



Normanhurst School

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HEADMISTRESS

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1 December 2021

Dear Parents

Re: **Headmistress's Letter**

The Christmas season is finally upon us, with activities and rehearsals for performances well on the way. There is plenty to celebrate and enjoy for pupils and parents alike. This term has gone by incredibly quickly and it continues to be action packed.

Yearbooks

Work has already begun on the yearbooks for Year 6 and Year 11. We have many photos available at school, but we are aware that, as parents, you may also have some great photos taken over the years. We have therefore set up a yearbook email address which allows parents to send in photos to be considered for the yearbooks. Please email yearbook@normanhurstschool.co.uk and put either Year 6 or Year 11 in the subject heading.

'Gift a Birthday Book' Scheme

We are continuing the 'Gift a Birthday Book' scheme. This is not compulsory, but we would like to encourage pupils, families and teachers to become involved if they would like to. On your child's birthday, they can donate a new copy of their favourite book to the school. A bespoke bookplate will be placed inside the front cover, with the name of the person who has given the book, the date and the reason why they love it. This will be presented in the weekly assemblies, shared on social media and then placed in the library for other pupils to read.

Headmistress's Commendations

This term I have awarded three Headmistress's Commendations to Mia Johnson, Olivia Lassen and Sai Siram in Year 11. These pupils are being commended for going above and beyond in their roles as part of the Student Leadership Team, and embodying the school values. Congratulations to all three of them. We are incredibly proud of their efforts, commitment and ability to serve and help others: this is the Normanhurst way!

Christmas Events

Carol Service: We have been rehearsing Christmas songs for our Carol Service which is going to be a fantastic event, full of happiness and cheer. The service takes place at The Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul Church on Tuesday 14 December at 2.00pm. Parents are very welcome to join us to share in this festive celebration.

Nativity Performances: There is a lot of excitement around the Nativity, which this year returns to having a live audience of parents. I know we are all in for a very special treat. There will be three performances at school:

Wednesday 8 December

- 9.15am EYFS - refreshments available in the hall from 8.40am
- 2.30pm Year 2 - refreshments available in the hall from 2.15pm

Thursday 9 December

- 9.15am Year 1 - refreshments available in the hall from 8.40am

Visiting Pantomime for Early Years and Juniors: Due to last year's success of the visiting pantomime, On Friday 10 December, we have arranged for the Early Years and Junior pupils to watch a live pantomime performance in school.

We are very excited about this and I know the children will really enjoy it. Once again we would like to thank the NSPA for sponsoring this event. It will add something very special to the celebrations and also create lovely memories.

Sharing Christmas with The Spinney: As you know throughout the year we normally visit our local care home, The Spinney. This continues to be a challenge given the challenge of Coronavirus. Therefore, the pupils will be involved in creating a video to send to the residents, including songs, festive readings and poetry. They will also be making a Christmas card for each resident at the care home, with a thoughtful message, as well as sending written messages and drawings to share some of our Christmas cheer.

Christmas Lunches: These are taking place on Tuesday 7 and Wednesday 8 December, and will be followed by class parties for pupils up to Year 6.

Pupils will, as usual, be allowed to wear a festive jumper on the day of their Christmas lunch and party, which are as follows:

- **Tuesday 7 December** – Kindergarten, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 10 and Year 11
- **Wednesday 8 December** – Year 4, Year 5, Year 6 and Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9

Festive Fun Day: The Early Years Festive Fun Day took place on Monday 29 November. It was a super day for our youngest pupils. The children were thrilled to learn that the 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.

Staff News

This term we say goodbye to Miss Buggins from the Early Years department. She has been superb in Lower Kindergarten always showing such warmth, care and compassion for the children. We would like to thank Miss Buggins for helping to create such a nurturing environment and for supporting the children and parents. We wish her the very best for the future. We are incredibly lucky to have appointed Miss Sulzmann as the Lower Kindergarten lead key worker. Many of you will already know Miss Sulzmann, who is a fantastic, well-established current member of the Early Years department. Miss Elwis, a Teaching Assistant in Year 1, will move into the Early Years department and she is very excited to be joining the department working with the Reception children.

We have appointed Miss Fagan to join the Learning Support team from January and she will be working with Miss Collings in Year 1. She has already met the children and looks forward to supporting the pupils' learning.

We are also saying goodbye and good luck to Miss Godfrey who has been a Teaching Assistant with Year 5 this year, but also supported a few senior pupils in lessons. Miss Godfrey will be relocating to start a new adventure, teaching in Poland. She has made valuable contributions to the school and we are grateful for the passion she has shown when nurturing our pupils. We wish her the best of luck for the future. We have appointed Miss Gilbert to join the team from January to support the Year 5 class and some of the seniors.

Mr McDermott, our Caretaker will be leaving us this term. He has been brilliant in supporting the busy nature of the school, events and maintaining facilities. We wish him the very best of luck and are very grateful for his hard work.

End of Term Arrangements

The final day of term on **Wednesday 15 December** will be a non-uniform day when pupils will be able to wear something festive and bring a donation of £2 to raise money for our local food bank. The charity committee is also having a cake sale on 10 December to support this cause. Mrs Prior and the Charity Committee will be sending further details shortly. Pupils can wear jeans, or something sensible for school, but we would like to see everyone wearing something festive.

Please note the dismissal times for the last day of term, after final celebrations and rewards assemblies:

Dismissal Times:

- **EYFS and Year 1** at 11.30am
- **Years 2 and 3** at 11.30am
- **Years 4, 5 and 6** at 11.40am
- **Years 7, 8 and 9** at 11.50am
- **Years 10 and 11** at 11.55am

Autumn Term Reflections

It has been wonderful to return to some form of normality this term, despite the unpredictable nature of the pandemic continuing to present a challenge to the Normanhurst community. Nevertheless, I have really enjoyed seeing you all face-to-face. We have welcomed new children into the school this Autumn Term and I am pleased to see how well they have settled into their first term at Normanhurst.

Pupils should be incredibly proud of their efforts this term. It has been wonderful to read through the latest set of school reports; there is a significant amount to celebrate. Pupils have been determined to get back into good learning habitats, showing resilience, understanding and a love for learning. This is what makes them excellent ambassadors for the school.

We have also had success in the ISA Art competition this term where Clem in Year 2 was awarded first place in the National finals for her textiles and Olivia in Year 11 was awarded second place in the national photography competition. These are amazing achievements: well done to both pupils!

Year 11 Mock GCSE Exams

The Year 11 pupils have already begun to sit a full set of mock exams. This will enable pupils 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.

Years 10 and 11 Workshops

Building on the success of last year's revision workshops, we are pleased to be able to extend these this year to include all senior pupils, and with the support of the NSPA, to subsidise the costs per pupil. On Wednesday 19 January, there will be a series of workshops.

Years 7 & 8 - 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
- Upskilling pupils with effective memory techniques
- Providing a comprehensive exam tool kit

Years 9 & 10 - 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

Year 11 – Mind Mapping which is designed to help pupils better organise their thoughts, allowing pupils to:

- To show them how to make and take mind mapped notes
- To boost understanding and recall
- To encourage creativity and build excellent planning skills

These workshops will provide some excellent additional tools to their skillset and revision techniques to add to our pupils' exam repertoires. Mr Clair will be writing to parents with further details shortly.

Parent Talk – How to help your child revise or form positive study habits

We will be hosting a parent talk for parents of pupils in Years 7-11 on how to help your child revise or form positive study habits. This talk will happen at school on Wednesday 19 January at 4.45-5.45pm, run by the company 'Positively You'. There will be limited spaces available, with one place per family. These will be available on a first come first served basis and parents will be required to text back to confirm their seat.

We hope this will be one of the first talks in a series of parent talks over the forthcoming terms.

Career Talks

We are hoping to extend our careers programme to include short talks from parents to inspire our pupils, the future generation. We are therefore interested in hearing from parents from a variety of sectors and industries to come into school during the Spring term on Thursday mornings to offer a 20-25 minute talk to our pupils about their occupation, roles, the journey and motivation to work in these fields. If you think you would be able to offer your expertise please could you email Mr Botha, responsible for Careers Education by Wednesday 8 December, EBotha@normanhurstschool.co.uk.

Snow and Wintry Weather

Our aim will always be to stay open in the wintry weather, even if the snow comes. In the unlikely case that we are unable to open, we will move to our online home learning programmes. On snow days, 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 wear a plain pair of gold or silver stud earrings to school from Year 5 upwards only.
- 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. This year the NSPA have purchased a wooden work bench for the Early Years department and paid for the visiting pantomime to attend school for the Juniors. In addition to this they are

subsidising the Yearbooks for Years 6 and 11, the Year 11 Prom event, the revision workshops for Years 7-11 and finally the annual Christmas gift for the pupils. We are incredibly grateful to the NSPA for their ongoing support.

The NSPA is holding a 'Festive Zooming Quiz Night' on Friday 10 December at 7pm. 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 Mornings

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

Safer Internet Day

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 8 February 2021. This year's theme of 'exploring reliability in the online world' focuses 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.

Festive Wellbeing

The festive period can bring immense joy when we reunite with family and connect with relatives and friends. It can often be an exhausting for young people as their normal routine is disrupted (for pleasant reasons). I have included a link to a website that provides some helpful tips to support children's wellbeing over the busy festive period: <https://happiful.com/6-ways-to-support-childrens-mental-health-this-winter/>

Important Dates for the Diary

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	09:15 – 10:00	KG-Rec Nativity performance to parents
	14:30 – 15:00	Y2 Nativity performance to parents
Thu 9 Dec	09:15 – 10:00	Y1 Nativity Performance to parents
	17:00 – 18:00	Winter Sparkle Informal Concert
Fri 10 Dec	08:45 – 09:45	Y3 Coffee Morning for Parents
Fri 10 Dec	13:00 – 15:30	Junior Pantomime (hall)
	19:00 – 20:15	NSPA Festive Quiz Night (Zoom)
Tue 14 Dec	14:00 – 15:00	Christmas Carol Service at St Peter & St Paul Church
Wed 15 Dec	11:30 – 12:00	End of Autumn Term – staggered finish (see above)
Thu 6 Jan		First day of Spring Term – school start at the usual time
Fri 7 Jan	08:45 – 09:45	Y4 Coffee Morning for Parents
Tue 11 Jan	16:00 – 18:30	Y10 Parents' Evening
Fri 14 Jan	08:45 – 09:45	Y5 Coffee Morning for Parents
Mon 17 Jan	19:00 – 20:00	NSPA Meeting

Tue 18 Jan	16:00 – 18:30	Y11 Parents' Evening
Fri 21 Jan	08:45 – 09:45	Y6 Coffee Morning for Parents
	12:30 – 21:15	Y5&6 Young Voices at the O2
Tue 25 Jan	16:00 – 18:30	Y8 Parents' Evening
Thu 27 Jan		Y10 Forest School Careers Fair
Fri 28 Jan	08:45 – 09:45	Y7&8 Coffee Morning for Parents
Tue 1 Feb	08:30 – 09:00	LK-Y6 'Drop-In' Morning for Parents
	16:00 – 18:30	Y7 Parents' Evening
Fri 4 Feb	08:45 – 09:45	Y9-11 Coffee Morning for Parents
Tue 8 Feb		Safer Internet Day
Sat 12 – Tue 15 Feb		KS4 Languages Trip to Paris
Mon 14 – Fri 18 Feb		Half 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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