



Welcome back!

We have had our welcome back assembly this morning and all of the children have welcomed each other. We were especially pleased to welcome our new Reception children, and our new Year 6 role models. We were even more delighted to see that EVERY child came to school in uniform this morning – well done and thank you!



School website

Letters and information sent home are uploaded to our website at least half-termly, visit us at www.hesleden.durham.sch.uk; Up-to-date news and pictures are shared through our X [Twitter] account, including home learning opportunities and other useful links, follow us on X www.twitter.com/hesledenprimary



Twitter.com

Our School Day

- Everyone was in school on time this morning – well done for making the first day back so much easier! We continue to use a longer welcome so that our locker and porch areas do not get too busy. The doors open at 8.40am and all children are expected to be in school by 8.55am.
- It doesn't take long for even our newest and youngest children to learn routines and our Nursery and Reception children will enjoy showing off their independence on a morning as they come into school by themselves. We will continue to develop good independent skills, but which includes supervision to ensure the safety of everyone.
- To minimise congestion at the gate at home-time, the following times apply. Please be considerate of where you park, and take care when pulling away.

Pick up - Collection point	Time	
END of Nursery fence	3.00pm – Class 2	3.05pm – Class 1
Gate	3.00pm – Class 4	3.05pm – Class 3

① Length of the school day – changes

From September 2024 (next year) the Government expects all schools to be open to children for a minimum of 32.5 hours per week. Our current opening times fall short of this, so this term we will be letting you know how we plan to change our school day so that we meet the requirements. It will mean longer days for all, but we will let you know how this will affect you and your children.

Back to School safely

Children have been reminded today:

- **Uniform** is expected to be worn every day. Children should also bring a **waterproof** each day, and return their **wellies** to school. *We still have a good supply of uniform items in school, if you need spare items at short notice, we should be able to help.*
- **Jewellery** (ear-rings; bracelets etc.) **is not allowed in school**. Watches need to be removed for PE. Children cannot play with/on equipment whilst wearing jewellery (even taped-up ear-rings).
- All girls and boys with **long hair** should tie their hair up for school. This helps to prevent the spread of head lice, and is a safety requirement for PE and playing on the outdoor equipment.
- **PE Kits** - the whole school will have **PE on a Thursday** (usually an afternoon) – children should **come to school in their PE kit** (plain white t-shirt, dark bottoms and trainers) for the day.
 - PE starts this week with an activity session with the Sports Partnership on Thursday
 - C4 will be swimming this term. Our session this year is *first thing on a morning* so children will need to be in school promptly to catch the bus! Information will follow.
- Every child **MUST** bring their own **filled water bottle** – this will be sent home daily for cleaning and returning. Water bottles can be refilled at lunchtime if necessary.
- **Medicines**: Please ensure all medication/inhalers are returned to school as soon as possible; and contact Mrs Medcalf directly for further help or information regarding health or care plans.

Photographic Policy

Our Photographic Policy not changed this year.

In school we use photographs to evidence children's work, for displays and to share events on Twitter. Current photo consent remains relevant and we have not asked you to re-sign for this year, however if you want to check (or change) your consent, please let us know.

We will continue to ask you not to take photos at events in school as not all children are allowed to be photographed, however we will always try our best to provide opportunities for you to take photos of your own children. We also ask that photos are not shared on social media where children other than your own may be in the background.

Dates for your diary

Most events are for children only, but we hope to be able to invite families to more events as the year progresses and as plans are made. We will send home dates as far in advance as possible, although sometimes these have to be changed due to unforeseen circumstances nearer the time. So far, this half-term:

Th 7 Sept	Sports Partnership activity morning – all children
Th 14 Sept	Sarah McAllister – cooking workshops – all children
Th 21 Sept	Sports Partnership – Dance with me session all children
Wed 27 Sept	NSPCC workshops for Y2 and Y5/6
Fri 13 Oct; 9-9.30am	Family Friday for Classes 1 & 3
Th 19 Oct	Sports Partnership Colour run – all children
Fri 20 Oct; 9-9.30am	Family Friday for Classes 2 & 4

Other dates for your diaries include:

Parent consultations (in school)	Wed 22 November; afternoon	Mon 15 July; afternoon
Family Fridays – C1 & 3	Fri 26 January	Fri 10 May
Family Fridays – C2 & 4	Fri 9 February	Fr 3 May

Updates:

- Our Behaviour Policy will be shared with you for consultation. You will also receive a copy of our 'Behaviour and Learning' leaflet which summarises the strategies we use in school to help us learn better and behave well.
- We are planning to return to Pupil Voice activities and House time, to allow the children to help us make decisions about their school, and to work together on mini-projects and activities.
- Following our inspection, Mrs Johnson is also working hard to develop an 'after-school clubs' provision. We will let you know about this as soon as we can. We hope to offer a wide range of clubs across the year.
- School lunches – please let Mrs Medcalf know if your child is moving to/from school meals so this can be properly tracked. Menus should be available on the school website once finalised, but are also available from the office. From this term a meal for Y3-Y6 children is £2.50 per day – payable through ParentPay.
- Our Curriculum topics documents are currently being finalised and formatted so that we can send you details of what your child will be learning this year. These will also appear on our website once completed.
- All children will need to bring wellies to school so that we can continue to play outside whatever the weather. Children should also always have a coat with them since the weather is so unpredictable! You will soon receive an updated 'Loose parts play' leaflet which shows how we are trying to develop children's play. This includes a request for you to help restock some of the resources we need for successful and creative play.

2023-2024 Holidays

Holiday	Closing Date	Re-open for Teaching Purposes		
Autumn term 2023		Tuesday 5 September 2023		
Autumn half-term 2023	Friday 27 October 2023	Monday 6 November 2023		
Christmas 2023	Tuesday 19 December 2023	Thursday 4 January 2024		
Spring half-term 2024	Friday 16 February 2024	Monday 26 February 2024		
Easter 2024	Thursday 28 March 2024	Monday 15 April 2024		
May Day 2024	Friday 3 May 2024	Tuesday 7 May 2024		
Summer half-term 2024	Thursday 23 May 2024	Monday 3 June 2024		
Summer 2024	Tuesday 23 July 2024			
School will be closed for the following staff training days:				
Mon 4 Sept 2023	Fri 6 Oct 2023	Mon 27 Nov 2023	Wed 3 Jan 2024	Fri 24 May 2024

Parental Engagement & Communication

As last year, we will hold parent consultations face-to-face in the autumn and summer terms, making phone calls in the spring. We will also continue to host Family Friday visits (to help you to see how your child learns, how they are making progress, and allow you to talk informally to the staff) in the alternate half-term (see dates above).

Outside of these 'formal' meeting times, we are always happy to speak with parents/carers about any suggestions, comments or concerns. Staff are generally available after school, but to be sure you will be seen, passing a message on at the gate on a morning, or giving us a call (01429 836376) always helps. Please try to speak to your child's teacher in the first instance. We can always be contacted by email (hesleden@durhamlearning.net), and will always respond either by telephone or email. These are our **official communication channels**, and are the *only* channels which will be used to deal with parental communication. Any complaints or criticisms posted or shared in personal chats or on social media platforms are not constructive and cannot be dealt with if not raised appropriately.

Later this month, you will be invited to a parents/carers/community coffee morning. Mrs Garside (on behalf of the school, Hazel Dene childcare and the governors) will be organising the event with a view to gathering opinions on how to improve school events, fundraising etc. We hope you will take the opportunity to come along for a cuppa and cake and share your thoughts.

Being a parent governor is also an invaluable way to help support and improve our school. You have the opportunity to get 'behind the scenes' and see how we operate and why we make the decisions we do. If you are interest, see the later in the newsletter, or get in touch.

Governing Body

As we return to school this term, there are some changes to our Governing Body. Its current constitution is:

Mrs D Dunn	Headteacher
Mrs L Johnson	Teacher Representative
Mrs Gemma Morris	Co-opted
Mr John Gillette	Co-opted
Mrs Clare Garside	Co-opted
Mrs Stacey Deinali	Co-opted
Vacancy	Co-opted
Mr Andrew Stafford	Local Authority
Mrs Laura Jamieson (Chair)	Parent Representative
Mrs Natalie Cox	Parent Representative
Vacancy	Parent Representative
Vacancy	Parent Representative

You will see that we have two Parent vacancies and a 'Co-opted' vacancy (people from outside of the immediate school community (i.e. business) who may have an interest in education and supporting the school).

Please see the notice below, and please consider this opportunity to support our school.

Parent Governor Vacancies

Parent governors play an important role as members of the governing body. This involves several main responsibilities (acting as a 'group'):

- plan the school's future direction
- be accountable for the overall performance of the school
- ensure that the school makes appropriate provision for all its pupils
- ensure that the school actively promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development
- have strategic oversight of the school's budget and staffing
- ensure financial probity

The term of office for parent governors as determined by the governing body is 4 years. The school has high expectations of the time and commitment required from its governors in order to effectively fulfil their roles.

All parents of children at the school are eligible to stand for election. This includes:

- parents of children attending nursery, either full-time or part-time
- any person who is not a natural parent but has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child (Education Act 1996, Section 576)

Parents who are employed at the school for more than 500 hours per year are NOT eligible to stand for election as Parent Governors.

If you are interested in becoming a Governor and would like to know more, please contact the school to speak to Mrs Dunn. Interested parents will need to complete a nomination form, also available from school, or by email.

Where the number of nominations is equal to, or fewer than, the places available no ballot will be necessary and any remaining vacancies will be appointed by the Governing Body.

Any completed and duly signed nomination forms should be returned to the school by midday on Friday 22nd September.

Should a ballot be required the school will send each parent a voting form. When the process has been finalised, the school will inform the parent body via its newsletter, website or other means and Education Durham Governance Services will write formally to the candidates with the outcome.

Successful candidates will be required to undertake an Enhanced Disclosing and Barring Service check prior to final appointment and will be supported through an 'Induction' process.

We are delighted to be back, with lots to look forward to. We hope to see you at our events later in the term, but if you need anything in the meantime, please get in touch.

Mrs Dunn, Staff & Governors