



Normanhurst School

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HEADMISTRESS

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1 December 2020

Dear Parents

Re: December Headmistress's Letter

The Christmas season is finally here, and activities, filming and rehearsals are well on the way. There will much to enjoy for all the pupils, and for parents alike, in the remaining weeks before the end of Autumn Term.

Christmas Events

The next few weeks are certainly going to be busy. We have been rehearsing Christmas songs for our Carol Service filming and there is a lot of excitement around the filming of the Nativity. I am sure we are all in for a very special treat. Once the recordings have been completed, we will send you a link so you are able to watch these performances together. A special thank you to the NSPA for supplying the school with a new camera for these and future performances.

On Thursday 10 December, we have arranged for the Early Years and Junior pupils, within their bubbles, to watch a live pantomime performance in school. We are very excited about this and I am sure the children will really enjoy it.

As you know throughout the year we would regularly visit our local care home, The Spinney. However, with the restrictions in place at the moment we have been unable to do so this year so far. Christmas is a time that both the children and the residents really look forward to, so this year we will be sending them written messages and drawings to share some of our Christmas cheer.

We also have Christmas lunches, parties and quizzes planned and our Christmas recordings of the Nativity and Festive Carols will be released to parents on Monday 7 December. Pupils will, as usual, be allowed to wear a Festive Jumper on the day of their Christmas lunch and party, please see below:

- Monday 7 December Kindergarten to Year 3
 Years 10 and 11
- Tuesday 8 December Years 4, 5 and 6
 Years 7, 8 and 9

The Early Years Festive Fun Day took place on Monday 30 November. It was a super day for our youngest pupils. The children were thrilled to learn that the Christmas Elf had paid a visit to my office. This year I found him hiding on top of my shelf; he was so high up that I nearly didn't see him! He and I went to Kindergarten and Reception to spend time with a very festively dressed group of children and staff.

Final Day Arrangements

The final day of term on Friday 11 December will be a non-uniform day when pupils will be able to wear something festive and bring a donation of £2 for our school charities this year; Mrs Prior has sent a letter home to parents about this. Pupils can wear jeans, or something sensible for school, but we would like to see everyone wearing something festive.

Can you please note the dismissal times for the last day of term after final celebrations and rewards assemblies.

- **EYFS, Years 1, 2 & 3** at 11.30am
- **Years 4, 5 & 6** at 11.40am
- **Years 7, 8 & 9** at 11.50am
- **Years 10 & 11** at 12pm

Staff News

At the end of this term we say goodbye to our SENDCo, Mrs Gill Huxford, who will be retiring from Normanhurst after 10 years of service. She has expertly led the SEND Department, always putting the pupils first, and we are incredibly grateful for her hard work and commitment within our Normanhurst community. We thank her for sharing her wealth of experience and the support she has given the pupils, parents and staff and wish her the very best for the future.

Mrs Roma Lafferty will be joining Normanhurst from January 2021 as our new SENDCo, and has already started visiting the school in preparation for the Spring Term. Mrs Lafferty is a very experienced practitioner and will come to us having spent 6 years as Deputy Head of English and SENDCo at Roding Valley High School. She has also spent time as a member of the Senior Leadership Team and Literacy Lead Practitioner at Larkwood Primary School.

We also welcome Mr John Watts to our Normanhurst community, who joins us today as our new assistant caretaker.

Autumn Term Reflections

Although nobody could have predicted a term such as this, I have really enjoyed meeting and seeing you all. We have welcomed a few new children into the school throughout the Autumn Term and I am pleased to see how well they have settled into their first term at Normanhurst. It has been wonderful to read through the latest set of school reports; there is a considerable amount to celebrate and pupils should be proud of their hard work and effort since returning to school. Your children have been determined to get back into positive learning habitats, showing resilience, understanding and a love for learning. This is what makes them excellent ambassadors for the school.

We have continued to develop our learning beyond the classroom. Years 8 to 11 have connected with two schools in Spain, The I.E Rivera del Bullaque in Porzuna and I.E Maria Immaculada in Puertollano, and have just received their first penpal letters to translate. We wish them the best of luck writing their letters back as this will be a fun and real way to improve their written Spanish.

Many of our pupils have competed in internal and external competitions and have shown excellent creativity, sportsmanship and musical talent. The Christmas card design competition winners have been announced and their designs have been printed as the official school Christmas card this year. Congratulations to our winners:

- Early Years: Florence Darby
- Key Stage 1: Noah-Hussain Mahmood Gupta
- Lower Key Stage 2: Francesco Chechile
- Upper Key Stage 2: James Taylor
- Key Stage 3: Mehrnaz Amini
- Key Stage 4: Mia Johnson

We have also had success in the ISA Digital Art competition this term where Sydney Grant in Year 9 was awarded first place in the Key Stage 3 category for his animation "The Crow and the Deer". Sam McDonald was awarded second place in the Key Stage 4 category. This is the second year in a row that Sam has won an award for his animations. This is an amazing achievement - well done to both pupils!

Year 11 Mock GCSE Exams

The Year 11 pupils have a full set of mock exams before the end of term to enable them to see clearly how they are currently performing and how to build on these grades before the final exams in the summer. Our pupils have been working extremely hard for their mocks and have also attended a programme of after school booster sessions. We are looking forward to seeing this hard work reflected in their mock results.

Year 10 & 11 Workshops

In January, the NSPA will be sponsoring two workshops – the first for Year 10 as *Super Speed Study Skills* and the second for Year 11 as an *Exam Busters Workshop*. These will take place at the Masonic Hall on 15 January 2021.

The Super Speed Study Skills workshop is an effective, immersive workshop that aims to inspire pupils to take control of their studying. It includes:

- How to maintain motivation when studying
- To raise standards of learning and cognition
- To encourage the adoption of a range of learning techniques

The Exam Busters workshop aims to empower pupils with exam preparation tips, revision tools and stress management techniques. It includes:

- Stimulating a positive attitude towards learning, revision and exams
- To upskill pupils with effective memory techniques
- To provide a comprehensive exam tool kit

These workshops will provide some excellent additional tools to add to our pupils' exam repertoires.

Seesaw

Over the last few weeks, we have been introducing the pupils from Reception to Year 6 to the new online platform Seesaw. The pupils, as expected, have responded amazingly and have become very familiar with it very quickly. From this week, we will no longer be setting homework on Show My Homework and will be switching over to Seesaw. Show My Homework will remain in use for our senior pupils only. Please contact Ms Low Ten Que, Miss Stone or Mrs Prior if you would like any help accessing this new platform.

Snow and Wintry Weather

Our aim will always be to stay open in the wintry weather, even if/when the snow comes. If we really cannot open due to sudden blizzards and adverse conditions then we will move to our online home-learning programmes. If the snow comes, the maintenance teams will arrive on site early to clear paths and to ensure that pupils, staff and parents can make their way safely into the buildings. We will always aim to update our website and email/text all parents and staff by 7am so that you will know our plans for the day ahead.

School Uniform and Rule Reminders

We take great care to maintain high standards of uniform and presentation at school, and as the wintry weather is set to continue I would like to remind you of the school's uniform expectations so that these can be resolved before the start of term in January:

- Pupils may not wear earrings to school. This applies to all classes.
- Long hair should be tied back securely all day.
- Hair styles should be neat and tidy, not heavily styled, no quiffs, or cut-in designs.
- All school bags and sports bags in the seniors are to be plain navy or black. There are currently a few seniors with patterned bags with large logos on them that are not permitted.
- Pupils may not wear black trainers to school instead of their black polishable shoes.
- All pupils should be wearing the winter uniform. Juniors from Reception class upwards are expected to wear the regulation school coat purchased from the uniform shop.

- Seniors must wear either the school coat or a plain navy or black coat. Coats should not have design features and should be appropriate for school. All seniors hang up their coats in school and I suggest coats should be practical and not expensive. They should also be named.
- Cold weather accessories: in the juniors, the school woollen hat and scarf available from the uniform suppliers should be worn. In the seniors, a plain black or navy scarf or gloves are to be worn. No pupils should wear coloured or patterned hats, gloves or scarves. Please be aware that seniors will have non-uniform items confiscated and these will need to be collected from the school office.
- Boots are not a part of school uniform in any part of the school, including the Early Years classes, so please make sure that pupils have sturdy black school shoes throughout the winter. If it snows, pupils may wear boots to and from school, but will need to wear shoes on site and in the buildings.

We are very aware that when returning to school in the Spring Term, the weather may be colder and classrooms will continue to be ventilated as part of our response to the Coronavirus. Pupils may wear a white thermal top underneath their school shirt if they feel the cold.

NSPA

The NSPA have been fabulous once again in sponsoring so many excellent pupil experiences and valuable equipment for the pupils at Normanhurst.

We have already taken delivery of some planters to grow our vegetables. The NSPA have also purchased a giant Connect 4 game and a new table tennis table for the playground. The new camera, tripod and microphone are a wonderful addition and will be used to record the Christmas performances. In the New Year, we have the Young Shakespeare Company visiting school to perform Romeo and Juliet and there are the aforesaid Revision Technique Workshops for Years 10 and 11. Thank you all for your contributions and in particular thank you to the NSPA committee for your support.

Christmas Panto for the EYFS and Juniors

The NSPA is holding a festive Zooming Quiz night on Wednesday 2 December. It promises to be a night of family fun and laughter. The Senior Leadership Team and Heads of House will be joining forces to make a team. Please contact normanhurstpa@gmail.com if you would like to take part - it is never too late to join the fun!

Coffee Afternoons

We have very much enjoyed meeting parents who have been able to make the coffee afternoons so far. If you are unable to make them but have some feedback, please feel free to email Miss Reid at treid@normanhurstschool.co.uk and she will pass it on to us.

Safer Internet Day – 9 February 2021

As you will be aware, we consider the protection and safeguarding of children to be of the highest priority. With the expansion of social media websites and younger children having more access to mobile phones, it is essential that all members of our community are aware of the need to act responsibly when using technology away from the normal school or parental controls.

E-Safety is an integral part of children's education in today's digital world and is embedded in their learning at school. We also want to help our parents improve their own understanding of E-Safety issues so that children can learn to use the internet and all digital media in a safe and secure way.

For these reasons, we will be participating in the Safer Internet Day on 9 February 2021. This year's theme of 'exploring reliability in the online world' focusses on how we can decide what to trust online and supports our pupils to question, challenge and change the online world for the better. It will explore how influential and persuasive the internet can be. We will also look at the impact of young people's decisions, opinions and what they share online.

Adjustments to School Arrival Times

We have kept to the temporarily advanced start time of 8.15am (it was previously 8.30am) throughout this Autumn Term in order to train our pupils to keep their distance from others when entering the site. This also allowed for a wider window for arrivals and for pupils and families to establish new routines after the summer holidays. We feel that our Coronavirus procedures are now more settled and that we have a greater level of control over the initial morning routines, so we plan to start moving the arrival time back in order to help our staff prepare more effectively for the start of the school day.

From Wednesday 6 January 2021, the doors will open at 8.20am. Our team will be on hand as usual to welcome the children from this time.

We anticipate moving the start time to 8.25am from after the February half term, but I will confirm this in my February Head's Letter once we have had the opportunity to review the first month back.

Important Dates End of Autumn Term/First Half Spring Term

Tue 1 Dec	16:00 – 18:30	Y9 Virtual Parents Evening
Wed 2 Dec	13:00 – 14:00	Y5 & Y6 Virtual Coffee Afternoon
	18:30 – 19:30	NSPA Family Quiz via Zoom
Wed 9 Dec	13:00 – 14:00	Y7 & Y8 Virtual Coffee Afternoon
Thu 10 Dec		Visiting Pantomime for EYFS - Juniors
Fri 11 Dec		Last Day of Term
Wed 6 Jan		Start of Spring Term
Tue 12 Jan	16:00 – 18:30	Y10 Virtual Parents' Consultation Meetings
Wed 13 Jan	13:00 – 14:00	Y9-11 Virtual Parents' Coffee Afternoon
Fri 15 Jan	11:15 – 13:00	Y10 Exam Busters Workshop
	14:00 – 16:00	Y11 Exam Busters Workshop
Tue 19 Jan	09:30 – 13:00	11+ Entrance Exam
	16:00 – 18:30	Y11 Virtual Parents' Consultation Meetings
Fri 22 Jan		Y10 & 11 Young Shakespeare Company Visiting Performance
Tue 26 Jan	16:00 – 18:30	Y8 Virtual Parents' Consultation Meetings
Tue 2 Feb	16:00 – 18:30	Y7 Virtual Parents' Consultation Meetings
Tue 9 Feb		Safer Internet Day
Mon 15 – Fri 19 Feb		Half Term

As always, if you have any questions you would like to raise with the school, please contact your child's form teacher, a member of the Leadership Team or telephone the school office to arrange an appointment. We are always happy to meet with you.

I would like to wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely



Jacqueline Job
Headmistress



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