



Normanhurst School

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HEADMISTRESS

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2 September 2022

Dear Parents

Re: **September 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, and that you and your children are looking forward to the new academic year which begins for them on Monday 5 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 have been preparing for the start of term. We have received the delivery of two additional interactive white boards, the science classrooms now have new chairs, carpets have been changed in areas around the school and many rooms across the school have received a wonderful redecoration.

Welcoming our New Pupils

The Year 7 classes came into school on Friday 2 September from 9am until 12pm for the second part of their school induction. 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. The pupils 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 on Monday 5 September; I am looking forward to seeing these.

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 their 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 meeting call to talk to you, if this is easier. Please 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 27 September at 5pm. 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 16 September, including the hospital or GP notes to confirm any medical needs. Parents can update these details by logging onto the portal.

If parents are away for any reason during term time and your children are being looked after by relatives – you should notify the office and class teacher with the name and contact details of the relative in advance, so that we know who has responsibility for your child while you are away.

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

As some staff have been appointed in new positions and we welcome new staff to the school, I thought it may be helpful to re-share this information with parents.

- Mr Clair – Head of Seniors – with responsibility for Assessment, Attainment and Data, along with Pastoral Care.
- Miss Stone – Head of Juniors – with responsibility for Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Pastoral Care for the Juniors.
- Mrs Lafferty - Assistant Head Seniors - SENDCo, Exams Officer and Responsible for Teaching and Learning.
- Mr Masters - Assistant Head Juniors – with responsibility for Teaching and Learning and Pastoral Care.
- Mrs Saint is Assistant Head across the school, she is responsible for Pupil Mental Health, Health and Safety, PSHE and Senior Pastoral Care.

All members of the senior leadership are Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL) and I am the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the school including EYFS.

Miss Collings becomes Head of House for Connaught House and Mr Botha is Head of Warren House. They will become Heads of House for both the Juniors and Seniors. Mrs Jayaram has become Head of Science, Mrs Allen Junior Art Coordinator and Mr Matthews is the Oak-Tree Challenge and Duke of Edinburgh Coordinator.

We also welcome to the Juniors, Miss O'Brien as a Year 5 teacher and Miss Varley as a Year 3 Teacher. Both teachers are excited to join us and bring energy and innovative ideas. Both teachers will be in their classroom in the mornings to welcome the children, and will be at the gate at dismissal. To the Seniors, we welcome Mr Christofides, Head of Music, Ms Arrowsmith as Head of English, Mrs Mouslmani as Head of Maths and Miss Ridge as Teacher of Science.

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

Excellent GCSE results

On 25 August we celebrated with the former Year 11 their incredible GCSE results. This GCSE cohort was the first to sit public examinations since the start of the pandemic. We are proud of the Year 11 pupils for their bravery, dedication and commitment towards the courses. They all deserved the grades they achieved and they showed great resilience in dealing with the uncertainty around their public examinations.

I am delighted to share that 98% of grades achieved were at grade 4-9, equivalent to a previous grade C or higher, with 51% at grades 7-9, equivalent to the previous grades A* or A. Once again, the pupils achieved particularly well in Maths, English, Sciences, Computing and PE, with 100% good passes in English Literature, Art, Business Studies, Geography, French, RS, Graphics, Drama, Music, History, Spanish, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Further Maths.

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

We aim to invite parents from Early Years to Year 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 will show you the work they have been doing. The first 'drop-in' is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 27 September. Further details will follow.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club is available in the Early Years and Reception classroom for juniors and seniors from 7.30am. From 8.30am pupils should go straight to class.

The Start and End of the School day from Monday 5 September

The morning dropping off for all pupils will be during a staggered arrival time of 8.30am to 8.40am. Years 5-11 should go straight to the playground, Years 1-4 should go straight to their classrooms and Early Years including Reception will be collected from the main gate. All pupils should be in class by 8.40am at the latest for registration 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.

We will also continue the staggered end to the day and lining up at dismissal:

- Early Years and Reception at 3.15pm
- Years 1-3 at 3.25pm
- Years 4-6 at 3.30pm
- Years 7-9 at 3.40pm
- Years 10-11 at 3.45pm

Senior Pupils: Arrival Arrangements

- 7M use the front gates and go to room 15, your form room
- 7T use the front gates and go to room 3, your form room
- 8D use the front gates and go to room 21, your form room
- 8P use the front gates and go to room 5, your form room (Art Room)
- 9S use the front gates and go to room 4, your form room
- 9M use the front gates and go to room 22, your form room
- 10B use the front gates and go to the Library, your form room
- 10R use the front gates and go to room 11, your form room
- 11J use the front gates and go to room 6, your form room (Science Room)
- 11B use the front gates and go to room 18 your form room (Languages Room)

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.

Junior Learning Initiatives

We know how important high quality regular support can be to junior pupils' progress, and therefore our Teaching 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 Wednesday.

Mrs Lafferty and Miss Stone will contact parents if they would like a child to attend and feel it would have a positive impact on their progress. The group numbers are limited. They will give parents feedback at the end of the half term.

ATOM Learning – Years 4-6

This year we will be introducing the use of ATOM Learning for Years 4-6 for some of the homework tasks. Atom Learning is a platform that we will use for homework tasks that will:

- Adapt as the pupils complete their homework
- Provide support with help sheets and video tutorials
- Boost progress

The platform will be introduced to the pupils in school first, so they feel comfortable before using it for homework. All homework will continue to be set via our Seesaw platform, with Years 4-6 having access to ATOM Learning via a link, further details will follow. Years 1-3 will continue to be set tasks on Education City via Seesaw.

Dragons' Den at Normanhurst

Last year we saw the launch of 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/Summer 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 come into school for a morning to hear our pupils present their ideas, please contact him via email.

Mental Health

Mental health and wellbeing remain high on the school's priorities and the current climate stresses how important it is. This year our trained Pupils Wellbeing Ambassadors will be supporting their peers, in a peer- to-peer support structure. This year we also have a trainee counsellor Mrs Khalil to support the pupils one day a week starting in September. She is in the final stages of her qualification and will continue to be professionally supervised. We are excited to be trialling this provision.

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 Tuesday 6 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 separately with further information.

Year 10 Matters

There is a meeting for all Year 10 parents on Wednesday 7 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 grades in Year 11.

NSPA

The NSPA continue to contribute in many ways to school life. They have some exciting events on the calendar to look forward to. Here are the dates for your diary, timings will follow:

- NSPA Meeting 19 September
- Autumn Term NSPA Walk 25 September
- Junior Disco 7 October
- Quiz Night 14 October
- NSPA Meeting 17 October
- NSPA Meeting 14 November
- Winter Fair 12 December
- Potential Murder Mystery Night 3 February 2023

All parents are welcome to join the NSPA by contacting normanhurstschoolpa@gmail.com.

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, 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. Pupil's hair should be tied up throughout the school day.

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. Our policy is to collect pupils' mobile phones during morning form time and they are kept securely 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 ensure your child understands these rules. Your support is much appreciated.

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. 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. They will not need to bring their uniform into school on these days, except when they have swimming. When pupils have swimming, Juniors and Seniors will be expected to wear their school uniform and change back into their school uniform after swimming.

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 5 September.

Breakfast club, afterschool Club and Homework Club all begin on Monday 5 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 Stone (Head of Juniors) and Mr Clair (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 3.45pm to 4.45pm; 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 information 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 to reflect change to the implementation of the framework and curriculum. This year parents will have access to the 'Evidence Me' portal to enable them to see photos of their child's achievements and learning. A separate letter has been sent to parents from Mrs Osborn with further details.

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 takes place on 15 and 16 September. Year 3 pupils will participate in an exciting and enjoyable adventure of activities on the two school fields. I know the Year 3 pupils are looking forward to it.

Dates for the diary

Fri 2 September	09:00 – 15:30	New Year 7 Induction Day
Mon 5 September		First day of Autumn term
Tue 6 September	17:00 – 18:00	Year 11 Post 16 Education Parents' Meeting
Wed 7 September	17:00 – 18:00	Year 10 Being Successful at GCSE Parents' Meeting
Mon 12 – Fri 16 Sep		Years 1-6 Baseline Assessments
Mon 12 September	15:45 – 16:45	Years 1-6 Maths Information Parents' Meeting
Tue 13 September	15:45 – 16:45	EYFS RWI/Maths Information Parents' Meeting
Wed 14 September	12:00 – 18:30	Year 10 & Year 11 GCSE Eng Lit An Inspector Calls theatre trip
Thu 15 – Fri 16 Sep		Year 3 Overnight Camp at Oaklands
	16:00 – 16:30	Year 1 RWI Information Parents' Meeting
Fri 16 September	08:30 – 09:30	McMillan coffee morning
Mon 19 September	19:00 – 20:00	NSPA Meeting
Thu 22 September		Individual School Photos tbc
Sun 25 September		NSPA Autumn Walk
Tue 27 September	08:30 – 09:00	Kindergarten -Year 6 Parents' 'Drop In' Morning
	17:00 – 18:00	Year 7 Meet the Teacher Parents' Meeting
Tue 4 October	09:30 – 10:30	Harvest Festival
Thu 6 October	18:00 – 19:30	Open Day – EYFS, Infants and Juniors

Fri 7 October	09:15 – 10:30	Open Morning - Seniors
	17:00 – 18:30	Junior Disco
Mon 10 October	16:00 – 18:30	EYFS/Junior Parents' Evening
Tue 11 October	16:00 – 18:30	EYFS/Junior Parents' Evening
Wed 12 October	16:00 – 18:30	EYFS/Junior Parents' Evening
Fri 14 October	18:00 – 20:00	NSPA Quiz Night
Mon 17 October	19:00 – 20:00	NSPA Meeting
Mon 24 Oct – Fri 4 Nov		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



OAK-TREE SCHOOLS is the group name of:

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

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