

11 September 2026

### **QEHS UPDATE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS**

Dear Parents and Carers

As we move further into the new academic year, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on what has been a very positive start to term for our students, staff and the wider Hexham community.

Students in Years 9 to 11 have settled quickly into routines and expectations, and it has been pleasing to see a record number of P Points awarded already this term. These recognise the many examples of effort, achievement and positive contributions that students are making every day.

Our Sixth Form students have also made a strong start to the year. They have shown a high level of maturity and independence and have embraced the additional responsibilities that come with being our senior students.

It has also been encouraging to see how well students have responded to our phone policy. The consistency with which this has been implemented across the school has contributed to a calmer and more focused environment, helping students to engage fully in their learning.

On a personal note, I have greatly enjoyed meeting so many students during my first weeks at Hexham. I have been impressed by their conduct, their pride in the school and the way they have welcomed the start of the new academic year.

#### **Welcome back to Sixth Form – message from Miss Platts**

It was a pleasure to welcome our Year 13 students back to school last Wednesday and to meet our new Year 12 students as they began their Sixth Form journey on Thursday. We were also delighted to meet the parents and carers of our new Year 12 students at our information evening on Tuesday.

The slides from the Year 12 Parents' Information Evening have now been circulated and contain key information, important dates, and guidance to support students throughout the year.

We would also like to remind you and students to regularly check the [Sixth Form Noticeboard](#), as new opportunities are being added frequently. Recent additions include information about work experience opportunities with the NHS and NCC, alongside a range of other enrichment and career-development activities.

We look forward to an exciting and successful year ahead for all of our Sixth Form students.

## Respect

### Drop-off and pick-up

Parents and 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.

## Engage



### Music clubs

Clubs and enrichment activities will be starting soon and we encourage all pupils/students to sign up to an activity. Due to current staff absence in music, there will be a delay to the start of choirs, we hope to have these up and running later in the term.

## Aspire

### Career of the week

This week's job of the week was sustainability

officer: <https://www.unifrog.org/student/careers/direct/chief-sustainability-officer>

You can activate your parent / carer Unifrog account by visiting [www.unifrog.org/parent](http://www.unifrog.org/parent) and signing up with the same email address that is linked to your child on Bromcom.

## Sixth Form

### Sixth form noticeboard

[The sixth form Noticeboard](#) is regularly updated with new opportunities. Please visit regularly to see what has been added. There have been new [local and national apprenticeship opportunities](#) added this week. We rely on parents sharing opportunities with 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](mailto:sixthform@gehs.net). Equally, if you would like to advertise local job opportunities (paid or voluntary), please send the details.

## QEHS Parent Teacher & Friends Association news

The QEHS Parent Teacher and Friends Association is run by volunteer parents/carers, teachers and friends of the school who work together to raise funds to make QEHS an even better environment for students to learn and thrive, engaging in activities or providing facilities or equipment which support the school community.



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### Thank you!

Thank you to all our QEHS families for the fantastic support you've given the PTFA over the past year. Your generosity, time and involvement make a real difference to our school community and we're truly grateful for everything you do. When we return in the autumn, we'll be sharing a full overview of how much has been raised and the projects your contributions have funded across the school. We look forward to another year of working together to support our students and enrich school life.

If you'd like to get involved next year, we'd love to hear from you. Whether you're great at organising, budgeting, promoting events or simply bringing fresh ideas and enthusiasm, there's a place for every skill set. Supporting the PTFA is a brilliant way to make a tangible difference to school life while meeting other parents and feeling more connected to our school community. If you're interested, just drop us a line at [gehs.ptfa@gmail.com](mailto:gehs.ptfa@gmail.com)

### Dates for the diary

Tuesday 15 September - next PTFA meeting, 6pm County Hotel, Hexham

Tuesday 20 October - AGM, at QEHS

### A chance to win one of two cash prizes each month

Tickets for the PTFA lottery cost just £1 with simple online entry. For more information and to sign up complete the [online application](#) or email [gehsprizedraw@gmail.com](mailto:gehsprizedraw@gmail.com).



Contact the PTFA committee by emailing [gehs.ptfa@gmail.com](mailto:gehs.ptfa@gmail.com). Follow us on Facebook (QEHS Parent, Teacher & Friends Association), Instagram and Threads (@gehs\_parent\_teacher\_friends).

## Online Safety Update

### For Parents – ChatGPT Parental Controls

ChatGPT has parental controls which allow a parent or guardian to link their account with a teenager's account and manage a range of settings. Parents can control things such as: additional safeguards around sensitive content; Voice Mode; image generation; memory; quiet hours and some other ChatGPT features. Importantly, linking the accounts does not allow a parent to read their teenager's conversations or monitor their chat history. This could be a useful link to share with parents, particularly those whose children are already using ChatGPT. Link: [Managing parental controls in ChatGPT](#) (by Alan Mackenzie, Online Safety Specialist).

## 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)

## Reminders/ Key Dates

| Date                          | Event                                          | Who                         |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Monday 14 September</b>    | Year 9 Photographs                             | Year 9                      |
| <b>Wednesday 16 September</b> | Year 11 and Sixth Form information evening 6pm | Year 11                     |
| <b>Thursday 24 September</b>  | Open Evening 6-8pm                             | Prospective Year 9 students |
| <b>Thursday 8 October</b>     | Year 9 and Year 10 tutor evening 4-6.30pm      | Year 9 and Year 10          |

## Free School Meals

I am writing to let you know about important changes to Free School Meals (FSM) that have taken effect from the start of the school year in September 2026. These changes may mean that your child becomes newly eligible for a free school meal, even if you have not qualified before. We would encourage every family to check their eligibility as soon as possible.

### What Is Changing?

Until now, free school meals have been available to children from households receiving Universal Credit where annual household earnings are no more than £7,400. From September 2026, this changes significantly.

| <b>Targeted FSM</b><br><i>Existing entitlement — continues</i>                                                                                                       | <b>Expanded FSM</b><br><i>New entitlement from September 2026</i>                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Households receiving Universal Credit with annual earnings of <b>£7,400 or less</b><br><i>Also attracts Pupil Premium and other funding for your child's school.</i> | Households receiving Universal Credit with annual earnings <b>above £7,400</b><br><i>Free meal entitlement only (does not attract Pupil Premium).</i> |

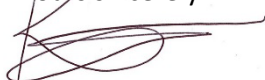
For further information on the changes, how to check eligibility and to apply for Free School Meals go to:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/education-skills/schools/school-meals>. If 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. To apply, please [complete this form](#) via Northumberland County Council.

Finally, I would like to thank all members of the Hexham community for their continued support. The positive start to the year is a reflection of the partnership between students, families and staff, and I look forward to working together over the coming months.

I also look forward to meeting Year 11 families at our Year 11 Information Evening on Wednesday 16 September and discussing how we can work together to support students through this important year.

Yours sincerely



Katie Innes  
Headteacher

**Pupil support and safeguarding**

Designated Safeguarding Leader: Mr David Todd  
Deputy Safeguarding Leader: Mr Emerson Brown  
SENDCo: Mrs Laura Warland

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@gehs.net](mailto:admin@gehs.net)

For queries regarding attendance or absence, please email [attendance@gehs.net](mailto:attendance@gehs.net)