



Normanhurst School

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HEADMISTRESS

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1 November 2021

Dear Parents

Re: **Headmistress's Letter**

After such a busy half-term, I hope you and your families have enjoyed the holiday and a well-deserved break. We are very much looking forward to the rest of the term, which includes a number of special events. Please make a note of the dates at the end of this letter and online in the calendar.

Junior Parent Consultation Evenings

Thank you to all the parents for attending the junior parents' evenings. I hope these were a useful opportunity to come into school, see your child's classroom, their teachers and some of their books. We very much enjoyed meeting you all face-to-face and thank you for your positive feedback. Please remember, if you were unable to attend the event, please contact the class teacher who will be able to arrange an alternative time to meet with you.

Junior Assessment Information Evening

This year we have made slight adjustments to the junior assessments to enable parents to have a better understanding about the progress their son or daughter is making. We will therefore be inviting the junior parents from Years 1-6 to attend an information evening on Tuesday 16 November at school. There will be two meetings:

- Years 1, 2 and 3: 4.00pm - 4.30pm
- Years 4, 5 and 6: 4.30pm - 5.00pm

Further details will follow from Miss Low Ten Que in due course.

Normanhurst School Parents' Association (NSPA)

I often have conversations at the school gate about the work of the NSPA. The NSPA recognises that family lives are busy, but appreciates any time and ideas parents are able to contribute. If you would like to know more or would be interested in joining, please contact Sinead Greenaway, the Chair at: NormanhurstPA@hotmail.com. She would be delighted to let you know more about the NSPA. It is never too late to get involved.

Thank you to the NSPA for its ongoing support for the school. We have already booked the Junior Christmas Panto, are exploring parent talks on Children's Mental Health, Coping with Teenagers and Supporting your Child to be Resilient. Further details will be shared with parents at a later date. Once again, the NSPA have agreed to make a contribution towards the Year 11 leavers, Year 6 yearbooks and hoodies and Key Stage 3 & 4 revision workshops. The NSPA are also hoping to organise some fantastic events such as a family quiz night, junior disco and summer barbecue.

Everyone's Invited and Keeping Children Safe in Education – New Government Statutory Guidance for Schools

Following the publication of the testimonies of the survivors of sexual abuse in schools, the Government asked Ofsted to undertake an immediate review of safeguarding in both state and independent schools. As a result of recommendations arising from the review, the Government issued new statutory guidance to all schools and colleges to be implemented from September 2021, which is found in the document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education': https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1021914/KCSIE_2021_September_guidance.pdf.

This guidance requires schools to look again at a number of aspects of what we teach about how to keep safe, maintaining healthy relationships, recognising peer-on-peer abuse and addressing concerns about sexual harassment or sexual violence.

All schools have needed to review their Relationships and Sex Education curriculum and consider how they create a culture in which pupils feel able to raise concerns and know that they will be listened to when they do so. Schools are required to take all concerns seriously and to have a 'zero tolerance' approach to unacceptable behaviour.

The review found that pupils find it very difficult to raise concerns in school and that they can feel very vulnerable in so doing, so we have been looking at how we can make a safe space for this to happen more easily for the Oak-Tree pupils, particularly those in the Seniors. We have decided to have a dedicated email address, which can be anonymous, at both Braeside and Normanhurst. Pupils and parents will receive information about this over the course of the next term.

In addition, we will be looking at our PSHE programme in all of the schools to ensure that lessons explore thoroughly the idea of consent and the safe use of the internet, including aspects like the sending of 'nudes' and 'semi-nudes', at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way.

PSHE Workshops

As part of PSHE education, Years 9, 10 and 11 will be participating in some workshops on Monday 1 November run by The RAP Project which support pupils' awareness of personal safety, respectful language used among teenagers, while openly exploring social media influence, attitudes and expectations. They will also explore how media can negatively affect body image and self-esteem. Our workshops have been personalised, however further details can be found at [Presentations \(theraproject.co.uk\)](https://www.theraproject.co.uk). The presentations form part of our whole school response to the latest guidance and we hope these will enable our pupils to reflect on how we build a safe, supportive and healthy environment for all of our pupils in school.

National Online Safety Advice about Netflix's Squid Game

Netflix's Squid Game is set to become the service's most successful show of all time, with huge numbers of viewers taking to social media to discuss each new episode. The South Korean thriller features some scenes of fairly brutal violence and is rated 15 by the BBFC. It follows a group of adults who compete to win innocent-looking playground games, but who are killed if they do not succeed at the tasks.

Squid Game's popularity is beginning to spread across various online platforms. Associated content has been created – ranging from memes to apps – that convey the violence of the show, so it is helpful for parents to understand the basis of Squid Game and the potential risks to young people who might be exposed to it: https://nationalonlinesafety.com/wakeupwednesday/squid-game-trending-across-platforms-what-parents-need-to-know?fbclid=IwAR0gR4_0HjAYvPINA6UK0aszIKc10-8yC4K5CrOI2Es-dGzi9MjxeYQkbtQ

Squid Game's 15 rating has not prevented clips and images from the show being uploaded onto social media sites such as TikTok, with the #SquidGame hashtag being viewed more than 22.8 billion times. There have been reports of children who have accounts on these platforms inadvertently viewing gory, explicit scenes from the programme, and parents should be mindful of the prevalence of these uploads.

The popularity of the programme has also led to online challenges based on various scenes, which see people taking part in seemingly innocent children's games. On the show, however, characters are executed if they fail in the game – and videos of people pretending to kill each other after competing in Squid Game-style contests are going viral on social media, where they are easily accessible to children.

Online Safety

As a school, keeping our pupils safe online is high on our priorities. We do this by exploring the issues and challenges our pupils face, but also raising awareness about how to remain safe online. As a school will adopt a joined up approach encompassing issues around internet safety within the curriculum, supported by our PSHE programme (Jigsaw), weekly assemblies and Computing curriculum. We will continue to share with helpful resources to assistant parents with monitoring home usage. We will be sending a number of information sheets to parents to support this work, and there is also a section of the school website with resources for parents. I hope you find these useful.

Black History Month and Dyslexia Awareness Day

October was a busy Black History Month. Pupils in a variety of lessons across the school learned about some of the many significant black people in history and modern day. We also celebrated Dyslexia Awareness Day by wearing red and donating money to the British Dyslexia Association. The pupils learnt a lot about the many attributes of dyslexia and participated in circle times, poetry reading, role play and solving riddles. The newsletter and our social media pages celebrate the pupils' learning as part of their understanding of diversity and inclusion.

Gift a Book

This term we continue with our 'gift a birthday book' scheme, where pupils on their birthday can gift one of their favourite books to the school. A certificate is placed inside the cover of the book explaining who has gifted the book. Please have a look at the newsletter for staff and pupils' photos. Thank you for supporting this; pupils are very proud to donate their book in assembly and explain their choice of book to share.

Pupil Voice

We have continued to empower the pupils across the school to create a pupil led school menu. Once again the pupils have provided valuable positive feedback and it is good to see pupils enjoying second platefuls and engaging with international food theme days. They have been balancing healthy tasty dishes with an amazing array of desserts. All menus are on the website, although there may be a last minute amendment if ingredients are delayed.

There is a suggestion box in the school; please encourage your child to make suggestions. This can be for school food or for another improvement they would like to see within the school. After half term we aim to start speaking to pupils in small groups about their school experience, listening to their suggestions and hearing their perspectives on school life.

Crossing the Road Safely

Can I ask all parents to encourage good road crossing habits at the start and end of the school day. Although it may feel quicker to cross the road between cars, it is incredibly dangerous and not something we endorse as a school. There is a zebra crossing not too far from the school, which is much safer to use. Please support us by encouraging pupils to cross safely and by discussing this with your child.

Winter Uniform Reminders

We take great care to maintain high standards of uniform and presentation at school, and as we return to wintery weather I would like to remind you of the school's uniform expectations.

From November 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.

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 area 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.

Please could I also remind parents and pupils to ensure clothing items are labelled. We have a growing box of lost property containing unnamed items.

Year 11 Mocks

GCSE Mock Exams for Year 11 begin on Thursday 25 November. These will take place at the United Reformed Church hall. I am pleased to hear that pupils have been working hard over half term at the school booster classes. These have been important preparations and I have been proud to see the pupils so committed towards their studies. We await the results of the DfE final consultation on exams and their 'Plan B', in case exams are unable to go ahead, but in the meantime we are fully preparing pupils to sit exams in the Summer term. I will be writing to Year 11 parents separately with the details of any amendments made by the Government to exam arrangements.

Reflections on Events this Term

It has been incredibly heart-warming to see and be able to meet so many parents and prospective parents this term. Junior Drop-In morning, Open Days, Macmillan Coffee Morning, parent information and assessment evenings along with our wonderful Harvest Festival at St Peter's and St Paul's Church. I am incredibly proud of our pupils and staff as once again they continue to be fantastic ambassadors for the school. Equally, I am incredibly grateful and appreciative of the unwavering support we receive from our parents. I hope you have also enjoyed attending school events this term; it has been wonderful to create some wonderful memories.

In November we have Armistice Day and the Poppy Appeal fast approaching. Every year in school we remember those who have died in wars by supporting the Poppy Day Appeal. Remembrance poppies will be available from Friday 5 November at the front of the school in the morning. Please feel free to make a donation. We will have a minute's silence on Thursday 11 November in the playground to remember.

Celebrating Christmas Together

December is busy as usual with a number of seasonal highlights:

- The Infant Nativity performance and Christmas Concert
- Christmas lunches week with the Junior Christmas parties in the afternoons from Monday 6 December
- The Early Years and Junior pantomime performance in school on Friday 10 December
- The annual Christmas Service on Tuesday 14 December

Government Guidance Relating to Coronavirus

I have had a number of parents contact me regarding Government guidance and the possibility of future changes. We have taken care at every stage of the pandemic to implement Government guidance in a thorough and timely way, which we will continue to do. If any changes are announced, Mr Hagger will write to parents with any information, as we have done throughout. Although we hope school will not be interrupted this academic year, nevertheless we are prepared and will respond and adjust accordingly, if Government advice changes.

Coffee Mornings for Parents

Our programme of Coffee Mornings will start next week to provide you with the opportunity to chat to us informally about life at school. This time, we will be inviting you to join Mr Hagger, Mrs Osborn and myself in school. Dates were in the previous Headmistress's Letter and are listed below. Parents will receive a Groupcall text message from the office the week before the coffee morning so that you can confirm if you are able to attend.

Important Dates for the Diary

Tue 2 Nov	09:30 – 12:30	Y5 William Morris Gallery trip
Thu 4 Nov	13:00 – 18:30	Y9+GCSE Drama 'Woman in Black' Theatre trip
Fri 5 Nov	08:45 – 09:45	Kindergarten Coffee Morning for Parents
	09:30 – 13:00	Y7 Stansted Mountfitchet trip
Mon 8 Nov	19:00 – 20:00	NSPA Meeting
Tue 9 Nov	08:30 – 09:00	Rec/Junior Parents 'Drop In' session
Wed 10 Nov	09:00 – 10:00	Rec-Y11 Flu vaccinations

	10:00 – 14:00	EYFS trip to Pimp Hall
Wed 17 Nov	12:30 – 14:30	Kindergarten trip to Chingford Fire Station
	18:00 – 19:00	Past Y11 GCSE Presentation Evening
Fri 19 Nov	08:45 – 09:45	Reception Coffee Morning for Parents
Tue 23 Nov	17:00 – 18:30	Y9 Options Evening
Thu 25 Nov – Fri 3 Dec		Y11 Mock GCSE Exams
Fri 26 Nov	08:45 – 09:45	Y1 Coffee Morning for Parents
	09:00 – 15:00	Y6 trip to Duxford Air Museum
	09:00 – 16:00	Y9 History trip to Imperial War Museum
Mon 29 Nov	09:00 – 15:00	EYFS Festive Fun Day
Fri 3 Dec	08:45 – 09:45	Y2 Coffee Morning for Parents
Mon 6 – Wed 8 Dec		Scholastic Book Fair
Tue 7 Dec	16:00 – 18:30	Y9 Parents' Evening
Wed 8 Dec	14:15 – 15:00	EYFS Nativity Performance
Thu 9 Dec	09:15 – 10:00	EYFS Nativity Performance
	17:00 – 18:30	Winter Sparke Informal Concert
Fri 10 Dec	08:45 – 09:45	Y3 Coffee Morning for Parents
Fri 10 Dec	13:00 – 15:30	Junior Pantomime (hall)
Tue 14 Dec	14:00 – 15:00	Christmas Carol Service
Wed 15 Dec	12:00	End of Autumn Term

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



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