

22 October 2021

Dear Parent/ Carer

HMS WEEKLY UPDATE

Update on life in school

I can't believe we have reached the half term point already – time really does fly. It's been another great week in school and the atmosphere has continued to be positive, calm and purposeful. It has been wonderful to see our 'Respect. Engage. Aspire' awards being given out to recognise these character values across the school. I want to send a huge thank you to the school community for your generous donations to the Harvest Festival collection for the West Northumberland Foodbank – these were greatly appreciated. As we look ahead to the next half term, we are excited about the many events and opportunities we have planned for the children to enjoy and for the brilliant learning experiences ahead. Thank you for your continued support of school life – it is appreciated by the whole team.

Update on arrival and departure

Since returning to school, we have worked hard to manage the safety of pupils arriving and departing. We have several staff on duty to help pupils whilst crossing on Whetstone Bridge Road. Over the last few days, we have noticed an increase in the number of parents/carers dropping their children at school (particularly on wet days). We ask that you avoid dropping off on Whetstone Bridge Road and, where possible, encourage your child to find a safe walking route to school or to use public transport, rather than bringing them by car.

If you do need to bring your child by car, please remember that you can drive into the car park in the morning and let children out at the drop-off point – this helps to ease congestion in the surrounding area. In the afternoon, we cannot allow access to the main car park due to the buses being parked within the site. We also ask that you are mindful of our neighbours and do not block driveways or access points to properties. Thank you for your support.

COVID-19 update

We have been advised that there has been further confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the school. NHS Test and Trace will contact any individuals who have been identified as close contacts to let them know if they are required to self-isolate, and to provide further advice. **The school remains open, and your child should continue to attend if they remain well.** Please be assured that we shall continue to follow the guidance both in relation to dealing with individual cases and in relation to wider control measures in school.

Hexham Middle School

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Head of School: **Liam Watters**



Tonight, I have sent home updated COVID-19 guidance which will be implemented across school from Monday 1 November (after the half-term break).

Year 6 Parents' Evenings

On Tuesday 9 and Thursday 11 November, we will hold our Year 6 Parents' Evening. Following surveys last term, we have decided to keep these evenings online using the School Cloud system. Booking guidance has been sent home. If you need any support with the system, please contact the school office team who will be happy to help. Booking link: <https://hexhammiddle.schoolcloud.co.uk/>



House Point Totals

Below are this week's House Point totals as well as the **'Top 4' pupils in each year group this week**. P 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	6,478	1	Zach D	1	Thomas T	1	Chloe W	1	Lola R H
Coquet	7,159	2	James L	2	Charlie H	2	Anya C	2	Beth R
Tweed	6,749	3	Paloma P	3	Ella H	3	Laura W	3	Lucas J
Wansbeck	7,355	4	Ossie D	4	Thomas E	4	Charlotte A	4	Geoffrey B

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	Sophie A	Christopher S	Lorna D	Alec C
Engage	Tyler B	Freddie H	Iris A	Max H
Aspire	Evie T	Grace B	Josh C	Isaac H

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Remembrance 2021

This year, we are taking part in the Remembrance Service in Hexham. Our Head Pupils have been invited to attend and we will have a poppy wreath to lay on the day.

In the lead up to Remembrance Day, pupils will have the opportunity to purchase Royal British Legion merchandise. Our Head Pupils will be available at the front of Fellside Building next half term for pupils to purchase items. We have a collection box for any donations, and we will be launching an online payment (from Monday 1 November) should anyone prefer that method. Pupils will have the opportunity to reflect on Remembrance Day 2021.

Parliament Week



When we return after half term it will be 'UK Parliament Week'. We will be re-launching our School Parliament soon, as we have been finalising the nominations and mini elections of candidates during form time recently. Each tutor group will have two School Parliament representatives who will meet as Key Stage committees twice every half term. Our Head Pupils will help to chair the meetings supervised by Miss Downes in Key Stage 2 and Mr Johnson in Key Stage 3. We are sure that we can get excellent levels of engagement with the democratic process to allow pupils across the school to use School Parliament as a means of effective pupil voice.

Extracurricular activities

It is great to see so many pupils attending extracurricular clubs both at lunchtime and after school. After half term, there are some further after-school clubs starting up. One new club will be a [British Sign Language Club](#); another will be an 'Earth Shot Project' club responding to Prince William's commitment over the next 10 years to support sustainable development and minimise the impacts of environmental damage. We are also hoping to set up an Interact club, supported by Rotary International, where we are looking for 15-20 year 8 pupils to develop their leadership skills. Year 8 will receive an assembly on Tuesday 2 November about 'Interact'.



Next half term, we will launch our flipbook adverts for different clubs to show how participation in them can help support the development of essential skills including listening, speaking, teamwork, leadership, aiming high, staying positive, creativity and positivity.

A message from Mr Barry on KS3 Rugby Club

We have had an amazing turn out for rugby club so far this year, and it has been so impressive to see the quick progress in our year 7 teams as well as the continuation of the year 8 development. Due to

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Mr Barry's professional development commitments, he is going to have to move rugby club to a **Friday night at the same time of 3.20-4.20pm**. Please complete the form at this [link](#) to re-sign up.

Note that the club will restart on the **12/11/21** as on the Friday before we have national qualifiers in other events. As always, we appreciate your support.

Attendance – top 3!

1	2	3
7AMG	6RAL	7BLA

Writing competition for KS3

A message from 'The Walter Scott Young Writers Competition': If you are aged between 11 and 19 and interested in history and writing, the YWSP is ready to take you on an adventure! We are the UK's only creative writing prize specifically for budding historical fiction writers.

The Young Walter Scott Prize 2021 is now accepting entries and closes on **1st November 2021**. You could win a £500 travel grant, an invitation to one of the UK's best book festivals, and a chance to see your own work in print. Stories must be between 800 and 2,000 words, and set in a time before you were born. You can find full details, an entry form on our [How To Enter](#) page.

Bag2School collection

The PTA have confirmed this term's 'Bag2School' collection. This is an opportunity for you to send in clothing items from home to be reused and recycled. This will support the fundraising of our PTA. Bags can be brought in by the children or, if it's easier for you, we will hold parent/carer drop-offs on Thursday 18 and Friday 19 November in the car park from 9.00-9.30am. Thank you for your support.



Reminders/ Key Dates

- **School closes for half term:** Thursday 21 October (*Friday 22 October is INSET Day*)
- **Year 6 Parents' Evening:** Tuesday 9 and Thursday 11 November (online – information to follow)
- **HMS PTA Annual General Meeting:** Wednesday 3 November 7.00pm at The County Hotel (all welcome to join us)
- **'Bag2School' PTA collection:** deadline for donations is Monday 22 November

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spes durat avorum

I hope you all have a wonderful half term break. We will see the children back in school on Monday 1 November. Enjoy the autumn events over the holiday – I love this time of year!

Yours sincerely

Mr Watters

Head of School

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