



## HMS Weekly Update

24 September 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer

### Update on life in school

We are already reaching the end of week four – time really does go so fast! We have had another busy week in school with Head Pupil interviews, our extra-curricular clubs commencing and pupils getting back into good learning routines. On Tuesday, we were delighted to be able to take our year group bubbles onto the field to watch the ‘Thank You NHS’ Spitfire fly over Hexham hospital – a great experience and memory! We have now sent home the link for our [Pastoral Consultation booking form and parent survey](#) – thank you for taking the time to complete it. In lessons, our pupils are working very hard and are re-adjusting well to life in the classroom.

### Virtual Information for Prospective Pupils

This year, we will sadly not be able to host our usual ‘Open Evening’ in school. We are disappointed that we can’t meet prospective pupils and their families in person, but are working very hard to prepare informative and engaging virtual resources. Launching at 6pm on Monday 5 October, a [new website page](#) will have all of the information needed including: a ‘Welcome to HMS’ video tour; subject videos; interviews with pupils; Parents’ Guide and Prospectus as well as lots of other useful resources. This event will be advertised on our social media and in the local press but please do spread the word if you can.

### House Point Totals

Pupils are responding extremely well to our updated approach to rewarding positive behaviour. We plan to update you weekly so that you can discuss the ‘P point’ system at home. Below are this week’s House Point totals as well as the **‘Top 4’ pupils in each year group**. Well done to each and every one of you – the totals are increasing rapidly!

Information Videos for Parents/Carers & Pupils  
Release date: 6pm on Monday 5 October 2020  
At 6pm on 05/10/20, please visit [www.hexhammiddleschool.co.uk](http://www.hexhammiddleschool.co.uk) to find:

- A 'Welcome to HMS' overview
- Subject-specific videos giving you a taste of the types of exciting lessons on offer
- Pupils discussing life at HMS
- A presentation on the amazing extra-curricular life in school
- Details of our fantastic new buildings on the QEHSS site
- Details of a special competition and prizes
- Other useful information

**Opportunity to speak with senior staff**  
If you would like to speak to a senior member of staff regarding a place at HMS for your child, please use the online booking form that can be found on the above website.

House Totals		Year 5		Year 6		Year 7		Year 8	
Aln	3112	1	Robert R	1	Archie H	1	George L	1	Ryan P
Coquet	3216	2	Sophie S	2	Josiah I	2	Hannah H	2	Anna F
Tweed	3110	3	Lorien V	3	John C-T	3	Adam W	3	Lucy D
Wansbeck	3057	4	Alistair W	4	Ava S	4	Jackson B	4	Beatrice D

## Extra-Curricular Opportunities

Despite the ongoing restrictions, staff have worked very hard to put together a fantastic extra-curricular offer for our pupils to enjoy. We really do encourage all pupils to get involved where they can and to try new opportunities in school. HMS really does go above and beyond in terms of opportunities outside of the classroom and there is something for everyone throughout the year. The list has been shared on our [website](#) (where it will be updated as necessary), in pupil planners and has been sent home to you all as part of today's update.

## Key Stage 2: 'Stars of the week'

This week's theme was **working hard in English lessons**. Well done to all of the pupils below.



Year 5		Year 6	
<b>5FHA</b>	Emilia S	<b>MST</b>	Jade L
<b>5JNI</b>	Billy B	<b>MDO</b>	Lincoln S
<b>5FHI</b>	Imogen S	<b>RAL</b>	Josiah I
<b>5EKI</b>	Rose C	<b>CPR</b>	Jack T

## Head Pupils

Following last week's virtual elections of our new House Captains, I am delighted to announce that we have now recruited this year's Head Pupils. After submitting detailed letters of applications, the candidates were interviewed by Mr Barry and me. We were so proud of each and every one of them for putting themselves forward for the role and for approaching the interview with confidence - it really was an incredibly difficult final decision. We have now appointed:

**Head Pupils:** Daisy B and Sam C

**Deputy Head Pupils:** Pippa C and Benjamin W

## School admissions

[Northumberland County Council's School Admissions Portal](#) opened on Saturday 12 September and will **close on Saturday 31 October 2020**. Parents/ carers must access the portal to make applications for places in local middle, high and secondary schools. For Year 8 moving on to high school, please make sure you apply before the deadline as no pupil is guaranteed a place. For prospective pupils to HMS, please follow the above link and contact the school if you have any further questions. Northumberland County Council has also released a helpful [handbook](#) to support the process.

## When a person requires a coronavirus test and what the symptoms of coronavirus are

Public Health England have produced a letter for schools to distribute to parents which explains when a person requires a coronavirus test and what the symptoms of coronavirus are. The intention of the letter is to help prevent children being taken out of school unnecessarily and answer some of the questions parents may have around testing. [You can view the letter here.](#)

## Forest School Sessions

It is lovely to welcome Mrs Gray back to HMS to work with KS2 pupils during Forest School. Forest School helps to develop confidence and self-esteem through learner-inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting. Forest School Club has started on a Friday after school 3.30pm - 4.30pm for year 6 pupils. Last week, it was lovely to see the pupils exploring the forest area and learning the forest rules. We are really looking forward to having a fire and toasting marshmallows this coming Friday. Mrs Gray and the pupils are aware of being safe at all times during Forest School and have even made a tippy tap for washing hands. There are still plenty of spaces for year 6 pupils in the afterschool club; please print a letter or collect one from the office and return it to Miss Kingett. A year 5 club will be running on a Friday afterschool 3.30 – 4:30pm after October half term.



## Class Charts

We are delighted that **over 75%** of parents/ carers are now accessing Class Charts. We would really appreciate you downloading the app and regularly [accessing the site](#) so that we can keep you up-to-date with your child's time in school. If you struggle with accessing the app and/or site, please contact Mrs Curry. Once logged in, you will get daily updates of your child's behaviour record in school. Staff will be adding comments to explain why both S3/4 sanctions and P3/4 positives have been given. We will not be adding comments for S1/2 or P1/2 records but think that this is a valuable addition to our home-school communication in that you can keep track of lower-level behaviour instances and hopefully discuss these occurrences at home to instil a change. We have now also sent home the **pupil log-in details** so that the children can check their own records. If possible, please encourage them to log in.



Class Charts also has a **homework** feature which we have now asked teachers to begin using to record homework tasks. This will allow you as parents to see what needs to be completed and when. Pupils will still record their homework in their planners to develop their own personal organisation skills.

## A focus on... Reading



In our weekly update, I will be asking Curriculum Leaders to shine a spotlight on certain subject areas. We are starting with reading – a key focus of our 'back to school' approach. HMS is very much a school with reading at its heart – pupils here love reading and it is widely celebrated. All pupils are asked to have a reading book with them each day and form classes enjoy a session where their tutor will read a class novel to them.

At Hexham Middle School, our approach to reading is designed to promote and encourage a lifelong enjoyment and love of literature; create curious, independent and perceptive thinkers and create treasured memories of reading that pupils can cherish for many years to come.

Over lockdown, our English team and Mrs. Jackson, our dedicated librarian, have been working hard to make the library a resource which can better support students to choose the most appropriate reading materials for them as individuals. We have created a colour-coded system that

allows pupils to select books suitable for their own reading ability and encourages them to track their own progress as they take on the challenge of moving up through the colour bands. Although our library has had to operate on revised opening times for different year groups, we are working hard to ensure that all students are able to access this valuable resource. You can also check out some fabulous reading competitions [here](#).



### **A message from Mr Gaines regarding PE**

It has been great to be outside and to get active in our PE lessons since normal lessons have restarted. Mr Gaines would like to give some PE messages:

1. Please bring the appropriate footwear for the activity. Boots or trainers with a good grip are essential for the lessons you are on the field.
2. Tracksuit bottoms are not part of the PE kit at HMS. Pupils can wear black shorts or black lycra style leggings as identified in the school planner.
3. For safety reasons, earrings cannot be worn for PE, extra-curricular clubs or competitive fixtures. Ears recently pierced should be taped for lessons. It would be helpful if your child brought their own tape with them.
4. Try to bring a plastic bag for wet shoes and clothing.
5. Pupils **do** need to change back into uniform to go home at the end of the day. This includes changing into their school shoes.
6. A polite reminder that we do require a note if your child has an illness or injury. However, we will still ask your child to participate and learn in that lesson as either a coach, referee or another support role.

### **Reminders/ Dates**

**Pastoral Consultations (Form Tutor Calls)** – week beginning 28 September – please book your appointment and complete the parent survey at [this link](#).

**Y5, Y6 and Y7 Flu Immunisations** will take place in school on Thursday 8 October. Please return the consent form as soon as you can.

**Young Minds #HelloYellow Day** (*promoting mental health and wellbeing for young people by wearing something yellow*) on Friday 9 October.



**Individual School Photographs** – Friday 6 November.

Wishing you all a happy weekend – thank you for all of your continued support.

Yours faithfully

Mr Watters

**Deputy Headteacher**