



**HMS WEEKLY UPDATE 1**

**Welcome Back**

Welcome back to a new school year – I hope you all had a lovely summer break. It has been great to welcome our pupils back to school this week – the atmosphere around school has been calm, positive and productive. Pupils have focused on getting back into the school routine and navigating their new timetables. The return to school after a long summer break can be challenging, and it's been great to see our pupils embracing life in their new year groups with such positivity and motivation. It was lovely to see the whole school for their 'Welcome Back' assemblies – everyone looked smart, eager and ready to learn, and I know this positive start will continue as the term goes on.

*Welcome  
Back!*

I am so proud of our new Year 5 pupils who have settled in brilliantly this week. It's a huge step moving to middle school and they have been an absolute joy – so enthusiastic and ready to make their mark on middle school life. Thank you very much to our new Year 5 parents/carers – your support throughout the transition process has been hugely appreciated. I know it's a big change for all of you too and I hope you have felt supported over the past few months. Middle school life is different to first school in many ways, but we are here to support you and your child, and you can contact us via email, phone call or via your child's planner if you need us. We're looking forward to working with you all to ensure your child will thrive at middle school.

There's so much to look forward to this term – keep checking the 'Weekly Updates' for key dates and information about what's coming up.

**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 overall house totals for Aln, Coquet, Wansbeck and Tweed. **The 'HMS Way Awards' will return in next week's assemblies** and our monthly 'Headteacher Awards' will be back later this month.

| House Totals    |            | Top 4 'P Points' in each year |          |          |           |          |           |          |          |
|-----------------|------------|-------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
|                 |            | Year 5                        |          | Year 6   |           | Year 7   |           | Year 8   |          |
| <b>Aln</b>      | <b>701</b> | <b>1</b>                      | Olivia C | <b>1</b> | Vini W    | <b>1</b> | Archie H  | <b>1</b> | Theo B   |
| <b>Coquet</b>   | <b>597</b> | <b>2</b>                      | Andrej V | <b>2</b> | Kai B     | <b>2</b> | Oscar C   | <b>2</b> | Thomas G |
| <b>Tweed</b>    | <b>641</b> | <b>3</b>                      | Rohan T  | <b>3</b> | Annie B   | <b>3</b> | Thea G    | <b>3</b> | Archie J |
| <b>Wansbeck</b> | <b>641</b> | <b>4</b>                      | Jake T   | <b>4</b> | Jackson T | <b>4</b> | Brianna H | <b>4</b> | Meike O  |

**Hexham Middle School**

Whetstone Bridge Road, Hexham, Northumberland NE46 3JB

T: 01434 610300 E: [admin@hexhammiddle.org.uk](mailto:admin@hexhammiddle.org.uk)

[www.hexhammiddleschool.co.uk](http://www.hexhammiddleschool.co.uk)

Executive Headteacher: **Graeme Atkins**

Head of School: **Liam Watters**

## Senior Leadership Team

You can find information on the school's Senior Leadership Team [here](#). It has been great to welcome Mr Walton (Assistant Headteacher: SEND) and Mr Kiln (Assistant Headteacher: Personal Development). New parents/carers may now be aware that I informed the school community that I'd be leaving my role as Headteacher in December this year. This wasn't an easy decision at all, and I'll be very sad to leave HMS at the end of term. The recruitment for my successor will take place in due course and Mr Atkins will keep you all informed as the term goes on. For now, it's business as usual and I look forward to the autumn term in school.

| Welcome Mr Walton                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Welcome Mr Kiln                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p>Thank you once again for the welcome to Hexham Middle School. I appreciate I came in quite a few times before the summer break, but it was still quite nerve wracking starting somewhere new.</p> <p>For those that don't know, I was an Assistant Headteacher at Monkseaton High School, responsible primarily for SEND, but also for behavior, culture and attitudes and a DSL. For the last ten years, being a SENDCo has been very interesting with many new challenges and changes coming, and of course, many more to come. However, I truly believe in our most valuable learners and supporting them the best we can on their journey.</p> <p>It is great to be somewhere, much like my previous school, which is so passionate about inclusivity. And I really can't wait to support our children the best we can.</p> |  <p>Hello. I am delighted to have joined Hexham Middle School as the new Assistant Headteacher (Personal Development). I am passionate about providing children with a range of opportunities to extend their learning beyond the classroom, and I'm looking forward to building on the breadth of enrichment experiences the pupils here already benefit from. Most recently, I have been Deputy Headteacher at Allendale Primary School, where I worked with colleagues from across Northumberland to organise trips, workshops and events to bring the curriculum to life. I have also previously taught in schools in Edinburgh and London.</p> <p>This week, I have been struck by how welcoming and friendly all pupils, parents and staff have been, along with the clear sense of pride and positivity on show throughout the school. In my role, leading on Pupil Voice, Careers and Sustainability, I'm looking to getting to know everyone across the school, and working together to make HMS an even more brilliant place to come and learn.</p> |

## Drop-off and pick-up

- Parents/carers can drop off in the school car park, but we ask for your support in reducing traffic on the streets around school where possible. If you do need to drop off, there is a clear drop off route. All children must stay in vehicles until you have reached the drop off zone at the top of the car park. Vehicles should not overtake and should remain on the drop off loop to ensure safety for all.



- At the end of the school day, children can be picked up from the car park if necessary but please note that the car park is closed to vehicles from 3.10 – 3.25pm to allow safe movement of pupils as they leave the school site.

A reminder to all pupils **not to walk across the bus park**. If they walk into school or get off at the public bus stop, they need to walk along the path on Whetstone Bridge Road and walk up the main pathway to school, or along the footpath around the edge of the bus park.

### Welcome to Year 5 Evening

Parents/carers and pupils are invited to join us at our 'Welcome Evening' on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September 5.30pm in our main school hall. The evening will allow you to hear from a range of school staff about what Year 5 will look like for your child. This will include information about their learning as well as pastoral information from Miss Bell.

If you'd like to join us, please sign up here if you haven't already: [Welcome to Year 5 Evening – Fill out form](#)

### Meet the Tutor Evening

You can now book appointments to meet your child's form teacher at our 'Meet the Tutor Evening' on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 3.45pm - 6.30pm. All appointments can be booked via MCAS. Meetings will take place in your child's form classroom. The evening is always a good opportunity to meet your child's form teacher and to discuss how the term has started for your child. To help our form teachers to prepare for the evening, we would value your feedback by completing this very short ['Start of Term Survey'](#).

### Macmillan Coffee Morning

To support the annual Macmillan Coffee Morning, there'll be a cake sale on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September.

- If you are able to send in any baked or bought treats to sell, we would really appreciate it. Any cakes can be brought to school on the morning of Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September and dropped off in our main lobby area.
- Cakes will be available to purchase at morning break:
  - Front yard for KS2; Games yard for KS3
- Any baked goods should include an allergen note. A reminder that HMS is a nut-free school.
- Donations of vegan and gluten free products would be appreciated too.
- Pupils will need some cash if they would like to buy a treat! Thank you so much for your support.



### Year 5 News

- Team Building Day:** Year 5 had a very fun day during their Team Building Day today – what a great way to end a wonderful first week at HMS – well done everyone!

- **Ford Castle Residential:** there'll be information coming home soon regarding booking spaces on the 2027 Ford Castle residential. You may want to have a chat with your child to see if they'd like to attend the visit – deposits will be needed soon to secure a place. Look out for information from Miss Bell soon.
- **Bikeability:** look out for information from Miss Bell regarding an upcoming cycling proficiency course – Bikeability. The letters will be sent home with the children and there'll be a draw for places due to limited availability on the course.

## Mobile Phones



Thank you very much for your support of our new mobile phone policy. The pupils have been fantastic this week – we are very proud of them. In line with Department for Education guidance on, pupils are expected to have no access to mobile phones or similar smart technology during the school day. All mobile phones must therefore be **handed in on arrival at school and will be securely stored until the end of the school day.**

We also ask that pupils do not bring smartwatches into school. We appreciate that there are now many different types of watches available, and that some may look like traditional watches while offering additional functionality. However, where a watch has features that allow communication, notifications, recording, internet access or other similar functions, we ask that it is left at home. To avoid any uncertainty, if a watch resembles or functions like a smartwatch, we will be asking students to hand it in alongside their phone.

If a pupil needs to contact home for any reason, they can do so through the school office, and we will support them in making contact. We appreciate your continued support in helping us maintain a calm, focused and distraction free learning environment for all pupils. Thank you for your cooperation and support. The policy will be continually reviewed by leaders in school.

## Use of images

You may notice some differences in the way we post on social media and our website going forward. The school recognises the increasing risk that images may be misused, manipulated or exploited through artificial intelligence (AI) and other digital technologies. To reduce the risks, the school will apply safety controls such as posting images which are taken from a distance; using over-the-shoulder angles; avoiding clear facial close-ups and using blurred imagery where suitable.

## Attendance - top 3!

Our aim is that pupils maintain very high attendance of at least 97%+. We really value that our 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. We encourage pupils to ensure that they don't miss out on great learning each day – especially as look towards the colder winter months. Thank you for your support in ensuring your child attends well.

**1<sup>st</sup> form class – 100%**

**2<sup>nd</sup> form class – 99%**

**3<sup>rd</sup> form class – 98%**

|                            |              |       |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------|
| 7-SFO, 7-ETA, 5-RAL, 5-MDO | 7-SGE, 5-YTA | 6-FHI |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------|

### Ski Trip 2028 – 4 places left!

Mr Gaines and Mr Johnson are now finalising places for the Les Menuires Ski Trip in France in February 2028. The trip provides a brilliant French mountain experience in a wonderful resort for beginners and experienced skiers alike. HMS has 40 places booked for this trip - we have **currently 4 places still available** if your child would like to attend. The trip is available for **current Y6 and Y7 pupils only**. The trip is available in your MCAS Outstanding Payments on Bromcom. To sign up, complete you are required to pay a deposit to secure the place. Payment of the outstanding balance will be completed with a payment plan which allows you to spread the payments making it easier to pay for the trip.



### PTFA News

**Join the HMS PTFA!** Could you spare a little time to help make a big difference at HMS?

We're looking for friendly volunteers to support our PTFA. Whether you can help organise events, share ideas, assist with fundraising activities, or lend a hand at events, we'd love to hear from you. No experience is needed, and every contribution big or small, helps create fantastic opportunities for our pupils. Get involved, meet other parents, and help support our school community! To sign up/register your interest in being part of the PTFA <https://hmsptfa.org/get-involved>



### PTFA Lottery becomes the '200 Club'

Thank you past, current and future members of the Hexham Middle School PTA lottery. Your support is very much appreciated. As the PTA becomes known as the PTFA (Parents, Teachers and Friends Association), we are also giving the lottery a makeover. We will be launching it in September after the final draw of the current lottery in August, and it will take back its original name of the 200 club. Players will log onto the website monthly to pick a number, and the system automatically selects winners. <https://hmsptfa.org/club>

### Community News

#### Students paying their own travel costs

For current pupils of HMS, Arriva provide a cost effective and flexible direct debit solution to assist with the cost of travel. For more information follow the below link or scan the QR-code.

[www.arrivabus.co.uk/monthlytickets](http://www.arrivabus.co.uk/monthlytickets)



### Free School Meals - Update

From September 2026, the government is making changes to eligibility criteria for Free School Meals. Notably, it is expanding eligibility to all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit. For further information on the changes, how to check eligibility and to apply for Free School Meals go to: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/education-skills/schools/school-meals>

- If your child (children) is joining the school from a different local authority and has previously been entitled to free school meals, you may need to make a new application to Northumberland to ensure continued eligibility.
- Northumberland County Council manage eligibility checks for FSM on behalf of Hexham Middle School. The Middle School then monitors information about approvals and rejections of FSM claims to ensure our database matches the local authority system and that we provide FSM to the right children. If you have any queries about FSM eligibility please contact [finance@gehs.net](mailto:finance@gehs.net)

If a pupil is in receipt of free school meals the monetary value of **£2.95** per day will automatically be added to their account, and they have total anonymity. Your child will receive an allowance of **£0.30** at morning break to buy a slice of toast and **£2.65** at lunchtime to buy the 2-course lunch.

**Please note:** drinks and snacks **are not** available as part of the free school meal allowance. If you wish for your child to purchase additional items at breaktime or lunchtime above the free school meal allowance, please credit their account via MCAS. It would be advisable for you to let your child know what their free school meal entitlement is - this will avoid any confusion at the till. Unspent free school meal money cannot be carried forward to the next day.

**We know from our records that a number of parents do not claim for their entitlement of a Free School Meal for their son/daughter.** Free school meals entitlement enables your child to have a free hot or cold lunch every day, and the school will also receive additional funding to spend on extra support for your child. This additional funding continues to apply for several years after a pupil ceases to be eligible for free meals, so it's still worth applying even if you think you will qualify for only a short period of time.

### School Calendar

| Date                                       | Event                                   | Who             |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Tuesday 7 and Wednesday 8 September</b> | Zones of Regulation Workshops           | Year 5          |
| <b>Friday 11 September</b>                 | Extra-Curricular Clubs Programme Launch | All year groups |
| <b>Friday 11 September</b>                 | HMS Council Elections                   | All year groups |
| <b>Monday 14 September</b>                 | Lunchtime clubs launch                  | All year groups |

|                               |                                                           |                                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Monday 14 September</b>    | <a href="#">Welcome to Year 5 Evening – Fill out form</a> | Year 5                                |
| <b>Wednesday 16 September</b> | Head Pupil Selection Day                                  | Year 8                                |
| <b>Friday 18 September</b>    | Macmillan Cake Sale                                       | All year groups                       |
| <b>Monday 21 September</b>    | House Hustings                                            | All year groups                       |
| <b>Friday 25 September</b>    | Individual School Photographs                             | All year groups                       |
| <b>Friday 25 September</b>    | European Day of Languages activities                      | All year groups                       |
| <b>Thursday 1 October</b>     | HMS Open Evening, 6-8pm                                   | Prospective parents/carers and pupils |

Have a great weekend!

Mr Watters

**Headteacher**

**Pupil Support and Safeguarding**

**Designated Safeguarding Leader:** Mrs Mackenzie

**Deputy Safeguarding Leaders:** Mr Scott, Mr Walton, Miss Lamont and Miss Bell

**Heads of Year:** Miss Bell (Y5), Mr Scott (Y6 and Y7), Miss Lamont (Y8)

**SENDCo:** Mr Walton

**Academic Support Coordinator:** Mrs Toor

**SEMH Practitioners:** Ms Thompson and Mrs Richards

**Attendance Officer:** Miss Parradine-Robson

**Inclusion Administrator:** Mrs Blakeburn

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](mailto:admin@hexhammiddle.org.uk)).