



8 November 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

HMS WEEKLY UPDATE 9

Welcome back to the second half term of the year and what a great first week we have had. It's already been a busy one with new clubs starting, sports events in hockey and cross country, Zones of Regulation workshops (thanks to those who could attend) and our first Year 6 Parents' Evening. There's so much to look forward to this half term – it's action-packed as always but we know it's such a special time of year! The 'Festive Calendar' has been sent home and I have included a bumper edition of the 'Key Dates' at the bottom of this update. Hopefully this will help you to start organizing your calendars for the busy weeks ahead.

Mr Morgan (SENDCo) returns to school next week following his paternity leave – Mrs Ballantyne has done a great job leading the SEND team in his absence – you can contact them at send@hexhammiddle.org.uk. Mrs Downes has now started her maternity leave, and we wish her all the best as she awaits her new arrival. We will miss her so much in school, and we can't wait to see her soon. Mrs Pemberton will now take over 5MDO while Mrs Downes is away with Miss Bell stepping into the role of Deputy Head of Key Stage 2.

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
Daniella H	Phoebe D	James D-S	Mollie L
Thea G	Thomas M	Xav H-L	Ailsa B-S
Leo H	George L	Harry B	Jess P
Sophie C	Alex E	Oliver D	Fen P
Ethan W	Arthur D	Ted W	James H

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Executive Headteacher: **Graeme Atkins**

Head of School: **Liam Watters**

Children in Need

HMS will be supporting Children in Need to 'Make Life Lighter' this year. On Friday 15th November, pupils are invited to join our fundraising efforts to support the vital work of charities up and down the country. Donations can be made via MCAS (if you feel able to) – suggested donation £2 per child – we appreciate your support. On MCAS, please visit the 'shop' section on the main menu. Our fundraising day will be a cashless event – all donations should be made via MCAS. Friday 15th will be a non-uniform day – wear something spotty if you can! We'll also be holding our HMS Big Children in Need Fair – pupils will get information in form time. Thank you for your support!



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	21,236	1	Ruben B	1	Joey R	1	Wilfy D	1	James H
Coquet	21,604	2	Harry D	2	Henry W	2	Betti A	2	Shontelle B
Tweed	21,729	3	Bertie L	3	James D	3	Dexter B	3	Cameron S
Wansbeck	21,818	4	Sophia M	4	Alexander U	4	Oskar P	4	Sophie A

Sports updates

Cross Country Success

What a day our schools have had at the regional round ESAA Cross Country. It was great to see both schools represented so well. The Junior Boys, Inter Boys, Senior Girls and Senior Boys all qualified for the nationals in the competition! Congratulations everyone!

Five teams from HMS and QEHS travelled to the Regional Finals of the school's cup cross country. This event was held at Stewart Park in Middlesborough. The best teams from Northumberland, Durham, Cleveland and North Yorkshire were competing for three qualifying places in the national final which will be held in Leeds this year.



The junior boys from HMS ran in the second race of the day. Ten teams lined up to compete for the 3 places in the final. HMS runners performed brilliantly: Charlie M 9th, Monty C 11th, Ossie D 12th, Nicholas Y 25th and Finn C 33rd. The event winners are decided on the cumulative total for the first four runners from each school. HMS had a team total of 57 which was good enough for second place! The winning school total was 33 - Ermysteads School from Skipton.

It was a brilliant performance by the whole team. This is the second year in a row that we have had a team qualify for the finals. QEHS also had three teams qualify. It is a great achievement, and we are excited to see how all our teams can compete at the National final in December. Mr Gaines and Mrs Southern were very proud of all performances on the day. The excited buzz from all the athletes was infectious. All our teams were determined to reach the finals. Well done everyone.

Skills Builder Day



On the final day before half term, the whole school enjoyed our first 'Skills Builder Day' of the year. The children enjoyed working with their form class on an engaging and exciting project focused on developing the 8 essential skills. It was a great day of collaboration, communication, problem solving and resilience and it was lovely to hear the final presentations around school at the end of the day. Thank you to Mr Freeman-Myers for his continued leadership of 'Skills Builder' and our recent 'Gold Award' accreditation which we have achieved in a relatively short period of time. Look

out for the next Skills Builder Day in the summer term.

HMS Residential Updates

The Year 8 High Borrans visit will go live on MCAS on Monday 11th November and information will be sent home by Miss Lamont. Year 6 will be visiting Newby Whiske Hall in July and Mr Rutherford-Orrock is finalising the information and payment plans now – information to follow very soon. The Year 5 visit to Ford Castle is live now and deposits are needed by 18th November. Please contact us if you need any further information or payment support.

HMS PTA Updates

HMS PTA Committee Updates

The PTA held their AGM last night and celebrated another hugely successful year of fundraising. The support of the PTA is valued by all of us in school, not least the pupils who benefit from so much funding for their enrichment opportunities. As you know, many of our longstanding committee members left HMS in the summer term as their children moved to high school. At last night's AGM, Sheryl stepped down as Chair of the HMS PTA. Sheryl has been Chair and part of the PTA for many years and has given so much of her time, energy and enthusiasm to supporting our school. I am delighted that she'll continue on the PTA for a while longer yet and thank her for her time as Chair.

I am very pleased to say that two Co-Chairs have been elected with Amy and Karen taking on the role together. Suzanne continues as our wonderful Treasurer with Gillian taking on the HMS Lottery and Dawn leading our Go Green Used Uniform Service. With new supporters and volunteers on board, we are confident that the great work will continue. Thank you all for your continued support.

Festive Forest Evening – Monday 9 December

Our PTA Festive Forest Evening is back this year to kickstart the festive season and we can't wait! It's a night of family arts and crafts both indoor and outdoor, the forest fire is lit for s'mores, hot chocolate and forest craft and there's food, drinks and lots of music - a perfect night! Please try to save the date. It's always a joyous event for the whole family - it would be great if you could join us.



Christmas Card Competition

We are running a school Christmas card competition this year to help raise funds for our PTA. We would like to pick a 1st prize winner along with up to four runners up. The card design should be A5 in size. The design must be able to be scanned. The deadline for all submissions to Mr Freeman-Myers is Friday 22 November. We will use these cards to make packs of 5 cards which can be ordered online - link to follow - at the start of December. These will be delivered to pupils to take home.

Christmas Pop-Up Shops – Tuesday 10 and Thursday 12 December

Our very popular pop-up shops will return this year. We ask for your support in sending in gift donations (if you can) which the pupils can then purchase as gifts for their loved ones at Christmas time. It's a great chance for them to do some Christmas shopping and they always feel very proud buying a special gift which is wrapped up ready for Christmas Day. There'll be a non-uniform day on Friday 29 November, and we ask for your support in sending in gift donations to build up our stocks. More information to follow!

Attendance – top 3!

Attendance has been excellent this week with 97% of pupils being in school. Our school target is 97%. 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.

1 st form class 99%	2 nd form class 98%	3 rd form class 97%
5-FHA, 5-MDO	5-EKI	7-PGA, 7-AMG, 7-PES, 6-RAL, 6-JJO, 6-MBE, 5-ZSC, 5-JNI

News from the community

The Salvation Army Christmas Card Competition

The Salvation Army organise a Christmas Card design competition. Closing date Friday 22 November. For more information: <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/fundraise-us/card-competition>

Rotary Competition

The Rotary competitions give participants the chance to express themselves through art, photography and writing, the competitions are run over three stages, club level, district and culminating in the national final. The theme for 2024-25 is 'Wonderful Water'. The competition is open to three age groups:

- Junior Up to 10 years
- Intermediate 11 – 13 years
- Senior 14 – 17 years

Click [here](#) for more information. All entries will be collected from school, the deadline for collection of entries is Tuesday 10th January 2025.

Online Safety Updates

Character AI

Online safety advisor Alan McKenzie pointed out to us a 'What Parents Need to Know' article by Internet Matters: [HERE](#). (by Alan McKenzie, online safety advisor)

Upcoming Dates

Date	Event	Who
Sunday 10 November	Remembrance Sunday Service	Head Pupils
Monday 11 November	Anti-Bullying Workshops	Year 5
Wednesday 13 November	War Horse, Sunderland Empire	Year 7
Wednesday 13 November	Chess Tournament, St Bede's Blyth	Chess Team
Thursday 14 November	Year 6 Parents' Evenings <i>(bookings open via MCAS)</i>	Year 6
Thursday 14 November	Watch House, Queen's Hall	Year 8
Friday 15 November	Children in Need Fundraising Day (info to follow)	All year groups
Friday 15 November	Lego League Event	Lego League Club
Monday 18 November	NHS Height and Weight Checks	Year 6
Tuesday 19 November	Mighty Minds – Mindset Coaching Workshops	Year 5
Tuesday 19 November	Zones of Regulation Workshops	Year 7
Thursday 21 November	Zones of Regulation Workshops	Year 5

Friday 22 November	UK Parliament Week: Joe Morris MP visit	HMS Council
Friday 22 November	COP29 Event, County Hall	Head Pupils
Friday 22 November	Hexham Christmas Light Switch On, 4.15pm, Sele Bandstand	All welcome
Wednesday 27 November	PSHE Workshops	Year 7
Wednesday 27 November	Year 7 Parents' Evening 1 (in school)	Year 7
Friday 29 November	Non-uniform day – please send in Pop-Up Shop donations	All year groups
Friday 29 November	Head of School Award Breakfast	Winners
Monday 2 December	STEM to Stars	Group
Tuesday 3 December	Year 7 Parents' Evening 2	Year 7
Tuesday 3 December	Forum Cinema Visit	Year 5
Friday 6 December	House Event!	Info to follow!
Monday 9 December	Why Queue, PSHE performance	Year 7
Monday 9 December	PTA Festive Forest Evening (5.30pm)	All welcome
Tuesday 10 December	Be You Parent Workshops, Anxiety and Worry	All welcome
Tuesday 10 and Thursday 12 December	PTA Christmas Pop-Up Shops	All year groups
Wednesday 11 December	HMS Christmas Lunch	All year groups
Wednesday 11 December	Christmas Jumper Day	All year groups
Thursday 12 December	Year 8 Christmas Trip – Centre for Life/Ice Skating	Year 8
Thursday 12 December	Year 5 Christmas Trip – Pantomime	Year 5
Friday 13 December	Year 7 Christmas Trip – Cinema and Bowling	Year 7
Monday 16 December	House Prize – non-uniform day and extra lunchtime!	Winning House
Tuesday 17 December	HMS Carol Service, Hexham Abbey, 7pm	All welcome

Monday 16 to Wednesday 18 December	Safety Works Visits	Year 8
Tuesday 17 December	Year 6 Christmas Trip - Pantomime	Year 6
Wednesday 18 December	HMS Carols in the Community	Visits to care homes and hospitals
Thursday 19 December	Christmas Celebration Assemblies	All year groups
Friday 20 December	Christingle Services	All year groups
Friday 20 December	Christmas Jumpers/Non-Uniform/Form Class Time	All year groups
Friday 20 December	School closes at 1.30pm	All year groups

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-Orrrock
Heads of Key Stage: Mr Scott and Mr Rutherford-Orrrock
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).