



# Normanhurst School

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## HEADMISTRESS

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September 2019

### Headmistress's Letter

Dear Parents

I hope that you enjoyed a relaxing summer break with your families and that you and your children are looking forward to the new school year which begins for them on Wednesday 4 September.

During the holidays the maintenance, office and teaching staff have been busy. A number of improvements have been made on site, the office team has been in school working on admin tasks and the teaching staff has been busy over the holidays preparing for the start of term. We are looking forward to welcoming the pupils back to school.

The Year 7 classes are coming into school on Tuesday morning from 9.00 – 11.00am for the second part of their induction. They will have time with their form tutors and with some of the new prefect team getting to know school better and being allocated their lockers and timetables.

The first full day of term is Wednesday 4 September when school begins at the usual time of 8.40am. Breakfast Club and After School Club are also available from Wednesday. The day begins with an assembly and is followed by extended form time so that classes can be given their new routines and timetables; lessons will begin with period 2. There will be PE/Games for Years 7, 8 and 9 on Wednesday, so please remember to come to school with PE kits.

If your child joins Normanhurst for the first time this week, I hope they and you settle quickly into the Normanhurst community. We have in place good systems to help pupils settle quickly, whether they are joining the Early Years, juniors or seniors. If you have any questions, please feel free to email or speak to your child's form tutor; I am sure we will be able to help the transition run smoothly and we are very much looking forward to getting to know you over the course of the coming year.

New pupils joining from Year 1 to Year 6 will have a 'buddy' to help them settle in and the class teachers are available every afternoon for a brief chat when they bring the children out to meet you. As you bring your child to the classroom in the morning, you will quickly become familiar with their class teacher and routine.

The new senior pupils in Year 7 have had induction days to make friends and to get to know the school. Seniors joining other year groups will have a member of their class to help them settle into Normanhurst school life. The form tutor has a central role, so please contact the form tutor if you have any questions. Likewise, please encourage your child to talk to their form tutor who will want to support them pastorally.

Every form in the seniors has a prefect linked to it and the prefect team and school leaders will be helping the new pupils to feel at home.

Settling-in reports will be sent home for new pupils after three weeks and for Year 7 parents there is the opportunity to meet the teachers informally at a Parents' Meeting on Tuesday 24 September at 5.00pm. Details of this event will be sent out soon and we hope you and your child will all be able to join us.

### Summer Holiday Work

Normanhurst has had a number of site improvements this holiday. The servery has been refurbished, the boys' toilets have been re-fitted and there has been redecoration around the site, including a redesign of the English

room and a new interactive smart board in the Languages room. We have also created an enhanced Head of House office next to the PE office and a Drama department based on the first floor.

The Bursary has been fitted with charging units for the new iPads which have been given to the school by the Normanhurst Parents' Association. The iPads are in carry bags, so teachers can book them out for use with classes. The IT team have installed the relevant Apps and we are looking forward to making full use of this new resource.

### **Important Update: Parent Contact Information**

Parents will have received an email on Friday asking you to ensure that the contact details we hold for you and your child are up-to-date and that we have AT LEAST 2 emergency contacts, who would be available if needed during the school day.

Please would you ensure we have this important information within the first two weeks of term.

Please also inform us if your child's medical information has changed or if they have any food allergies or intolerances. We need to have this information, including any relevant medical notes.

### **New Members of Staff**

We welcome several new teachers to the staff this year.

In the juniors we have 3 junior teachers joining the team:

Miss Katherine Collings and Miss Charlotte Prebble are teaching Year 3. Ms Susan Reid will be the Year 4 class teacher during Mrs Beeson's maternity leave.

We welcome two new teachers to the seniors: Mrs Ujwala Jayaram, to join the science department and Ms Dezna Marks will be teaching History and RS. Unfortunately, Mrs Wilson, whom we appointed in the summer term had to withdraw following family illness.

### **Excellent GCSE Results**

The former Year 11 celebrated excellent GCSE results last week.

Nearly all pupils were able to take up places at their first choice school or college. 89% of all grades were good 'passes' which means grade 4 or above. A quarter of grades awarded were grades 7-9, which equates to the old A and A\* grades. Once again the pupils achieved particularly well in English and English Literature with 96% pass rates, individual Sciences and the creative and performing arts with 100% passes in Art, Business Studies, Computer Science, French, Geography, Graphics, History, Spanish, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

### **Morning Routines for EYFS and Junior Pupils**

Parents or carers take children in Kindergarten and Reception directly to their classrooms in the morning from 8.30-8.40am. Parents also drop off their children in Years 1-6 at their classroom areas between the same times. Please do not arrive before 8.30am as the teachers are preparing for the day. This is a 'drop-off' and class teachers will have activities for the children to do, the register is taken at 8.40am and the school day begins. If you arrive late for any reason, after 8.40am, please report to the school office with your child on arrival rather than going to the classroom.

On Tuesdays the children from Year 1 to Year 6 have singing practice from 8.30-9.00am in the school hall and on Fridays we are introducing a new 'Reasoning and Problem-solving' activity session.

Once every half-term there is a 'drop-in' morning for the children from Year 1-6, to which you are invited. On these mornings you come into the classroom and your children will show you the work they have been doing. These 'drop-ins' finish promptly at 9.00am so that the first lesson of the day can begin. We will ring a hand bell when the session is over and your cooperation in leaving promptly is much appreciated so that the children do not miss learning time. The 'drop-ins' are not times for individual teacher feedback about your child's progress. We are aware of the sensitive nature of conversations about individual pupils, so we ask you to arrange an individual meeting with the class teacher at an alternative time if there are particular issues you wish to discuss.

The dates for the drop-ins are on the school diary and the dates for this term are at the end of my letter.

### **Morning Routines for Senior Pupils**

Breakfast Club is available in the hall for seniors from 7.30am. From 8.15am each morning staff are on duty in the playground to supervise seniors. The library is available or they may wait in the playground or Room 3. Pupils may not go into the main school buildings until the bell rings at 8.40am for the start of the day. All pupils should be in school by 8.40am when registration begins. Senior pupils arriving after this time should report to the school office before going to their form room.

Senior pupils have clearly labelled bag racks where they should leave sports bags until their lesson, and school bags during assembly, lunch and break times. Pupils may also have a locker and should see Mr Clair if they need to be allocated one.

### **New Initiatives for the Seniors**

This year we will be introducing a number of new initiatives in the seniors as part of the GCSE preparations, which involve a change to the timing of mock exams for Y11, and end-of-year exams for Y10.

Year 11 mocks will take place in the 10 days leading up to the Christmas holidays, and there will be a second set of mocks before Easter. Year 11 will have individual meetings with Mr Clair, Mrs Coates or Miss Barnard to help them set ambitious targets for their progress towards the final exams.

There is a sixth form transition meeting for parents and pupils on Tuesday 10 September at 5.00pm in the school hall. All Year 11 parents and pupils should attend, as we will be providing information about the process of applying to sixth forms.

There is a meeting for all Year 10 parents on Tuesday 17 September at 5.00pm when we will be outlining the next GCSEs and giving important information about the GCSE exams to parents and pupils. Year 10 families should make every effort to attend.

Year 10 will have their first set of mock exams in the first week back after the Easter Holidays, which will enable the pupils and staff to set targets for the summer term to ensure that all pupils are working for their best possible grade.

### **Uniform Matters**

The juniors should return to school in their summer uniform, which they can continue to wear for the first half-term, if the weather is still warm.

We reminded pupils at the end of last year that hairstyles must be smart and suitable for school. As detailed in the parent handbook, this means no coloured extensions or braids. Any braiding should be one colour and close to the hair's natural colour. Hair should not include cut-in designs, or shaved patterns.

Please remember no pupils are allowed to wear earrings at Normanhurst. This includes children in Kindergarten and Reception. Please do not send pupils into school with earrings in place, even if they are covered with sticking plaster. If you do need to do this temporarily, please would you email your child's form tutor with details.

### **Mobile Phones in School**

Pupils in the juniors are not permitted to bring mobile phones or electronic devices into school.

Pupils in the seniors are not permitted to use their phones or have them switched on from the time they arrive on the school site until after they leave. Mobile phones should never be used in school, in class, in the playground or in the toilets.

Pupils can hand their mobiles into the school office, or they should be locked away in their locker. The school does not take responsibility for any loss or damage to mobile phones and they are brought in at the pupil's own risk.

If your son or daughter needs to contact you during the school day, they can go to the school office and they will facilitate any calls.

### **A Reminder about Absences from School**

If your child is unwell and unable to attend school, please telephone the school office to report the absence to a member of the Office team or email [absence@normanhurstschool.co.uk](mailto:absence@normanhurstschool.co.uk).

Try to book medical, dental and orthodontic appointments out of school time wherever possible; if this is not possible, please notify the school in advance with the appointment details by phone, email or letter.

Children are compulsory school age from Reception and should be in school every day. Any absence has to be authorised by the school, whatever the reason. Absences because your child is ill need to be confirmed by email or letter.

Requests for absence during term time for other reasons can only be approved in exceptional circumstances. If you wish to request time out of school for such a reason, please contact the Office who will give you a 'request for absence' form which should be completed, returned to them or download it from the website; I will then confirm whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Requests should be made in advance.

May I also emphasise the importance of punctuality, not just in school but in life beyond Normanhurst. When seniors go on to sixth form we are always asked for information about punctuality and the number or percentage of 'lates' recorded for pupils. This is why we encourage our seniors to ensure they are in school on time each day.

### **Absence from PE/Games Lessons**

If your child is in school but unable to participate in their PE or Games lesson, please send them into school with a note for the PE staff explaining the reason. Please also ensure that they have their PE kit with them because they need to wear it and go to the PE lesson with the rest of the class, even though they will not participate.

### **Extracurricular Opportunities**

The confirmed programme of extra-curricular activities was sent to parents before the holiday. The programme of activities and clubs starts in the first full week of term, on Monday 9 September.

Breakfast Club, After School Club and Homework Club all begin on Wednesday 4 September.

There will be a number of extra booster classes for Year 11 after school either during the lunch break or after school from 3.30-4.30pm, with the purpose of helping students make maximum progress this year and thus achieve the best grades possible in their GCSE examinations. I ask all Year 11 parents to support us by ensuring your son or daughter attends the classes.

### **Homework Matters**

We are continuing to use the 'Show My Homework' online homework portal this year for Year 6 to Year 11. There were some issues with the online platform in the summer term, but we hope they have been resolved by the company and that it will be working effectively when we return to school.

New pupils and parents will receive their log-ins during the first week of term. Miss Barnard coordinates the scheme and she can assist you if you lose your log-in details or cannot access the site.

As previously there will be a published homework timetable so that pupils and parents know when homework is scheduled for each subject. When there is a lengthier task, teachers will usually try to include a weekend so that there is time for the work to be completed. Quality of homework is a significant contributor to senior pupil achievement overall and we aim to set meaningful, challenging and helpful independent work for pupils to complete at home. Having a routine for the effective completion of this study will result in better progress for your children, so please encourage them to do homework well, in a suitable environment without distractions.

GCSE pupils in Years 10 and 11 should be practising exam questions at home regularly. This make a significant impact on outcomes in the final exams as students become more proficient at understanding what questions require.

Junior parents received a welcome letter from the class teacher after the moving-up day last term, with all the details about homeworks, tests, topics and routines, so that you know when PE or swimming kits are needed. If your child struggles to complete their homework in the time, or if there are any other difficulties, please talk to the class teacher so that we can ensure the work is appropriate for your child.

### **Curriculum Matters**

Curriculum overviews will be sent out during the first part of the term to advise you of the work your children will be doing in class. In the EYFS these are weekly and in the juniors these are sent out on a termly basis, for seniors you will have a long-term plan for the work, set out in half-termly units. I hope parents find these useful.

### **Open Evening Thursday 3 October 2019**

The school has its main Open Day on Thursday 3 October from 6.00pm. The school day runs as usual, but many pupils will be asked to return at 5.30pm to participate. Some pupils will be in classrooms, others will be guides showing visitors and prospective families around the school. I hope pupils enjoy talking about school and sharing their experiences.

Current parents are also welcome to attend and to look around the school. Junior parents find this particularly helpful as they have the opportunity to learn more about life in the senior part of the school.

The EYFS School in Action Open Morning is from 9.15-10.30am on Friday 4 October. This is for parents with children in Kindergarten or Reception.

### **New Parents' Portal Access**

New parents will receive an email this week with information about how to access the parent portal. The email will contain your username and password details. Please log on to check the portal and to confirm that your details are correct. If there are any difficulties please contact the school office.

### **Important Dates for the Diary**

Tue 3 Sep	09:00 – 11:00	New Y7 Induction Morning – second half
Wed 4 Sep		Pupils return
Mon 9 Sep	19:00 – 20:30	NSPA Meeting (hall)
Tue 10 Sep	15:30 – 16:30	Y2-6 Parents' meeting - Information on Maths
	17:00 – 18:00	16+ Transition Evening - Y11 Parents
Fri 13 Sep	08:30 – 11:30	Individual Photos
Sun 15 Sep	11:00 – 13:00	NSPA 'Welcome Walk'
Mon 16 - Fri 20 Sep		Y1-6 Baseline Tests
Tue 17 Sep		Y8 Boys & Girls HPV Injections
	08:30 – 09:00	Y1-6 Parents' Drop In
	15:30 – 16:30	Rec Parents' meeting - Getting to Know You/RWInc&Maths
	17:00 – 18:00	Y10 Parents' meeting - Being Successful at GCSE
Thu 19 – Fri 20 Sep	09:00 – 15:30	Y3 Overnight Camp at Oaklands School
Tue 24 Sep	15:30 – 16:30	KG Parents' meeting - Getting to Know You/RWInc&Maths
	17:00 – 18:00	Y7 Informal Parent/Teacher evening
Fri 27 Sep	08:00 – 08:30	Y1&2 RWI talk to parents
Mon 30 Sep	09:00 – 10:00	Harvest Festival URC Church
	19:15 – 20:15	NSPA AGM
Wed 2 Oct	09:00 – 15:30	Y2 trip to Floating Classroom

Thu 3 Oct	18:00 – 20:30	Open Day
Fri 4 Oct	09:15 – 11:00	EYFS Open Morning
Wed 9 Oct	08:30 – 15:30	Y1T trip to Colchester Zoo
Thu 10 Oct	09:00 – 15:30	Y5&6 Museum of London trip – Vikings Workshop
Fri 11 – Sun 13 Oct		PGL Netball Weekend
Mon 14 Oct	09:00 – 10:00	House Music Competition – parents invited
Tue 15 Oct	16:00 – 18:30	KG-Y6 Parents’ Evening (specialist staff in hall)
Wed 16 Oct	16:00 – 18:30	KG-Y6 Parents’ Evening
Fri 18 Oct	18:00 – 19:30	GCSE Presentation Evening
Mon 21 – Fri 1 Oct		HALF TERM
Mon 21 – Fri 25 Oct		Madrid Sports Term
Mon 18 Nov	09:00 – 15:30	Y2 Gunpowder Mills trip
Tue 19 Nov	17:00 – 18:30	Y9 Options Evening
Wed 20 Nov	09:30 – 15:30	Y1T Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood trip
Thu 21 Nov	09:30 – 15:30	Y5&6 Museum of London – Anglo-Saxons Workshop
Fri 22 Nov	08:30 – 09:00	Rec-Y6 Parents’ Drop In
Mon 2 – Fri 6 Dec		Y11 Mock GCSEs
Tue 3 Dec	14:00 – 15:00	EYFS and Infant Nativity Play
	16:00 – 18:30	Y9 Parents’ Evening
Wed 4 Dec	14:00 – 15:00	EYFS and Infant Nativity Play
Tue 10 Dec	14:00 – 15:00	Carol Service
Thu 12 Dec	12:00	Last day of term

I am very much looking forward to this exciting new school year; I hope you are too.

The Leadership Team, your child’s form tutor or I are very happy to discuss any questions or concerns that may arise. Please do feel free to email or contact the school office if you would like to meet with us and discuss any issues.

With my very best wishes

Yours sincerely



Mrs Claire Osborn  
Headmistress



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