



28 March 2025

QEHS WEEKLY UPDATE 26

Lockdown evacuation practice

As part of our approach to ensuring all children, staff and visitors are safe on the school site, we have a lockdown procedure. This is common for all schools and provides information on what we would do in the event of a situation where the school was required to go into lockdown. A lockdown might be required for several reasons: for example, an incident in the wider community where it is decided that we would be safer to keep people secure on site; an environmental incident such as a large fire nearby and concern of the impact of fumes meaning people need to stay indoors; or an animal or intruder on site.

On Monday 7th April, we will be doing a walkthrough of a lockdown procedure with staff and pupils. This drill will allow everyone to understand the procedure. Staff are already aware of the lockdown procedure, but we will talk it through with pupils in the coming weeks, along with details of how the walkthrough will work. The walkthrough will be handled carefully, and pupils will be prepared in advance and helped to understand why we have such safety procedures.

Our decision to carry out a walkthrough of our lockdown procedure is to ensure that staff and pupils are clear on the expectations and does not reflect a change to the level of any risk or threat to the school. If you or your child have any specific questions or concerns, please contact the school, or suggest your child speaks to their form teacher. The SEND team will be working with pupils who may need more support in advance or during the walkthrough.

Respect

QEHS Parent/Carer Survey

Each year we survey parents and carers to seek their views on various aspects of the school's provision. In recent years, the feedback has led to a return to face-to-face parents' evenings, a reworking of the Y9 options processes and a review of our behaviour system. It has also helped us to sustain the good work we have been doing and share positive messages with staff.

The [Parent Carer Survey Form](#) (Microsoft Form) is live until Friday 11 April. Please take the opportunity to complete it.

House System

Last week students in Beech house won the house praise points competition and were allowed to have a non-uniform day. The house system was introduced this year, and we are developing house identity through assemblies and competitions. Each house has also chosen to fundraise on

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behalf of a charity. There is a link on MCAS to each of the charities if you would like to donate to your child's house. The house charities are listed below:

Ash: Teenage Cancer Trust
 Beech: Dementia UK
 Birch: Daft as a Brush
 Oak: Northumberland National Park Mountain Rescue Team
 Sycamore: Great North Air Ambulance

Attendance

Being in school, meeting people and doing activities helps social development and positive mental health. When we review outcomes data there is a clear correlation between attendance and performance. Students make better progress and achieve higher outcomes when they attend. In the newsletter each week I will show you our current attendance data for each year group. Our school target is 95%. We know that some students will struggle to attend school so please speak to their form tutor, Head of Year or Mrs Curry if you have any concerns. We work with families to help students overcome barriers to attending school.

Attendance week (week ending 21 March)				
Year group	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	All years
Percentage	93.68%	90.8%	94.3%	92.2%

Engage

Moira Buffini author visit for Y9



Playwright, film and TV screenwriter and now author of her first novel, we were delighted to welcome Moira Buffini to QEHS on Tuesday. Moira's depth and breadth of experience informed her highly engaging and inspiring talk, weaving in 'The Hunger Games', Shakespeare and Orwell. She highlighted that writing is a viable career in this country, how the publishing process works and how she uses her 'writing toolbox' to create a world. Moira kindly stayed at the end of the event to guide and give advice to our young writers.

'Songlight', Moira's dystopian, coming-of-age novel, explores social and environmental challenges facing young people. Copies will be available to borrow in the QEHS LRC shortly.

Many thanks to Moira for her visit and to the Hexham Book Festival for bringing her to us.

Hexham Schools' Festival Book Orders

If you would like to order a copy of Moira's book at a discounted rate of £7.00, please follow the link below to Hexham Book Festival's bookseller, Opt Indie Books.



Please note that this order is not organised by QEHS and is therefore not on MCAS. You are making the order directly with [Opt Indie Books](#).



Spring Concert

It's that time of year and one of the highlights of the calendar! Save the date for our Spring Concert on 9th April. The concert will feature our brand-new Soul Band as well as favourites such as the Jazz Band, Show Choir, Wind Band, QEHS Choir, String Ensemble and much more!

Y10 Football

Y10 were excellent on Thursday v's Ponteland. They were 4-0 up after the first half with goals from Jack T (2), Ollie G and Jimmy C. Ponteland came back in the second half but another goal by Ben P cemented a comfortable 5-3 win against a team that made it to the quarter finals in the National Cup.



Rowing – Schools Head competition



QEHS Rowing club rowers attended the prestigious Schools Head competition on Tuesday 25th March. This is the very first time that QEHS Rowing Club has ever entered a crew for this event. This is held on the River Thames in London and is raced over the Oxford and Cambridge boat race course in the reverse direction. It attracts top club and school crews from across the country, with over 2000 competitors racing across a range of categories.

The crew competed in the J16 championship 8+ category, seeing QEHS Rowing Club crew compete against the premier J16 crews from across the country. They finished 13th in their category and 86th overall out of over 300 crews.

Tom M, Dan J, Mr Gaines were immensely proud of the rowers' conduct at the event and it was a pleasure to take the crew away. Mr Gaines would like to thank all the QEHS coaches for their effort and expert coaching that enabled these boys to excel. [Read more here](#) (QEHS website).

Regional Indoor Rowing Competition



15 QEHS and Hexham RC rowers attended a regional indoor rowing competition last week, representing QEHS against multiple schools from all around the north-east. We had a very successful day with five 1st place finishes. Races were completed over a range of distances depending on the year group. [A summary of the results](#) is on our website.

Well done to all involved with lots of new fastest times attained.

DofE Bronze Club Preparations

The Duke of Edinburgh Award Bronze club was out yesterday afternoon to practise their campcraft skills. The teams enjoyed learning how to use a Trangia and put up a tent in strong winds. Next week they will complete an 8-mile practice walk.



Aspire

Green Careers Event

It was great to see our students engaged in meaningful conversations with employers, employees and places of further and higher education at the [QEHS Green Careers and Information Fair](#). We are so grateful to all of the exhibitors and to the National Park Authority Green Pathways Project for organising the event!

Career of the week

This week's Career of the Week was 'Botanist'. The following link will take you to further information on 'Unifrog': [Botanist: Unifrog](#)

This includes Labour Market Information (LMI). It is important both parents and students are aware of this as it includes current and predicted figures relating to the profession, particular attention should be paid to the expected growth figure. All students have received a 'Welcome' email from Unifrog. This can be found in their school email account. Please encourage them to activate their account if they haven't already done so.

We also have a 'dummy' code for parents. Use 'QEHSparent' on this page: unifrog.org/code.

QEHS Parent Teacher & Friends Association news



After the huge success of the previous concert, we're looking forward to the QEHS Spring Concert on 9th April - it's going to be a great evening! If you can spare any time to help serve refreshments alongside the PTFA, raising funds to support enrichment activities for the students, we'd love to hear from you.



The Hexham Amateur Stage Society will be performing Broadway Musical Theatre classics in the Winter Gardens Friday 25th April and Saturday 26th April. We are looking for more volunteers to help serve refreshments alongside the PTFA during this event too to raise additional funds (note, this is during the Easter break).

If you can help at either of these events, please email gehs.ptfa@gmail.com

PTFA Lottery

Tickets for the lottery are £1 per entry with 2 monthly cash prizes. Entry is simple and online. For more information and to sign up complete the [online application](#) or email gehsprizedraw@gmail.com.



Sixth Form



<https://www.speakersforschools.org/work-experience-opportunities/>

Find 3-5-day in-person and virtual work experience placements and 3-5-hour introductory Insight Days with leading UK employers. Try searching for keywords such as opportunity type, location or employer name or click on filters to refine your search by placement type, industry or date range.

Students wishing to attend should complete a Unifrog request and email sixthform@gehs.net for permission to miss lessons if it is in school time.

Work experience week

Year 12 students undertake a compulsory week of work experience to give a greater understanding of the world of work in their chosen area and help build links for future employment opportunities. The school will help where possible, but ultimately it is down to students themselves to organise their placement. Work experience week takes place from Monday 9 June to Friday 13 June.

Students who haven't already found a placement are encouraged to use: <https://www.unifrog.org/placement/guides>.

Sixth form noticeboard

Opportunities and advice for employment, volunteering and university are regularly promoted via the website, within the [Sixth Form Noticeboard](#).

We rely on parents 'feeding' opportunities into the students, so if an organisation you are involved with is doing something in the future that a young person may find inspiring, please email sixthform@gehs.net. Equally, if you would like to advertise local job opportunities (paid or voluntary) please send the details.

LRC Recommended Read

This week's LRC recommended read is *Blood Flowers* by Jay McGuinness

Seventeen-year-old Bear lives in the walled town of Calleston - a place of stark divide between the rich and poor. Living down in Cobblestone, Bear is painfully conscious of the inequalities between him and residents of Roofside.

When the town's annual Field Day - an event during which those who've recently come of age test their Sinsin growing capacities - shows Bear to have unprecedented abilities, he's hurtled into the upper echelons of society, and everything he's ever wanted is within his grasp.

But it soon becomes apparent, that it's not all he expected it to be. He finds himself existing amidst an uncaring, callous people, concerned only with themselves, living in a society in which corruption is rife. Finding himself unwillingly entangled with the Overlord's beautiful but spiteful daughter, Bear is forced to make decisions which may jeopardise everything he's dreamed of - or risk the lives of the people he once lived amongst.

A story of love, witchcraft, betrayal and murder!



News from the community

Autism Support Groups – new dates

- [Daisy Chain Northumberland Autism Support Workshops](#)
- New dates for the [NCC Autism Family Drop Ins](#)

Hexham Book Festival 2025: Now open for booking

We are very fortunate in Hexham to have our own inspiring and engaging book festival. Events have now opened for booking. We would encourage our students across all year groups to take a look at the programme for this year. From the latest fiction, to maths, science, farming, fashion, history, poetry and politics, there is something for everyone. [View events and Book.](#)



Online Safety

TikTok, Teens, Social Media and You

MediaSmart has released a wonderful new resource for parents whose children are using TikTok. Designed for 13+ (as you have to be 13 to use TikTok), the resources will help parents better understand their young person's online world and support them through conversation and participation.

There's a campaign film, downloadable guide with practical tips, a school to parent letter and more. Full details can be found [HERE](#). (by Alan McKenzie, online safety advisor)

Free School Meals

If you feel that your child may be eligible for free school meals, please read the criteria and make an application as soon as you can. Find out more on the [Northumberland County Council website](#). To apply, please [complete this form](#) via Northumberland County Council.

Reminders/ Key Dates

Date	Event	Who
Tuesday 3 April	DofE Practice walk	Year 10 (selection)
Monday 7 April	Lockdown evacuation practice	All year groups
Wednesday 9 April	Spring Music Concert – 7pm	All welcome
Wednesday 9 April	School photographs	Year 11 and Year 13
Thursday 10 April	DofE Practice walk	Year 12 (selection)

Yours faithfully



Neil Seaton
Head of School

Pupil support and safeguarding

Designated Safeguarding Leader: Mrs Hattie Curry

Deputy Safeguarding Leaders: Mr Emerson Brown, Mr Alex Robson & Mrs Jill Wood.

SENDCo: Mrs Jill Wood

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@qehs.net

For queries regarding attendance or absence, please email attendance@qehs.net