

27th September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

HMS WEEKLY UPDATE 4

House Captains

Following our hustings and a whole school vote, we are delighted to present this year's House Captain Team. Huge congratulations to each of them for putting themselves forward to lead their House group and to represent HMS as part of our Pupil Leadership Team. Well done to everyone who applied and showed the courage needed to speak in front of their peers.



The HMS Way Awards

Each week, teachers nominate pupils for awards to celebrate those who have demonstrated our school values and to recognise the brilliant achievements of our pupils. The awards celebrate children who have shown great respect, who have engaged well in all aspects of school life and who have shown high aspiration during lessons and around school. Well done – we are very proud of you!



Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
Ollie A	Luke T	Sofia O	Bobby E
Sophie W	Jessica D	Neve B	Evie J
Erin McCahill	Martha G	Dexter B	Alex W
Callum T	Kai B	Ben N	Oscar D
Sally B	Blake T	Arthur G	James V

European Day of Languages Bake Off 2024

Wow - we were absolutely blown away by the entries to this year's Bake Off. We had more cakes than ever and the engagement was superb. Mr Armstrong and the staff were amazed by the wonderful creativity, skill and effort on display. Due to the high number of entries, results (a very tricky process to decide) will be announced in next week's assemblies with certificates and a P4 award to follow. Well done to each and every pupil who took part - it was outstanding!



Hexham Middle School

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Executive Headteacher: **Graeme Atkins**

Head of School: **Liam Watters**

Head of School Awards

The first Head of School Awards were awarded this morning with pupils being recognised for showing 'courage'. Pupils were invited to join Mr Watters for breakfast – bacon sandwiches, pastries, hot chocolate and juice – and were presented with a certificate and P5 award! Congratulations everyone – well done for showing our skills and values every day!

Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
Emily C Daniella H Amelie F Sebastian D Archie H Elke H	Poppy M-B Jesse C Alec W-W Alex E Eleanor W	Cody R Evie R-C Katie R-B Libby C Rory A	Dylan N Caitlin H Anna M Daniel W Bobby E

House Point Totals

Each week, we celebrate our P Point (positive point) total across the school. We include the 'Top 4' pupils in each year group, as well as the house totals for Aln, Coquet, Wansbeck and Tweed. Well done everyone for such a positive start to term.

House Totals		Top 4 'P Points' in each year							
		Year 5		Year 6		Year 7		Year 8	
Aln	8,067	1	Bertie L	1	Charlie M	1	Anna F	1	Felicity F-N
Coquet	8,211	2	Ollie K	2	Jennifer V	2	Effie R-B	2	Ruby C
Tweed	8,378	3	Sally B	3	Jessica D	3	Kirstie A	3	Isobel S
Wansbeck	8,161	4	Heidi B	4	Thea H	4	Ben N	4	Sophia F-N

Hexham Abbey Singing Project

Well done to all HMS and QEHS students who performed in the Hexham Abbey Singing Project, which was part of the Hexham Abbey Festival of Arts and Music. Both schools performed a piece each and were then part of a large choir of 200 young people, made up of students from schools across Hexham and Corbridge. Together, they performed a piece called '1350' (a world premiere in fact!) which was written by local composer and teacher Fiona Lander. It told the story of the Abbey and its early history. All students were exemplary in their conduct. Many thanks also to Ms Rowell and Mr Harbron who attended and supported the event, and not forgetting HMS' very own Mr Holdsworth who returned to accompany the HMS choir in their piece and was of course adored by his fans all day!

STEM

We were thrilled to welcome the Street Science STEM Outreach Team from Newcastle University, who put on their incredible Story of Earth show. From Earth's very first day 4.6 billion years ago, right through to the present, the show brought our planet's history to life with mind-blowing demonstrations. Our students were amazed by dry ice experiments, elephant's toothpaste, fire hands and more! The Year 5s were completely enthralled, and it was fantastic to see their excitement for science grow. A huge thank you to the Street Science team for bringing their energy and knowledge to our school.



Homework Update

We have had some feedback about the frequency of homework. We have been reflecting on this as a team as we never want homework to cause stress at home. We do believe in the value of purposeful homework to build pupils towards their high school years when studying at home will be essential. However, we want to get the balance right and build homework up as the children move through middle school. **We have now [updated our policy](#) with a refreshed frequency of homework showing a gradual scale up from Year 5 to Year 8.**

Teachers will also be sure to make homework expectations clear by sharing tasks on MCAS (we'll soon be launching the pupil version too!). Teachers will also make sure that necessary adaptations are made to tasks to promote independence. If your child is struggling with homework completion or you feel there is too much, please just contact us so that we can find positive solutions.

HMS PTA Updates

New members – thank you

It was great to welcome so many new parents to our PTA meeting this week. We have several new members and supporter – thank you all. If anyone else would like to get involved, please get in touch.

PTA AGM and next meeting

Our PTA AGM will take place on Thursday 7th November at The County Hotel – all welcome.

Disco Night

The first disco night of the year has been booked. [Sign up using this form.](#) £3 per ticket. We can't wait to see everyone having a great night!



Exciting news...

Who fancies a show...?

Plans are taking shape to introduce a school production this year..... updates to follow from Mr Rutherford-Orrrock. If you'd like to get involved, look out for more info. Parent/carers helpers wanted! Exciting times ahead!

MCAS Updates

MCAS – where to find payments

If you receive an email request for one off payments for items such as Food Technology these will be in the 'Store' section at the bottom of your MCAS App. Payments for any school trips/clubs/swimming lessons will be in the 'Trips' or 'Clubs' tile of the MCAS App.

Attendance – top 3!

Attendance has been excellent this week with **97%** of pupils being in school. Our school target is 98%. It's so important that pupils and parents have a positive attitude towards school attendance – pupils should be in school every day, ready to learn and to make the most of their school opportunities. Thank you for your support.

1st form class 99%	2nd form class 98%	3rd form class 97%
6-MBE, 5-FHA, 5-MDO	8-SMC, 7-IBO, 7-AMG, 7-PES, 6-YTA, 5-JNI, 5-EKI	7-PHA, 5-ZSC, 6-JJO

Online Safety Updates

For Parents - Video Games and Children

Unicef have shared an article with some nice, clear and simple advice for parents/carers about online gaming. The article covers how to create a positive and safe gaming environment, how parents can engage with their children, what the benefits of gaming are and more.

You can view the article on the Unicef website [HERE](#). (by Alan McKenzie – E-safety advisor)

HMS Extra-Curricular Updates

New Club – KS2 Football

We have now been able to secure a coach with Full of Beans Fitness for a KS2 Football Club. This will take place on Wednesdays after school from 3.20 - 4.30. The football will take place in the large Sports Hall. Pupils must be wearing

PE kit. Bookings can be made on MCAS. The first date of the club will be Wednesday 2nd October. Spaces are limited to 20 pupils. There will be a wait list enabled. If you do not use MCAS or having difficulties, please contact a member of our Admin team and we will be happy to help. Please note, if the club proves popular we may choose to operate a rotation. Those that are not successful initially will be invited from the waitlist.

Mandarin School

We still have spaces for our Mandarin School which takes place on Wednesdays after school. This starts next week. It's open to all year groups. We have a native Mandarin speaker who comes to school from The Confucius Institute based in Newcastle University. This is a fantastic opportunity to learn a new language, which is fun for all involved. No experience is needed. This is a great way for pupils to meet others and make new friends. The club is free and high-quality resources are used by our tutor, Xinye. This could be the time your child realises a new linguistic talent or gains the confidence to participate.

Extracurricular Clubs Update

It has been wonderful seeing lots of clubs up and running now with a great buzz about the school - be that pupils rehearsing, engrossed in some physical activity, creating things or having fun playing in Dungeons and Dragons. A huge thank you must go to our staff who offer their own time after school. We also have the help of many volunteers and some outside companies that form a key part of our provision.

A few important polite reminders:

- Pupils being collected by parents/carers should meet at the main gates.
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to know how their child will be getting home.
- Please try to be prompt in picking up your child. If you are late, your child will be asked to wait inside Fellside Building near the library until you arrive. We do not want pupils waiting in the car park.
- Pupils should only attend clubs where bookings have been confirmed on MCAS or by other contact with the school/club leader. We have had a few instances of pupils attending who have not applied or are currently on a waiting list. We obviously do not want to disappoint pupils, but some clubs have space limits, in order to ensure appropriate safeguarding.
- We are looking at clubs with large wait lists and will start to explore rotations, which we have operated in the past. This will allow us to provide maximum participation for all pupils that have expressed an interest. Parents are therefore advised to check the MCAS app for changes. We will endeavour to communicate with parents in good time when rotations will come to an end, so that alternative care arrangements can be made, if necessary.

French and Spanish Trip

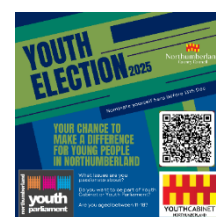
Pupils have now been informed about which trip/trips they have been given a place for. If your child has a place on both trips, please can you have a conversation with them about which trip they might prefer. Of course, they are entitled to go on both trips. Deposit payments to secure your child's place on the trips will open on Monday 30th September and close on Friday 4th October. If you have any questions, please get in touch.

News from the community

Youth Election 2025

The expression of interest form goes live at 7am on the 20th Sept and closes at midday on the 13th Dec. There is a QR code within the graphic that will take young people to the form, additionally, the link below can also be shared.

<https://forms.office.com/e/HMGUblIU6p>.



This opportunity is open to all young people who would be in school years 7 and 8 at Hexham Middle School.

Upcoming Dates

Date	Event	Who
Thursday 3 October	HMS Open Evening, 6pm	All welcome
Friday 4 October	STEMfest virtual event	Year 5
Friday 4 October until Sunday 6 October	Manchester Experience Tour	Year 7 and Year 8 (group)
Monday 7 October	Author Visit: Nadine Aisha Jassat	Year 6 and 7
Friday 11 October	Hello Yellow Day – non uniform day!	All year groups
Friday 11 October	National Day of Spain Themed lunch	All year groups
Wednesday 23 October	PTA Disco Night	All year groups
Wednesday 6 November	Year 6 Parents' Evening	Year 6

Have a fantastic weekend everyone!

Mr Watters

Head of School

Pupil Support and Safeguarding

Designated Safeguarding Leader: Mr Stephenson
Deputy Safeguarding Leaders: Mr Scott and Mr Rutherford-Orrcock
Heads of Key Stage: Mr Scott and Mr Rutherford-Orrcock
SENDCo/Assistant SENDCo: Mr Morgan and Mrs Ballantyne
Academic Support Coordinator: Mrs Toor
Pupil Support Workers: Mrs Dodds and Mrs Richards

Please remember that we are here to support you and your child at any time. You can contact us via the main office (phone) or by email (admin@hexhammiddle.org.uk).