

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

FRIDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been a very difficult few weeks for our school community following the sudden and tragic death of one of our Year 11 students. During this incredibly sad time, I have been deeply moved by the compassion, kindness and incredible resilience shown by our students, staff and wider school community. We have come together to support one another, demonstrating the strength of our school family.

Thank you for your support with respect to the early closure of school at 1.00pm on Tuesday 24th November, which will enable staff and students to attend her funeral and pay their respects. Thank you for your understanding, flexibility and support in these exceptional circumstances. I recognise that changes to the school day can cause inconvenience for families, and I am extremely grateful for the way in which everyone responded.

Supporting Every Student – The Importance of Relationships

On Monday, I had the privilege of attending the Attachment Research Community (ARC) conference in Birmingham. It was an extremely valuable opportunity to hear from leading practitioners and educational experts about the importance of relationships, emotional wellbeing and the way in which we support young people in school.

Our staff have undertaken training with a team of educational psychologists in Trauma Informed Attachment Awareness Schools (TIAAS) and Emotion Coaching. The conference reinforced my belief that we have taken the right approach as a school. We are committed to ensuring that our staff are highly trained and equipped to support students emotionally, recognising that every young person is an individual with their own experiences, needs and circumstances.

One of the keynote speakers was Paul Dix, author of 'When the Adults Change, Everything Changes' and a former teacher in Nuneaton. He spoke powerfully about the importance of positive relationships, consistency and the language adults use in the classroom. At Higham Lane, we firmly believe that students achieve their best when they feel safe, understood, valued and supported. Developing positive relationships is therefore central to everything we do.

The Importance of Working Together

Recent research published by the Department for Education (DfE), entitled 'Parental Engagement and Academic Outcomes: Evidence from Longitudinal Data', reinforces the important role that parents and carers play in supporting their children's education.

The research highlights the benefits of taking an active interest in school, talking regularly with your child about their learning, the power of reading, encouraging high aspirations, supporting good attendance and engaging constructively with school. We recognise that every family is different and that circumstances are not always straightforward. However, we firmly believe that the strongest outcomes are achieved when home and school work together. We therefore encourage all parents and carers to maintain positive communication with us, take advantage of opportunities to discuss their child's progress and work with our staff to find constructive solutions whenever challenges arise. Together, we can give every young person the best possible opportunity to succeed.

You can read the DfE research here: [Parental Engagement and Academic Outcomes: Evidence from Longitudinal:

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6ad5ddd2e5db84746b4797aa/parental_engagement_and_academic_outcomes.pdf)

Celebrating Our Literacy Leaders

Our Literacy Leaders continue to play an important role in helping younger students develop their reading skills and confidence. Our Year 9 Literacy Leaders work with Year 7 students, while our Year 10 Literacy Leaders support students in Year 8. They meet regularly in the school library, where they listen to younger students read and provide encouragement, guidance and support. They also help students overcome difficulties with reading, pronunciation and understanding unfamiliar vocabulary, creating a friendly and supportive environment in which students feel comfortable developing their skills. This initiative benefits everyone involved. While our younger students build their literacy skills and confidence, our Literacy Leaders develop valuable communication, leadership and mentoring skills. I would like to congratulate all the students involved and thank them for the enthusiasm and commitment they bring to this valuable initiative.





Fundraising and Celebrations

Today, we held a non-uniform day in support of World Children's Day and Children in Need. Thank you to everyone who contributed and helped raise money for these important causes. Your generosity is very much appreciated.

Well done, too, to everyone involved in the CEAT Christmas Choir. It was a great success, and I would like to congratulate all the students and staff who contributed to making the event so special.

Christmas Music Events



Christmas is always a particularly busy and exciting time for our musicians, and we have several performances coming up over the next few weeks.

Please make sure that consent forms have been completed and returned if your child is participating in the choir or orchestra.

Our forthcoming events are:

- **Thursday 3rd December, 6.00pm** – St Nicholas Church, Nuneaton (Choir and Orchestra).
- **Wednesday 16th December, 6.00pm** – Christmas Concert at Coombe Hall (Choir, Orchestra and selected soloists/groups).
- **Thursday 17th December, 2.00pm** – Christmas performance at a local care home (Choir).

If your child plays a musical instrument or enjoys singing, I would also encourage them to consider performing at our Christmas Concert on Wednesday 16th December. It is a wonderful opportunity to showcase the musical talent within our school. Students can sign up on the sheet outside MU2. Please ensure they do so by Friday 27th November. I look forward to seeing and hearing our talented students perform.

There will be no jamming club on Thursdays until after Christmas. If you would like to try a similar club why not try instrument repair on a Tuesday after school - 3.15-4.00pm in the music department

Thank You

As we move towards the end of term and the Christmas period, I want to reiterate my sincere thanks to all our parents and carers for your continued support, kindness and understanding. The last few weeks have reminded us just how important our school community is. As you know, Be Kind and Take Responsibility are two of the three core HLS values. I have been incredibly proud of the way our students and staff have been so kind, supported one another, showing compassion, maturity and resilience in such difficult circumstances and taken responsibility for their actions.

At Higham Lane, we remain committed to ensuring that every student feels valued, supported and able to achieve their very best. The partnership between home and school is central to this, and I am grateful for the trust you continue to place in us.

Thank you once again for standing alongside us during this particularly difficult time.

With best wishes,



Michael Gannon - Headteacher



Dates for your diaries

Monday 23rd November - Year 9 Safeline workshops
Tuesday 24th November - Year 9 Safeline workshops
Wednesday 25th November - Year 11 photographs - whole year group, forms and sports teams
Thursday 26th November - Year 11 photographs - individual photographs
Thursday 26th November - Year 11 SPE 1 - Online, 3.00pm-7.00pm - *please note the early closure of 2.15pm*
Monday 30th November - Staff Training Day - school closed to all students
Friday 11th December - Christmas Jumper Day

Please ensure that you have noted the staff training day on Monday 30th November, when school will be closed to all students.

Michael Drayton Junior School
The Woodlands, Hartshill, Nuneaton, CV10 0SZ
TEL: 024 7639 2272
Email: admin2028@welearn365.com
Headteacher: Mrs. D. Compton-Belcher

Dear Parents and Carers,

Iam writing to ask for your support with a very special community event that we will be hosting at Michael Drayton Junior School next Saturday, 21st November.
StJohn's Primary School and Nursery in Kenilworth is currently supporting one of its teachers, Mrs Saurabhi Bhave, who has been diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (AML), an aggressive form of blood cancer. Saurabhi is undergoing intensive treatment and is urgently in need of a stem cell donor. Sadly, there is currently no life-saving donor currently on the register.

To support the search for a life-saving donor, Michael Drayton Junior School will be hosting a DKMS stem cell registration event on:
Saturday 21st November
10:00am to 3:00pm

The event is open to anyone aged 16-55 and in good health. Registration is simple, painless and involves completing a short form and taking a cheek swab, no needles!
While there is no guarantee that a matching donor for Saurabhi will be found through this event, every person who joins the register increases the chances of finding a match for her and for many others facing blood cancers and blood disorders.
You can find more information about Saurabhi's campaign, including eligibility criteria for joining the register, here: https://www.dkms.org.uk/get-involved/virtual-drives/saurabhi

We would be grateful if you could also share this information with family members, friends, neighbours and colleagues who may be eligible to join the register.
Thank you for your support, and we hope to see many of you on Saturday 21st November.
Yours sincerely,

Headteacher
Michael Drayton Junior School

Winter 2026
Holiday Activities & Food (HAF) programme

Dear Parent/Carer,

The nationally funded Holiday Activities & Food (HAF) programme provides young people the opportunity to access enriching activities alongside healthy meals over the main school holidays at Christmas, Easter and Summer.

All young people who currently meet the following two criteria are eligible:

- In full-time education between Reception - Year 11
- Receiving benefits-related free school meals (Targeted FSM category)

Please note you will need a HAF code to book activities. Eligible families can access their HAF code through the 'Request a HAF code' form at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/HAF.

Each eligible young person can access a maximum of 4 funded sessions over Winter. Activity providers can request additional funding for 1:1 support if this is required, however this depends on their staff availability and qualifications. We also fund a number of SEND-specific activities.

- 17-22nd Nov Applications open for SEND Family Experiences (Requires Targeted FSM and an EHCP)
- 30th Nov HAF listings live on www.warwickshire.gov.uk/HAF
- 21st Dec Activities begin

If you have any queries on the programme, please contact us at hafprogramme@warwickshire.gov.uk or use the QR code to visit our website, www.warwickshire.gov.uk/HAF.

With our regards,
Warwickshire HAF Team

HAF programme team
hafprogramme@warwickshire.gov.uk
0800 408 1558 (Family Information Service helpline)