

End of Term Newsletter

17 July 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

As the academic year 2025/26 comes to a close next Wednesday, I want to highlight just a few of the many key achievements and successes across a very busy year:

- **This year's leavers** - Year 11 have demonstrated real resilience and determination as they faced the challenge of their final GCSE papers. Their hard work and commitment will return strong GCSE results for them in August and provide valuable 'tickets' to their post-16 destinations. Pupils in Year 11 did, however, find a little time to relax and celebrate completing their examinations with a very emotional Leavers' Assembly, and a wonderful Prom at The Queens Hotel in sunny Southsea. Our leavers braved the heat and looked fantastic as they dined then danced the night away!



Current Year 11 pupils are returning to school on Thursday 20 August from 10.00 am to collect their GCSE results.

They are the first cohort who will be able to use the Department for Education's new Digital Education Records App. Once they have collected their results, pupils will be able to download the new app, have their identity verified by a member of the Portchester staff, and then access their results ready to start their digital qualifications portfolio. Pupils will be able to give local colleges and apprenticeship providers access to their grades without printing copies or taking copies to interviews, thus speeding up the admission process.

CONFIDENTIAL LLPR Visit Report



School Inspection Report July 2026 Report Summary.

Summary comments to be shared: Leadership and Governance

Leaders continue to demonstrate a clear and ambitious commitment to school improvement, with a strong strategic focus on increasing pupil numbers. Transition arrangements are a particular strength. Leaders have successfully engaged prospective pupils through a Year 5 Taster Day held in July, which was attended by over 200. In addition, they have secured strong participation in transition activities for the new Year 7, including a fully funded three day summer school that will be attended by the majority of the incoming cohort.

Governors have demonstrated a strong commitment to understanding staff views through the commissioning of an independent staff survey. Findings indicate high levels of staff engagement, with 85% of respondents reporting that they are proud to work at the school and 95% stating that they understand the school's priorities and their role in delivering them. Leaders recognise the importance of responding visibly to staff feedback and governors will analyse the findings carefully, communicate outcomes to staff and demonstrate how feedback will inform future decision making.

New House Ties from September 2026



Our House system is now in its second year and has successfully established really effective fundraising strategies, fun competitions, and a sharp competitive edge to its sports activities.

To further embed the House system, we are introducing the new House tie. As a welcome gift, these have been issued to new Year 7 pupils for a September start.

Pupils in all other years will remain wearing their current school ties but replace with House ties when appropriate. As new cohorts of pupils enter the school, they will purchase their own House ties.

Awards Evening 2026

Despite the very hot weather and being scheduled on the same evening as an England World Cup game, we celebrated in style the amazing hard work of our talented pupils with speeches from Subject and House Leaders highlighting the individual pupils who have shone this year. These pupils reviewed a wealth of trophies, certificates and vouchers to reward their great work. Our new Pupil Leaders summarised key highlights of the academic year through their reflective and well received annual speech.



Headteacher: Mr R Carlyle BEd (Hons)

Portchester Community School

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Year 7 Transition – In September, we are welcoming our new cohort of Year 7 pupils. Before they start term in September, they will have taken part in the usual Transition Day activities with getting to know their new Tutor and tutor groups, their House, and have had experience of some aspects of the secondary curriculum. The significant majority have also signed up to our free Summer School – this is running on Monday 17, Tuesday 18 and Wednesday 19 August. Teaching staff and support staff have planned a great suite of activities to help pupils get to know each other and familiarise themselves with the school. A new term, with a new cohort of pupils, also provides an opportunity for parents and carers to get involved in the running of the school. We are on the look out for new Governors, and/or members for our great PTA. If you are keen to join, please contact Mrs Tonks on h.tonks@portchester.hants.sch.uk and she will signpost you to the appropriate contact.

Year 5 Taster Day – July 2026 – This year, we tried out Year 5 Taster sessions in a slightly new format. We welcomed over 240 Year 5 pupils from across our cluster of schools for an exciting day of secondary curriculum subject taster sessions. The Year 5 pupils were amazing! They thoroughly enjoyed all the sessions – especially the Science ‘fire and rocket’ sessions, pizza making, wheelchair basketball, and the drama/art lessons. They looked exhausted at the end of the day, but were very keen to come back next year for Year 6 Induction.

Year 5 Taster Day at PCS: Friday 3rd July 2026



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Merit and House totals – to date, without Sports Day!

Castle	55834
Portsmouth	61301
Solent	61631

The House totals look very close at the top between Portsmouth and Solent Houses – However, there could be **over 1000 points** to be collected through the end of term Sports Day - The winning House will be announced at the end of term – Good luck.

- ✓ Pupils with over 1000 merits include – F Crouch/E Vokes/G Huntley.
- ✓ Pupils with over 700 merits include – O Gorman/I Rowe/H O'Malley/T Comben/C Tower.

Congratulations on your achievements – there will be new goodies in the Reward Store in September for you.

From September, we continue with our Mobile Phone Policy: Based on the feedback from pupils, parents and staff:

- Portchester Community School applies an 'Away for the Day' policy which means **pupils are not permitted to use their mobile phones during the school day or on the school site.** (This includes during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes).
- Should a parent/carer wish for their child to bring a mobile phone into school, it should be switched off and carried out of sight in the pupil's school bag by the **first bell at 8.40 am and not be seen until the final bell at 3.10 pm** (2.10 pm on a Friday), therefore, Away for the Day.

The next academic year will be very busy for pupils in Key Stage 4.

- New Year 10 pupils will be taking their English Literature GCSE in May 2027.
- They will also benefit from studying Statistics and some have opted for the new Enterprise and Marketing course.
- Building on the success of their work experience and college taster sessions, pupils will be starting their application processes to colleges, or wider training opportunities.

This very busy academic year concludes on **Wednesday 22 July at 12.35 pm for pupils**, where we say a sad farewell to a small, but valued group of staff. From the teaching staff, Miss Hope is leaving. From the support staff, Mrs Ford, Miss Savage, Miss Riley, Mrs Schofield, and Ms Hamilton are moving on to new roles. They are leaving for a range of reasons from relocation, promotion and career change. I would like to thank them for their amazing work here at Portchester Community School and we wish them every success for the future.

Last day of term arrangements – Wednesday 22 July 2026

- Tutor time.
- Lesson 1 – As per timetable.
- Lesson 2 – Key Stage 3 Assembly/Key Stage 4 Tutor period.
- Break 1 – Pupil lunches to be served.
- Lesson 3 – Key Stage 3 Tutor period/Key Stage 4 Assembly.
- Term ends for pupils at 12.35 pm.

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Key dates during the summer break:

- Summer School – Monday 17, Tuesday 18 and Wednesday 19 August (new Year 7).
- Thursday 20 August - GCSE Results day 10.00 am -12.00 noon.

Arrangements for the start of the Academic Year 2026/27:

- Tuesday 1 September 2026 – INSET Day.
- Wednesday 2 September – Years 7 and 11 in school only.
- Thursday 3 September – All pupils in school.
- Friday 4 September – All pupils in school.

Finally, thank you for your sustained support through Parents' Evenings, concerts, trips and visits, and your meetings with staff in school.

Your support is vital in guiding the provision for your child.

Wishing you and your family a safe and relaxing summer break.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Carlyle

Mr R Carlyle
Headteacher

A few sporting highlights from a very successful year.



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PE UPDATES FROM INSTAGRAM

SPORTS RESULT



YEAR 8 INTERHOUSE FOOTBALL

1ST - SOLENT ●●●●●●

2ND - PORTSDOWN ●●●●●●

3RD - CASTLE ●●●●●●

CONGRATULATIONS TO SOLENT HOUSE!!!

SPORTS RESULT



YEAR 7 INTERHOUSE FOOTBALL

1ST - SOLENT ●●●●●●

2ND - CASTLE ●●●●●●

3RD - PORTSDOWN ●●●●●●

CONGRATULATIONS TO SOLENT HOUSE!

SPORTS RESULT



YR 9 NATIONAL CUP RESULT

PORTCHESTER 3-0 BOUNDARY OAK

TWO GOALS FROM TAYLOR GREENE
AND A FIRST FROM JACOB BENNETT SAW THE TEAM MOVE INTO THE 2ND ROUND

YEAR 10 FOOTBALL



2 0

YEAR 10 FOOTBALL



2 1

YEAR 9 FOOTBALL



DISTRICT SILVER MEDALLISTS!

2

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PE!

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL



12 4

YEAR 7 NETBALL



4 3

YEAR 8 FOOTBALL



3 2

YEAR 11 VOLLEYBALL



COUNTY SILVER MEDALLISTS

2



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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about GENERATIVE AI SAFETY

Generative AI tools – such as ChatGPT – are now commonly used by children. In fact, 3 in 4 pupils in the 2024 Annual Literacy Survey reported using generative AI, up from just 2 in 5 the previous year. While these tools can boost learning and creativity, they also raise concerns around misinformation, privacy and overuse. This guide explores the key risks and how to support safe use.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

MISINFORMATION AND ACCURACY



Generative AI can sometimes produce false or misleading content. Children – and even adults – may assume the information is accurate and trustworthy. This can affect learning and understanding of important topics. It's vital to teach children to critically assess all information, even when it comes from AI.

EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Because generative AI is trained on vast datasets from across the internet, there is a chance it may occasionally generate harmful or inappropriate content. Without supervision, children could encounter disturbing or unsuitable material. Active monitoring and clear usage boundaries can help reduce this risk.

PRIVACY AND DATA SECURITY

Some AI tools ask for personal details or store users' interactions. If privacy settings are not correctly configured, children's personal data could be exposed or misused. Teaching good digital hygiene and setting strong privacy controls is essential for protecting children online.

REDUCED CRITICAL THINKING



Relying too heavily on AI-generated responses may reduce children's willingness to think independently. If they consistently use AI to solve problems or complete tasks, it could impact their ability to reason, analyse and form their own ideas. Encouraging thoughtful reflection is key.

DIGITAL DEPENDENCY



Regular use of generative AI can contribute to increased screen time and less real-world interaction. If left unmanaged, it may affect physical activity levels, sleep, and social development. Striking a healthy balance between online and offline activities is important for wellbeing.

UNCLEAR ETHICAL BOUNDARIES



Children may not fully understand the ethical implications of using AI to complete homework or creative tasks. This can lead to unintentional plagiarism or dishonest academic practices. Conversations around responsible use and academic honesty are crucial.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ESTABLISH CLEAR GUIDELINES

Set clear, age-appropriate rules for when and how generative AI can be used. Reinforce these regularly to help children develop a healthy, respectful and informed relationship with the technology.



PROMOTE ACTIVE SUPERVISION

Keep an eye on how the children in your care use AI tools. Check in regularly to ensure they're using them appropriately and be ready to step in if something doesn't feel right.



ENCOURAGE CRITICAL EVALUATION

Help children to question the accuracy of AI-generated information and seek out additional trusted sources. This builds essential digital literacy skills and supports better decision-making.



ENHANCE PRIVACY AWARENESS

Talk to children about the importance of keeping personal information private. Make sure privacy settings are in place and explain how data shared with AI tools could be used.



Meet Our Expert

Brendan O'Keefe, Deputy Headmaster and Director of Digital Strategy at Eaton House Schools, has extensive expertise in digital safety, safeguarding, and generative AI in education. As an author and speaker on digital literacy and online safety for institutions such as The National College, Brendan guides parents and educators in creating safe digital learning environments.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about THE DANGERS OF VAPING

Data collected for ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) shows an increase in 11 to 17-year-olds experimenting with vaping: from 7.7% in 2022 to 11.6% in 2023. It's concerning that these age-restricted products are getting into the hands of under 18s as most contain nicotine, which can be detrimental to brain development and cause long-term addiction. Some schools have reported students having their focus in lessons affected by nicotine cravings; vaping in school toilets; and even trying vapes found in their local park. Raising awareness of the risks among young people could help to prevent these problems from escalating and reduce the number of young vapers.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

NICOTINE ADDICTION

Since they were initially developed to help people stop smoking, the vast majority of vape liquids contain nicotine. Not only is this a highly addictive stimulant, but it can also have detrimental effects on brain development in the under-25s. Nicotine can decrease the ability to pay attention, weaken impulse control, affect mood and increase the likelihood of substance addiction as an adult.

WHAT IS VAPING?

Vapes contain a liquid (vape juice/e-liquid) that is heated by a battery and evaporates, creating a chemical vapour which the user inhales. They can be disposable (once the liquid or battery runs out, the vape is thrown away) or rechargeable (the user replaces the liquid and recharges the battery on demand). Most vape liquids contain nicotine and other chemicals.

LACK OF AWARENESS

A proportion of young people tend to view vapes as harmless, mainly because of the products' appearance and the perception (often strengthened on social media) that "vaping is cool" and on trend. In many instances, young people don't fully appreciate the concept of addiction: that is, they aren't adequately aware of the risk of becoming hooked on nicotine before trying a vape.

POTENTIAL TOXICITY

Many vape liquids have been found to contain 'heavy' metals such as lead, tin, nickel and (in some cases) mercury – all of which are toxic. These metals often take the form of tiny shards inside a device's liquid tank, which are then inhaled into the body. Some media reports have suggested these metals are particularly prevalent in illegally imported vapes which don't comply with UK regulations.

UNCLEAR LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

The liquids in vapes also contain solvents, which can create carcinogens at the point of evaporation. Vapes were only introduced into the UK in 2005 – and, because of the relatively short timeframe involved, there is insufficient medical evidence to assess the long-term harms that regular inhalation of these chemical fluids might have on the human body.

ATTRACTIVE PACKAGING

The packaging of many disposable vapes is very appealing to young people, frequently echoing the colours and flavours of the sweets or fizzy drinks they're used to buying. There's a relative lack of regulation around vape marketing, and vaping is often depicted positively on social media – which can lead young people to develop favourable views of vaping and overlook the possible harms.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

In the UK alone, around 5 million disposable vapes go to landfill every week. Due to such significant numbers of these products not being recycled, their components – a lithium battery and a chemical liquid – pose a toxic risk to the environment, the ecosystem and wildlife. Vapes are also predominantly made of plastic and metal; materials that, of course, do not naturally decompose.

WIDER HEALTH CONCERNS

Studies are already showing a link between vaping and oral health problems such as tooth decay and gum disease. This is because vaping reduces the amount of saliva in the mouth, while increasing bacteria – resulting in bad breath and a build-up of plaque. There are also concerns that, in some users, vaping could lead to the development of asthma, a persistent cough and breathing difficulties.

UNREGULATED VAPING PRODUCTS

The number of retailers willing to sell vapes to under-18s is a worry, as the chance of these products being unregulated (and therefore containing illegal chemicals and higher levels of nicotine) is high. A related concern is that the mechanisms inside unregulated products are unlikely to have been tested and safety checked – presenting a possible fire risk if the liquid and battery come into contact.

SCARCE INFORMATION

The lack of information about the ingredients and potentially harmful chemicals in a vape is troubling. Some vape fluids (unregulated in the UK) contain traces of nuts, which can cause an allergic reaction or anaphylactic shock. To date, medical warnings aren't required on vape packaging – with only medical disclaimers being found on the websites of the various brands.

VAGUE INGREDIENTS LISTS

Early research has suggested that the chemicals used to produce some strawberry and banana flavour e-liquids can kill cells in the blood vessels and heart. These ingredients aren't identified on the packaging, instead falling under the umbrella term 'natural and artificial flavourings'. Such vague listings mean that consumers aren't aware of the liquid's content so can't identify potential risks.

Meet Our Expert

Run by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Healthy Schools Service (commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council), Catch Your Breath is a school-based project aimed at young people. Its goal is to embed a proactive, coordinated approach among both primary and secondary schools in discouraging smoking and vaping behaviours.



HEALTHY SCHOOLS
CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH

The National College

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-65809924>



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