



Normanhurst School

68-74 Station Road, North Chingford, London E4 7BA

Tel: 020 8529 4307

HEADMISTRESS

Mrs Jacqueline Job B.S.C., NPQH

E-mail: info@normanhurstschool.co.uk

Website: www.normanhurstschool.co.uk

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Dear Parents

Re: **Headmistress's Letter**

I hope that you enjoyed the well-deserved summer break with your families whether you have travelled abroad or experienced a staycation. I hope you and your children are looking forward to the new academic year which begins for them on Monday 6 September. We are excited to be welcoming all pupils back to school.

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. The playground markings have been completed and these look fabulous. The computers in the junior ICT room have been upgraded and the senior computer suite replaced with brand new desktop computers. The Art and Music departments have received new Apple Macs for pupil use and an additional A3 printer in the Art department. I hope you will all agree that these additions add considerably to the pupils' educational resources.

Welcoming our New Pupils

The Year 7 classes came into school on Friday 3 September from 9am until 2pm for their induction day. They had time with their form tutors and with some of the new student leadership team, getting to know school better and being allocated their lockers and timetables. Year 7 also participated in a variety of team building and problem solving activities. This encouraged the pupils to get to know each other. Please could I remind the Year 7 classes to bring their Summer Challenge work/project into school; I am looking forward to seeing these.

The new senior pupils in Year 7 have had an induction day 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.

New pupils joining Normanhurst from Year 1 to Year 6 have a 'buddy' to help them settle into school, and the class teachers are available every afternoon for a brief chat when they bring the children out to meet you at the end of the day. Alternatively, they are very happy to arrange a Zoom call to talk to you, if this is easier for you. I would like to ask you to bring your child to the gate in the morning where there will be a member of staff to welcome your child and direct them to their class. The class teacher will be waiting in the classroom ready to meet the children.

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 over the next weeks.

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 28 September. This meeting will also include a short presentation on your child's assessment journey. Details of this event will be sent out soon and we hope you and your child will all be able to join us.

Information Update

You will be receiving a number of emails requesting information over the next 7 days. Please complete these as soon as possible to ensure we have the most up-to-date contact details and medical information for your child.

It is a requirement that all schools have at least two emergency contacts, who would be available if needed during the school day. We also need to know if your child's medical information has changed or if they have any food allergies or intolerances. Please ensure that we have this important information by **Friday 17 September**, including the hospital or GP notes to confirm and medical needs.

If you have any questions or concerns about the information, contact the school office and a member of the team will be happy to assist you.

Staffing Update

I am delighted to announce that Mrs Prior will be joining the Senior Leadership Team as an Assistant Head working across the school, responsible for Pupils' Mental Health, Health and Safety and Community. Miss Collings becomes Junior Head of House for Warren and Miss Sainsbury becomes the Junior Humanities Coordinator.

We also welcome three new teachers to the staff this year. We welcome Miss Rudman as a Year 4 teacher. She began to visit the school last term, is thrilled to be joining Normanhurst and looks forward to meeting you all over the course of the term. Miss King joins as the Year 3 teacher. She is excited to join us and brings energy and innovative ideas to team. Both teachers will be in their classroom in the mornings to welcome the children, and will be at the gate at dismissal.

We also welcome Mr Matthews, as Head of PE and Duke of Edinburgh Coordinator. Mr Matthews brings many years of experience leading PE, educational visits and Duke of Edinburgh. He looks forward to meeting the Normanhurst community through this year and he will be teaching across the school, including the GCSE PE classes.

We would like to wish all members of staff the best of luck in their new roles and settling into Normanhurst this academic year.

Excellent GCSE Results

The former Year 11 celebrated excellent GCSE results despite the cancellation of the usual exams due to Covid and the implementation of new arrangements this Summer. We are incredibly proud of them; they responded so well to the ever changing situation and challenges and worked together with staff to understand their strengths and areas of development. They all deserved the grades they achieved and they showed great resilience in dealing with the decisions that were made nationally to cancel their public examinations.

All pupils were able to take up places at their first choice school or college. 96% of all grades were good 'passes' which means grade 4 or above. 42% of grades were grades 8 and 9. 62% of grades awarded were grades 7-9, which equates to the old A and A* grades. Once again the pupils achieved particularly well in Maths, English Language and individual Sciences; Biology, Chemistry and Physics with 100% pass rates. Option subjects also had excellent results with 100% passes in Art, Business Studies, Music, Drama, Computer Science, French, Graphics, History, RS and Spanish. Geography and Combined Science also achieved 92% and 86%.

Drop-in Mornings for Parents in the Early Years and Juniors

We aim to invite parents from Years 1-6 into school once every half-term to attend a 'drop-in' morning. On these mornings, parents are able to come into the classroom and your children would show you the work they have been doing. We hope these 'drop in' mornings can begin again this term, possibly with some slight adaptations, and we look forward to welcoming you. Further details will follow.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club is available in the hall for junior and seniors from 7.30am. From 8.25am pupils should go straight to class.

The Start and End of the School Day from Monday 6 September

The morning dropping off for all pupils will be during a staggered arrival time of 8.25am to 8.40am. Please could you ensure that your child is in school by 8.40am to allow them enough time to settle. All 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 PE lesson, and leave their 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.

EYFS and Junior Pupils: Arrival Arrangements

- Kindergarten – use the double gates at the front of the school - Mrs Fisher will greet the children
- Reception and Year 1 – use the double gates at the front of the school
- Year 2 – use the single gate at the front of the school
- Year 3 – use the single gate at the front of the school
- Years 4, 5 and 6 – use the double gates at the front of the school.

Staff will be at the gate to welcome and direct pupils.

EYFS and Junior Pupils: Dismissal Times

- Kindergarten and Reception at 3pm
- Years 1, 2 and 3 at 3.15pm
- Years 4, 5 and 6 at 3.30pm

Senior Pupils: Arrival Arrangements

- 7D use the front gates and go to room 21, your form room
- 7P use the front gates and go to room 5, your form room
- 8S use the front gates and go to room 4, your form room
- 8M use the front gates and go to room 22, your form room
- 9B use the front gates and go to the Library, your form room
- 9R use the front gates and go to room 11, your form room
- 10E use the front gates and go to room 15, your form room
- 10C use the front gates and go to room 6, your form room
- 11M use the front gates and go to room 3, your form room
- 11C use the front gates and go to room 18, your form room

Senior pupils: dismissal times

- Year 7, 8 and 9 at 3.40pm
- Years 10 and 11 at 3.45pm

Reading Initiatives this Year

We will be continuing with the '**Gift a Birthday Book**' scheme. Whilst this is not compulsory, but we would like as many pupils and teachers to be involved. On your child's birthday, they can donate a new copy of their favourite book to the school. We will add a book plate on the inside of the cover which acknowledges who has gifted the book to Normanhurst and the reason why they have chosen it. The books are presented in the weekly assemblies and then take their place in the library for other pupils to read.

We will also be collecting donated books, in good condition, to create a series of book swaps throughout the year. The aim is to do this at least twice, highlighting both the importance of reading and sustainability in sharing books. Mrs Botha, Mrs Coates and Mr Masters will be providing more details closer to the time.

Junior Learning Initiatives this Year

We know how important high quality regular support can be to junior pupils' progress, and therefore our learning assistants will be running some short morning sessions from 8.10-8.30am for small focus groups. The sessions will be for a half term, on Monday through to Friday.

Mrs Lafferty and Miss Low Ten Que will contact parents if they would like a child to attend and feel it would have a positive impact on their progress. These sessions are not compulsory and the group numbers are limited. They will give parents feedback at the end of the half term.

'Dragons Den' at Normanhurst

We know that our pupils are full of great entrepreneurial ideas. Throughout this coming year they will be set some challenges to develop these ideas, using subject knowledge but also other skills to fulfil the challenge brief.

In the Spring term we plan to run our own 'Dragons Den' competition and we will be looking for three parents to be our Normanhurst Dragons. Mr Botha will be writing to parents in the Autumn term looking for volunteers. If you think you may be able to spare a few afternoons to hear our pupils present, please get in contact with him via email.

Mental Health

Mental health and wellbeing continues to remain high on the school's priorities and the current climate stresses how important this is. This year we will be introducing Pupils Wellbeing Ambassadors who will be trained to support their peers, in a peer- to-peer support structure.

Assessment throughout the School

We will be revising the assessment system from EYFS up to Year 9. We hope that this will give parents and pupils further detail about their progress and how well they are doing. Mrs Coates and Miss Low Ten Que will be writing to parents with details in the next few weeks.

Year 11 Matters

Year 11 mock exams will take place just before the Christmas holidays, with a second set of mock exams before Easter. Year 11 will have individual meetings with the Senior Leadership Team 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 Thursday 9 September at 5.00pm. All Year 11 parents and pupils should attend, as we will be providing information about the process of applying to sixth forms. We will write to you closer to the time to inform you of the details.

Year 10 Matters

There is a meeting for all Year 10 parents on Monday 13 September at 5.00pm when we will be outlining the GCSE programme and giving important information about the exams to parents and pupils. Year 10 families should make every effort to attend. This is an important meeting to enable parents to understand GCSEs, which have changed significantly from the exams they would have taken at school.

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 final grade in Year 11.

Inclusion and Diversity

Last year we completed an Inclusion and Diversity curriculum audit, as we felt it was a valuable opportunity to review our current offer, and to ensure that as a diverse school, we continue to be reflect our Normanhurst community. This year we look forward to building on this review with experiences, resources and topical debates and discussion to enrich our educational offer. We will be seeking the views of our parents in due course to ensure we have a diverse viewpoint from everyone involved in the life of the school.

Uniform Matters

The juniors should return to school in either their summer or winter uniform, which they can continue to wear for the first half term, if the weather is still warm. Seniors return wearing the usual full uniform. All pupils are expected to wear the school PE kit; no other brands are allowed. Please ensure that your child has the right kit for allocated days.

One pair of plain stud earrings, one in each ear lobe, may be worn by pupils from Year 5 upwards. These must be plain silver or gold studs, small in size, and each pupil must take full responsibility for them, including removing them for PE lessons.

Pupils' hairstyles must be smart and suitable for school. As detailed in the Parents' Handbook sent home electronically in August, 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.

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' mobile phones will be collected during the morning form time and they will be kept safe until they are returned at the end of the school day. 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. Please could you discuss this with your child to ensure they understand this rule. Your support is appreciated in this matter.

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 by 9am. Please avoid booking medical, dental and orthodontic appointments in 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.

REMINDER: please do not send your child to school if they are unwell in any way. All children will be sent home if they display any signs of illness.

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, or email the PE staff or School Office directly. Pupils will come to school wearing their PE kit. They will not need to bring their uniform into school on these days. Pupils not participating will also need to wear their PE kit and go to the PE lesson with the rest of the class, even though they will not participate.

Extra-curricular Opportunities

The published 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, from **Monday 6 September**.

Breakfast Club, After School Club and Homework Club all begin on **Monday 6 September**.

There will be a number of extra booster classes for Year 11 either during the lunch break or after school from 3.45-4.45pm, with the purpose of helping students make maximum progress this year and thus achieve the best grades possible in their GCSE examinations. It will be very important that pupils attend these classes and I ask all Year 11 parents to support us by ensuring your son or daughter attends.

Homework Matters and Diaries

We are continuing to use 'Show My Homework' called 'Satchel' for the senior pupils from for Year 7 to Year 11. We are continuing to use 'Seesaw' for the Junior pupils.

From time to time there may be technical difficulties, but we will always work with the company to resolve any issues. This online platform has been invaluable for our online learning and shown how effective it can be.

New pupils and parents will receive their log-ins during the first week of term. Miss Low Ten Que (Head of Juniors) and Mrs Coates (Assistant Head of Seniors) coordinate the scheme and they can assist you if you lose your log-in details or cannot access the site.

The homework timetable will be published so that both 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 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.

This is also a good opportunity to remind senior parents that we have senior homework club in school every evening from 4pm to 5pm; please encourage your child to attend.

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

The seniors will not have hard copies of diaries this year, because all communications are now via 'Show My Homework' or email. The senior pupils will, however, have a note journal to write important notes through the day. The journal also has a reference section at the back with Mental Health pages included.

The junior pupils will continue with reading diaries to encourage regular reading and staff are as always available to meet parents face-to-face or via Zoom to discuss any issues relating to reading.

Junior parents received a welcome letter from the class teacher after the moving-up day last term, with details about homework, tests, topics and routines. This information included the days when PE or swimming kits are needed. If you are unsure about any of the junior routines, or 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. We have also updated our EYFS parents' booklet as there are changes to the EYFS framework this year, and we will resend this curriculum information to parents.

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 email support@oaktreeschools.co.uk or contact the school office.

Year 3 Camp

The annual Oak-Tree Year 3 Camp held at Oaklands School is finally back. On 9 and 10 September the Year 3 pupils will participate in an exciting adventure of activities on the two school fields. I know the Year 3 pupils will be excited that this will go ahead this year.

Important Dates for the Diary

Fri 3 Sep	09:00 – 14:00	New Y7 Induction Day
	10:00 – 11:00	Kindergarten Stay and Play
Mon 6 Sep		Pupils Return
Thu 9 – Fri 10 Sep		Y3 Overnight Camp at Oaklands School
Thu 9 Sep	17:00 – 18:00	16+ Y11 Transition Parent Meeting
Mon 13 – Fri 17 Sep		Y1-6 Baseline Assessments
	15:45 – 16:45	Y1-6 Maths Information Parent Meeting
	17:00 – 18:00	Y10 Parent/Pupil Meeting - Supporting your child at GCSE
Tue 14 Sep	15:45 – 16:45	EYFS RWI/Maths Information Parent Meeting
Wed 15 Sep	19:00 – 20:00	NSPA Meeting
Thu 16 Sep		Y8 HPV 1 st Vaccination
	08:30 – 16:30	Y10&11 Art/Graphics trip to Turner Exhibition
	15:30 – 16:30	Y1 RWInc Parent Information Meeting

Mon 20 Sep		Whole School Photograph
Tue 21 Sep	08:30 – 09:00	Junior Parents' 'Drop in' Session
	17:00 – 17:30	Y7 Parent Meeting – New Assessment System
	17:30 – 18:00	Y8&9 Parent Meeting – New Assessment System
Thu 23 Sep		Individual School Photographs
Sun 26 Sep	11:00 – 13:00	NSPA Welcome Walk and Litter Pick
Tue 28 Sep	17:00 – 18:00	Y7 Parent Meeting: How to support your child at home/ MIDYIS Assessments
Mon 4 Oct	09:00 – 10:30	Harvest Service
Thu 7 Oct	18:00 – 19:30	Open Evening
Fri 8 Oct	09:15 – 11:00	EYFS Open Morning
Mon 11 Oct	16:00 – 18:30	KG-Y6 Parents' Evening
Tue 12 Oct	16:00 – 18:30	KG-Y6 Parents' Evening (specialist staff in hall)
Wed 13 Oct	16:00 – 18:30	KG-Y6 Parents' Evening
Thu 14 Oct	18:00 – 19:00	Past Y11 GCSE Presentation Evening
Mon 18 – 29 Oct		Half Term
Mon 1 Nov		UK Parliament Week
Tue 9 Nov	08:30 – 09:00	Junior Parents' 'Drop In' Session
Wed 10 Nov		Rec-Y11 Flu Vaccinations
Thur 11 Nov		Remembrance Day
Mon 15 – Fri 19 Nov		Junior Assessment Week
Tue 23 Nov	17:00 – 18:30	Y9 Options Evening
Mon 29 Nov – Fri 3 Dec		Y11 Mock GCSE Exams
Tue 7 Dec	16:00 – 18:30	Y9 Parents' Evening
Tue 14 Dec	14:00 – 15:00	Christmas Carol Concert
Wed 15 Dec	12:00	Last Day of Autumn 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



Jacqueline Job
Headmistress



OAK-TREE SCHOOLS is the group name of:

BRAESIDE SCHOOL, BUCKHURST HILL • COOPERSALE HALL SCHOOL, EPPING • NORMANHURST SCHOOL, NORTH CHINGFORD • OAKLANDS SCHOOL, LOUGHTON

HEAD OFFICE ADDRESS: 6 ALBION HILL, LOUGHTON, ESSEX IG10 4RA

GROUP MANAGING PRINCIPAL & DIRECTOR: MR MATTHEW HAGGER B.A. (HONS), M.ED., PGCE CO-DIRECTORS: MR NICHOLAS HAGGER M.A. (OXON), MRS ANN HAGGER CERT. ED.

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