

Abbey Hill Academy

Summer Term Newsletter

July 2025 Volume:32



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Message from the Principal


Welcome to the Summer 2025 edition of the
Abbey Hill Academy Newsletter.

As we reach the end of another busy and successful year at Abbey Hill, it is easy to look ahead to the next big event, the holidays, celebrations, or the start of a new term. More often, it's the everyday moments that matter most: the small wins, the quiet determination, and the ongoing progress that defines our students' journeys and these things should be celebrated in equal measure.

One of the things that continues to inspire us is how our students, no matter the challenges they face, approach each day with resilience and positivity. Rather than focusing on barriers, they work hard to overcome them, showing us what true effort and courage look like. In assemblies and day-to-day conversations, we often talk about the importance of trying new things, embracing mistakes, and recognising that getting things wrong is a vital part of learning and growing. The confidence and skills our students build, both in the classroom and in social settings, are laying strong foundations for their futures.

<https://abbeyhill.horizonstrust.org.uk>

<https://x.com/HorizonsTrust>



Message from the Principal

This term, we've been especially proud of our work around communication, which remains at the heart of everything we do. Abbey Hill has recently been nominated for the *Communication Matters AAC Setting of the Year* award, an exciting recognition of our commitment to supporting students through Alternative and Augmentative Communication. AAC combines high-tech and low-tech tools that help students to support or replace speech. For many of our students, AAC is truly life changing, it provides new ways to express themselves, connect with others, and be fully heard and understood by both peers and adults. We are proud to share that Abbey Hill Academy has been nominated for the *Communication Matters AAC Setting of the Year* award. If you haven't already, we'd be incredibly grateful for your support by casting a vote via this link: <https://survey.mars.com/q/TgKLIyhQU>.

As we head into the summer break, we are also looking ahead to the new academic year. Our English, Maths, and Reading curriculums continue to go from strength to strength, and we are always exploring new ways to help students deepen their knowledge, retain what they've learned, and build lasting confidence.

Student behaviour remains a real strength of our school, and we are now placing even greater emphasis on supporting students in many different social situations. By carefully observing how individuals respond and interact, we aim to offer more tailored guidance that helps them grow socially and emotionally, skills that are just as vital as academic ones and will help them throughout their lives.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support, encouragement, and partnership throughout the year. On behalf of all the staff at Abbey Hill, I wish you a restful and enjoyable summer break.

Speech and Language

Abbey Hill shortlisted for a national award!

Abbey Hill Academy and Sixth Form has been shortlisted for a national award for our commitment to and practice of AAC (talkers, signing and communication books)!



The shortlisting was completed by experts in the field, and so to have made the shortlist is a tremendous honour and is a real testament to all who have been championing AAC development over recent years.

The Award is decided by public vote, so please SPREAD THE WORD AND GET EVERYONE VOTING!

You can vote for Abbey Hill here, it just takes one click: <https://surveymars.com/q/TgKLIyh.QU>



A Colourful Triumph - "Joseph" Shines in School

The performing arts options group performed Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat to an audience of parents and fellow students on Thursday 22nd May. This was a vibrant, high-energy showcase of student talent and dedication. From the iconic opening number to the final bows, the cast and brought Andrew Lloyd Webber's classic musical to life with enthusiasm, creativity, and charm.

The role of Joseph, played by Elliott, was delivered with heartfelt emotion, particularly in numbers "Close Every Door" and "Any dream".

The Narrators, portrayed by Ellisha and Roxie, anchored the show with strong vocals and a natural command of the stage. This role is no small feat, requiring constant energy and vocal clarity, and they handled it impressively.

The brothers brought humour and character to the stage, with standout performances in "Go, Go, Go Joseph" and "One More Angel in Heaven"

In all, this school production of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat was a joyful, polished performance that clearly reflected months of hard work. It entertained, impressed, and reminded the audience of the power of storytelling through music and theatre.





A Colourful Triumph – “Joseph” Shines in School



Here are some of the kind comments received.

Spectacular!

You have all worked so hard to produce that performance; you learned 17 songs, all the dance moves and then you added the acting skill, costume, props, humour and drama.

You worked as a team and the support you gave each other was clear for all to see.

We are all so proud of what you have achieved.

I am lost for words and crying again.

Jo McDonagh

Wow! Wow! Wow!!!

What can I say? Thank you. Please tell all your cast they were amazing!

What a fabulous talented bunch of young singers and actors. Every one of you gave it their all. I could see how much hard work and love went into the performance. It was absolutely brilliant.

My students and staff all loved it. You probably heard one student shouting for more on numerous occasions. Everyone gives you all a massive round of applause and a very large thumbs up.

Well done everyone!

Gill Hook



IOAB

IOAB have had another amazing term. Students have enjoyed a variety of experiences ranging from overnight camping trips to visiting art exhibitions. All of the enrichment activities we participate in are helping our students to understand the wider world and to develop their independence skills, which is just amazing.

We visited the World buffet, to encourage students to try new foods. The majority of students tried sushi, which most of them enjoyed. Some students even tried seaweed, which they enjoyed. It was lovely to sit as a tutor group to sit together and to chat, laugh and eat. After 2 hours we had to leave to get back to school. I think some students could have had more desserts!



IOAB were also lucky enough to visit Stewart's Park, where the students practised their money skills and independence skills. The students ordered their own snack and paid for it.





5AB

5AB have had another amazing term!

We have thrown ourselves into our adventurous topics.

We have explored 'Going to a Circus.' We had great fun with jugglers, tightrope walkers and of course the clowns made an appearance, spraying us with foam and water!

We have also explored going to 'The zoo' and have enjoyed meeting lots of different animals through music, stories and sensory experiences.

We also went on a real-life adventure and visited Pendragon sensory centre.

Everyone had a wonderful time, and all the students made us immensely proud.

This year we say farewell to Leon who is moving on to pastures new. Leon will be missed by all, but we know he will be very happy.

5AB wish you all a wonderful, fun filled summer and look forward to the new school year.



Sports Day 2025



Abbey Hill held two fantastic sports day this year. Every student in the academy was brilliant and showed great sportsmanship. The students competed in a range of events from howler throwing, 60-meter sprint, egg and spoon race, wheelchair races and hurdles. It was great to see so many parents supporting the athletes and it really helped them to succeed.



Abbey Hill at North Shore

World Oceans Day - Wednesday 11th June

In honour of World Ocean Day, our students embarked on an educational trip to Seaton beach. During this experience, they had the opportunity to learn about the vital role of wind turbines in renewable energy generation, the purpose of shipping containers that help deliver goods to our area, and the importance of protecting local wildlife, particularly the little terns. The discussions surrounding pollution highlighted the growing concern for our oceans and environment. To take hands-on action, our students participated in a litter pick, demonstrating their commitment to making a positive impact in their community and fostering environmental stewardship.



Dance Exam Success

The excitement continued as our students attended their dance exam at Thornton Dance Academy. After a year of dedicated practice and perseverance, we are thrilled to report that every student passed their exam, with many receiving commendations for their performances.



This accomplishment is a testament to their hard work, resilience, and dedication to mastering their craft. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to each dancer—very well done! We are incredibly proud of you all and look forward to seeing how you will continue to grow in your artistic endeavours.



Abbey Hill at North Shore

Year 10 Careers Discovery Day

IORB were invited to experience life as a student at Stockton Riverside College. Each student participated in taster sessions for two chosen courses, allowing them to explore their interests and aspirations. This experience was aimed at broadening their horizons and raising their educational aspirations, helping them to see the possibilities that await them after their current studies. We believe that such exposure is instrumental in helping our students make informed decisions about their future career paths and educational choices. They all really enjoyed the experience and were model pupils!



Year 8 Trip to Middlesbrough College

In line with our commitment to exploring diverse career paths, class 8LT attended a performance of "The Wedding Singer" at Middlesbrough College. This experience not only entertained but also enriched our students' understanding of the various roles involved in the performing arts, both on and off the stage. The performance was directly connected to our current PSHE topic focused on careers, emphasising how teamwork, creativity, and dedication come together to bring a production to life. By witnessing this process, our students gained valuable insights that will inspire their future aspirations in the arts.



Abbey Hill at North Shore

Staffing Updates

This year we say a fond farewell to Gemma Robson who will be transferring back to Abbey Hill after supporting in our Year 7 group this year. We want to say a huge thank you to Gemma for all of her hard work here at North Shore, we will miss her but still see her regularly when we visit Abbey Hill.

Beamish and Railway Museum Trips

Our year 8 students had the chance to visit the Beamish Open Air Museum, where they delved into their English topic on "Oliver Twist." This immersive outing allowed them to experience first-hand what life was like during the Victorian era, offering a unique context for their studies. By engaging with history in such an interactive way, students were able to strengthen their understanding and appreciation of the literary work, making their learning all the more meaningful. This visit also tied in with their Humanities work on the Industrial Revolution including transport and coal mining. They all had a great day out! Additionally, they went on a Humanities visit to the Railway Museum in Shildon for the afternoon, they loved seeing all the trains and learning more about our areas rich railway heritage.





Abbey Hill at North Shore

Pizza Making Day

8LT took a trip to Pizza Express, where they had the opportunity to become pizza chefs for the day! This experience was part of their exploration of career options within the hospitality and catering industry. Students learned about various aspects of this industry from food preparation to customer service. They developed valuable skills as they crafted their own margherita pizzas, fostering creativity while discovering the joy of cooking. The laughter and teamwork displayed during this activity were a true testament to their enthusiasm and collaborative spirit.



Move It May—Fundraising for PWS



In a commendable display of teamwork and determination, our students participated in a sponsored daily fitness challenge. They also hosted a tombola in North Shore school. We are overjoyed to announce that, collectively, they raised an astonishing £1,105 for the Prader-Willi Association UK!

This fantastic achievement speaks volumes about their spirit of perseverance and commitment to a cause. We are confident that the funds raised will be put to good use, and we sincerely thank you for your ongoing support.

Your encouragement plays a crucial role in motivating our students to engage in their community and support meaningful initiatives.



Abbey Hill at North Shore

Year 10 English Trip to Ninja Warrior Teesside

On Tuesday 20th May, IORB visited Ninja Warrior at Teesside Park. The students used this trip to support their learning in their qualification 'Step Up to English' where they had to plan, organise and review a local leisure facility. The students really enjoyed their afternoon and gave it a glowing review! They also created some excellent information leaflets to inform others on what to expect.



Awesome Art Work

Our Year 10 students have been learning all about Egyptian Art. They visited the Oriental Museum in Durham and then worked on their own 2D and 3D projects using a range of techniques. The results are excellent!



Abbey Hill at North Shore

End of Year Thanks and Celebrations

We had a wet but wonderful day out to Lightwater Valley to celebrate our successful year in school. We all had a great time, even though it rained most of the day! We wish to thank all of our fabulous students for being amazing all year, growing, shining, smiling and always doing their best! A big thank you to all our parents, carers and families for all their support this year too. We are really proud of our brilliant provision and the fantastic staff and students who belong here at Abbey Hill at North Shore. We hope you all have a well deserved, restful and enjoyable summer.





Fairfax

End of Term Highlights



As we reach the end of another busy and rewarding school year, we'd like to take a moment to reflect on all the fantastic achievements and special moments we've shared this term at Fairfax Provision.

Academic Success & Determination

Our students have shown incredible resilience and dedication over the past few months. Whether sitting exams or completing final pieces of coursework, they've worked extremely hard to showcase their progress and talents. Staff are immensely proud of how much effort our young people have put into their studies - well done to each and every one of you!

Celebrating Community - Summer Fayre Fun

This term, we had the pleasure of hosting our Summer Fayre - a joyful event that brought students, families, and staff together for a day of fun, laughter, and community spirit. It was fantastic to see so many parents and carers joining us, and we truly value your continued support in your children's education.

A Fond Farewell to Year 11

As always, this term comes with a touch of sadness as we say goodbye to our Year 11 students. It's been a pleasure watching them grow and develop during their time with us. We are incredibly proud of all they have achieved and we wish them the very best as they take their next steps into college, training, or employment. You'll always be part of our school family - good



Fairfax

Victory on the Pitch ⚽



Our Fairfax football team have shown great commitment this term, training regularly and supporting each other on and off the field. Their hard work paid off recently with a well-deserved win in their latest match against Beverly. A huge [congratulations](#) to the whole team - we're proud of you!

Wishing You a Restful Summer

As we wrap up the school year, we want to thank our students, families, and staff for making this term so memorable. We hope everyone enjoys a safe and restful summer break. We look forward to welcoming you all back in September, ready for another exciting year.

With warm wishes,
Michael Bennett
Assistant Vice Principal

Key Stage 3 Design Technology

In Year 7 pupils have been learning about different materials both natural and man made. They have recently completed a design and make task for a ball bearing game.

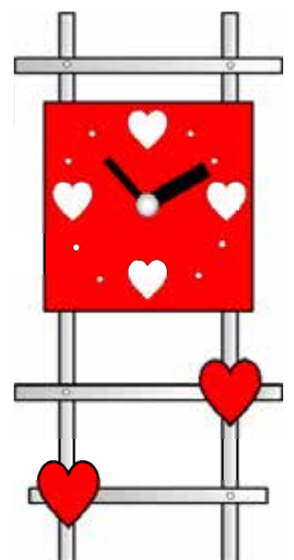


Year 8 pupils have been learning about different types of plastics this term. They are presently working on designing and making light nights.



In Year 9 pupils have been learning about casting pewter and producing pendants of their own design.

They are presently working on designing and making clocks using aluminium, riveting techniques and acrylic.



Key Stage 4 Design Technology



In KS4, pupils worked so well on their entry level qualifications in Product Design. They designed and modelled a product of their choice using CAD (computer aided design) to produce virtual models and then used a range of tools and equipment to make their product in the workshop.





Prom.

On Friday 27th June 2025 it was a day of celebration, reflection and emotion as we looked back on the past 5 years, the achievements , the friends made, the memories and the experiences encountered by our leaver's as they prepared to take on their next journey.

The day started with a Leaver's assembly where memories were shared from the past 5 years.

The hall was then transformed in to a masquerade ball for the evening for the Prom.

The evening was filled with memories, fun laughter and a few tears the students all looked amazing in their suits & dresses. Our very own celebrities.

We crowned our Prom King & Queen Phoenix from IICJ and Roxie form IISO.

The students danced the night away. A lovely evening which the students will remember for a long time to come.

Best wishes to all our leaver's for the future.

Suzanne Florence



Lead Parent Partnership Award (LPPA)



We are preparing ourselves for our renewal for the Leading Parent Partnership Award. The award recognises the schools' work with parents and families. Home is the greatest influence on a child's academic and social development and at Abbey Hill Academy and Abbey Hill sixth form we want to do everything we possibly can to help parents, carers and families support their children and young people.

This award is a nationally recognised award achievable by schools who work very closely with the families of their students and is assessed externally.

If you have any comments or feedback about how the school is doing or could improve, please contact me on julie.thomas@horizonstrust.org.uk



Online Safety update

ASDAN Computing Course



This year those students that selected Computing for their Key Stage 4 option have completed the ASDAN short course 'Computing Vocational Taster'.

Challenges undertaken had a strong element of online safety. Students learned more about the theory and recent developments that impact upon individuals and businesses. This enabled them to deepen their understanding and clarify any misconceptions so that they are better equipped to engage in the online world.

Students identified the most popular passwords of 2024 and were surprised by their simplicity and weaknesses. They were then able to identify what makes up a strong password providing a number of excellent examples that were hard to guess.

Another challenge focused upon writing a 'bring your own device' (BYOD) policy. Students were able to appreciate the value of people being able to use their own devices in a workplace setting. They became more aware of a number of associated security issues and started to identify steps that could be taken to manage these and reduce their potential impact.



Online Safety update

Supporting Families Around Online Gaming



Most modern video games are very much focused on connectivity and going online. The e-safety curriculum in school continues to stress the importance of knowing who we are talking to online and considering the information that we share. Risks and emerging trends in online gaming, alongside ways to stay safe are discussed [here](#)

Research indicates that young people are spending an increasing time playing video games, which can in some cases lead to parental concerns. Further information about how this can be managed are outlined [here](#)



Local Online Safety Support

The Stockton on Tees Family Hubs run **Keeping Kids Safe Online workshops**. These provide advice on good practice around internet safety for the family, looking at what devices are in the home , highlighting appropriate settings and restrictions that can be applied.

Details about Family Hub courses are outlined [here](#). Look out for the informative online safety workshops in the autumn.

Further Online Support for Parents

- ⇒ Navigate to the parent e-safety content on the [Abbey Hill website](#)
- ⇒ Create an account with [National College](#) to keep up to date with the ever changing world of E-Safety.

Top Tips for SETTING BOUNDARIES AROUND GAMING

If your child loves video games, then you'll probably be aware that how long they spend gaming – and what they're actually playing – can occasionally become a source of concern or conflict. The UK's trade body for interactive entertainment, Ukie, has recently launched a campaign to promote safer and more responsible gaming among young people – with parents and carers helping by setting sensible and fair boundaries. Our guide has tips on key areas where you could agree some healthy ground rules for your child's gaming activity.

PROMOTE SAFER GAME CHOICES

Deciding which online games are OK – and which should be avoided – is tricky. Some titles allow children to cooperate or compete with strangers, which creates potential risks. Watching your child play online for a while could provide more insight into a particular game, while the parental controls on most consoles allow you to limit who can chat to your child or send them friend requests. Remind your child of the hazards around strangers online when you discuss this boundary with them.

ENCOURAGE REGULAR BREAKS

Help your child understand the need to take regular breaks, playing in shorter bursts rather than marathon sessions. Bear in mind that some games (such as role-playing games) require time investment from the player, while others (online team games, for example) can't be stopped or paused at a moment's notice. A quick break every hour or so is good practice, and you could suggest some things to do in these breaks, such as having a drink of water or getting some fresh air.

AGREE SPENDING LIMITS

There's no doubt that gaming can be expensive, and younger players often don't realise how much paying for digital items and subscriptions can add up to. Many young gamers love to buy new skins or upgrades for their character, so you could settle on a fixed amount that your child is allowed to spend on in-game items each week or month. This sort of boundary will not only help your child to manage their expectations but will also make you more aware of the price of these items.

DISCUSS AGE RATINGS

Children often ignore the age ratings on games – or are unaware they even exist. If you're happy with your child playing a particular game even though it's rated above their age, then establish that as a boundary, emphasise that you've made an exception, and talk about what age ratings mean and why they're important. You could add context to this boundary by browsing games' boxes together while shopping, discussing why some games might have earned certain age ratings.

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CENSORED

FACTOR IN FRIENDS

If your child is a keen video gamer, the chances are that they'll have other gamers among their social circle, too. When friends visit, do they instantly dash to their console or computer? You could put boundaries in place before their guests arrive by agreeing on a length of gaming time. Bear in mind, though, that they may try to extend this once they're together. Try coming up with activities or challenges for them during screen breaks – if they join in, they earn a little extra time on their game.

ENJOY GAMING TOGETHER

Setting time aside to play video games together can be an enjoyable bonding exercise. Undeniably, some young gamers may be less enthusiastic about a parent or carer joining in, but it can be a productive way of encouraging them to share their hobby with you. Setting goals or tasks might be useful if they love Minecraft, choose something to build together, if Fortnite's their favourite, ask to try out some of the fun game modes, like Prop Hunt, which don't require high skill levels.

TALK ABOUT EMOTIONS

Help your child to monitor their emotions as they play. Discuss what is (and isn't) an acceptable level of competitiveness to show while gaming. Are they allowed to trash talk other players, for example? Can they notice when they get angry if they lose? Do they think these emotions are healthy? Some games can provoke anger, but others can bring joy, humour and the thrill of overcoming a challenge. Try to steer your child towards games that tend to produce these more positive feelings.

BE PREPARED FOR TROLLS

A frequent problem when gaming online is other players who are deliberately troublesome. Make sure your child knows how to report and block someone who makes their experience a negative one. Between you, decide if or how they should deal with these online trolls. Talk about where your child's boundaries are in terms of what they think is acceptable, what behaviour by other users is merely frustrating, and what crosses the line to become upsetting or abusive.

Meet Our Expert

Daniel Upcombe is a writer specialising in technology, video gaming, virtual reality and web3. He has also written 10 guidebooks for children, covering genres such as Fortnite, Apex Legends, Halo Infinite and Minecraft. With work published by the likes of PC Gamer, Kotaku, Pocket Gamer and VG247, he has reviewed more than 50 games and products over the past year.



Source: <https://hipol.app/about/privacy.html>

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Snapshots of summer term



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