



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

FRIDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been a wonderful but very busy week at Higham Lane School, with many highlights that demonstrate the fantastic work taking place across our school community. From celebrating the achievements of our students and welcoming families into school to supporting our young people's wellbeing and recognising the dedication of our staff, there has been much to be proud of.

As always, thank you for your continued support. It is a real privilege to lead a school community where young people are encouraged to flourish, challenge themselves and make a positive difference to the world around them.

Year 7 Curriculum Evening and Meet the Tutor

A huge thank you to all our Year 7 parents and carers, and to our Year 7 students, who joined us on Thursday 8 October for our Year 7 Curriculum Evening and Meet the Tutor event. It was so lovely to meet so many parents and carers, to talk about our curriculum and to hear such positive feedback about how well our newest students have settled into the Higham Lane School family. Starting secondary school is a significant milestone, and it is wonderful to see our Year 7 students growing in confidence, building friendships and embracing the opportunities available to them. Thank you also to our incredible Mrs Bissett and Miss Charnell for their presentations to parents on how our new Year 7 students can flourish here at HLS. Thank you for taking the time to attend and for working in partnership with us to give our students the very best possible start.

Youth Parliament: A Voice for Young People

Two of our fantastic students represented Higham Lane School at the first Youth Parliament of the 2026-27 academic year. It was wonderful to hear young people sharing their views and ideas about how Nuneaton can be improved for everyone. The event was a really enriching experience, giving students the opportunity to express their opinions, listen to others and contribute to meaningful discussions about their local community. A very special congratulations goes to Anabella, who was voted for by fellow Youth Parliament members to lead the Environment Portfolio! This is a fantastic achievement and a testament to her enthusiasm and commitment to making a positive difference. We are incredibly proud of you, Anabella, and look forward to hearing more about what you achieve in this important role.

Congratulations to Our Sixth Form Student Leadership Team

Well done to our wonderful team of Sixth Form students who have been appointed as President and Vice Presidents. Taking on this responsibility is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate leadership, support younger students and contribute to the life of our school. Our Sixth Form Leaders play an important role in driving the vision of the sixth form forward from a student perspective. I am delighted to see our Sixth Form students stepping forward to lead by example, and I look forward to seeing them flourish in their new roles.

Thank a Teacher Day: Celebrating All Our Staff

Monday was national Thank a Teacher Day, and I took the opportunity to speak to all our staff during our morning briefing to thank them for the incredible work they do every day. Although the national day celebrates teachers, I wanted to make it clear that every member of staff at Higham Lane School is equally valued, including our non-teaching and support colleagues. From our pastoral, administrative and premises teams to our teaching assistants and all those who work behind the scenes, every individual makes a vital contribution to our students' education, safety and wellbeing. A successful school depends on far more than excellent classroom teaching. It relies on a team of dedicated professionals who care deeply about young people and work tirelessly to help them succeed. I am immensely grateful to every member of our team for everything they do.



Kinship Care Week: Recognising Our Families

This week is national Kinship Care Week, an important opportunity to recognise and celebrate the families who provide care for children when their birth parents are unable to do so. We know that kinship care is part of life for a number of families within our school community. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all the kinship carers connected to Higham Lane School for the love, commitment, stability and support they provide to young people. Your contribution can make an enormous difference to a child's life, and we recognise and appreciate the care you give. At Higham Lane, we want every student and every family to feel welcomed, understood and supported.

Supporting Student Wellbeing: Up Front Theatre Company

On Wednesday, we welcomed the Up Front Theatre Company to present *In Harm's Way* to our Year 9 students. This powerful PSHE performance combined theatre with an interactive lecture to explore mental health, self-harm and the different forms these difficulties can take. Importantly, it also encouraged students to consider positive coping mechanisms and ways to seek help when they or someone they know may be struggling. The play was exceptionally well received, with students describing it as "impactful" and "really well acted to help get a serious message across". Experiences like this provide valuable opportunities for students to reflect on difficult topics in a safe and engaging environment. We are grateful to the company for delivering such an important message and to our Year 9 students for engaging so thoughtfully.



Year 11 Exam Stress Workshops

We also welcomed colleagues from the Mental Health in Schools Team on Wednesday afternoon, who delivered two workshops for our Year 11 students. With trial examinations and GCSEs approaching, this is an important time for students to develop strategies to manage pressure and maintain their wellbeing. The workshops gave students an opportunity to discuss their thoughts and feelings and explore practical ways to manage exam-related stress.

Our students engaged brilliantly in both sessions. We hope they will take away some useful strategies that help them approach their examinations with greater confidence, resilience and a sense of perspective. We will continue to remind our Year 11 students that, although examinations are important, their wellbeing matters too. They are not alone, and there are always adults in school ready to listen and help.

Mental Health, SEND and Supporting Every Young Person

There has been media coverage this week following the publication of a new independent review into mental health conditions, ADHD and autism. I listened with interest to Professor Peter Fonagy, who led the review, speaking on BBC Radio 4's Today programme this morning.

Some of the headlines have focused on the possibility of overdiagnosis of ADHD and autism. However, Professor Fonagy emphasised that the increase in mental distress among young people is real and significant. He challenged the suggestion that young people's mental health difficulties are simply being over-diagnosed and highlighted the need for high-quality assessments, national standards and better regulation of private diagnostic services.

The important message for schools and families is that we must take young people's experiences seriously and ensure that appropriate support is available when it is needed. A diagnosis can be important, but access to help should also reflect an individual young person's needs. At Higham Lane School, we are extremely fortunate to have such a dedicated and talented SEND team, led by our wonderful SENCO, Mrs German, and brilliantly supported by our Deputy SENCO, Mrs Smedley. We are also fortunate to have Mrs Hood and Mrs Smith, our highly skilled higher-level teaching assistants, alongside an incredible team of teaching assistants who work tirelessly to support some of our most vulnerable students.

I would like to thank every member of this team for their compassion, expertise and commitment. Their work helps ensure that students with additional needs are supported, included and given the opportunity to achieve their potential. I am immensely proud of the difference they make to the lives of our young people.

A Busy Week Beyond the Classroom

It has also been an incredibly busy week for me personally, with several important activities focused on safeguarding, collaboration and improving educational opportunities. A number of HLS colleagues, including myself, completed the latest safer recruitment training. This is an essential part of ensuring that our recruitment practices remain exemplary and that we do everything possible to safeguard the young people in our care. Keeping students safe is our highest priority, and we are committed to maintaining the strongest possible procedures.

On Thursday, I was delighted to visit Michael Drayton School and deliver an assembly to students who may be considering applying to join Higham Lane School next year. It was a pleasure to meet the students, introduce them to our school and share some of the opportunities that await them. Other members of our Senior Leadership Team are also visiting our feeder schools to deliver a similar message ahead of our open evening next week.

This week, I also attended a meeting of the Warwickshire Education Partnership Board in Warwick, where as chair of our district, I represented headteachers from Nuneaton, Bedworth and North Warwickshire. We discussed a range of important educational priorities, including plans for SEND provision across our area. Working collaboratively with other education leaders is vital if we are to secure the best possible outcomes and support for all young people in our communities.

Keeping Our Students Safe

Throughout the week, we have continued our morning gate screening to check for prohibited items. This includes ensuring that mobile phones are switched off and kept securely in students' bags rather than carried on their person, as well as checking for dangerous or illegal items such as vapes and weapons.

I would like to thank our students for their cooperation and positive attitude throughout this process. Hundreds of students have been screened each day, and we are delighted that no prohibited items have been found during these checks this week. Our approach is about prevention, safeguarding and creating an environment in which every student and member of staff feels safe. We will continue these checks as part of our ongoing commitment to doing everything reasonably possible to protect our school community. Thank you, too, to parents and carers for supporting our expectations and helping us reinforce these important messages at home.

Best Wishes to Students with Trial Examinations

To all students who have trial examinations over the next two weeks, we wish you the very best of luck. Please remember that preparation, organisation and a sensible balance between revision and rest can make a real difference. Approach each examination positively, do your best and use the experience as an opportunity to recognise your strengths and identify areas for further development. We are proud of the effort our students put into their learning and will continue to support them as they prepare for their next steps.

Important Dates and Reminders

Please make a note of the following dates in your family calendar.

Wednesday 14 October – Open Evening

We are looking forward to welcoming prospective students and their families to Higham Lane School for our Open Evening, which will run from 5.00 pm to 7.30 pm. To accommodate this event, the school day will follow our student progress evening timings, and school will finish at 2.15 pm. We are excited to showcase our school, celebrate the work of our students and staff, and share what makes Higham Lane such a special place to learn.

Thursday 22 October – Y13 Parents Evening – School will close at 2.15pm to allow school to prepare for parents and carers.

Friday 23 October – Teacher Training Day – School will be closed to students on Friday 23 October for a teacher training day. Students are not required to attend.

Monday 26 October – Half-Term Holiday Begins – School will break up for one week.

Monday 2 November – Return to School – Students will return to school on Monday 2 November, beginning the week with an extended tutor time.

We are also very excited about our Year 11 practice interviews, which will take place throughout the first week back after half-term. These are an excellent opportunity for our students to develop their confidence, practise their interview skills and prepare for future education, training and employment opportunities. We are grateful to everyone who helps make this valuable experience possible.

Preparing for Colder and Wetter Weather

The weather is certainly beginning to feel colder and wetter, so please ensure that your child comes to school appropriately dressed. A black waterproof coat and waterproof leather shoes that comply with our school dress code are particularly important as the weather changes. It may also be helpful for students to carry a small umbrella in their school bags. Thank you for helping us ensure that students are comfortable, prepared for the weather and dressed appropriately for the school day.

On rainy days, all student can access the canteens where they will be warm and dry and we also provide free toast everyday and free hot chocolate on Fridays to create a lovely environment where students can start their day, even when the weather is not so great.

Thank You and Have a Wonderful Weekend

As I reflect on the week, I am reminded once again of the many reasons to be proud of Higham Lane School. Whether it is our students representing us in the wider community, our staff going above and beyond to support young people, or our families working in partnership with us, there is so much to celebrate.

Thank you to all our parents and carers for your ever-present support, encouragement and commitment to our school. The partnership between home and school is incredibly important, and we are grateful for all that you do to help our students thrive.

I wish all our students, parents, carers and staff a relaxing and enjoyable weekend. I look forward to another positive week at Higham Lane School.

With best wishes,



Michael Gannon
Headteacher



26543



27005



27862

Every day counts

Weekly form attendance

Week ending: 9 October 2026



● 97% and above

● 95% to below 97%

● Below 95%

YEAR 7

7H1	● 95.4%	7L1	● 99.2%	7S1	● 98.5%
7H2	● 95.7%	7L2	● 97.8%	7S2	● 97.1%
7H3	● 94.8%	7L3	● 91.4%	7S3	● 99.3%

YEAR 8

8H1	● 98.6%	8L1	● 93.8%	8S1	● 93.2%
8H2	● 97.8%	8L2	● 99.3%	8S2	● 98.8%
8H3	● 88.0%	8L3	● 97.6%	8S3	● 93.6%

YEAR 9

9H1	● 86.4%	9L1	● 95.2%	9S1	● 95.7%
9H2	● 92.1%	9L2	● 93.6%	9S2	● 98.1%
9H3	● 90.4%	9L3	● 92.1%	9S3	● 93.3%

YEAR 10

10H1	● 99.0%	10L1	● 90.0%	10S1	● 79.6%
10H2	● 93.1%	10L2	● 96.4%	10S2	● 90.3%
10H3	● 98.5%	10L3	● 92.8%	10S3	● 92.5%

YEAR 11

11H1	● 93.3%	11L1	● 94.3%	11S1	● 79.3%
11H2	● 93.3%	11L2	● 85.4%	11S2	● 91.4%
11H3	● 86.7%	11L3	● 92.3%	11S3	● 95.4%

This week's highest attendance:

7S3 and 8L2 | 99.3% - well done!