



# HSL NEWS



## Student Spotlight

Well done to Sophia, Phoebe and Ava who won the first Year 11 Effort Challenge!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- ✳ **End of term**  
Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October at 3:35pm
- ✳ **Year 11 Mock exams**  
w/c Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November  
w/c Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November
- ✳ **Year 10 Parents' Evening**  
Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November  
4-7pm via School Cloud
- ✳ **Non-uniform Day**  
Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November
- ✳ **INSET Day - school closed to pupils**  
Friday 28<sup>st</sup> November
- ✳ **INSET Day - school closed to pupils**  
Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the end of a busy and rewarding first half of the autumn term, I want to take a moment to reflect on what has been a fantastic October at The High School Leckhampton. The school feels full of energy and purpose, with students engaging enthusiastically in lessons, clubs, and a wide range of enrichment opportunities.

Our Year 7 students have continued to settle in brilliantly, bringing curiosity, kindness, and a great deal of enthusiasm to school life. The atmosphere across the school has been lively and positive, and it's been a real pleasure to see so many pupils taking part in activities beyond the classroom.

One particular highlight this month was our House Cross Country event. Every pupil rose to the challenge of tackling the route around Burrows Field, demonstrating determination, teamwork, and great school spirit. We were especially proud to see some of our runners go on to achieve excellent results in the district finals. House competitions continue to be a wonderful way for pupils to connect and show pride in their houses – and there's much more to come with the House Art competition now underway.

The term has also been rich in cultural and academic experiences. Almost the entire school attended the Cheltenham Literature Festival, a remarkable opportunity to hear from inspiring authors and thinkers. Our Geography field trips have provided valuable hands-on learning, and as I write, 40 of our students are on a residential visit to Spain, immersing themselves in the language and culture.

The school's Autumn Recital showcased the extraordinary musical talent within our community, and rehearsals for the school production are now a daily feature – the dedication of our students (and staff!) is truly impressive. Meanwhile, our clubs continue to thrive; sitting in on Philosophy Club and hearing students explore big ideas is always a reminder of the depth of their curiosity.

Our recent Enrichment Day, focused on our journey as a Rights Respecting School, was another moment of pride. We welcomed a range of visitors who shared how they make a difference in their communities, and our pupils engaged with them with maturity and empathy.

Thank you to all parents who have attended recent events such as the Parent Forum and the Year 7 Parents' Evening. Your partnership and support are so important to us.

I hope you all enjoy a well-earned and restful half-term break, and we look forward to welcoming everyone back for the second half of term, ready for more learning, creativity, and success.

With best wishes

Helen Wood, Headteacher

## PTFA Preloved Uniform & Lost Property

The PTFA Preloved Uniform team will be available at the same time as lost property viewings this Autumn Term. This is a great opportunity to check for any missing items and to purchase good-quality, affordable uniform. Dates (6.00–8.00pm):

- November 25th & 26th
- December 16th & 17th

If you have any outgrown uniform in good condition, donations are very welcome and can be dropped off at school reception. All proceeds go back into supporting our school community.

## This Month in Pictures



Ms Harris meeting Dean Atta at the Cheltenham Literature Festival!



Year 7 speaking to members of the community about children's rights



Year 11 Geographers conducting field work at Blackpool Brook



HSL students helping to replant trees at Westonbirt.



## Vacancies at HSL

Please do look at our website to see the vacancies that we currently have. We are advertising:

<https://www.hsl.gloucs.sch.uk/page/?title=Vacancies&pid=80>

### What's it like to work at HSL?

“HSL is a wonderful school to work at. The environment created by the senior leadership team is hugely positive, supportive and one with incredibly high expectations of staff members and pupils alike. They all conduct themselves in a highly professional manner with the pupils best interests always at the forefront.”

## RRSA Enrichment Day



On Tuesday 20th October, students from Years 7 to 9 took part in an inspiring Enrichment Day exploring what it means to be part of a Rights Respecting School. As a school that proudly holds the RRSA Gold Award, our purpose is to educate children about their rights and help them understand how these rights are upheld locally, nationally, and globally.

The day was a great success, offering students the chance to deepen their understanding of children's rights and how they connect to real-world issues.

A huge thank you goes to all of our visitors and community partners for giving up their time and enriching our students' learning with their experience and expertise.



## Year 7 – Rights in Our School and Community

Year 7 students began their day with a “Rights Quest” orienteering challenge, exploring how children's rights are supported within our school and the local community. They learned about the right to education, the importance of local foodbanks, and how different services protect and promote children's wellbeing. The highlight of the day was a marketplace event, where pupils met and interviewed a range of local visitors who work to support children's rights. Visitors included a retired magistrate, local clergy, representatives from Gloucestershire Young Carers, the Spring Community Group, Talk Well Counselling, local PCSOs, an apprenticeship provider and pharmacy services. It was a fascinating opportunity to learn about how many people in our community work every day to uphold the rights of children.



## RRSA Enrichment Day



### Year 8 – Poverty and Social Justice in the UK

Year 8 students focused on the issue of poverty in the UK, beginning with an excellent and thought-provoking talk from Councillor Flo Clucas, representing No Child Left Behind. She shared her wealth of experience working within communities and spoke powerfully about tackling poverty in Cheltenham.

Students then explored the North–South divide and the inequalities that exist across the country. The day concluded with a dynamic oracy debate, in which students discussed what action society should take to address social injustice and ensure all children’s rights are met.



### Year 9 – Refugees and the Global Picture

Year 9 students took a global perspective, learning about the rights of refugees around the world. They attended an inspiring talk by Paddy Davie from Cheltenham Welcomes Refugees, gaining valuable insight into the challenges faced by those fleeing conflict and persecution.

Through an immersive drama experience, students explored what it might feel like to leave home and travel in dangerous conditions in search of safety. They also had the opportunity to undertake a creative writing task, powerfully reflecting on the refugee experience and the right to protection and education.



## Senior Citizens Tea Party

As a 'flagship school at the heart of its community' The High School Leckhampton is excited to arrange our second Christmas tea party for senior citizens in our local community.

Following the success of our 2024 event, this year's party will take place in the main school hall on 4th December 2024. Our doors will open to visitors at 11:30am and the event will finish at 1.15pm. On arrival, our guests will receive a warm welcome from our front of house team, before being treated to refreshments. Entertainment will be provided by our talented musicians and performers and we also hope to run a traditional raffle.

### Request for help!

This event is free for our guests, and we are asking for donations from parents and carers, and local businesses to help source gifts for our raffle. If you are able to donate raffle prizes such as chocolates, toiletries, stationery, puzzle books, scarves, magazines (but no alcohol or candles, thank you) it would be hugely appreciated. Please drop any donations at Reception anytime from now until Thursday 13th November or send in with your child



Tickets are free to invited, pre booked senior citizens. If you know of anyone who would like to attend, please let them know of this event. They should contact

Helen Holland via email at

[hih@hsl.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:hih@hsl.gloucs.sch.uk) to book their places by Thursday 13th November.

Please note that telephones and emails will not be answered on weekends and during half-term or weekends.

We would appreciate it if you could provide the following information when reserving a place:

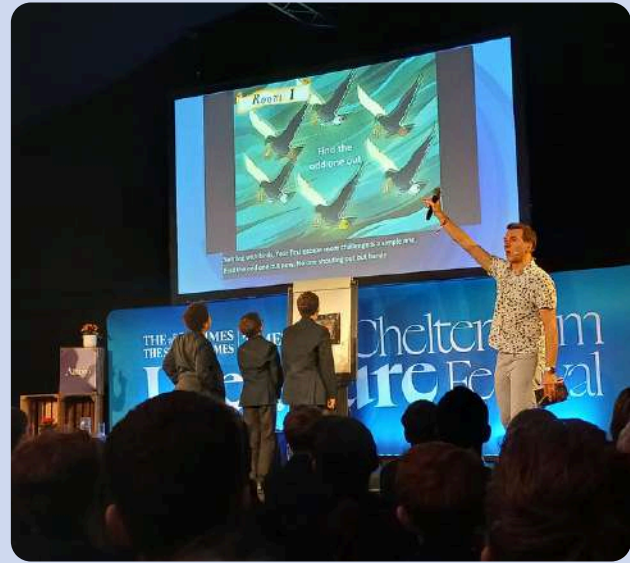
- Name of the attendee(s)
- Any allergies (and for which guest). School is not a nut free zone and we might not be able to cater for all food requests/ intolerance.
- Any access arrangements we need to be aware of.

## Pupil News: Literature Festival

Last week marked our annual trips to the Literature Festival. We are very proud that every pupil from Year 7 to Year 10 was able to attend an event. Please read the reviews from Flo, Ethan, Jess and Molly about the exciting events that they attended.

On Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October, Year 7 headed down to the Literature Festival. It was very exciting that we were the biggest school group there. As we sat down, the lights went down as a wave of claps rippled through the air as the author - Johnathan Stroud - came on stage. He told us about why he became an author and what encouraged him to keep going. He also told us about his books and even invited a HSL student on stage! He talked to us through his new book, and we all felt really inspired. This experience was remarkable, it showed us that anyone could be an author if you put your mind to it.

Flo Musty, 7LB2



On Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October, me Year 8 studens all walked to the literature festival to go see a talk about Christopher Edge's new book, Escape Room Game Zero, the talk was very interesting and interactive. Then, Christopher Edge had people come up on stage to complete escape room style tasks and collect 4 different keys.to escape. Escape Room Game Zero is about a young girl who sees an advert for an escape room, The Escape, so when she signs up she is told to go to the tech room in the park, when she reaches there she sees a bird trapped so she frees it and when she does, the birds all start to murmur ate creating some sort of loading circle then they make a sentence, a question: Are you ready to play the Escape?

I really enjoyed the talk as it was very descriptive and Christopher Edge got everyone involved. I liked this years trip to the literature festival very much!

Ethan Jones, 8CH

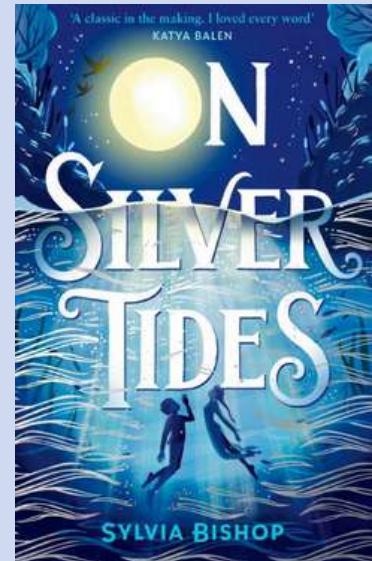
## Pupil News: Literature Festival

On Friday 17th October 2025, Year 10 attended the Cheltenham Literature Festival, to see Dean Atta the Poet and activist for LGBTQIA+ rights. He gave us a poetry workshop writing session, and in this session

Dean Atta helped us to create poems and gave examples from his own books 'The Black Flamingo' and 'I Can't Even Think Straight'. He gave us useful prompts, so we could make our own poems in his style, we wrote a 'I come from poem', 'verb poem', and then a 'character poem' in the style of Dean Atta.

I was fortunate that my poem was chosen to represent HSL and was read out to Dean Atta and the audience. I then got my book signed by Dean Atta, after having a very inspiring day learning about writing poems.

Molly Hannaford-George, 10IS



On Tuesday 14th October, I went to the Cheltenham Literature Festival to see a talk by the author Sylvia Bishop.

In the talk she talked about making characters for her books and the various research methods she used to build the world around them. I really liked the method she used to make her characters because it really used your imagination because you can start with something as simple as a superpower and make an entire world. I also liked that she went out into the world purely to build a world for her books. For example, she went on a cross-country overnight train to write her book *The Secrets of the Night Train*. She also let us participate in making our own characters and it was a really fun talk.

Jess Guppy, 9CH1

## Languages Week

The MFL department was so pleased to see our school marking Languages Week with a vibrant celebration that truly showcased our love for languages and cultures.

Throughout the week, teachers and students made a special effort to use a wide range of languages in greetings and conversations around the school, creating an exciting multilingual buzz in the corridors and classrooms. A particular highlight was Miss Winters' European language

greetings song, which quickly became a favourite among students and staff alike! A special shout-out also goes to

Miss Orsler, who brought a creative twist to her maths lessons by incorporating French into her starter activities, showing how language can be used across all subjects. A popular activity during the celebrations was our school-wide hunt for "hard-to-translate words", where students

explored unique words from different languages that capture ideas and feelings that are difficult to express in English. From the Indonesian jaysus ("an unfunny joke that's told so badly that you actually laugh") to the Japanese age-otori ("to look worse after a haircut"), the hunt encouraged curiosity and cultural appreciation. The

celebration extended beyond the classroom with our canteen offering a delicious variety of international dishes each day. Students were able to experience new flavours and learn more about the culinary traditions of different countries by trying Greek spanakopita, French boeuf bouruignon and Italian cacio e pepe, to name just a few.

Overall, Languages Week at HSL was a huge success and a wonderful reminder of the richness and diversity of the languages that connect us all.



## Autumn Recital

Our Autumn Recital was a wonderful celebration of music, showcasing the hard work and creativity of our students. From confident soloists to duets and even an ensemble, every performance reflected the amazing level of talent at HSL. The evening highlighted a wide range of musical abilities and styles, from beginners in their debut performance to Year 11 GCSE Music students. It was an inspiring event that captured the spirit of our musical community. Next up is our Christmas Celebration on 11th December at 19:00, we all can't wait to perform again!



## LAMDA success

We are delighted to share the fantastic results from the recent LAMDA examinations. At the start of this term, the results arrived, and we are proud to announce a **100% pass rate**. An impressive 52 pupils achieved Distinction, demonstrating outstanding commitment and skill.

A number of pupils were also awarded the Grade 6 medal, which is a remarkable achievement, particularly as many were preparing for their GCSE mock examinations at the same time. Their dedication and perseverance deserve special recognition.

### A Strong Start to the Term

This term has seen a wonderful increase in pupil numbers, and it has been a joy to welcome both returning and new students. Pupils have shown great responsibility in remembering their times and folders each week, which has contributed to a smooth and productive start.

We are now well underway with selecting new scenes and preparing speeches, and the enthusiasm and creativity on display have been excellent.

### Thank You

As always, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to parents for their ongoing encouragement and support—it makes such a difference to the success of our pupils.



## Year 11 Geography Field trip

Earlier this term, we were delighted to take 80 Year 11 students to the Blackpool Brook in Wenchford (a tributary of the River Severn). Whilst at the river they were able to learn and practice techniques for measuring the flow of the stream, the width, the depth and gradient of the slope.



In the afternoon, students were able to begin writing up their projects. The fieldwork is a compulsory element of their GCSE in Geography and in the summer examinations of Year 11 students across the country are asked questions about what the techniques they used for physical geography investigation and their findings; this is a replacement for the more traditional coursework element of Geography and this supplements other questions about Geographical skills in Paper 3.

# Tree Care at Westonbirt

On Tuesday 30th September, the HSL Eco-Committee visited Westonbirt Arboretum to learn how to identify and care for the trees that our current Year 10 students planted as part of the Silk Wood Community Planting Project in March 2025.

It was a glorious day to appreciate the autumn colours on display at Westonbirt and the Eco-Committee worked hard to identify and care for as many trees as they could, including Italian alder, European pear, Holly and Field maple. The students really enjoyed their visit.



# Eco-Schools Action Plan

## Eco-Schools Action Plan 2025-2026

The Eco-Committee are a fabulous group of HSL students who are passionate about protecting the environment and dedicated to making our school as environmentally friendly as possible.

Over the last few weeks all our committee members have been conducting an Environmental Review to understand what environmental work our school is already doing, and what we need to improve. Our topics of focus this year are: marine, school grounds and healthy living.

Now that the review is complete, our Eco-Committee have designed an Action Plan of changes they would like to make this academic year. Look out for more information in the months to come about these actions and how you can help.



# Bat Walk

The first HSL bat walk of this academic year took place on Wednesday 1st October from 7pm until 8:30pm.

Steve Mason, Community Parks Officer at Cheltenham Borough Council, kindly ran the event alongside Miss Kennedy and brought along some bat detectors borrowed from the University of Gloucestershire.

The event was popular and a large group of students, staff, families and friends of HSL walked through Burrow's Field hoping for a sighting. The detectors sprang into action a few times to reveal bats from a variety of species including a Noctule, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, a Myotis and possibly a rare Lesser Horseshoe!

Miss Kennedy would like to thank all those who advertised and attended the event - it was a great success and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The next bat walk at HSL will take place in Spring 2026. Hope to see you there!





# CUT YOUR CARBON



Throughout November, we're challenging everyone to complete 6 small carbon-cutting activities at home with friends and family.

These actions will reduce your everyday carbon emissions and benefit our planet.

To find out how you can get involved, speak to a member of the school Eco-Committee.



# Sporting Success at HSL

October has been a jam-packed month of sport for our students at HSL. In lessons, Key Stage 3 students have been learning hockey, badminton and tag rugby which will continue up until Christmas, giving all of our pupils a chance to learn new skills, overlearn existing skills and techniques, and develop their rules and tactics. The Key Stage 4 students that are taking GCSE PE have been working very hard on their badminton as part of the individual and team performances that have to be submitted, whilst at the same time our students have been continuing to build on their knowledge and performance in the invasion games of netball and hockey this term.

## House Events

At the end of September, we had started House Netball and House Cross Country. The House events are always competitive at HSL, but the level of participation combined with the high level of performance was particularly notable across all of the year groups in both of these events and we are excited to see this continue as we move through the academic year.

### House Netball Results

Year 7 Winners – Isbourne

Year 8 Winners – Windrush

Year 9 Winners – Chelt

Year 10 – Lilleybrook

Year 11 – Isbourne

Overall Winners – Isbourne

\*Isbourne, Lilleybrook and Windrush all had the same number of overall points, but Isbourne won because they scored more goals across all year groups.



## House Cross Country

House Cross Country was staged slightly differently this year. We adjusted the course, the races took part in the PE lessons, and the top 10 girls and boys from each lesson went through to our HSL trial to compete for a place in the school cross country team on an extended cross-country course.

### House Cross Country Results

Year 7 Winners – Isbourne

Year 8 Winners – Windrush

Year 9 Winners – Lilleybrook

Year 10 Winners – Lilleybrook

Year 11 Winners – Windrush

Overall winners – Lilleybrook



# District Cross Country

Following our final trial our selected teams competed at the Cheltenham District Cross Country event last week in a highly competitive event against all the Secondary schools in Cheltenham. In each event there were well over 100 runners with each school having teams with their 10 fastest runners in Year 7, Year 8 & 9 combined and Year 10 & 11 combined.

All of our runners raced incredibly well, managing their nerves and the tough hilly course of Ashley Manor Prep with utter grit and determination. We had an excellent set of results from our runners with each year group having at least one athlete being selected to run for the Cheltenham District team in December.

Some particularly notable performances were:

Year 7 Girls Team – 2nd place overall

Theo – 3rd place (Year 7)

Maisie – 4th place (Year 7)

Sam – 5th place (Year 8&9)

Ben – 10th place (Year 10&11)

Ada – 12th place (Year 8&9)

Kitty - 13th place (Year 10&11)

Lachie – 14th place (Year 10&11)



# Hockey tournament

We are continuing to have a very successful hockey season for our Girls hockey teams this term. We have had very competitive fixtures against all of the local secondary schools with Year 7 A&B teams, Year 8 A&B teams, Year 9, 10 and 11 teams playing the 11 aside game.

Both the Year 8 and the Year 9 Girls hockey teams competed in the Gloucestershire County Hockey Tournaments this month, both finishing in 3rd place overall, narrowly missing out on a place in the Final which would have taken them to the Regional play offs. There are more matches to come before Christmas as well as the year 7 District and County tournaments.



# Year 9 Rugby

Our Year 9 team represented High School Leckhampton with pride and determination at the Cheltenham Tigers Rugby Tournament, delivering an inspiring series of performances across the day.

We began strongly, securing two impressive victories through disciplined defence, aggressive tackling, and intelligent attacking play. A hard-fought draw in the final group match left qualification hanging in the balance, and despite our unbeaten record, we were incredibly unlucky to miss out on a place in the semi-finals by just four points on points difference!

The resilience shown by the squad was particularly commendable, especially after sustaining two injuries in the early fixtures. Rather than letting this affect their morale, the team rallied together, demonstrating fantastic teamwork, communication, and character throughout the competition.

There were standout performances across the squad, with Charlie Mallen shining in attack and consistently breaking the defensive line, while Henry Cox led from the front with outstanding commitment in both tackling and ball-carrying. Their efforts were crucial in driving the team forward and setting the tone for the group.

Although progression to the knockout stages just slipped from our grasp, the team should be incredibly proud of their efforts. They displayed resilience, skill, and a strong team spirit – proving that they can compete with the very best.

## Year 8 Rugby

High School Leckhampton's Year 8 rugby team delivered a sensational display of fast-flowing rugby in their fixture against All Saints Academy, scoring over 10 tries in a dominant and exciting performance.

From the first whistle, the boys set the tempo with quick ball movement, strong running lines, and excellent support play. Our forwards provided a solid platform at the breakdown, allowing the backs to express themselves with pace and creativity. The teamwork and communication were evident, as offloads and passing sequences repeatedly cut through the defence.

Try after try showcased the squad's ability to transition from defence to attack with speed and confidence. The boys demonstrated brilliant spatial awareness, using the width of the pitch effectively and finishing their chances clinically. What stood out most was the collective performance – every player contributed, whether through strong carries, key tackles, or supporting runs. The effort, attitude, and determination from the whole squad were exemplary, making it difficult to single out individuals in what was a superb team display.

This match highlighted the exciting potential within the Year 8 group, and the boys should take great pride in their performance.



## Year 7 Rugby

On Monday 20th October we visited Balcarras in our third game of the season. We started brilliantly, taking the game to Balcarras and scored a great early try. Our attacking intent was clear to see throughout the half – limiting Balcarras to some rare attacks as we penned them into their own defensive half.

Our defensive line was incredibly secure. We often turned the possession over and forced errors meaning we won the ball high up the pitch. In tricky conditions, our players battled hard and moved the ball out wide with purpose.

We won the game 15-10 with 3 great tries scored.

## Year 11 success

Congratulations to our Year 11 students Ollie Freebury and Jake Harris. Both boys were selected to represent the Cheltenham District U16 Rugby Team at the recent County Tournament and were part of a successful team with Cheltenham District winning the event.



# NEWS FROM HSL PTFA

parents • teachers • friends

## Hello, Goodbye!

### Highlights from a busy year and welcoming new faces

At our recent PTFA AGM, we looked back on a fantastic year of fundraising and community fun. Highlights included:

- **£7,500 donated to the school**, from PTFA events and E.asyFundraising.

- **Summer BBQ & Fish & Chips Quiz Night:** our most successful quiz yet, with 20 teams taking part, plus a record £800 raised in the BBQ raffle!

- **Pre-loved Uniform Sales:** thanks to our brilliant volunteers these continue to offer an affordable and sustainable option for families. And many thanks to everyone who has donated uniform; we couldn't do it without you!

- **EasyFundraising & Online Giving:** small but steady contributions, with Gift Aid registration underway to potentially increase future donations by 25%.



You can read the full PTFA AGM Report [here](#).

A huge thank you to Kelvin Jones, who has stepped down as Chair after two fantastic years. He's left us in great shape, setting up all the behind-the-scenes tools and processes, and helping us register as an official charity. We're also saying goodbye to Kerry Lea, our Secretary, whose support has been invaluable. We're also delighted to welcome our new Chair, Sharon Graves, and new Secretary, Caroline Hanagan.

Keep an eye on the **HSL newsletter** and **year group WhatsApp chats** for news of upcoming PTFA events!

## Is it too early to talk mince pies?



### HSL Christmas Celebration - Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December

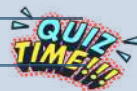
Our annual Christmas Celebration is a magical evening filled with music and singing from the students – the perfect way to start the festive season! The PTFA will once again be serving warmed mince pies and delicious mulled wine, made from Richard 'Knight of Round Grill's' secret recipe!

- We'd love your help to make the evening a success. Could you:
  - Help set up, warm mince pies or serve mulled wine?
  - Donate a bottle of red wine (for the mulled wine), or a raffle prize?
  - Lend a hand with tidying up?
- Or simply buy a raffle ticket (or two!)?

If you can help, email us on [hello@hslptfa.org.uk](mailto:hello@hslptfa.org.uk), or scan the QR code below to get involved. Thank you for your support – it really makes a difference!

### DIARY DATES

25th-26th Nov	Preloved Uniform Sale, HSL Sports Hall Balcony, 6-7pm
11th Dec	Christmas Celebration Concert, Mince Pies and Mulled Wine, 7-9pm
11th-	School Production
13th Feb	"We Will Rock You", 7-9pm
24th April	Quiz & Chips Night, 7-10pm
10th July	Summer Fair & BBQ



Scan the QR code to join our friendly PTFA team!