



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 see our new Year 6 role models. We were delighted to see how smart everyone was this morning – well done and thank you!



School website

Our assembly included lots of reminders about routines and expectations – many of which are provided here for your information. This newsletter also includes dates we have set for the year – please add these to your diaries – we will do our best to keep you updated with additions or changes.

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.
- Please be considerate of where you park, and take care when pulling away – almost 100 children arrive and leave at around the same time!
- Remember our school day has now officially changed – children finish at 3.30pm, Monday to Thursday, and 3.05pm on a Friday. This ensures we meet the statutory requirement of 32.5 hours per week.

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 next week, however:
 - C3 will be swimming this half-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.
 - C2 will be doing forest schools – information in a separate letter.
- Every child **MUST** bring their own **filled water bottle** (water only!) – 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 has not changed this year.

In school we use photographs to evidence children's work, for displays and to share events on X. 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:

Fr 6 Sept	School year group photos (for our welcome wall)
Fr 13 Sept	Hoopstarz
Fri 11 Oct; 9-9.30am	Family Friday for Classes 1 & 3
Fri 18 Oct; 9-9.30am	Family Friday for Classes 2 & 4
W 23 Oct	Sarah McAllister – cooking workshops – all children

Other dates for your diaries include:

Parent consultations (in school)	Mon 25 November; afternoon	Mon 14 July; afternoon
Family Fridays – C1 & 3	Fri 7 February	Fri 16 May
Family Fridays – C2 & 4	Fri 14 February	Fri 9 May

Updates:

- Arbor – you should have received an invitation to Arbor and the Parent app during the summer. If you haven't please let Mrs Medcalf know and we can look into this.
This will be our main method of contact for emails and text messages so please ensure your contact details are correct. You can make changes in the app, these will be verified in school.
We are currently working on the payment information side of the Arbor app and will write to you separately, but this is where you will pay for school meals, breakfast & teatime club and any school visits.
- 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, but are also available from the office. From this term a meal for Nursery and Y3-Y6 children is £2.81 per day.
- In the summer we told you that all of the Hazel Dene Childcare responsibilities were moving into school. Although Mrs Garside will continue to manage breakfast and after-school/teatime club on our behalf, bookings and enquiries will need to be made through the school office, either by phone – 01429 836376, or by email hesleden@durhamlearning.net
- We will let you know about after-school clubs for this term as soon as we can. We hope to offer a wide range of clubs and the model will be the same as last year.
- Our Curriculum topic 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!

School Admissions

Parents of children in **Year 6** will need to make an application for secondary school this half term. Applications are currently open, and the deadline is 31 October. Information about how to do this is contained in a separate letter.

Open nights: Wellfield – M 16 Sept, 4.00-6.30pm Shotton Hall – Th 12 Sept, 5-7pm

Parents of children in **Nursery** will also need to make an application for a place in Reception for next September. Applications are currently open, and the deadline is 15 January. Information about how to do this is contained in a separate flyer.

2024-2025 Holidays

Holiday	Closing Date	Re-open for Teaching Purposes
Autumn term 2024		Thursday 5 September 2024
Autumn half-term 2024	Friday 25 October 2024	Monday 4 November 2024
Christmas 2024	Friday 20 December 2024	Monday 6 January 2025
Spring half-term 2025	Friday 21 February 2025	Monday 3 March 2025
Easter 2025	Friday 11 April 2025	Monday 28 April 2025
May Day 2025	Friday 2 May 2025	Tuesday 6 May 2025
Summer half-term 2025	Friday 23 May 2025	Monday 2 June 2025
Summer 2025	Friday 18 July 2025	
School will be closed for the following staff training days:		
	Wed 4 Sept 2024	Fri 31 January 2025

Parental 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.

Parent Governor Vacancy

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. 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 Monday 23rd 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