



HMS Weekly Update

5 November 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer

Update on life in school

Welcome back to a new half-term. I hope you have all managed to enjoy the break despite the rainy October weather. It has been a joy to welcome pupils back to school this week – we agree that it is important for school life to continue in a safe, well-managed manner. As increased national restrictions begin today, we will be providing regular reminders to our pupils to keep them safe in school and out in the community. This will include reminders on the importance of hand hygiene (washing and sanitising), face coverings (where applicable) and following our established systems in and around school. It is important to remind pupils in years 7 and 8 that they are asked to wear a face covering when moving around inside the buildings and in communal areas (unless they are exempt). Please contact us if you have any concerns or questions.

The weekly updates will continue throughout this half term and I know that life at HMS will continue to be as busy and vibrant as ever. As we move towards December, staff will be discussing how we celebrate 'Christmas' (*sorry, I said it!*) as it is almost impossible for us to enjoy the events we usually do such as Christmas discos and our annual Hexham Abbey Carol Service. Rest assured, I know that the HMS staff will be creative in their alternatives and I will keep you updated along the way.

Finally, as we have introduced our new structure of the day this week, we are aware that lunch times have caused a few concerns. We are still committed to providing a wide range of lunch options in our canteen. We are discussing alternatives to our approach and, as always, will adapt to an ever-changing situation. Thank you for your patience and support.

Children in Need



We are delighted that we will once again be supporting BBC Children in Need this year. Typically, we would have a fair full of stalls in Fellside Hall, but this is not possible.

We would like to support the physical wellbeing of our school community: being outdoors and getting plenty of fresh air is so important. We are planning a **'Run For Pudsey'** event in school on Friday 13 November. Pupils are encouraged to run or walk at least four laps of the fields which is approximately 1 mile. Some pupils may want to further challenge themselves, and parents are welcome to sponsor their child or children an amount for every lap they run/walk. If each pupil completes four laps of the field, that is more than the 460 miles - an approximate journey from Hexham to London.

We will be setting up a donations link on School Gateway. We are suggesting a voluntary donation of £2 per child, but please feel able to donate whatever you can manage (be that less than or more than £2). On School Gateway, there will be an option of either £2 or 'other amount'.

We ask that pupils come to school wearing appropriate PE kit. **They can also wear Children in Need merchandise such as ears, bracelets, pins or capes.**

During the day there will also be other year group activities, such as the 'HMS Children in Need Quiz', to raise awareness of the work undertaken by the charity and the impact it has on the lives of many children.

Extra-curricular

Due to newly-released Government guidance, **after-school clubs will be temporarily suspended as of today** – there will be no after-school clubs tomorrow (Friday 6 November). We will continue to provide in-school activities in line with our safety measures and we encourage pupils to keep getting involved. There have been new, exciting clubs added to our list such as a new year 5 Harry Potter Club which was very popular this week!

Our updated programme is available on our [website](#) and lunchtime provision will continue.

This term's assemblies

This week, assemblies have focused on fire safety and fireworks as we approach Bonfire Night. Pupils have been reminded about the 'firework code' and how to stay safe at all times. Next week, we will focus our reflections on 'Remembrance' and I am looking forward to sharing our poppy display with you all. Upcoming themes for assembly include: 'Respect Me' (linked to Anti-Bullying Week), road safety (as we approach the darker months), Parliament, Advent and human rights. We are also looking forward to our end of term 'Christmas Celebration Assemblies' where we reflect on the successes of the autumn term.



House Point Totals

Pupils continue to respond extremely well to our updated approach to rewarding positive behaviour. Below are this week's House Point totals as well as the **'Top 4' pupils in each year group this week.** Well done to each and every one of you – the totals are increasing rapidly! **The winning house will enjoy a special movie afternoon (in year group bubbles) at the end of the half term.**

House Totals		Year 5		Year 6		Year 7		Year 8	
Aln	8886	1	Thomas T	1	John C-T	1	Geoffrey B	1	Eve C
Coquet	8386	2	Aidan T	2	Beau F	2	Ben C	2	Archie B
Tweed	8296	3	Alfie B	3	Archie H	3	Arthur DL	3	Maria G
Wansbeck	8198	4	Christian T	4	Poppy A	4	Tara T	4	Ella S

Year 6 Parents' Evenings

On Monday 16 and Wednesday 18 November, we will be hosting virtual Parents' Evenings for year 6 parents/ carers. We will be using a new online system which makes managing appointments easier for parents, pupils and teachers. The appointments can be made on your mobile or any other device/ computer and meetings are held online (with or without video).

To make appointments, please visit <https://hexhammiddle.schoolcloud.co.uk/> where you will be asked to enter your email address and child's details. If you have any questions or issues, please call the office who will be happy to help.

This is a trial of a new system which we believe will allow us to meet parents/ carers despite the current national restrictions. Home-school communication is highly-valued and important and we are looking forward to speaking to you all later this month. We would also value your feedback on the system – please drop any comments to the admin mailbox.



Hexham Middle School PTA: Fundraising from home



Our PTA work incredibly hard with your support to raise funds. The fundraising enables events and opportunities for our pupils to happen in school. Due to current restrictions, the usual events will not be able to take place this term. The PTA are committed to doing whatever they can to support school life. For now, they would like to update you on three ways you can support their fundraising from the comfort of your own home. **An information poster has been sent home today.** Thank you for all of your continued support!

Tomorrow's Engineer Competition

We are keen to give pupils the chance to learn more about engineering. Please talk to your child about '[The Big Quiz](#)' which pupils can complete in their own time. There is an opportunity for the school to win £1000 of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) vouchers; there are two prizes - one for the most entries and another for the top scoring school. Come on Hexham Middle School - let's give it our best shot.

Uniform and Equipment

The vast majority of our pupils are always extremely smart and well prepared for lessons. There are a handful of pupils who are not adhering fully to the school uniform policy, [available here](#). Please ensure that your child has the correct uniform for school and wears it every day.

Pupils should also be arriving at school fully equipped to learn and prepared for every lesson. Basic equipment includes: a pencil case, blue and black pens, pencil, rubber and a ruler. Please encourage your child to take responsibility for being prepared for school by checking that they have their pencil case and planner each day. If there are particular issues with accessing the correct uniform or equipment due to current lockdown restrictions or other extenuating circumstances, please contact your child's pastoral leader and we will aim to support you.

Individual School Photographs

Michelle Fowler will be in school tomorrow (Friday 6 November) for individual pupil photographs. We will unfortunately not be able to accommodate sibling photographs this year. Photographs will be taken in accordance with our safety measures. Details on how to order photographs will be sent home soon.

A focus on... PE (from Mr Gaines)

It has been great to be back to school and get all the pupils outside and being active in PE. Having the opportunity to run, move and laugh is a great way to release the pressure of this strange start to the year. Mr Barry, Mrs Coldwell and Mr Gaines have been delighted with the pupils' attitude to learning in handball, lacrosse, tennis and tchoukball. It has been great to see the enjoyment on pupils' faces as they co-operate and communicate in their teams.



We are currently doing our four lessons of Run4Fun. pupils are keen to challenge themselves, set goals and aim to do their personal bests. We apologise for the 'clarty kit' but these are the four stand out lessons that everyone remembers (not always fondly!) when they leave us and head to the high school! We are planning to head back indoors soon to start some socially-distanced gymnastics and dance. These are some of my favourite lessons of the year as we get to see pupils at their athletic best. I also enjoy watching Mr Barry teaching cheerleading!

I am afraid I have still no updates on when inter-school sport will start up again. This is a real frustration but building on our handball competitions, we are looking to run more competitions during school time. We are hoping that swimming lessons can commence in the spring term.

A few polite reminders to finish:

Earrings cannot be worn for PE or during competitions or clubs. If they cannot be taken out, they need to be covered with tape. Please can you ensure that your child has a hair bobble if needed as part of their PE uniform. Please also ensure that all PE kit is named. We do endeavour to return all kit that is found but we always have a lot of shorts and hoodies with no names.

UK Parliament Week



As in previous years, we are engaging in UK Parliament Week this year. In year 5, pupils are exploring the timeline of Parliament, delving into some of the key events that have shaped its history. In year 6, pupils are learning more about influential black Britons that have impacted on law and equal rights. Year 7 and 8 are currently learning about democracy and law in PSHE. During form time, year 7 pupils are being encouraged to debate a current issue developing their oracy skills. For year 8 pupils, the focus is on race relations, discrimination and its legislation.

Later this half term, we will be hosting a virtual assembly to all pupils relating to UK Parliament. We also have the opportunity for KS3 pupils to enter the online 'Make Your Mark' vote. This information is already promoted on our school website - <https://www.ukparliamentweek.org/en/make-your-mark>. For the past 4 years we have participated in this national vote and received gold status recognition for our turnout. Due to Covid-19, we are unable to hold a face-to-face ballot. Can we

actively encourage all parents to engage their KS3 pupil in this process? It will also provide you with an opportunity to discuss some of the themes that pupils can vote for. The strapline for this year's UK Parliament campaign is **'It all starts with action!'**

Class Charts



Class Charts parent accounts are also available and can be accessed either by the website <https://www.classcharts.com/> or by downloading the free app.

Please remind the children that P points are 'spendable' in the [Classcharts Rewards Store](#). This can be accessed by both parents and pupils via the web page or app. **Available rewards include: queue jump passes (always a favourite!), stationery, USB memory sticks, movie afternoon and even an afternoon tea!**

Reminders/ Dates

Individual School Photographs – Friday 6 November (note: there will be no sibling photographs)

Remembrance Day – Wednesday 11 November

Children in Need Day: Friday 13 November (see above)

Year 6 Parents' Evenings: 16th and 18th November

Year 5 Parents' Evenings: 7th and 9th December

Thank you for your continued support. As we enter the national lockdown, I am sending best wishes to you and your family. We are always here at HMS to support you in any way we can.

Yours faithfully

Mr Watters

Deputy Headteacher