thailand and Bali, which was an unforgettable experience for all of us. If you see me around, feel free to say hello.

I'm Debi, I've been at Pilgrim since April 2014 when I started as an Admin Assistant. Now I am the Finance Administrator and work in the Lincoln base, three days a week.

I like to see the growth in our pupils; often starting with little to no hope for the future but over their time with us expanding their horizons and enriching their lives.

When not at work, I like eating out, walking, looking after my grandkids and spending time with my family. I am also an active Jehovah's Witness, which I invest a lot of time and energy in.



I'm Eva and I am the Administrator for the Home taught pupils and work from the Baumber Base. I provide admin support to the Home Team including ES teachers and PSWS and keep track of their home visits. My other role is being the Assistant Exams Officer for Baumber so I ensure the smooth the day-to-day running of the exams and offer general admin support when needed.

Working for Pilgrim feels like it was meant to be as I love the work ethos and the support that encompasses both students and staff. The most rewarding part though indirect, is supporting our pupils in their journey with us.

Outside work I love spending time with my family and friends and the experiences different environments provide, man-made or not, photography, art, music, wildlife and gardening.

Hi, I'm Gemma and I have recently joined the Pilgrim School as an Administration Assistant. I currently work part-time in the office at the Baumber site. I am looking forward to the future and continuing my new role supporting staff and pupils as a member of the Pilgrim School family.





Hi, I'm Gen and I started working at The Pilgrim School in 2020! I work in the office at the Amber Hill base as an Administrator Assistant. I feel very privileged to be a part of such a wonderful setting and watching the students grow with confidence. I find great satisfaction in contributing to the well-being and education of our students during their time with us. Outside of work, my life revolves around my two wonderful children, our energetic dog and creating memories together. We are always looking forward to our next family holiday or fun day out.

I'm Lauren, before I started my Pilgrim Journey, I was working in an RAF Nursery in the toddler and baby room and this was because before I started full-time there I was doing a college course in Childcare. I come from an Armed Forces background due to my Dad being in the RAF. This means that I have lived all over the country. I have been at The Pilgrim School since January 2021, where I started my Apprenticeship in Business Administration Level 3 (A - Level).

My role at The Pilgrim School now is SEND Administrator and Pastoral Administrator. You will also see me at the Amber Hill Base reception.

I enjoy working at the Pilgrim School and seeing the journeys of each pupil. I look forward to continuing working to help out the Pupils and Parents/Carers as best as I can, alongside a great team! Outside of work I love spending time with Family and Friends! I have a German Shepherd and she loves going on long walks.



I'm Liz, I have worked for the Pilgrim School since April 2021, and this is my first job in education, having worked previously in tourism and arts establishments including Southend Pier (yes, I drove the famous train!) and over a decade at Spalding's South Holland Centre.

In September I moved into the Exams and Data Officer role (previously Administrator and Exams Officer) and I love the new challenges this has brought and the opportunity to get involved in more 'behind the scenes' work. My Exams role is incredibly varied and complex, and I love being able to support our pupils through their examinations and onto the next stage of their journey. Pilgrim is a unique place to work, where no two days are the same and you never quite know what will be thrown at you!

Away from Pilgrim I am the parent to two older teenagers, two cats and two rabbits and I also work part-time for a local youth theatre company which satisfies my 'inner-thespian'! I also love country walks with my hubby, musical theatre and snuggling down with a good book – usually a crime thriller.

# AWARDS EVENING...

We held a joyous gathering of the Pilgrim School Family on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November to celebrate the achievements of our Year 11 leavers who were welcomed back to the Amber Hill base for their special evening. Pilgrim staff, governors, parents and friends gathered to watch our leavers receive their **Pilgrim School Hope Certificate**, alongside certificates for their academic qualifications and Duke of Edinburgh award for those who have completed the challenge this year.

Our Hope Certificates are presented to all Year 11 leavers at the end of their time with us and are a unique reflection of their individual journey at Pilgrim. The certificates feature personalised comments from pastoral and teaching staff that reflect the growth, resilience, and spirit each pupil showed during their time with us. In addition to the comments, each student's certificate features the Hope Word that staff feel best embodies their Pilgrim journey.

The evening was filled with a sense of optimism and pride, as we reflected on how these young people have embraced the challenges of their academic and personal lives with courage and determination.

Our guest of honour for the evening was Jenny Clarke, one of our 2022 leavers and previous recipient of the Pilgrim Governor's award, who presented the outgoing Year 11 pupils with their Hope certificates. In her inspirational speech, Jenny spoke movingly about her time at Pilgrim, the impact it had on her life and how she still carries the hope that was fostered during her short time at our school.

The culmination of the evening was the presentation of our main awards and trophies, each presented by a different member of staff.

The pupils who received one of our main awards were:

Home pupil award – Jamie

Jayne Dean Award for Motivation

Kai presented by Mel Findon



Hope award – Pheobie presented by Sarah Mulligan



Headteacher's award for Academic progress – Olivia



Governor's award for 'Being Pilgrim' - George presented by Tony McCarthy (Governor)

Interestingly when preparing their Hope certificates, we noticed that the Hope word that was chosen most often by staff to describe our leavers was **SISU**. Sisu is the Finnish term that can be roughly translated into English as strength of will, determination, perseverance and acting rationally in the face of adversity. It is the extraordinary strength and persistent resolve to continue and overcome in the face of adversity. This is the legacy of our amazing 2025 Year 11 leavers, and we are incredibly proud of them all!

Congratulations to all our outgoing Year 11 students for their remarkable contributions to the Pilgrim School Family, please keep in touch and let us know how you are getting on as you progress to the next stage of your journey.

# MOCKS SEASON...

At the start of November, most of our Year 11 pupils sat their mock GCSE exams across the three bases over a two-week period. Our mock exam period is a hugely important rehearsal for the main Summer exams, offering pupils an opportunity to experience the exam room setting, and the processes that will need to be followed. Mock exams also form a vital part of meeting the JCQ resilience requirements to retain formal assessment evidence should it be required in the event of formal exams not being able to take place on a national level.

Any Pilgrim exam season brings a lot of change of routine and affects the entire school base, as those in KS3 and Year 10 may find their lessons take place in different rooms or their usual staff are involved with invigilating. This year also saw the mocks period being brought forward by two months, instead of taking place in January, to allow for more teaching time post exams to cover areas shown during the mocks as requiring further input.

The mock series ran very smoothly in all three bases and we'd like to commend all our pupils for coping incredibly well with the changes, and especially to Year 11 for their hard work, resilience and *ikigai* during the mocks period. Individual results for mock exams are being informally released in lessons to pupils over the last couple of weeks of term.

From January we will be running revision classes on Wednesday afternoons for all Year 11 pupils who wish to join. Any Year 11s currently not in school on Wednesday afternoons who would like to do revision classes should speak with their academic link to arrange a timetable change and taxi request if necessary.

**Summer GCSE exams will run from 7<sup>th</sup> May – 15<sup>th</sup> June 2026** with the national contingency day being Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June. All year 11 pupils who are sitting GCSEs should remain available until after 24<sup>th</sup> June in case any of the exams need to be moved due to disruption on a national scale.

Information and timetables regarding Summer exams will be sent out to all relevant families in the Spring term.



## On your exam day

This checklist will help you to be as prepared as possible for your exams so that you can focus on doing your best on the day.

### Before sitting your exams, ensure you know:

- the date, time and location of each of your exams. You might find it helpful to write this information in a calendar or planner.
- who to contact at school or college in case there's an emergency that makes you late or unable to sit your exam.

### What you will need:

- a clear pencil case 
- at least two black ink pens – blue pens are **not acceptable** 
- an approved calculator for relevant exams 
- appropriate apparatus, such as a ruler or protractor, for relevant exams 
- a clear water bottle if you wish to take one in. It **must not** have a label 

### Contingency sessions:

- There are contingency sessions within the Summer 2026 exam timetable on the morning and afternoon of 24 June 2026. Make sure you are available on 24 June 2026.

### What you cannot take into your exams:

- any type of phone 
- revision notes
- any type of watch (this includes analogue, digital and smart watches)
- smart devices (e.g. Airbuds, smart glasses or tablets)

### Other important information:

- Listen carefully to the invigilator's instructions, which will be specific to your exam. If you are unsure of anything, please raise your hand and wait for the invigilator to respond.
- Fill in your details on the front of your answer booklet.
- If you need an additional answer sheet, raise your hand and wait for an invigilator to provide one. Remember to add your details to this sheet.
- If you need to use the toilet or feel unwell, raise your hand and wait for an invigilator to escort you from the exam room.
- Remember to stay silent – talking to a fellow candidate could result in disqualification from all your exams.

If you have any questions about your exams, please ask your teacher or exams officer.



You can also find useful information about preparing for exams at [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents)

# HOLOCAUST TRIP...



Our recent Holocaust trip proved to be an incredibly insightful and meaningful experience. The students were highly engaged throughout, showing genuine interest in the historical facts and asking thoughtful questions. They explored the museum with curiosity, paying close attention to the exhibits and props that brought the history to life.

All students represented the school exceptionally well, demonstrating respectful behaviour and a mature attitude during the entire visit.



# RESIDENTIAL PLANS...



## Exciting Residential Trip to London!

We are thrilled to announce that planning is underway for this year's school residential trip to London!

Students can look forward to an action-packed itinerary, including theatre visits, exploring the Tower of London, boat trips, and much more.

Don't miss out! The deadline to confirm attendance is **19th December 2025**. For more information, please visit **ReachMoreParents!**

## TABLE CRICKET...



For the past few weeks, each of our three bases has been diving into table cricket — and what a brilliant few weeks it's been!

Every base took part in their own sessions, practising batting, fielding, quick reactions, and of course showing off some top-tier teamwork.

From close finishes to lots of laughter, the energy has been fantastic.

The excitement doesn't stop there! All three bases now have their very own table cricket set to keep the practice going. That means even more chances to build skills, challenge students and teachers, and prepare for the big tournament we'll be entering in February 2026 which will see us face other local schools.

Even the staff got stuck in... though some of them might still need a bit more practice before they go pro!

A huge well done to everyone involved — with all this enthusiasm (and all the extra practice we can have!), our team is shaping up to be unstoppable!



# MATHS WEEK...

At School we celebrated this by sharing Maths challenges and resources throughout Tutor times and also online with our pupils and wider School community. Thank you to everyone who took part in the challenges in School and the challenges that were set online.

*But did you know:*

*'Many adults and children feel worried or stressed when faced with maths. Some of us also have physical symptoms too, such as a racing heartbeat, feeling hot and flustered, or sweating.'*

According to [research by the University of Cambridge](#), "Many children and adults experience feelings of anxiety, apprehension, tension or discomfort when confronted by a maths problem."  
Source: National numeracy organisation.

*The aim with something like Maths week is to increase the curiosity, fun and thinking skills withing our wider community. This, hopefully, will then increase engagement and the way that different people may think about Maths.*

# LANGUAGES WEEK...



The whole school participated in our annual 'Languages Week' in tutor times at the start of term. This year, the theme was **'Languages open hearts and minds.'**

*"This reflects that learning languages harnesses both the emotions and the brain. As well as potentially boosting brain power and connecting people, learning languages can facilitate the exchange of ideas, emotions and experiences – strengthening empathy and respect for different ways of life"*

Pupils took part in a variety of quizzes, including flag quizzes and capital cities puzzles and finished the week of in style with an extended languages Kahoot quiz!

In a fast-paced world, communication and compassion are more important than ever and the more we understand of each other, the more we can connect.

Some of you may already learn a language at Pilgrim. At KS3 you can study French and German here (with Jen) and at KS4 you can opt in to study GCSE French or German or a different languages qualification. We learn the basics through to more advanced language but we also learn about culture and respect and have been known to bake tasty treats from around the world, such as 'madeleines' in French lessons and 'Lebkuchen' in German.

Remember: it's never too late to learn a language! If you think you would like to try languages lessons at Pilgrim, speak to your PSWS or teacher and they will be able to help.



# READING CHALLENGE...

This Christmas our reading challenge asks you to log into your account on the online library and find the answers to some Christmas questions. One winner in each base will win an Amazon voucher!

[Christmas Reading Challenge](#)

1. What is the name of the Christmas book written by Tom Fletcher?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Who wrote the book 'A Boy Called Christmas'?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who is the main character in Charles Dicken's 'A Christmas Carol'?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. In 'Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban', what did Mrs Weasley send Harry for Christmas? (Look on page 235)  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. In 'Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban', what did Professor Snape get in his cracker? (Look on page 241)  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What is the title of the third book in the popular Percy Jackson series by Rick Riordan?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Find a joke book by Rob Elliott and copy the funniest joke you can find.  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What is the name of the main character in 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time'?
9. Anthony Horowitz writes the 'Alex Rider' series of books. Can you find the name of another book he has written that is not part of the Alex Rider series?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Use the Browse button to choose 1 fiction book, 1 non-fiction book, and 1 audiobook that you might like to read/listen to next year.  
\_\_\_\_\_

# PILGRIM PRESS LAUNCH...

This term we are pleased to be able to launch **The Pilgrim Press**, Pilgrim's very own school newspaper. It is very early days but some of our base pupils have managed to write an article ready for a mini, Christmas edition of the Paper. Have a look at the very first edition and see what you think. Would you like to get involved and write an article for the next issue of the paper? Your article can be about anything you like: a review of a WOW or Careers trip; an article about your favourite hobby, music artist or TV show; or you could write about something exciting that has been happening in your base recently. If you have an idea about a topic for an article, drop me an email and let me know. [Sarah.Mulligan@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:Sarah.Mulligan@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk)

## The Pilgrim Press

Welcome to the very first edition of **The Pilgrim School newspaper**, written by Pilgrim pupils for Pilgrim pupils and families. We have introduced the newspaper in school this term with pupils coming up with lots of fabulous ideas for articles and features. In this introductory edition we wanted to give you a little taste of things to come. We would like as many pupils as possible to be involved with the paper, so, get your thinking caps on. You could write an article about your favourite band, TV show or hobby; or write a poem or a short story; write a review of somewhere you have been. All suggestions are welcome. Speak to your English teacher in base or drop me an email with your articles or ideas. [Sarah.Mulligan@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:Sarah.Mulligan@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk)



On Wednesday the 12th of November we went on a WOW trip to Stourton Deer Park.

We took the deer safari tractor and had a lovely look around, even though the weather was awful we still had a good time and learnt a lot about the deer and other important things at the park. We first saw the stags; they were all huddled up and lifted their heads to peak at us as the tractor came by. The stags had their antler velvet off so if they accidentally bump their antlers, they won't bleed or hurt themselves, we were also told that the place behind us was where they made the meat/venison which I was gob smacked about. We then saw the cows; they were all a very dark brown/black except for one that had white spots all around. The cows were extremely cute just like the deer, they all stood very close to each other trying to warm up from the rain. As we left the cows, we saw chickens in pens that the workers were hoping they don't escape from.

By Neave Ingamells

## [Pilgrim Press Issue 1](#)

# PODCASTS...

With its early beginnings in random recorded chats with consenting students, in which haphazard discussions took place on whatever questions came up, the Pilgrim Podcast has become an institution. Our ones of listeners have said great things like, “I actually enjoyed that one,” “A podcast?”, and “can you speak less?” The Pilgrim podcast has now, through hard work and dedication, moved onto a place where the exact same things happen only now with electronic theme music.

Often, I walk into staff spaces and ask, “Have you listened to the latest podcast?” and see the faces of blank incomprehension, the furtive looks of guilt, and the vocal chorus of “No.”

But slowly and surely, we have built a bank of conversations and interviews across bases with students who don’t always like to talk. Students have interviewed staff, and Elsie in Baumber still speaks fondly of her recorded chat with Steve Barnes, but less so of the hours it took to recover.

Recently, in Lincoln, students suggested the idea of a Roast, in which a member of staff (me) would be ridiculed. And I was. The student put together the piece, wrote and scripted and then was able to adapt as I gave answers they didn’t want. The flow and grace of words and thought was beyond impressive. The conversation flowed and the intonation and speed of sentence became mesmerising in its fluency.

Going forward we hope to have more students volunteer to talk about anything they wish to say or love to express. Teachers have stepped up to have an interview, and be ridiculed too. The benefits have been easy to see in the lightening of fear in exchanged words, and the silliness of thoughts and ideas which fall from student’s mouths when social time commences.

## SOCIAL MEDIA...

Please take a moment to look at the poster below—it shows all of our social media handles. Follow us to stay up to date with news, celebrations, reminders, and a closer look at what's happening across the school.

If you haven't already, we strongly encourage all parents and carers to sign up for **Reach More Parents**, as this is our primary communication platform. Important messages, updates, and information about your child's absence should be sent to us through this system. Being signed up ensures you never miss anything important.

We will also soon be sending out consent forms for our WhatsApp groups, which help us share quick updates and information for specific groups. Please keep an eye out for these forms and return them as soon as possible.

Thank you for staying connected and helping us keep communication smooth and effective for everyone!



# STEM EVENTS...

## **What is STEM?**

STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. It brings these subjects together to help students develop problem-solving skills, creativity and an understanding of how the world works.

## **STEM Highlights**

This term has been an exciting one for STEM across the school. We began with a trip to Lincoln University, where students visited the Sir Isaac Newton Lecture Theatre for a series of engaging talks on cybersecurity. They also had the opportunity to explore trade stands and speak with representatives from organisations such as Siemens, STEM Learning, Inzpire, the London Stock Exchange, the University of Lincoln, Mind Bicycle, Custodia, and RAF Space Command.

Students also took part in an inspiring live assembly broadcast all the way from Australia, focusing on Plastic Clever Schools and the steps we can take to reduce our use of single-use plastics. As a school, we have already introduced changes such as replacing disposable food bags with reusable plastic boxes and improving how we recycle thin plastics.

We celebrated Maths Week, during which many students signed up to compete in the International Maths Challenge, putting their problem-solving skills to the test. In Technology lessons, students enjoyed taking part in Engineering Week, exploring how engineering shapes everyday life.

Many students, both in school and at home, have also been learning to code through a Raspberry Pi initiative. Using the programme Scratch, they have created their own games and animations—an exciting first step into the world of programming.

## **Looking Ahead**

Next term, we are excited to launch Science Week, with even more opportunities for students to explore, experiment and discover

# CAREERS...

## Careers Programme Update – Autumn Term

Since the beginning of the academic year, the Careers programme has advanced in a highly positive and engaging direction. Students in Years 10 and 11 have participated in a wide range of opportunities designed to broaden their understanding of future pathways and strengthen their readiness for post-16 education and employment.

- **Access to Music:** Students attended sessions and successfully enrolled in courses, gaining direct insight into creative industry pathways.
- **Construction Event:** This initiative proved highly successful, with the opportunity to partake in practical Workshops.
- **Lincoln College:** Tour round all the departments resulting in completed applications from Year 11 students.
- **EMR Careers Experience:** Courtesy of EMR, students travelled by train to Lincoln and attended a presentation delivered by Kaye from EMR, which highlighted career prospects within the rail industry.
- **Armed Forces Engagement:** Representatives visited Baumber where students engaged in a presentation by Stephen Finch from the Armed Forces, discussing the various Courses and Training available Post 16
- **John Scarborough Farm Volunteering:** Animal care tasks undertaken such as feeding llamas and pigs.
- **Health and Social Care Careers Event:** Most recently, students attended a careers event in Lincoln focused on pathways within health and social care professions.

Collectively, these experiences have provided our students with meaningful exposure to a diverse range of career options, while also offering practical insights into the skills and opportunities available in the world of work.



# WORK EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES...

## Unlock Your Future: The Power of Work Experience for Young Teens

Hey there, future professionals! If you're 15 or 16, you're at a perfect age to start exploring the world of work, and here's why it's a fantastic idea!

- 1. Real-World Skills:** Work experience gives you a chance to learn skills that you won't always find in a classroom. Whether it's communication, teamwork, or problem-solving, these skills will set you up for success in any future career.
- 2. Discover Your Passion:** Not sure what you want to do yet? Work experience lets you try out different roles and industries, helping you discover what you love and what you don't.
- 3. Boost Your CV:** Even at a young age, having work experience on your CV can make you stand out. It shows future employers that you're proactive and ready to take on responsibilities.
- 4. Build Your Network:** You'll meet professionals who can offer advice, mentorship, and potentially even job opportunities down the line.
- 5. Increase Confidence:** Stepping into a work environment can boost your confidence and give you a sense of independence and responsibility.

Get Started! There are plenty of opportunities out there, from local businesses to charities, and even virtual internships. So why wait? Dive into work experience and unlock a world of possibilities!

This academic year has already seen Pilgrim School pupils undertake placements at a local garden centre, ice skating coaching, childcare and several virtual placements.

There are also some exciting opportunities coming up for pupils who do not feel they can undertake a full placement, with planned group visits to employers to learn more about the world of work.

If you would like to know more about work experience or ask any questions about careers in general then please get in touch. My e-mail address is [neil.blackwell@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:neil.blackwell@pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk).

# PARENT COURSES...

There are a wide range of **Adult Distance Learning opportunities** through Boston College which may be of interest to you. Boston College offers a wide range of **free, accredited Distance Learning courses** designed to fit around work and family life. These are:

ASF - Certificate in Awareness of Bullying in Children and Young People Level 2
ASF - Certificate in Understanding Children and Young People's Mental Health Level 2
ASF - Certificate in Introducing Caring for Children & Young People Level 2
ASF - Certificate in Special Educational Needs and Disability Level 2
ASF - Certificate in Understanding Specific Learning Difficulties Level 2
ASF - Certificate in Understanding Distressed Behaviour in Children Level 2

If you are interested in any of these or any other distance learning opportunities, please follow this link: <https://www.boston.ac.uk/find-a-course/by-course-type/distance-learning>

Also, if you are interested:



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 07707470845 | [jamie.baguley@aspireeducationacademy.co.uk](mailto:jamie.baguley@aspireeducationacademy.co.uk)



## PAST PUPIL NEWS...

We were lucky enough to be joined at Awards Evening by a past pupil who shared her journey since leaving Pilgrim in 2020. Her speech was inspirational and we have invited her to join us for a tutor time in school in the New Year so that our current pupils can also hear it.

We are always so proud to hear what people are up to and are keen to grow our alumni and bank of pupil 'Hopeful Heroes.' Please get in touch if you are able.

This term we have heard of the following successes, evidence that time spent at Pilgrim can lead to so many pathways:

- A 2020 leaver receiving university offers to pursue his goal of sports journalism.
- The engagement of two former pupils (to each other).
- An armed forces recruitment.
- A budding barrister having graduated with a law degree.
- A completed mechanics apprenticeship

## PUPIL FORUM...

This term in Pupil Forum, we explored the topic of artificial intelligence and discussed how pupils feel about the growing use of AI in the classroom. Opinions varied widely. Some pupils were strongly against AI, expressing concerns about its environmental impact—particularly the significant energy consumption required to operate large AI centres. Others took a more balanced view, recognising that while AI brings certain challenges, it also offers valuable benefits, such as personalised learning support, improved accessibility, and new opportunities for creativity.

To support these discussions at home, please see below a helpful resource from The National College, which provides clear guidance on the effective and responsible use of AI in education. This guide offered useful insights into both the opportunities AI can create and the safeguards needed to ensure it is used thoughtfully in schools.

At The National College, our #WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](https://nationalcollege.com).

# 12 Top Tips for Parents and Educators USING GENERATIVE AI IN THE CLASSROOM

Since the launch of ChatGPT in late 2022, the education sector has already seen the potential of generative AI as a teacher planning, content creation and learning support. However, this technology is accelerating so quickly that some teachers aren't sure how to make the most of it. This guide offers some tips for implementing generative AI in your classroom.

## ASK WHAT IT NEEDS

With ChatGPT, you could begin by asking what it needs you to input to provide the best response. You could try something like: "I want you to act as a (subject) teacher. I will provide the syllabus and you will provide me with a scheme of work. First, tell me what you need to know from me to create an excellent, differentiated scheme of work."

## START BROAD AND ZOOM IN

If you ask ChatGPT to give you a fully differentiated and resourced scheme of work or lesson plan from just one prompt, you'll probably be disappointed. Instead, begin by requesting a weekly outline, then a daily breakdown, then a single lesson, then the resources. That way, you'll get a lot more detail and can tweak the output if it's not quite right.

## SPECIFIC ROLES CAN BE HELPFUL

Because language models like ChatGPT are trained on human data, they're good at roleplaying. Asking it to assume a specific role – and telling it the tone you wish it to take – will likely make its output closer to what you're looking for. For example: "You will take the role of an expert AQA GCSE maths teacher. Write a syllabus guide for AQA GCSE maths in a friendly, reassuring tone."

## CREATE 'CHARACTER' BOTS

You can create your own chat bots, granting students free access to ChatGPT without the need to log in. On openai.com, choose 'Interface', then select 'Chatbot'. Filling in the fields allows you to customise the chatbot's persona – 'helpful teacher' or 'literary critic', for example – and create an avatar that copies its response to the chatbot. You can then make this available to your students.

## AVOID PLAGIARISM DETECTORS

We advise caution in using AI plagiarism checkers as they aren't reliable yet, it's easy to fool and often gives false positives. Some students have already been wrongly accused of cheating, which can damage their relationship with their teacher. It's often better to use your own judgement (if you know your own students' style well enough) or consider other options, such as controlled assessments.

## WHAT IS GENERATIVE AI?

Generative AI encompasses the family of artificial intelligence capable of creating content. This includes large language models such as ChatGPT and Google's Gemini, text-to-image software models including Midjourney and DALL-E 3, video, the newer crop of apps which can create videos from text, like RunwayML, and music-focused software such as Google's MusicLM.

## THINK BEYOND 'THE NORM'

Gamma is an app which uses AI to plan presentations, while Notion software employs AI to change the tone and length of text and explore ideas. Even without the AI elements, however, both can be worthwhile additions for any school as online alternatives to applications such as Word and PowerPoint. Furthermore, they are free to use, with free AI credits included.

## SET UP AN 'ASK THE AI' STATION

It can be difficult for school-age children to effectively engage with ChatGPT, as signing in requires a phone number and two-factor authentication. It can also be problematic regarding data protection in many countries. Instead, you could set up one or two laptops in the classroom as 'Ask ChatGPT Workstations', which you can direct your students to use at appropriate moments.

## BE CRITICAL USERS

Because they could be considered 'generative AI's occasional misusers', you could promote. Teach your students to think critically about what AI tells them and test check its responses, particularly those that are relevant. Models like Google Bard, while good for providing prompts, have already garnered a reputation for confidently making up references and even website URLs.

## GENERATE LOTS OF IDEAS

When exploring a topic with ChatGPT, ask it to generate 50, 100, or even 1000 ideas around the theme. For example: "Give me ten interesting and unusual lesson starters to hook my Year 6 class into the water cycle." You can then overlay your human intelligence and choose the best option for your class. Chances are, some won't be suitable, but you only need one to fit your needs!

## TAILOR YOUR RESOURCES

ChatGPT is excellent for differentiating resources to fit specific audiences, as it can generate any resource to better suit a different age or ability range. You could also ask it for alternative ways to present information, such as explaining a complex concept in the style of a movie scene or giving three simple analogies that a much younger pupil would be more likely to understand.

## TRY THE OPEN AI PLAYGROUND

On [platform.openai.com](https://platform.openai.com), click the 'Playground' option. Choose the chat function from the drop-down menu, then select the GPT model. This will quadruple the token size – meaning the programme's memory – meaning that you can paste in an entire chapter of a novel, an act from a play, or a section of a textbook, and ask the AI questions about it. This can make the GPT model much more useful.

## DIFFERENT TOOLS FOR DIFFERENT JOBS

ChatGPT is impressive, but it's not the only tool in the box. Perplexity is a user-friendly, web-enabled AI that runs the most up-to-date version of ChatGPT in the background – while it is a friendlier-sounding chatbot that students can get into discussions with on almost any subject. They both encourage learners to go deeper by asking probing questions or suggesting ways to explore a topic.

## Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is Chief Operating Officer for Skills Education, a Bahrain-based company with nine 6-12 international schools in the Middle East and North Africa region. A teacher and leader for 25 years, Darren is a blogger and thought leader in AI in education, who hosts The Educable Podcast. Later this year, he will publish *Education: a book or how to use AI to change the education world*.



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## PUPIL ROLES...

After the Christmas break, we will begin holding interviews for new student volunteer roles. These positions offer a great opportunity for students to develop confidence, communication skills, and teamwork.

Information on how to take part has been shared with the students in base, if they would like more information please see a member of the support staff team. Roles that are available to apply for are:

- Student Librarian
- Pilgrim pet care assistant
- Amber Grill Lunchtime staff
- Student Base Host
- Student administration assistant role
- Student Events co Ordinator
- Environmental sustainability Officer

## STAFFING UPDATE...

### **New Starters:**

Anne Bladon - Relief Teacher in the Home Team - started Sep 25

### **Leavers:**

Cheryl Collier - Teacher in Amber Hill was covering Maternity Leave - Leaving base contract at end of term. Will continue to work for the Home Team.

### **Other:**

Lynda Martin - PSWS in Amber Hill has increased her contract to 4 days a week - from Nov 25

Harriet Tricker - Teacher in Amber Hill returning from Maternity Leave - from Dec 25

# SEND...

## Pupil Passports

Did you know that every pupil has their own Pupil Passport?

These passports help ensure that all staff understand each child's strengths, interests, needs, and the support they require in school. They are updated throughout the year, and pupils are encouraged to take part in the discussions about their own passport.

## Our Intervention Team

We are fortunate to have eight dedicated classroom support staff who deliver a range of SEND interventions.

- Two team members are trained ELSAs, with a third soon to complete their training.
- We offer handwriting, touch-typing, and social skills interventions.

If you feel your child may benefit from any of these, please contact your child's academic link or PSWS.



## SEND Workforce Development – Free Online Modules

Lincolnshire offers a selection of free e-learning modules for all parents and carers. These resources were created by schools, for school communities, to support anyone working with or caring for children and young people with SEND.

Available modules include:

- Types of SEND
- What is Inclusion
- SEND Code of Practice
- Respecting Individuals
- Working with Professionals
- Awareness of a Neuro-Typical Child

To access the courses, sign up to the Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum and indicate in the information section that you are interested in SEND Workforce Development. You will then receive an email prompting you to create a password and log in.

# PHSE...

## **Introducing Our PSHE Corner**

We're excited to launch a regular PSHE instalment in the school newsletter! This section will give you a snapshot of what we've been learning in PSHE and a sneak peek at what's coming up next. PSHE is all about equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate life confidently and safely.

### **PSHE: Life Skills in Action**

This term, our health and wellbeing lessons focused on the essentials: healthy eating, exercise, sleep and managing screen time—because yes, carrots matter and scrolling TikTok at 2am doesn't count as rest! In our relationship's lessons, we explored what makes a relationship healthy, discussed intimacy and consent and tackled the serious issue of misogyny. These conversations have helped students think about respect, equality and making positive choices.

Next term, we'll move on to personal safety and basic first aid, because knowing how to apply a plaster properly is a life skill too! We'll also begin exploring unhealthy relationships and how to spot the warning signs early. PSHE isn't just a subject don't forget...it's about learning the tools to thrive in the real world and we can't wait to share more with you in future newsletters!