

### HMS Weekly Update

10 September 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer

#### **Update on life in school**

It is great to be back into the swing of a busy term again! The pupils have started to follow their individual timetables this week and have enjoyed getting to know new teachers and routines. From Monday, all pupils will be following their full timetable (5 lessons a day) and will need their kit on their PE days. It has been fantastic to get out around the school to see classrooms busy with learning once again. I have been particularly impressed with the calm, positive approach to our new routines and have heard consistently excellent manners around the school, particularly in the canteen at lunch time.

#### **Weekly highlights**

Year 5 enjoyed a 'Team Building' session with '*Wild About Adventure*' this week. Mr Stephenson and the year 5 team continue to be so impressed with how quickly our new pupils have adapted to middle school life. They should all be very proud of themselves – keep it up year 5! We have continued our focus on well-being and settling back into new routines ready for a busy timetable next week.



#### **Attendance**

2020 has been a very strange academic year and many of our pupils have spent a large part of the year learning at home. We are delighted to welcome them all back to school this term. Good attendance is vital for all pupils to enable them to achieve their potential both academically and socially.

Please be aware that government guidance with regard to school attendance has been updated as of September. Full details of how HMS are responding to this guidance can be found in the [Coronavirus Attendance Policy Annex](#) on the school website. However, the key message is that all school-aged children are now expected to be in school unless they are: unwell; self-isolating as per government

guidance; in quarantine as per government guidance or there is an extenuating circumstance which has been agreed by the Headteacher. Attendance will be closely monitored by our pastoral team and interventions, incentives and sanctions will be used to ensure excellent levels of attendance from all pupils.

### **Class Charts**



Mrs Curry has been very busy reviewing our policy and discussing new approaches with staff and pupils to ensure that we can celebrate the extremely positive behaviour of our children at HMS. A letter has been sent home today with more detail for you and I hope you agree that 'Class Charts' will be a fantastic addition to life in school. We also know that it will help you as busy parents/carers to be updated regularly at the click of a button. Please look out for Mrs Curry's next update with details on how you can **download the app and register**.

### **House Captains and Head Pupils**

Mr Barry has announced the process for electing this year's House Captains and for how pupils can apply for the position of Head Pupils – check out his video announcement on our website and social media pages. Both leadership opportunities are for year 8 only. House Captain candidates will need to prepare a short video speech for their houses to watch as part of this year's virtual hustings which will take place next week. Head Pupil applicants will need to prepare a written application for senior staff. I hope to see lots of our year 8 pupils getting involved and can't wait to see who this year's pupil leaders will be!

### **School lunches**

We are working really hard to ensure that all pupils get the chance to eat their lunch with friends in the canteen – we believe this is an important part of the school day. We also want to continue providing hot food options for our pupils and the catering team are doing a brilliant job! We are asking the children to focus on eating their food in the canteen as quickly as they can. We are clear that they **shouldn't rush**, but should concentrate on eating rather than chatting. It would be great if you could talk about this at home. If your child feels like they take a little longer than their peers, contact us and we'll make arrangements to support them.

It would also help the catering team to know a rough number of hot lunches per day. Please return the [short survey](#) by Tuesday 15 September. This is not a final answer. Your child can choose to change their option on a given day and does not need to inform us in advance. Thank you for the support.

### **Remote learning**

Our website is updated with details of our [remote learning provision](#). Lessons will be provided online in the event of a pupil being absent due to self-isolation or in the event of increased local and/or national restrictions which impact school attendance. All resources will be uploaded to Google Classroom which can be accessed through the pupils' School 360 accounts. We will be supporting pupils to log in during their lessons and allowing them to set their classes up in preparation. As we

have made such good progress with using online resources, teachers may continue to set homework tasks on the platform so that the children remain familiar with its use.



### Food Bank donations: Harvest Festival

Hexham Middle School is collecting for West Northumberland Food Bank again this year. We feel it is important to support our local community during what will be a very difficult time for some individuals and families. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

From **Monday 14 September 2020** we would gratefully receive donations. All pupils need to bring these items into their own area (Year 5: Orchard, Year 6 and 7: Fellside corridors and Year 8: Beaumont) and place them in the designated collection box where they will be stored before being taken to the food bank centre after Friday 25 September.



You can help by donating any of the following food items:	You can also donate the following items which are often in short supply:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tinned meat/fish</li> <li>• tinned vegetables/tomatoes</li> <li>• tinned fruit or desserts</li> <li>• dried or UHT long life milk</li> <li>• rice</li> <li>• noodles</li> <li>• tinned or instant potatoes</li> <li>• breakfast cereals</li> <li>• fruit squash</li> <li>• coffee</li> <li>• sugar</li> <li>• baby foods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• toothpaste</li> <li>• deodorant</li> <li>• toilet roll</li> <li>• shampoo</li> <li>• shower gel</li> <li>• baby wipes</li> <li>• biscuits</li> <li>• tinned vegetables</li> </ul>
	Things to avoid, as there is a high supply:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• soup</li> <li>• baked beans</li> <li>• pasta</li> <li>• oats</li> </ul>

### Public Health England (PHE) guidance

Should your son or daughter develop symptoms of coronavirus, as per the NHS [guidance](#), it is essential that they do not attend school and that you follow procedures outlined in that guidance. Should they develop symptoms whilst in school, we will of course contact you to make arrangements for them to leave the premises.

Public Health England (PHE) are concerned about the possibility of a surge in test demand as England's schools return. Their director of health protection has written to headteachers asking us to write to parents with the following information, to ensure that PHE continue to prioritise testing capacity for those with symptoms and to avoid pupils and their families self-isolating unnecessarily:

*If a pupil, student or staff member develops one or more of the main coronavirus symptoms described above, only they should be tested. There is no need for their households to have a test, unless they are also symptomatic. Unless a pupil, student or staff member has one of the three main coronavirus symptoms, they should only be tested if instructed otherwise by the local authority, health protection team or their GP. As schools and colleges across England return, pupils and students may feel unwell for example with a sore throat, stomach upset or a headache. These pupils and students don't need to book a test but may need to stay off school or college and seek medical advice through their GP or pharmacist as usual.*

### **Music tuition**



Many of our pupils have musical instrument lessons in school with our visiting teachers. We are delighted that lessons will begin to recommence from Monday 14 September. We have sent a letter for new starter parents/ carers as part of today's update. If your child does not currently play a musical instrument, please don't feel that they have missed the opportunity – please contact Mr Holdsworth for more information about lessons via the admin email address.

### **Dates for Parents' Evenings**

Due to current restrictions, we will communicate further detail on how parents' evenings will be held this year. For now, the below are the intended dates for each year group:

- Pastoral Consultations (all years): 28 September – 1 October (*appointment information to follow*)
- Year 5 Parents' Evenings: 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> December
- Year 6 Parents' Evenings: 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> November
- Year 7 Parents' Evenings: 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> February
- Year 8 Parents' Evenings: 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> January

### **Communication**

A reminder that we intend to send letters on a Tuesday and Thursday via email – please make sure we have an up-to-date address for you. Should you wish to receive paper copies, please let the office staff know as soon as you can.

We are also on social media and you can like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) for up-to-date school news.

Please look out for my new weekly update which I think is important given the additional level of information being communicated at the moment. Thank you for your ongoing support – it is always appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Mr Watters

**Deputy Headteacher**