

17 November 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Sad news**

We are very sad to report that Neil Morrison, former Federation Headteacher across QEHS and HMS, passed away on Wednesday morning. It was unexpected and has come as a real shock. As well as being a thoroughly nice person, Neil was an excellent leader of the schools, having previously been deputy headteacher and headteacher of QE. He was also headteacher at Whickham School in Gateshead.

Neil maintained a keen interest in Hexham following his retirement in 2014 and continued to be a trustee of Hexham Youth Initiative.

Neil is fondly remembered at both our schools and our deepest sympathies go to his wife Julia and their two sons.

### **Sixth form open evening**

We had a very successful open evening for sixth form on Thursday. It was lovely to see lots of people from school and from outside of school.

### **Student life**

I had the pleasure this week to 'breakfast' with some of our Y9, Y10 and Y11 students. As always, I was impressed by their confidence, good humour and ability to tell the Head of School their opinion on life at QE. Their observations of the high school highlighted what they enjoy but also the ways we can make their lives better. It was, as always, a pleasure to spend time with our students.

### **Battlefields Trip**



Sixth form students spent four days visiting the battlefields of Northern Europe, bringing to life their study of first world war literature. The students visited Tynecot where a number of soldiers from the North East are buried. Thank you to Mrs Howard, Ms Maurice and Mr Robson for organising the trip.

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Executive Headteacher: **Graeme Atkins**  
Head of School: **Neil Seaton**

## **Chess**

Very well done to the two teams who represented the high school at the National Schools' Chess Championship at St Mary's Catholic High School in Longbenton on Wednesday. Each team comprised six players and all acquitted themselves very well against some tough opposition.

Any student interested in competing in the Northumbria Junior Chess Association tournament on Sunday 26 November 10am to 4pm at RGS Newcastle Junior School can enter via this link.

QE Chess Club runs each Friday lunchtime in LA4 and all are welcome.

## **Routes into STEM**

During the October half-term holidays some year 9 and 10 students attended a 'Routes into STEM' course. This included a day at college, a day at university and a day at a STEM company. It allowed the students to gain first-hand information and experience of STEM activities to enable them to make informed decisions about their future pathways.

## **Attendance**

The message to students continues to be that attendance matters. Students do well when they are in school. Being in school enables young people to engage in learning, socialise with their peers and take part in extracurricular activities. The school provides support to students experiencing barriers to attendance because of mental or physical health concerns. Please contact your child's form tutor if you are concerned about their ability to get into school.

## **Ofqual consultation on the use of formula sheets in maths and physics**

Ofqual are consulting students and families about the inclusion of formula sheets in physics and mathematics. This was in place following the pandemic and teachers of these subjects believe current students still require this adjustment. Please complete the link below:

<https://ofqual.citizenspace.com/public/gcse-maths-physics-and-combined-science-in-2024/>

## **Sparx Maths**

We are excited to inform you that from now on, your child will be using Sparx Maths to complete their weekly maths homework. Sparx provides a highly personalised weekly homework to students, tailored to their attainment level and working speed. You will also be receiving a letter with further details and here is a link to the Sparx video for parents with some extra information.

<https://support.sparx.co.uk/v1/docs/sparx-math-homework-for-parents>

## Bus and rail strikes

Current bus and rail strikes are making challenging to get to school for some students. Go North East are offering a replacement service operating on a skeleton timetable. Further information can be found on the [Go North East website](#).

## Hexham Christmas Market – request for volunteers

The Hexham Community Partnership is currently finalising preparations for Hexham Christmas Market, which will take place on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December. The market runs from 9am until 3.30pm but there is a lot to do outside those hours, so they are looking for some volunteers who might be able to help with the following duties:



- Car park stewarding from 6am to 9am
- Providing event information at our event info table in the cloister porch from 9am to 3.30pm
- Car park stewarding from 3pm to 5pm
- Litter picking from 3pm to 5pm

If you think you might be available for an hour or two to help make this popular event run extra smoothly, please let Bettina Newton, Office Administrator for the Hexham Community Partnership, know via [admin@hexhamcommunity.net](mailto:admin@hexhamcommunity.net).

## Additional information

Please find information attached with the bulletin:

- Brundibár Arts Festival – Holocaust Memorial Day Fundraising Concert

Yours faithfully

Neil Seaton  
Head of School