

February 2024

Dear Parents & Carers,

As we approach the end of another half term, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the achievements and progress made in our school and provide you with some key updates. I am incredibly proud of our staff and students for their hard work, dedication, and resilience during what has been a challenging, busy and rewarding six weeks.

Attendance & Punctuality

Please remember that attendance is completely connected to progress: those students with 90%+ attendance in Year 11 last year performed on average 2 grades higher than their peers at GCSE. Attendance remains at 90.5% across Years 7-11, but considering we are in the middle of cold and flu season, it is positive that it has remained stable. This is, however, *still below the national average of 92%.* Year 8 is currently making the biggest effort to improve attendance as there have been days this has reached 93%. A big well done to Year 12 who are at 96.4%. Please remember that it is fine to come into school with minor ailments such as coughs and colds; we do not have a 24hr or 48hr rule around sickness bugs. Students should also **not** be booking summer holidays during the exam season - GCSE and A Level exams run until the end of June and all Year 11 and 13 students need to be available to attend school up to and including Wednesday 26th June (known as exam contingency day).

Staffing Update

The following appointments have been made in recent weeks, which provide some substantial and exciting changes to our leadership team from September. Joe Elliott was promoted earlier this month to the position of Deputy Headteacher, replacing Paul Atkinson - who will be leaving us to move to Jarrow School as Headteacher at the end of the academic year. This subsequently meant two vacancies at Assistant Headteacher level, which have been filled by Alex Maughan (currently Y10 RSL) and Kim Hay, currently at Monkseaton High School. Everyone will remain in their current substantive posts until the end of the summer term, but I wanted to let you know about these changes now.

Senior Leadership Team - September 2024		
Headteacher	Kelly Holbrook	<i>No change</i>
Deputy Headteacher Culture & Ethos	Joe Elliott	<i>Replacing Paul Atkinson</i>
Deputy Headteacher Quality of Education	Sarah Willis	<i>No change</i>
Assistant Headteacher Personal Development	Alex Maughan	<i>Replacing Val Short</i>
Assistant Headteacher Behaviour & Attitudes	Kim Hay	<i>Replacing Joe Elliott</i>
Assistant Headteacher Teaching & Learning	Ross Towler	<i>No change</i>



We are also currently recruiting a Curriculum Leader in English, as Anne Westgarth will be retiring this summer. I will keep you updated of further staffing changes as we go into the term. Please share our current vacancies page within your networks: <https://longbenton.org.uk/about/work-with-us>

New Governors

I am pleased to announce the addition of two new members to our Governing Body from January 2024: Jeremy Lulu joins us as a Trust Governor and Ashleigh Duggan joins us as a parent governor. The role of the Governing Body is to work with the headteacher and senior team to ensure that students at LHS receive the best possible education; the headteacher is accountable to governors and governors are in turn accountable to stakeholders: parents/carers, students and staff and the Local Authority. <https://longbenton.org.uk/about/governance>

Mock Exams/Summer Exams

Students in Year 11 and 13 have been approaching practice exams with real positivity and resilience. There are two further forthcoming mock exam windows straight after half term:

Year 10: Monday 26th February - Friday 8th March

Year 11: Monday 18th March - Thursday 27th March

Mellors & Bromcom

As referenced before Christmas, we are still moving forward with our plans for a new catering provider, Mellors, who will be in place from 15th April (the new term starting straight after Easter) <https://www.mellorscatering.co.uk/>. We will be in touch with a parents' welcome pack and more details after the February half term holiday, as moving to Mellors will require some changes to the way students pay for meals and the system parents use to keep accounts topped up. We are also changing our student MIS system in April, moving from SIMS to Bromcom. This means in the first instance we will require parents to ensure their contact details are up to date. Class Charts will still be in use so that parents can monitor their child across the school day. All of these changes are designed to improve the efficiency of our systems for staff and to provide the best possible experience for our students.

Student Surveys

Year 8 and 10 : Growing up in North Tyneside; Health and Wellbeing Survey

All schools in North Tyneside have been asked to participate in a Health and Wellbeing survey across Y8-10, led by the Public Health and School Improvement Teams in the Local Authority. The survey is **anonymous and confidential, and no individual pupil will be identified**. Our school has agreed to take part as it presents a unique opportunity to gain insights into how our children and young people self-assess their health, wellbeing and resilience. The questions concern a wide range of lifestyle and behaviours including:

- Growing up in North Tyneside
- Friendships and Relationships
- Emotional health and well-being
- Food choices and physical activity levels
- Tobacco, Alcohol, Drugs (appropriate to age range)



We will also be asking students to complete surveys to get some feedback on culture and ethos in the school next half term as part of our work with the DfE Behaviour Hubs programme and Inclusive Leadership programme. If you have any concerns about your child's participation in these surveys - which are all completely anonymous - please let us know.

MCKS Food Pantry

We continue to work with the MCKS Charitable Foundation UK, which aims to create healthy and resilient communities in the UK through feeding programs, educational support and charitable services. Our school receives a weekly food delivery which is distributed to families who request this. If you feel that you would benefit from this opportunity please inform school, by contacting either the main school office or your child's RSL or Pastoral Manager, where this request will be handled confidentially. We would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank MCKS for their support to date; many families in school have hugely benefited from this service. Families that have received the pantry supplies, have been amazed by the kindness of MCKS and the range of items supplied in the packs, which have included basic items such as toiletries through to a range of food products. From a school perspective, it is incredibly humbling to be able to support our students and families in this way. If you would like to help us further with this cause, any donations of long life / strong shopping bags would be gratefully received.

Support for parents - SEMH

Connect MHST, who support our students in school, would like to extend an invitation to parents and carers supporting children and young people with social, emotional, and mental health needs (SEMH) to a virtual support group on **Wednesday 21st February, 6pm, on Zoom**. The virtual group is a place for parents and carers to share their experiences, help and support each other and get information and advice to support them. **February's support group will share information about anxiety and strategies to support you to support your child/young person**. This link will take you to a flyer with further information and booking details: <https://rb.gy/r1dj37>

Reminders

The positive school culture we strive to achieve here is integral to creating an environment where students thrive academically, emotionally, and socially. Below are a few reminders of the expectations we have of all students in order to support this culture:

- School starts at 8.45am. All students are expected to be in form class by then.
- Mobile phones must be turned off and in bags as soon as students enter the school site. There have been occasions where parents have contacted students directly via mobile or students have called/messaged parents in school. We politely remind you that this should not happen between the hours of 8.45am and 3.15pm. If you need to contact your child during the school day, please ring the main office. The mobile phone policy can be found in the [Behaviour for Learning](#) policy.
- Please ensure you send your child to school in the correct uniform. This is the link to the [Uniform Policy](#). We specifically do not allow leggings, excessive jewellery, more than one studded earring or nose stud, or other



Longbenton
HIGH SCHOOL

facial piercings (this includes a ban on tongue piercings). Blazers must be worn at all times. Please contact your child's RSL if you need support with uniform.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to you all for your continued support. Your partnership in your child's education is invaluable, and it truly makes a difference to their growth and development. It is essential for our students to take some time to recharge and rejuvenate, ready to return to school with renewed energy and enthusiasm for learning; so I would like to wish you all a happy half term holiday.

Key dates for next half term are below.

Yours faithfully

Kelly Holbrook

Headteacher



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Key dates February-March 2024

February half term: week beginning Monday 19th February

First day of Spring Term 2: Monday 26th February

Year 10 Mock Exams: Monday 26th February - Friday 8th March

Year 9 Parents Evening: Wednesday 6th March

Year 11 Mock Exams: Monday 18th March - Thursday 27th March

Year 7 Parents Evening: Thursday 21st March

Year 10 Parents Evening: Wednesday 27th March

Last day of term: Thursday 28th March (Friday 29th is Good Friday/Bank Holiday)

Easter holidays: Friday 29th March - Sunday 14th April