

# **School Prospectus**

September 2025

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Address: Portal House School
Sea Street
St Margaret's at Cliffe
Dover
Kent
CT15 6SS

Tel: 01304 853033

**E-mail:** office@portal-house.kent.sch.uk headteacher@portal-house.kent.sch.uk

Head Teacher: Mrs R. Bradley

Type of School: Community Special School.

A Kent County Council SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs) school for secondary aged pupils.

District: East and South Area: South Kent

Age Range: 11-16 years Role: 80 maximum capacity

**Chair of Governors: Tricia Sherling** 

Area Education Office: South Kent Area Education Office
Kroner House
Eurogate Business Park
Ashford TN24 8XU

Tel: 03000 410 199 ADMISSIONS 03000 416309











# **PORTAL HOUSE SCHOOL**



Mrs Bradley - Headteacher

# **Welcome to our School**

Portal House School is a Kent County Council Special School for boys who experience Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH) aged 11 - 16.

The school is situated in its own grounds in the picturesque village of St. Margaret's, near Dover, Kent.

The school site has recently undergone a multi-million pound redevelopment and now operates out of one fit for purpose modern building.

## **OFSTED INSPECTION**

Portal House was inspected by Ofsted in January 2025, and was graded as Good, upholding all previous gradings.

A copy of the Report can be obtained on the internet at <a href="www.ofsted.gov.uk">www.ofsted.gov.uk</a> or on our school website at <a href="www.portal-house.kent.sch.uk">www.portal-house.kent.sch.uk</a>

#### SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN- PRIORITIES FOR 2023 - 2025

# **Priority 1: The Quality of Education**

- 1.1 To embed a culture of curriculum review and evaluation to ensure high-quality leadership
- 1.2 To adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of 'more able and 'less able' students
- 1.3 To develop a comprehensive whole-school approach to literacy, across the curriculum
- 1.4 To confirm that teachers' effective deployment and use of Teaching Assistants ensure students are well-supported in their learning
- 1.5 To monitor that all students achieve accreditation in core subjects and GCSE's to enable movement to higher education

#### **Priority 2: Behaviour & Attitudes**

- 2.1 To ensure attendance is at least in line with the national average for Special Schools and the percentage of persistent absentees has reduced
- 2.2 To ensure pupil engagement in curriculum development
- 2.3 To introduce a whole-school Trauma informed approach.
- 2.4 To implement a creative form-tutor programme that promotes student's independence and life skills

#### **Priority 3: Personal Development**

- 3.1 To enhance Careers Education in all subjects
- 3.2 To ensure personal and social development is baselined to target individual needs

#### **Priority 4: Leadership and Management**

- 4.1 To plan to mitigate against unforeseen financial pressures to ensure a healthy budget is maintained
- 4.2 Leaders to promote staff well-being and ensure reasonable workloads and a supportive environment to work
- 4.3 To introduce a comprehensive, 3-year strategic plan to integrate sustainable practices and climate change initiatives, in line with the DFE sustainability and climate change strategy
- 4.4 To review effective ways to monitor and evaluate In House 'alternative provision' (AP)
- 4.5 To develop school site and assets

#### **Priority 5: Safeguarding**

- 5.1 To improve Online Safety Education
- To ensure effective guidance is provided to raise student's awareness of specific safeguarding issues and situations that can put them and others at greater risk

#### **CORE AIMS**

# 'Raising standards, improving lives'

- 1. To secure for students, high levels of educational attainment through a rigorous focus on progress.
- 2. To enable students to develop personal resilience and self-awareness.
- 3. To improve students' social skills and foster British values and citizenship.
  - 4. To improve students social and cultural awareness.
  - 5. To prepare students for life beyond Portal House School.
  - 6. To ensure that identified additional needs of students are met.
- 7. To ensure that all students leave Portal House with high levels of literacy and numeracy.
- 8. To work effectively with schools, professionals and the community, in sharing our expertise and developing inclusive opportunities for students.
  - 9. To develop a highly skilled workforce.

We aim to create a place where everyone can work together to achieve their very best; where skills and talents are encouraged and developed, and where everyone feels valued and needed; Where everyone knows what is expected of them and is clear about the purpose of the whole school.

#### PRE-ADMISSION VISITS AND MEETINGS

Prospective parents and children are welcome to visit the School as often as they like before the child is admitted to the School.

Visits to the school are designed to enable parents/carers and children to tour all parts of the School, to meet key members of staff and to ask any questions. Some parents/carers and children find it helpful to write down a list of questions beforehand.

Equally, the admission meeting allows us to ensure that parents/carers and children understand how the School operates. Once parents/carers have decided that their child should attend the School, a starting date will be agreed

#### **ADMISSIONS**

Children are referred to the School by placement panels and Local Education SEN Officers which operate at local and County level.

All of the children have Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH) or Autism (ASD) as their main SEND. Many have in addition, complex health needs. Behaviour is the biggest barrier to accessing education.

Many of the children are underachieving and will require a great deal of help and support in the classroom.

On admission to the School, all children will undergo a period of assessment, as teachers find out what they can do, and where there are gaps in their knowledge. As this process proceeds, teachers will begin to identify individual learning targets for the child.

The School has the same holidays as other Kent Schools, and also has 5 staff development days when children are not in School.

# **What the School Offers**

- Portal House School is a secondary school for up to 80 children who experience significant Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs. Many have in addition, diagnosed health conditions such as Attachment Disorder, Autism, ADHD, ADH, ODD and OCD.
- The school offers a fresh start in modern fit for purpose facilities and is committed to reversing patterns of failure associated with school and learning.
- All students have broadly national average/above average academic potential according to recent formal assessments and/or have attained national average expectations for their age (potential to achieve 5 or more high grade GCSE including English and Maths). Year 7 students have attained scaled scores of 90+ in their KS2 SATS and age-related expectations at KS1.
- Our main curriculum offer is broad, balanced and academic. Students follow a secondary school timetable that leads to securing qualifications and life skills that will enable them to progress to their chosen pathways at 16+. In KS3 (Year 7, 8 and 9) students are taught the National curriculum programmes of study

and sit Entry level qualifications. KS4 students follow a timetable that leads to 7 GCSE's- English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Physics and from the following option subjects- Art and Design, ICT, Geography and P.E. Additional GCSE's such as Chemistry, Computer Science and Statistics may be offered on request. Biology and English Literature GCSE's are sat in Year 10. Other subjects can be sat early if appropriate. In addition, all classes have weekly PSHE, RE/World views, cooking lessons and a 2 hours enrichment session. In Year 10 students undertake work experience preparation for college and life skills lessons.

- At 16+ our students go to either 6<sup>th</sup> form, College, Apprenticeships or work after achieving on average 8-9 subject accreditations (GCSE, Btecs and Entry level).
- Students are taught in small year group classes by qualified staff and supported by class T.A.'s. Class sizes vary depending on need (4 7 per class).
- Behaviour is their biggest barrier to accessing education.
- A high proportion of students are eligible for pupil premium.

#### **TRANSPORT**

All transport to and from the School is organised centrally by Kent County Council, Passenger Transport. The contact numbers are given below:

#### PASSENGER TRANSPORT 03000 416777/03000 418484

If there are difficulties with transport, please inform the school and we will do our best to sort it out. Ultimately, the responsibility lies with Kent County Council Transport Department.

#### **PARENTS AS PARTNERS**

The School values the contributions that parents/carers have to make, and acknowledges the need for parents/carers and the School to work closely together.

Parents and carers are welcome to contact or visit the School at any time, particularly if they have any worries or concerns about their children.

## **HOME/SCHOOL LIAISON PROCEDURES**

The School liaises with parents/carers on a day to day basis. Daily liaison covers a range of issues, e.g. attendance, medical matters, transport arrangements and the reporting of significant incidents – either at school or at home.

If your child is ill at home then it may be better to allow them time to recover, before returning them to school. Please contact the school either by email, telephone or letter advising us of any reasons for absences your child may have.

Children who become ill whilst at School will be looked after until we can contact parents/carers and arrange for them to go home.

Each pupil receives a weekly report, written by his form tutor, which outlines progress made in lessons, behaviour, major achievements and any concerns. These weekly reports are emailed directly to parents/carers/Social Workers.

All students receive two academic reports per school year (Mid Year and End of Year School Reports). In addition to the above, the School holds an Annual Review of the child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and two provision plan reviews punctuated across the year. Annual School Reports are sent home to all parents towards the end of the Summer Term. Parents' evenings are held shortly after to discuss reports, celebrate achievements and plan for the following year. At the end of the Summer Term there is a Sports Day, which provides an opportunity for staff, parents and pupils to meet in a less formal setting.

#### **EQUIPMENT**

The school provides all items of equipment needed for lessons.

#### **JEWELLERY**

Pupils are asked not to wear any visible jewellery – only watches, ear studs or sleepers. If a pupil arrives at school with other items of jewellery, they will be asked to remove it for Health and Safety reasons.

#### **VALUABLES**

Pupils are asked not to bring money to school, unless specifically asked for a special occasion. If mobile phones, I-pods, personal stereos etc., are brought into school, students will be asked to hand in/lock away such items during the school day. These items can be a source of disruption and confrontation.

The school will not accept responsibility for the safety of such items.

## **SCHOOL UNIFORM**

All pupils are expected to wear school uniform. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their appearance.

#### Our school uniform is:

Black school trousers or black/navy blue plain shorts
Trainers or black school shoes
Navy blue polo shirt with school logo
Navy blue fleece with school logo
Navy blue school coat (optional)

Under exceptional circumstances, usually due to physical or sensory needs and by agreement, plain black/navy loose cuffed jogging trousers may be worn.

The school stocks the polo shirts and fleeces.

The cost of these items are as follows:

1 polo shirt - £8 1 fleece- £15

All available to purchase from school.

We also have a large selection of good, nearly new uniform available at no cost.

# P.E. Kit

Pupils are expected to change for P.E.

P.E. kit is provided and washed at school.

Navy blue shorts Mid blue Polo shirt with school logo Navy blue tracksuit with school logo

Students will need to provide their own trainers.



#### THE SCHOOL DAY

All pupils are transported to and from school by taxi paid for by the Local Education Authority.

The School Day starts at 8.45 a.m. Pupils are met on the playground as they get out of their taxi and registered as present by support staff, then go to their form rooms for tutor time.

Breakfast is available in the Dining Room for any pupil from 8.45 a.m. -9.00 a.m. (start of 1<sup>st</sup> lesson). There is usually a selection of cereals, milk and fruit.

Lessons begin at 9.00 a.m.

As far as possible, children are in the same National Curriculum Year Group as they would be in a mainstream school.

Classes are small. On average there are 7 pupils in each class. The pupils are taught by experienced, well qualified teachers and supported by teaching assistants.

## **Timings of the School Day**

8.45 - 9.00	Tutor Time
9.00 - 10.00	Lesson 1
10.00 - 10.20	KS3 Break
10.00 - 11.00	Lesson 2 KS4
10.20 - 11.20	Lesson 2 KS3
11.00 - 11.20	KS4 Break
11.20 - 12.20	Lesson 3
12.20 - 1.05	Lunch
13.05 - 13.25	<b>Tutor Time (DEAR)</b>
13.25 - 14.25	Lesson 4
14.25 - 15.25	Lesson 5
15.25 - 15.30	<b>Tutor Time</b>

The school day finishes with all pupils returning to their tutor rooms and meeting back with their own class. From 3.30 p.m. onwards pupils are called to their taxi to travel home.

On Friday's, lessons finish at 12.30 p.m. Between 12.30 – 12.45 pupils are called to their taxis to travel home.

When after school clubs are arranged, staff or taxis transport children home from 13.45 onwards. Revision sessions are scheduled and finish at 13.45.

# **SCHOOL MEALS**

#### **Breakfast**

Breakfast is available in school, from 8.45 a.m. - 9.00 a.m., for those who were unable to eat before leaving home. At present this meal consists of a choice of cereal, fruit and a glass of milk. – There is no charge for this meal.

#### Lunch

A cooked lunch is provided for all, prepared on site by our own staff.

The meals are traditional, wholesome and balanced. The menus are varied and promote healthy eating.

Mealtimes are seen to be pleasant, social occasions, and children are expected to show good table manners.

Children are encouraged to eat a little of everything, but they are not forced to eat anything that they do not like.

The School is able to provide alternative diets, e.g. vegetarian or gluten-free, should parents request this. Alternatively, pupils may bring a packed lunch to eat.

All pupils eat lunch in the school dining room between 12.20 p.m. – 1.05 p.m. KS3 eat lunch first, then have a break. KS4 have a break first then eat lunch.

On Fridays, a light snack style lunch is provided and eaten in the dining room. There is no charge made for lunch.

#### PRAISE, REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

At Portal House we recognise, praise and reward good work and appropriate behaviour. We operate a Whole School Behaviour Management Scheme, whereby pupils earn points for "getting it right". They are awarded points for consistently achieving their personal provision plan targets and following the six school rules. Pupils are monitored and awarded points throughout the day. Each week points are totalled and during class Praise Assemblies on Fridays, pupils are presented with a certificate in recognition of their point's achievement. Pupils who achieve the 'Gold' target number of points are invited to 'Gold Time' from 10.30 a.m. – 12.00 p.m. on Friday mornings.

Pupils who consistently achieve excellent points, feel ready to be self-monitoring, and are self-motivated to achieve, are awarded Senior Status.

The school does all it can to focus upon the things that pupils do well, but sometimes, for whatever reason, a pupil will disobey school rules. There are always consequences to actions. All the usual school sanctions apply with regard to individual needs and circumstances.

Our school rules are accepted by all and recognise that we all have individual rights and responsibilities.

#### THE SCHOOL RULES

- 1. Be in the right place be safe
- 2. We do as we are asked
- 3. We speak politely to everyone
- 4. We do not hurt anyone
- 5. We respect other people's possessions and property
- 6. We do not swear

#### Rights:

- To be able to teach and learn and make the most of the opportunities available.
- To be treated with respect.
- To be safe emotionally and physically.
- To have a pleasant environment in which to teach and learn.

#### **Responsibilities:**

- To allow others to teach and learn.
- To treat each other with respect.
- To ensure the safety of all people in the school community.
- To look after our own and other peoples' belongings.
- To look after school furniture, equipment and environment.

## **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

The School Council is a pupil body whose aim is to promote the best interests of the school and to provide experience of the democratic process for all of its members.

At the beginning of every term a representative is elected from each class. The representative then attends monthly meetings where items supported by a majority of a class are discussed. The representative is responsible for relaying the events of the meeting back to the class.

#### **ANTI-BULLYING STATEMENT**

Portal House is totally opposed to bullying in any of its forms and it will not be tolerated in school.

We have a comprehensive anti-bullying policy, which operates within school. All pupils, parents and staff are made aware of the content of the policy and what to do should a pupil feel they are being bullied.

We are committed to providing a safe, caring environment for all pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure environment.

#### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS**

Portal House School aims to provide all pupils with equal opportunities. They will have equal access and opportunities within the curriculum, both formal and informal, so that when leaving our school, they have the widest possible options available to them, educationally, socially and vocationally.

The school building takes into consideration relevant legislation to provide accessibility for all.

#### LINKS WITH THE LOCAL AND WIDER COMMUNITY

Portal House actively pursues community links with the village of St. Margaret's and the surrounding Dover/Deal area. Most Governors live in St. Margaret's or the surrounding area.

The school frequently welcomes a range of visitors to the school to enhance the curriculum and education experiences of the pupils. Enrichment activities often involve visiting local venues and engaging with the wider community.

The school has established several curriculum links with a variety of secondary schools in the area.

Portal House is a partner member of the Kent Special Educational Needs Trust (KSENT).

#### SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY (SEN POLICY)

All pupils at Portal House have Special Educational Needs and have a current Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) issued by the Local Education Authority. This document clearly states individual needs and what provision is required to address these.

For all pupils at Portal House the main or dominant Special Educational Need will be of a Social, Emotional and Mental Health nature or Autistic Spectrum Condition. Most pupils have additional health needs, specific learning difficulties, Autism – including Asperger's syndrome, ADHD, ODD and other medical or psychological conditions.

Our policies, procedures, staff environment and curriculum enable us to meet the special educational needs of the pupils.

All pupils have equal access to our broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. We teach the National Curriculum. Where necessary the curriculum content is differentiated to meet individual needs. The level of support a pupil may receive is tailored to individual needs. All pupils have Provision Plans which are reviewed three times a year. Targets are discussed and set with individual pupils and shared with parents/carers. Progress towards targets is monitored and reported to parents on a weekly basis.

All pupils have individual learning targets as well for each curriculum subject. These are also discussed and set each term and shared with parents/carers.

We support the national agenda to promote social inclusion and where appropriate pupils are encouraged to return to mainstream education on a part-time or full-time basis.

Each classroom/learning environment is spacious and well resourced. We have specialist areas for Science, Art and Design, cooking, Music, P.E. (gymnasium, fitness room, playground area, sports field). Each tutor room has an electronic teaching panel and a computer for each pupil.

#### **HOMEWORK**

Portal House does not set formal homework for pupils.

However, we do encourage pupils to pursue out of hours learning and when requested, provide support and resources to enable this to happen. The needs, motivation and confidence of the pupils are of paramount importance. Where pupils are identified as having an interest or individual need, they are encouraged and supported to develop these outside normal school hours.

All pupils are encouraged to use and practice their literacy and numeracy skills whenever possible in their out of school life.

The Government guidelines on homework do not apply to Special Schools.

#### **Our Curriculum Offer**

# (National Curriculum Year Groups 7, 8, and 9)

The School is obliged to teach the full range of National Curriculum Subjects and Religious Education to Key Stage 3 pupils. We operate a two-week timetable.

#### **Key Stage 3: - Curriculum Offer**

Subject Hours per 2-week timetable.

Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	8	8	8
Maths	8	8	8
Science	5	5	5
I.C.T	2	3	3
Art	5	5	5
Geography	4	4	4
Cooking	2	2	2
PSHE/RE/World views	4	2	2
P.E	4	4	4
Enrichment	4	4	4

The school places great emphasis on ensuring that the curriculum is interesting, relevant and modern, and has a degree of challenge that engages all.

The school encourages all to have high expectations and positive attitudes to learning.

It is hoped that the majority of our KS3 pupils will achieve National Averages in the core subjects.

Curriculum Plans provide an outline of the modules of work covered in each of the KS3 years and are available from the various subject leaders.

Towards the end of Key Stage 3, students sit entry level qualifications in Maths, English and Science.

# <u>KS4</u> (NATIONAL CURRICULUM YEAR GROUP 10 AND 11)

All pupils are taught a range of subjects to GCSE level and have the opportunity to experience various work-related learning activities, PSHE, cooking lessons and enrichment activities.

Currently, the timetable is designed to offer all pupils the opportunity to study 7 GCSE subjects.

At the end of Yr. 9, students choose 'Options' and an individual timetable is written for each student to follow in Yr. 10 & 11.

The GCSE subjects are as follows:

English Language
English Literature
Mathematics
Biology
Chemistry
Physics
ICT
PE
Geography
Art and Design

All GCSE/Entry level certificate course outlined are available on request from subject teachers.

# SUMMARY OF CURRICULUM HOURS FOR 2025/2026

**Key Stage 4: - Curriculum Offer** 

<u>2025-26</u>			
Subject hours per two-week timetable			
Subject	<u>Yr 10</u>	<u>Yr 11</u>	
English	8	8	
Maths	8	8	
Science	7	7	
Cooking	2	2	
PSHE/RE/World Views/Careers*	3	3*	
Core PE	4	4	
Sports Studies	5	5	
ICT option	5	5	
Geography option	5	5	
Art option	5	5	
Enrichment	4	4	

## **WORK EXPERIENCE**

All Year 10 pupils participate in one week blocks of work experience placement of their choice. This is organised by the School. The work experience week takes place in June, while Year 11 sit their GCSE exams.

#### PERSONAL, SOCIAL & HEALTH EDUCATION & CITIZENSHIP (PSHE)

Our aim is to enable all pupils to develop their personal identity and self-worth and at the same time develop respect for others. Great emphasis is placed on self-advocacy, although many pupils do find this difficult. As a consequence of this we constantly seek ways of enabling pupils to make decisions and choices appropriate to their needs and age.

We have a close relationship with other children's services who visit the school for various meetings from time to time.

Form Tutors play a valuable role in helping students develop appropriate social and emotional responses and character skills.

#### Student Wellbeing

The school employs a counsellor three days a week so that children can have regular sessions and drop-in sessions in our specialist therapy room.

#### **RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (PSHE)**

Section 80A of the Education Act 2002 requires relationship and sex education to be provided as part of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3. It is taught with due regard to moral considerations and an emphasis on the value and importance of family life. The programme, which has been ratified by the governors, is not taught in isolation but within a framework of a personal development programme dealing with the many aspects of growing up.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from sex education lessons and should discuss the matter with the Headteacher should they wish to do so. They are also welcome to discuss policy matters in this area with the Headteacher, to view teaching materials, look at the policy documents, or to submit a discussion item for the agenda of the governors' annual meeting for parents.

#### **RE, COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND WORLD VIEWS**

Religious Education is an important part of the curriculum at Portal House. It follows the approved Kent Syllabus, which is non-denominational in character. Parents/carers are welcome to see the Scheme of Work. KS3 students have an RE lesson every week and KS4 students have a World View lesson once a fortnight.

Religious Education has a special status as part of the basic curriculum and has equal standing in relation to the core and other foundation subjects. Whilst we consider that the fostering of spiritual and moral values is the responsibility of every teacher and should permeate all aspects of the curriculum, Religious Education is formally timetabled as a subject in its own right, and is co-ordinated by a designated member of staff.

Tutor group assemblies are held once a week (Fridays) and are broadly, though not exclusively, Christian in nature. Whole school assemblies also occur at the end of each term.

Parents who wish to exercise their right to withdraw their child from religious activities are asked to arrange an appointment with the Headteacher before doing so.

#### **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

#### Residentials

Residentials are classified as being within school hours if the number of school sessions missed by the pupil is at least 50% of the number of half days spent on the trip.

#### Board and lodging

We may charge pupils an amount up to the full cost of board and lodging on residentials whether it is classified as taking place within or outside school hours except where pupils are legally entitled to remission. In such cases no charge will be made for board and lodging.

#### <u>Travel</u>

If the residential is classified as being within school hours, no charge will be made for travel costs. Where the residential is classified as being outside school hours, no charge will be made for travel costs.

#### Activities on residential

If the residential is classified as being within school hours no charge can legally be made for the educational activities provided.

If the residential is classified as being outside school hours, a charge may be made for the educational activities provide.

#### Music tuition within school hours.

No charge will be made for instrumental tuition that the school elects to provide within school hours.

#### Damage to property and breakages

We may seek to recover some or all of the costs incurred due to damage or breakage of property through any act other than accidental belonging to the school or to a third party where the school has been charged. This will be determined by the Headteacher but will not exceed the actual costs of the damage. Students will be charged £10 for falsely setting off the fire alarm.

#### **Remissions and Concessions**

We may choose to subsidize, in full or part, charges for certain activities and pupils, as determined by the Governing Body, advised by the Headteacher. The circumstances in which concessions are applied will be reviewed regularly.

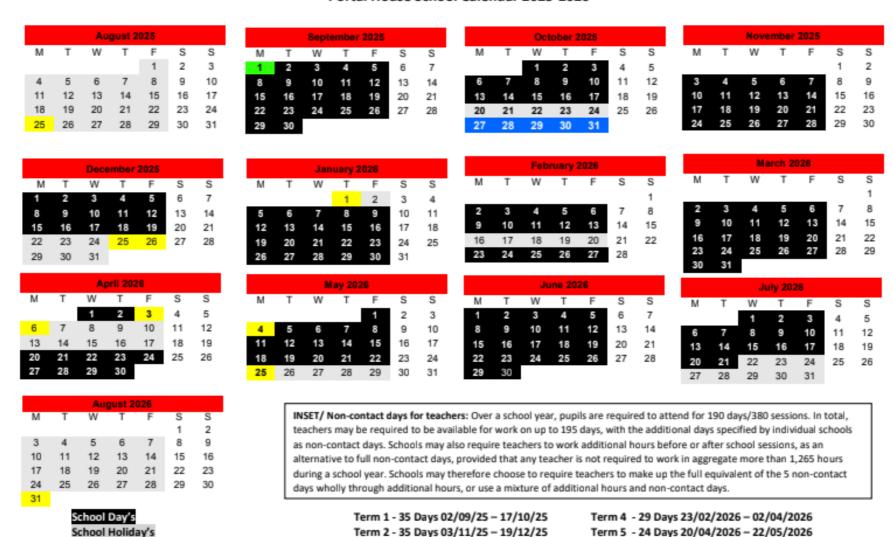
#### **Voluntary Contributions**

We may in certain circumstances invite parents to make a voluntary contribution towards activities that are exempt from charging.

Where we do ask for voluntary contributions, we will make it clear that children of parents who choose not to contribute will not be treated differently from those who do. No pupil will be excluded from the activity if their parents do not contribute.

If an activity cannot go ahead without sufficient voluntary contributions, this will be explained to parents when the contribution is requested. If the activity has to be cancelled due to insufficient funds, all monies received will be returned to parents.

#### Portal House School Calendar 2025-2026



Term 3 - 30 Days 05/01/26 - 13/02/26

Inset Day's

Essential Staff Training Day

Term 6 - 37 Days 01/06/2026 - 21/07/2026