

Dear Parent/Carer

HMS WEEKLY UPDATE 13

Another week closer to Christmas and the term is flying by! Thank you to those who could join us at our Stargazing Evening on Monday and our Year 7 Parents' Evening on Tuesday. It's been a busy one at HMS with Dog's Trust Workshops, a cinema trip for Year 5, football fixtures and careers education events across school. As well as that, rehearsals are well underway for our upcoming festive events and the sound of Christmas has filled the corridors all week! We have a very busy two weeks ahead with lots of festive joy – please check the calendar (at the end of this update) and shared earlier in the term.

Festive Forest Evening takes place on Monday at 5.30pm – we'd love to see you and your families at this wonderful event. The PTA will also be running our 'Pop-Up Shops' on Tuesday and Thursday next week – pupils can browse and buy over lunchtime with gifts priced at £2 each. Thank you for your continued support!

Stargazing Evening



It was a very exciting night at HMS as we hosted our first Stargazing Evening with Kielder Observatory. It was great to welcome lots of year 5 families to enjoy the event which involved visits to the planetarium and using the telescopes. Despite the cloudy evening, everyone enjoyed themselves and the cloud did clear a little for our second session! Thank you to colleagues from Kielder Observatory for their continued work with HMS, and to Mr Freeman-Myers for organising this opportunity.



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
Rowan D	Ruby D	Sam L	Edward C
Julia F	Charlie P	Archie G	Hayden D
Millie H-W	Kate H	Anabelle C	Teddy D
Isaac N-C	Hayden M	Annabel H	Jack H
Isabella N	Iris H	Betty F	Alice B

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Executive Headteacher: **Graeme Atkins**

Head of School: **Liam Watters**

House Point Totals

Each week, we celebrate our P Point (positive point) totals 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!

House Totals		Top 4 'P Points' in each year							
		Year 5		Year 6		Year 7		Year 8	
Aln	30,332	1	Effie W	1	Hollie W	1	Duncan G	1	Sophia N
Coquet	30,476	2	Julia F	2	Nancy M	2	Oliver D	2	Alfie R-W
Tweed	30,780	3	Jake S	3	Nick T	3	Tyler H	3	Alivia A
Wansbeck	31,062	4	Edward P	4	Harriette D	4	Annabel H	4	Samuel B

Pupil Competitions

Presentation Competition

Do you have lovely handwriting? Has your handwriting or presentation of work significantly improved since September? Do you have a piece of work that you're particularly proud of? If so, please enter our Presentation Competition. For more information, have a look on our website: [here](#). The deadline for entries is Friday 13th December.

Christmas Card Competition

Our Christmas Card competition will become an annual event following the overwhelming number of outstanding entries we received this year!

Following a very challenging pupil and teacher vote, the top 5 designs have been chosen and will be printed into this year's cards. Cards will be available at our Festive Forest Evening on Monday. Prizes will be awarded in school over the coming days.



Overall Winner – Katie G (Year 7)

Top 5 Entries – Ollie A (Year 5), Ossie D (Year 8), Lucy G (Year 6) and Bea S (Year 8)

All of the entries were superb and there will be further prizes awarded for individual designs – well done everyone!

Christmas Jumper Day

On Wednesday 11th December, HMS pupils can wear a Christmas jumper and/or festive accessories if they want to. Apart from the jumper, we ask that pupils wear their school uniform. We will have a selection of jumpers available at our Festive Forest Evening on Monday. Donations for Save the Children can now be made via MCAS if you feel able to.



Sports News

Pupil success

Congratulations to Ben who has been awarded a place on the Northumberland County Hockey Team! Well done, Ben – we are all very proud of you!

Tynedale Sports Hall Athletics Competition

Last week, HMS had four teams competing in the Tynedale Sports Hall Athletics competitions. The event was hosted by QEHS in our large sports hall and officiated by Year 12 Sports Leaders.

The competition is always well-supported by local schools and it was great to see pupils competing in a range of individual and relay running events as well as throwing and jumping events. On the day, we competed against Corbridge and it was great to see the friendly rivalry between friends from outside school, competing head-to-head in track and field. Our year 8 boys performed brilliantly totalling 283 points and winning their competition. They will go forward to represent Tynedale in the county final after Christmas. Our other HMS teams performed admirably. The year 8 girls came 3rd overall. While in Year 7, the girls came joint second with Highfield Middle school. Not to be outdone, the Year 7 boys also came second in their event. Well done to all athletes who competed. Mr Gaines and Mr Cameron look forward to you all competing on the track in the summer. It was great to see HMS pupils competing with a smile!



Year 6 Football

Mr Nichol led a group of 19 boys to Prudhoe CHS to compete in a football tournament. The boys split into two HMS teams and both teams represented the school brilliantly. All of the children showed constant respect to both teammates and opposition players, engaged well at all times and aspired to achieve great performances. Mr Nichol was very proud of all the pupils who participated.

Attendance – top 3!

Attendance has been excellent this week with 96% 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.

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

HMS PTA Updates

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 Pop-Up Shops – Tuesday 10 and Thursday 12 December

- Open at lunchtime next Tuesday and Thursday.
- Fellside Hall.
- Browse, buy and gift wrap - £2 per gift.
- Cash and card payments accepted!

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!

News from the community

Tynedale Lions Young People's Bursary

Tynedale Lions have a bursary scheme to highlight, celebrate and reward the exceptional achievements of young people (age 11-18) that, more often than not, go unseen and even unrewarded. They are looking for young people who "aspire to excellence" and deserve to be recognised for their hard work and/or exceptional achievement. Attached you'll find more information and a nomination form.

Hexham Community Grocery

I wanted to remind everyone that the Hexham Community Grocery provide a very valuable service which is a bridge between local food banks and supermarkets. You can visit the store on Wanless Lane in Hexham to become a member. You can pay £5 for a membership and £5 per shop – it's such a great, local service!

<https://communitygrocery.org.uk/how-we-can-help/>



Online Safety Updates

For Parents - Loot Boxes

For many children and young people playing games is predominantly about socialising with their friends. Because of this there can be significant peer pressure to look and be better than everyone else, to get further in the game than other and more. In-game purchases such as loot boxes capitalise on this peer pressure, essentially enticing users to get ahead more quickly by spending money. Loot boxes have been a concern for a long time. A few years ago in the UK it was thought that loot boxes would come under the updated Gambling Act but this never happened due to a lack of research, however it is though my many (including myself) that loot boxes can be a gateway or lead-in to gambling.

Concerningly, a BBC investigation has found that, out of the top 45 biggest games on the Google Play store, most are not disclosing that the games contain loot boxes properly. Many parents rely on the information that is available on the various game/app stores as well as ads to decide what is/is not appropriate for their children and this lack of important information is inexcusable. [The BBC article can be found HERE](#). (by Alan McKenzie, online safety advisor)

Free School Meals

Free School Meals

You can find the eligibility criteria for free school meals here. If you think your child may be eligible, please make an application to the local authority who review your request.

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Schools/Meals.aspx?nccredirect=1>

Upcoming Dates

Date	Event	Who
Monday 9 December	Why Queue, PSHE Workshop	Year 7
Monday 9 December	PTA Festive Forest Evening (5.30pm)	All welcome
Tuesday 10 December	Be You Parent Workshops, Anxiety and Worry, 4-5pm	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 (donations can be made via MCAS)	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 (TBA)
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-Orrock
Heads of Key Stage: Mr Scott and Mr Rutherford-Orrock
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).