



24 September 2021

Dear Parent/ Carer

Welcome to the first 'Weekly Update' of the year. It has been wonderful to welcome the children back to their new school this week and to hear the buzz of learning and laughter around the corridors. It has been a long journey to get to this point and we are delighted to finally be in our new buildings. I want to reiterate my huge thanks to the pupils for their resilience as their return to school was delayed and to you for your continued support of school life. I also want to extend thanks to the local community venues who supported us with our temporary arrangements including Hexham Abbey, Wentworth Leisure Centre, Queen's Hall and Hexham Racecourse.

Please can you remind your child that they should be on the school site for the **8.40am bell**. We are aware they may be taking new routes to school and that there are ongoing roadworks in the local area, but a prompt start to the school day is essential. We have continued to review our arrival and departure procedures this week and will continue to **end the day for HMS pupils at 3.10pm**. If your child gets school transport, they will be supervised in the library before being walked to the car park for departure. We would be grateful if parents coming to the site to greet pupils on departure would avoid congregating outside the gable end house opposite our exit, as a courtesy to our neighbours.

## Welcome Evenings



We would like to invite you to attend our upcoming '**Welcome Evenings**'. The sessions will involve a short presentation from leaders regarding our school's curriculum and pastoral care. There will also be an opportunity to have a short look around our new school.

Please complete this [form to book your place](#) at the session for your child's year group. If you have more than one child at HMS and would like to attend multiple sessions, please complete one form per child. On the evening, parking will be available on site. Please walk up the 'avenue' and turn left in front of the Hydro building to head towards HMS. We will monitor sign-up closely to manage numbers and will communicate any necessary changes to plans. For now, the timings are:

- Year 5 Welcome Evening: Wednesday 29 September 5.00pm – 6.00pm
- Year 6 Welcome Evening: Wednesday 29 September 6.15pm – 7.15pm
- Year 7 Welcome Evening: Thursday 30 September 5.00pm – 6.00pm
- Year 8 Welcome Evening: Thursday 30 September 6.15pm – 7.15pm

## Hexham Middle School

Whetstone Bridge Road, Hexham, Northumberland NE46 3JB

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Executive Headteacher: Graeme Atkins

Head of School: Liam Watters



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## Pastoral Evening: Thursday 7 October

Every year, we invite parents/ carers to meet their child's form teacher to discuss the start of term and to ensure children are happy and enjoying school life. To support the meeting, we ask that you complete a short pastoral questionnaire (available on the booking form). The meetings are a short 5-minute update; if you need to have a longer conversation, please contact school in advance.

Meetings will be held in school (maps and room lists will be provided) so that you can see your child's form room. Please complete the [online booking form](#) to indicate a preferred time slot. Form teachers will then confirm your appointment in your child's planner on Monday 4 October (on that date's page).

## Our new library

We're excited for the new term and are keen to ensure that all our pupils can become confident readers at HMS. There will be lots of opportunities built into lessons and form time for pupils to enjoy a wide range of texts and broaden their horizons. Our aim is to further enhance our reading for pleasure culture across the school and to further develop reading comprehension skills. All KS2 pupils will receive a reading record to record and share their daily reading. All pupils in every year group should be aiming to read for 20-30 minutes every night. They can read anything from newspapers, novels to comics and it would be great if you could encourage them to read with you and aloud. Some useful sites to get started are: [www.readingmatters.co.uk](http://www.readingmatters.co.uk) / [www.cool-reads.co.uk](http://www.cool-reads.co.uk)

We are so proud of our new library at Hexham Middle School – it is right at the heart of the building. With huge windows and plenty of space, it's light, airy and calm and the seating area is already proving popular for quiet reading at morning break. All the fiction and non-fiction books are now out on the shelves and new ones are on their way. We can't wait to launch for borrowing soon. Every English class from Y5 to Y8 will have dedicated weekly library time. This will be an opportunity to browse, change books, and ask for help or recommendations. There will be a 'wish list' for pupils to let us know which titles they would like to see in the library.

Our first author event is happening next week when **Peter J. Murray** is coming to visit!



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## House Point Totals

Below are this week's House Point totals as well as the '**Top 4**' pupils in each year group this week. Points are awarded for character value such as **resilience, respect, engagement and responsibility**. Well done to each and every one of them.

House Totals		Year 5		Year 6		Year 7		Year 8	
Aln	890	1	Ollie P	1	Charlie T	1	Imogen S	1	Vinnie M-R
Coquet	947		Alfie M	2	Thomas E	2	Troy P	2	Nathaniel T
Tweed	873		Carrie G	3	Phoebe S	3	Chloe W	3	Ralph D
Wansbeck	1,104		Alex W	4	Hudson R-C	4	Robbie S	4	Oliver K

## Class Charts

At HMS, we use Class Charts to celebrate pupil success and to manage behaviour. Parents can access the app to monitor behaviour (positive and negative), homework and your child's timetable. New parents/ carers should now have received joining information from Mrs Curry.



If you haven't received the information you need, please contact us via the admin email address and we will get it to you. We do encourage all parents/ carers to sign up and download the app as it does really support a positive home-school relationship. Thank you for your support.

## Respect, Engage, Aspire: Pupil Awards

To capture our school's ethos more prominently, we are now focusing on three key words: **Respect, Engage, Aspire**. Each week, staff will make nominations in recognition of pupils showing these characteristics in and around school.

	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
Respect	Cristina C	Charlie T	Brogan R	Martha C
Engage	Charlie M	Phoebe T	Ollie G	Alfie L
Aspire	Paloma P	Lilly S	Elliot Y	Kade M

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## Safeguarding

This week, Mrs Curry (Assistant Headteacher) spoke to our pupils in assembly about her role as Designated Safeguarding Lead in school. She also spoke to the pupils about their support network and knowing that they can speak to all members of school staff at any time. Mrs Curry was promoting the message of staying safe, healthy and happy and we have certainly experienced a positive atmosphere in school this week.

## New staff

We have welcomed three new teachers to the HMS team. Mrs Wade has joined us in English, Miss Lamont in science and Miss Taylor in art. We also now have a new structure to our Senior and Curriculum Leadership Teams - more information can be found in our [Parents' Guide](#).

## PTA news

HMS PTA would like to congratulate this month's 'HMS Lottery' winners Emma Howitson-Morley and Louise Coulson following their success in this month's draw. Their winnings of £25 and £15 respectively are on their way. If you are interested in joining the HMS Lottery, then please get in touch with Kate Robson at [hmsprizedraw@gmail.com](mailto:hmsprizedraw@gmail.com). Tickets are only £1 each per month and we'd be delighted to answer any questions or assist with the simple sign-up procedure.



## Reminders/ Key Dates



- **Year 5 Welcome Evening:** Wednesday 29 September 5.00pm – 6.00pm
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- **Year 7 Welcome Evening:** Thursday 30 September 5.00pm – 6.00pm
- **Year 8 Welcome Evening:** Thursday 30 September 6.15pm – 7.15pm
- **Peter J Murray visit:** Thursday 30 September/ **Peter J Murray book purchase/ signing:** Friday 1 October
- **Pastoral Evening (for all years):** Thursday 7 October 3.45pm – 6.15pm
- **HMS Open Evening (for prospective parents and pupils):** Wednesday 13 October 6.00pm
- **HMS Open Days:** Thursday 14 and Friday 15 October (bookable tours for prospective parents)

I hope you all have a lovely weekend! I hope you have found this first update of the year informative. Over the next few weeks, we will share more information on our extra-curricular provision and other aspects of our new school buildings.

Yours sincerely

Mr Watters  
**Head of School**

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