

The Heddingham School Newsletter

12 June 2026

Ready, Respect, Safe



Dear Parent/Guardian

We look forward to sharing a special day with our Year 11 students on Friday 12 June as they reach the end of their journey through their GCSEs. We are excited by the prospect of so many of our cohort remaining with us in our Sixth Form, but the end of Year 11 still marks a very special moment that we hope will prove a memorable experience for many. So many students have worked hard for their examinations, and I am sure that they are all looking forward to some time when they can deflect their focus onto other areas of interest and have a break from the intense nature of an examination period.

The traditional signing of shirts, tearful celebrations, assembly of memories and messages noted in leavers' books will be central to their day (after they have completed a Science examination in the morning!). I am keeping my fingers crossed for a return of the sunshine we have seen mere glimpses of since the half-term holiday as we have outdoor events planned including a visit from the ice cream van!

I extend my thanks to the parents and families of Year 11 students who have supported them through such a taxing few months; I am sure you are relieved to see the end of this year's examination season.

Attendance

We remain highly aware of the importance of consistent attendance in school. This is also a message that is being driven with force by the Department for Education and Ofsted. Our internal data clearly shows a positive correlation between strong attendance (95%+) and attainment and progress, good behaviour, high enrichment involvement and positive student wellbeing. We closely monitor our attendance trends compared to those of other schools and unfortunately, we currently sit below national averages.

We have introduced many initiatives in school to try and encourage stronger student attendance at school and continue to look for avenues that may help to drive our percentages beyond national average comparisons. We work hard to break down individual barriers to persistent absence (below 90%) through a range of different strategies. This year, we have a high level of absence through student illness and are encouraging our students to commit to getting into school wherever possible, even if they feel slightly under the weather. While we completely understand that children occasionally become unwell and must stay at home, we would like to encourage families to consider carefully whether absence is always necessary, particularly in cases of minor illnesses.

By working in partnership, we can ensure that all our pupils benefit from consistent learning and make the most of their time at school. We remain deeply determined to improve this priority within the school.

Years 7 and 8 Residential

Thank you to those parents who attended the Year 7/8 residential information evening. I popped into the student information event that preceded this meeting and it was so uplifting to see the enthusiasm and excitement in the faces of the students who will be attending this trip. It looks like a fantastic experience, and I look forward to hearing all about it.

Mobile Phones

The post half-term shift to a mobile phone-free environment has been an extremely positive one. This has been a significant culture shift for our students and a sizable operational/organisational challenge for us as a school. However, our students have been superb at working with us on this policy change. Phones have not been visible anywhere on the school site and our random spot checks have confirmed that students are following policy expectation. We have noticed that a large section of our school population are deciding not to bring their devices to school which is pleasing to see. Many who do bring them in do so due to electronic bus passes but we continue to try and work with the bus companies to try and find an alternative to this.

A step away from reliance on devices has been refreshing. Staff have observed increased student interaction in unstructured time, students are using wrist watches to tell the time and we have seen an increased interest in enrichment offers now that students are free from digital distraction. Some students are finding the tether of their device a difficult attachment to break which has led to a degree of emotional discomfort.

I appreciate the support of parents in supporting this positive in school change but also recognise the challenge that this may pose in your own expectations around phone use at home. The following link provides some advice and guidance for parents in navigating this challenge:

[How to manage your child's online world without clashing - BBC Bitesize](#)

Attendance Award

We are pleased to announce the winner of the first weekly form attendance award. This was Miss Plumb's form with 97.7% attendance for the week beginning Monday 1 June, well done! These students were surprised with a little sweet treat to reward their excellent attendance. I wonder who will be this week's winners!

As we are now in the final half-term, this is the last chance for students to enter this year's attendance raffle. Students simply need 97% attendance for this half-term to gain their final raffle entry. The grand prize of a Nintendo Switch 2 will be drawn at the end of the award ceremony and one lucky student will walk away from school that day with their prize. They have to be "in it to win it", so alongside the main important benefit of their education, if they want their chance to win, every day at school matters. A special thank you to HPTA for their very generous donation of a prize.

Active Citizens

One of the strands to our vision as a school is that we help build students who will positively contribute to wider society as active citizens. I believe deeply that the vast majority of our students have a strong inherent concept of what is right and wrong with a desire to contribute to society in a positive way. I had the pleasure of taking a call from a family member of a local gentleman who had suffered a fall in his home, local to the school. One of our students in Year 9 had heard his cries for help and attempted to assist him but had been unable to access the home despite the gentleman's request for help. Recognising his distress, he attempted to reassure him and, sensibly, asked another student passing to stay put whilst he ran to the school to get an adult's help. Once he alerted the front office, a member of our reception staff followed him to the home where they managed to contact his family who came to his aid.

The family member who called the school was hugely appreciative of our students (and staff) and it was a proud call for me to take. I spoke with the student to thank him and praise him for his efforts which he brushed off with huge humility.

Sports Day

Our sports day is scheduled for 7 July. Students in form groups are currently selecting their House sports day teams. Very much the essence of our sports day is the wider inclusion of as many students as possible and we are actively encouraging students to get involved. Each student is only able to take part in one track and field event although they are able to do the tug of war event and the relay in addition to this. Please encourage your child to get involved as there are House Points for participation.

Year 10 Prefect Applications

Thank you to those Year 10 students who have written application letters to be a prefect. We have had some fabulous letters, and I am excited by the prospect of being involved with the interview process.

Year 10 Sixth form Taster Day

On Thursday 18 June, Year 10 students will experience a day in the life of a Hedingham Sixth Former. Students are able to select from our full range of Level 3 courses to sample taster lessons. In addition, the students will have access to all Sixth Form facilities including our new Sixth Form cafe, T Level block and study rooms. Please note this is a **non-uniform day** for Year 10 only and they should report to the main hall for a welcome assembly from Mr Hyde, Head of Sixth Form.

House Badges

As we approach a period when the House competition really heats up (Sports Day, Celebration Events, Attendance Awards, Hedingham's Got Talent), reinforcing the importance of a sense of belonging to our House system is important. All students were issued with a House badge earlier in the year that we have asked them to wear on their blazer lapel. Can you please ensure that your child has their house badge attached to their blazer. If the badge has been lost, a replacement is available through the Student Support Centre.

Year 12 Trip

On 10 June, 52 Year 12s travelled to the University of Essex for the UCAS Roadshow where they got the opportunity to speak to representatives from over 100 universities, gather prospectuses, ask questions, find out what courses are offered, and explore entry requirements.

Football

The Year 8 team that participated in the Police 999 football tournament on Tuesday 9 June did very well. They narrowly lost on penalties in the final. They were very well behaved all day and were much better behaved than most of the other schools.

If you see any of the boys, please congratulate them.



EPQ Presentations

This week, our Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) students completed one of the most significant components of their qualification: their final presentations.

As part of the EPQ, students are required to present the journey of their project to an audience, reflecting on the research, planning and development process that led to their final outcome.

Following their presentation, students must also host a question-and-answer session, demonstrating their depth of knowledge and ability to critically evaluate both their project and the overall process. This presentation element sits alongside a detailed production log and a 5,000-word essay, making it a substantial and highly respected qualification.

Before delivering their assessed presentations, our Sixth Form EPQ students had the opportunity to trial their presentations with a Year 10 audience. This valuable experience allowed them to practise their delivery, receive feedback and build confidence before facing the formal assessment. The breadth and quality of the projects on display was particularly impressive. Presentation topics included: *Does Pretty Privilege Exist in the Sentencing of Criminals?*, *Is There a Link Between Alcoholism and Mental Disorders?*, *To What Extent Will AI Replace the Future Workforce?* and *What Is the Key Factor in the Current Box Office Decline?*

Throughout the EPQ process, students have demonstrated exceptional commitment, resilience and intellectual curiosity. Their presentations showcased a wide range of skills, including independent research, critical thinking, communication, organisation and public speaking.

We are incredibly proud of the hard work and dedication shown by all of our EPQ students and congratulate them on the high standard of their presentations.



Dora Love

Here are two statements from students who visited our local primary schools and working with the Year 6 students.

“At St Peter’s primary school, we had to finally put our planning from the week into action. Getting to know the children first and observing how they answered questions together helped us to approach and eventually help the Year 6s tackle the questions they had been struggling on. After the end of the session, we regrouped to review what went well and what we could do better. Before our trip to De Vere primary school we regrouped once more to perfect our slides. Feeling more confident, we settled in and played our roles perfectly. Everything was in order and we all spoke clearly and made sure the children were having a fun time. In all, the second trip was more successful than the first.”

Eli, Year 9 Student

“As a group, we have visited 2 of our local primary schools, St Peter’s and De Vere. We have done a range of activities in their Year 6 classes. All based on our theme for the Dora Love competition this year which is migration. As a whole class they all started by making a word cloud based around the word migration to see what prior knowledge they already know about the word. After the class split into groups each individually working on a separate activity. This was a range from push and pull factors, Hedingham’s migration stories and others. The activity I was set on was all about Hedingham’s migration. Their overall task was to colour in a plain map of the world based on where people had come from to get to Hedingham School. I gave the group a world map and they each had to name as many flags as they could before putting that onto their maps. This activity turned out very successful as they all had a lot of fun not only colouring them in but also naming the flags. Each student that I spoke to contributed really well with this task which showed their level of engagement in the classroom. After completing all the tasks, they were set a final challenge of completing another word cloud. This differed widely from the first one they completed as the tasks we had set in place made them have a new understanding of migrations and getting rid of all the misconceptions that they may have been facing. They were able to provide not only where people might move to but also the reasons they may move as well. Overall, the session was very educational for the Year 6s and they now have a new developed idea of the term migration, and they understand the key themes from it”.

Lucy, Year 9 Student

Hedingham’s Got Talent

On the 1 June we launched this year’s Hedingham’s Got Talent competition. During Form, tutors will speak to students so they can start thinking about their ideas. The categories in the competition are:

Music	Set Design	Make-up
Drama	Poetry	Creative Programming
Dance	Creative Writing	Costume Design
Musical Theatre	Baking	
Art	Photography	

The deadline for entries is the 26 June. We hope to see as much student involvement as possible. There will be House Assemblies week beginning the 8 June providing further information.

FREE MOVING UP WEBINARS FOR PARENTS/CARERS

of primary aged children

Provided by your Mental Health Support Team
@EssexMHST_and_SETCamhs

bit.ly/3MaR1wJ



Understanding and Managing
Difficult Behaviour
3rd June 10 am

Moving Up! Transition from
Infants to Juniors
17th June 10 am and 7 pm

Moving Up! Transition from
Primary to Secondary
24th June 10 am and 7 pm



Striving to provide the best care by the best people



FREE WEBINAR FOR PARENTS/ CARERS

of secondary aged children to support
with mental health and wellbeing.

Provided by your Mental Health Support Team
@EssexMHST_and_SETCamhs

bit.ly/4ozRciL



Coming up in June...

Understanding and Supporting Anxiety
2nd June 10 am

Talking to Your Teen About Mental
Health and Wellbeing
11th June 10 am

Understanding and Supporting Your
Child with Self-Harm
16th June 6:30 pm

