

The Hedingham School Newsletter

18 September 2026

Ready, Respect, Safe



Dear Parent/Guardian

The first days back at school have passed in a blur but it has been such a positive start to the academic year and a pleasure to welcome back our students into the start of a new and exciting term.

A particularly warm welcome to our Year 7 cohort who have already shown such maturity and commitment. They have adjusted brilliantly to life at Hedingham School and there is a real energy and buzz amongst the cohort.

Similarly, we welcome a new Year 12 cohort who start their challenging journey towards Level 3 qualifications. They have also quickly settled into their courses and are already showing huge potential in the classroom.

I would like to thank families for their support with ensuring that children are in full correct uniform including formal, unbranded school shoes. This sets the standard and reinforces our high expectations. Please also ensure that students do not attend school with jewellery. As per our Behaviour Policy, students can only wear a plain stud in each ear and a watch.

News from the Summer

We were delighted with the results of the formal examinations with some of the strongest outcomes that we have seen in many years. The outcomes are a reflection of the dedicated attitude shown by our Year 11 students towards diligently preparing for examinations. The year group demonstrated a culture where there was a thirst for success which made such a difference towards the momentum that built throughout the year. Staff worked hard to extend every opportunity to support student learning and this magic combination and collective effort reaped real reward. We now hope to support our new Year 11 cohort in a similar vein as they step into a key time in their academic journey.

I must also extend my sincere congratulations to our Year 13 cohort who now springboard towards an array of exciting avenues including university, apprenticeships and employment. Watching them secure the currency they required to open future doors was a real privilege in the summer.

Attendance and Punctuality

We started the term with welcome back assemblies for all students that had a particular contextual focus for each year group. However, there was a central core theme in each assembly around the importance of consistent regular attendance and punctuality. Disruption to learning through regular absence makes it very difficult for students to maintain continuity and momentum in classrooms. There is such a clear correlation between high attendance and strong achievement. Your support in making sure that your child attends every day and on time is essential to ensuring that your child achieves their full potential and does not miss valuable learning opportunities. We monitor attendance and punctuality closely and will report to you termly. Concerns will be flagged quickly and contact made with families. I would like to remind parents and guardians that, in line with clear national guidance and school policy, requests for leaves of absence for term time holidays will not be accepted. Taking a child out of school during term time is not considered "exceptional" circumstance.

New Staff

We welcome numerous new teaching staff who have made an excellent start to their time as part of the team at Hedingham. This includes Miss Dunne (SENDCo) and Mr Batch who has stepped into the Leader of Year 10 role. We also welcome Mr Spelman (English), Miss Guest (English), Miss Gunn (Science) and Mrs Gould (Geography).

Building and Decorative Work

During student summer absence, external contractors and internal site staff have been working hard on improving the school infrastructure (electrical and heating) and decorative aesthetics. We are gradually moving away from the "banana yellow" colour schemes to a more pleasant blue tone. We have installed smart boards throughout the building and updated a significant amount of our IT equipment. We have new hung ceilings with updated lighting as well as new performance lighting in the Main Hall and Drama Studio. This work continues as we step into the new term.

Rewards Ladder

With so much to be proud of and celebrate in the school, we have evolved our House Points system to reward those who routinely meet or exceed our expectations. Rather than House Points contributing to House competition. They also can now accrue to generate individual prizes at different points. Students' individual House Point tally allows them to climb our Rewards Ladder in KS3 and KS4.

House Points are awarded for club attendance as well as demonstrating the characteristics of a Hedingham student (Hard work, Perseverance, Resilience, Accountability, Kindness and Ambition).



Year 12 and 13 Geography Field Work trip at Abbots Hall Salt Marsh



Year 7 Meet the Tutor Evening

We were delighted to welcome so many parents and carers to our Meet the Form Tutor Evening at Hedingham School. The evening was a fantastic opportunity for families to meet their child's Form Tutor, find out more about school life, and ask some really important questions about the year ahead.

The positive turnout highlighted the importance of building strong links between school and home. Working together with parents and carers is an essential part of supporting our students to settle well, make progress, and have a successful school experience.

Parents and carers were also provided with an information card containing key contact details and useful information, so that they know how to keep in touch with the school and where to go if they have a question or concern.

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to such a positive and productive evening. We look forward to continuing to work closely with our families throughout the year.

Parliament Trip

On Friday 11 September Year 13 were given the opportunity to visit the Palace of Westminster as an enrichment activity for both politics and criminology. During the tour, students were offered further insight into both the history of Westminster and significant pieces of heritage. The trip provided excellent insight into how the dynamics of both Parliament, the executive and the judiciary operate daily and provided insight into how United Kingdom functions as a democracy. During the tour students were able to witness the commons debate over the controversial end of life care bill alongside the lord's debate on creative education. Students also toured the supreme court and showed the historical relevance of an independent judiciary branch.



Extra-Curricular Marketplace

This week, Year 7, 8 and 9 students had the opportunity to attend our Extra-Curricular Marketplace, which took place from Tuesday to Thursday. In groups, students explored the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities available across the school, viewed visual displays showcasing each club and activity, and spoke directly with students who currently participate. They were then given the opportunity to sign up for any clubs or activities that interested them. Participation in extra-curricular activities is an important part of the wider school experience. Regular attendance provides students with opportunities to develop new skills and interests, build confidence and strengthen important personal qualities such as teamwork, resilience and commitment. We strongly encourage all students to take advantage of the opportunities available and to attend their chosen activities regularly.

SCHOOL CLUBS AUTUMN TERM 2026

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
PD TIME				ALL YEARS Choir ROOM 14	
LUNCH	ALL YEARS Art Studio Time ROOMS 56-57 YEAR 7 Basketball Sports Hall ALL YEARS Table Tennis Dance Studio YEARS 10-11 Fitness Sports Hall YEAR 11 The Social Club ROOM 60 YEARS 10-11 Football Astro	ALL YEARS Art Studio Time ROOMS 56-57 ALL YEARS Small Animal Care ROOM 30 YEAR 7 Rugby Astro YEARS 8-9 Basketball Sports Hall ALL YEARS Table Tennis Dance Studio YEARS 7-8-9 Fitness Sports Hall	ALL YEARS Art Studio Time ROOMS 56-57 YEAR 7 Drama ROOM 14 ALL YEARS Tabletop Club ROOM 35 YEAR 10 Badminton Sports Hall ALL YEARS Table Tennis Dance Studio YEARS 10-11 Fitness Sports Hall YEAR 7 Football Astro	ALL YEARS Art Studio Time ROOMS 56-57 YEAR 7 Science Club ROOM 35 YEAR 9 Drama ROOM 14 YEAR 10 Badminton Sports Hall YEARS 7-8-9 Fitness Sports Hall YEARS 8-9 Football Astro	ALL YEARS Art Studio Time ROOMS 56-57 ALL YEARS Small Animal Care ROOM 30 YEARS 7-8-9 Dance Dance Studio YEARS 7-8-9 French Friday ROOM 53 YEARS 10-11 Fitness Sports Hall YEAR 11 Badminton Sports Hall Sixth Form League Astro
AFTER SCHOOL	ALL YEARS School Musical (Audition based) Hall ALL YEARS Girls Football Astro Goalkeeper Training YEARS 10-11 Rugby Astro	ALL YEARS Rock School ROOM 15	ALL YEARS Netball Courts YEARS 10-11 Basketball Sports Hall Selected Football Session Astro	ALL YEARS Hockey Astro	

H E D I N G H A M S C H O O L A N D S I X T H F O R M



Year 11 Parents' Information Evening

It was great to see so many parents on Wednesday night taking the time to come in to school to hear about the roadmap for Year 11, next steps at Hedingham Sixth Form, and strategies to support their children with exam stress and anxiety. Thank you for all the positive feedback, and we will be posting resources from the night on the school website for those who were unable to attend. We look forward to working collaboratively with parents to support students in building resilience and forming positive ways of working in preparation for their mock, and final exams.

Road Safety Event

Safer Roads Essex visited the school to deliver an important presentation focused on road safety, highlighting how students can remain safe both as passengers and, when they are older, as drivers.

The presentation was particularly powerful and impactful, with students responding positively to the real-life stories and experiences shared. Following the presentation, students participated in a short workshop, during which they were fully engaged in answering questions and exploring their individual responsibilities in keeping themselves and others safe on the roads.

This session formed part of the school's PSHE programme and provided students with valuable knowledge and practical guidance to support safer decision-making and responsible behaviour on the roads.

Nut Free School

This is a reminder that Hedingham School has a number of students with life threatening nut allergies. This means that we cannot have any nut based, or may contain nut products, in the building.

Safeguarding

All students in years 7-11 have received assemblies based around key safeguarding messages including managing risk and sharing concerns about themselves or a friend. The assembly also covered the school's zero tolerance approach to any prejudicial behaviour or bullying as well as e-safety messages including student conduct, contact and content on-line.

Students were reminded that they can seek support through their form tutor, the Student Support Centre, by completing an Orange Card or by emailing safe@hedingham.essex.sch.uk

Parents are reminded that our Safeguarding Lead is David Nash who again can be contacted via the following email address: safe@hedingham.essex.sch.uk or directly by emailing hed.nashd@hedingham.essex.sch.uk

Paul Finch, Headteacher



team
Dandelion
a parent support hub

Join us for a cuppa at one of our

PARENT HUBS

1.00-2.30PM

EVERY 2ND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH HALL
HALSTEAD CO9 2LD**

EVERY 3RD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

**BRAINTREE BAPTIST CHURCH
SWAN SIDE, CM7 3DA**

Join with other parents and invited professionals to learn more about your child's neurodivergent needs. We support families with fostered, SGO and adopted children too.

TEAM DANDELION

A PARENT SUPPORT HUB

*Do you support a child
with additional needs?*

*Join us for a coffee,
cake and a listening ear*

*Support from
professionals, parents
grandparents & carers
with lived experiences*



*For more information,
please call Suzanne or
Rachel on:*

07843027046



*Team Dandelion -
A Parent Support Hub*



TeamDandelion123



*In collaboration with The
MAZE Group and supported
by Families InFocus*



**Families
InFocus Essex**



**COMMUNITY
FUND**



Meet Team Dandelion

Team Dandelion is a group of parents, grandparents, carers and professionals who have lived the SEND journey. We are passionate about supporting families across Mid-Essex who need guidance, advice, or simply a listening ear and, of course, a cup of tea.

Our Founders

Suzanne Kenneally offers guidance and practical support tailored to your family's individual needs.

Rachel Jobson provides a compassionate listening ear and tools to support emotional wellbeing.

Both Suzanne and Rachel bring lived and professional experience from neurodiverse households, with extensive knowledge of navigating the SEND system, disability support, and adoption. Suzanne is a facilitator for The MAZE Group in Colchester, and Rachel is an experienced Parent Mentor within the same organisation.

About Team Dandelion

Together with our dedicated volunteers, we opened Team Dandelion – a Parent Support Hub in February 2026, providing a friendly, safe, and welcoming space for parents and carers of:

- Neurodiverse children
- Adopted or fostered children
- Families experiencing challenging behaviour

If you need understanding, reassurance, or support, you'll find it at one of our Hubs.

