



Norman Hurst School

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HEADMISTRESS

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6 November 2023

Dear Parents

Re: **November 2023 Headmistress's Letter**

I hope you and your families have enjoyed the holiday and a well-deserved break. Last half term it was wonderful to be back at school surrounded by the energy and positivity that comes with a new academic year. We have enjoyed seeing the children perform, audition for Oliver and celebrate an array of activities for Diversity Month. 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 on the school calendar.

Junior Parents' 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, meet their teacher and look at 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, contact the class teacher who will be able to arrange an alternative time to meet with you.

Mental Health Day, Diversity Month and Dyslexia Awareness Day

This term we continue to celebrate Diversity Month with traditional dancing from Ghana, a cultural dress up day, food tasting from around the world, African drumming, a Caribbean cooking challenge and a talk from the Enfield Caribbean Association about their book entitled Windrush Voices.

Pupils learned about tolerance and respect in a variety of lessons across the school. We also celebrated Dyslexia Awareness Day by wearing red and Mental Health Day by wearing green. The pupils learnt a lot about the many attributes of dyslexia and participated in circle times, poetry reading, role play and solving riddles. We have also been reminded about the importance of self-care and using effective strategies to maintain good mental health.

Music Bingo Night (NSPA)

Thank you to all of the parents who attended the NSPA Music Bingo night, it was lovely to see so many members of the school community coming together socially. I was particularly impressed with everyone's music knowledge and Karaoke singing. The evening reminded us of the true value of teamwork and how special our school community is.

Operation Christmas Child

I am delighted to say Norman Hurst will be participating again in Operation Christmas Child, a project coordinated by the UK charity Samaritan's Purse. Norman Hurst will be joining many other school across the country by wrapping, packing and sending shoeboxes full of gifts, for example: tooth brushes, toothpaste and soap, hairbrushes, pens, pencils, something to write on, toys or games, to children in need around the world. This continues to be a house competition across the four houses: Buxton, Rangers, Ridgeway and Forest.

Taking part in this project is optional, but will give your child the opportunity to not only transform a shoebox, but to make a difference to a life. By donating very simple and yet practical gifts you can make a huge difference in the life of another child this Christmas.

We hope that your child will want to be involved with us in this year's Operation Christmas Child campaign and help us reach children in need with shoeboxes of gifts to enjoy. We have the shoeboxes for sale in the office for £1.50. Please could all shoeboxes be in school by Friday 17 November. This year, Year 9 will be volunteering at the packing site in Tonbridge Wells on Tuesday 21 November.

Should you have any questions or concerns about Operation Christmas Child, or Samaritan's Purse, please visit: www.samaritans-purse.org.uk or speak to Mrs Saint.

Year 9 Options Evening

We have already begun to prepare for the transition to GCSE courses with the pupils in Year 9. They have this term been tackling GCSE style work and questions in lessons. It will ensure pupils are prepared for the rigour and challenge of the GCSE examinations. Parents will soon be receiving a GCSE booklet, which provides important information about the GCSE courses, both the compulsory 'core' courses for English, Maths and Science and the wide range of option subjects from which pupils will study four courses.

Please read this booklet together at home with your child in preparation for the Options Evening, which takes place on Tuesday 21 November at 5.00pm in the school hall. During this event you will have the chance to hear about the process and deadlines. There will be a talk about the GCSE programme and you will have the opportunity to hear from subject teachers about their courses.

This is to be followed by the Year 9 Parents' Consultation Evening on Tuesday 5 December, during which parents will have academic feedback on their child's progress to inform their subject choices. This will help the pupils to make the best choices of subjects for them when that time comes in the Spring Term.

Your son or daughter will need to select their 8 preferred options from the list of GCSE option subjects and to rank them from 1 to 8. These should be 8 GCSE subjects they would potentially be interested in studying, in which they show aptitude and which they are happy to take. Option blocks will then be created to best fit the cohorts' preferences. The deadline for returning the Option form will be Friday 19 January 2024.

Armistice Day and the Poppy Appeal

Every year in school we remember those who have died in wars by supporting the Poppy Day Appeal. Remembrance poppies will be available from Monday 6 November at the front of the school in the mornings. Please feel free to make a donation. We will have a minute's silence on Friday 10 November at the front of the school and in the playground. Our school have also been invited again to lay some flowers and a wreath at the Chingford Mount Cemetery on 10 November and we will be taking some pupils to represent our school.

Early Years Events

The Early Years department will be having their annual 'Festive Fun Day' on Monday 27 November. This has become an Early Years tradition where the children discover how this special time of the year is celebrated in many different ways across the world.

This year we look forward to the Early Years nativity performances. There will be two performances to our parents:

- Wednesday 6 December at 9.15am for our Early Years and Year 1 parents
- Wednesday 6 December at 2.30pm for our Year 2 parents

Rehearsals and preparations have already begun and it promises to be wonderful event as usual.

School Production - Oliver

Congratulations to all the pupils who after half term will begin rehearsals for Oliver. I am delighted that Mrs Bunting and Mrs Scott have secured a licence for the pupils to perform such a well know production. The production will take place on Thursday 23 May 2024 at 7pm at the Redbridge Drama Centre - please remember to save the date.

Winter Fayre and Bottle Day

This year we see the return of the Winter Fayre, an event we introduced last year. This will take place in the school hall on Monday 11 December from 3.45- 6.30pm. There will be a number of musical performances, senior pupils will be running the stalls, Santa's Grotto and a variety of refreshments will be served by the NSPA. Please save the date.

Please also note that Friday 1 December will be Bottle Day. Pupils will be allowed to wear their own clothes for the day and instead of bringing in money, they are required to bring an unused, unopened bottle. This could include a bottle of wine, soft drink, shampoo, sauces to name a few.

Celebrating Christmas Together

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

- Christmas lunches will take place on Monday 4 and Tuesday 5 December across the school with the Junior Christmas parties on same day as their Christmas lunch. Further details will follow.
- Reception to Year 8 will go to see Aladdin at the Hackney Empire on Thursday 7 December
- Christmas Carol Service will be on Wednesday 13 December at 2.30pm at St Peter and St Paul Church

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 be 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. More recently, there have been a few near misses and we do not want anyone to get hurt. Please support us by encouraging pupils to cross safely and by discussing this with your child.

ISA Success

We have had much success this year entering the ISA competitions.

Elin (Year 4) came third in the Fashion and Accessories Category having produced a stunning and innovative jacket from recycled materials. Also highly commended was Imogen from last Year's Year 11, in the 3D Individual Art Category entitled "Distortion". It was wonderful to see EYFS achieve second place in the 2D Group Category with a painting in the style of Jackson Pollack and Mehrnaz from last year's Year 11 achieve second place in the Individual 2D Painting Category.

Our ISA success, fortunately did not stop there, with Imogen in Year 9D being the first pupil from Normanhurst to attend and win first place in the ISA Rookie Sailing competition. Imogen continues to demonstrate our school values and go above and beyond with her academic and wider school contributions. She will therefore be awarded the Headmistress's Commendation.

Well done and congratulations to all pupils who have represented the school in ISA competitions this term.

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, this includes navy tights. 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. I suggest coats should be practical and not expensive.

Senior girls have the option to wear navy leggings with their PE skort. Please all pupils ensure these are plain navy and not black. If pupils do not want to wear leggings, they may wear the school tracksuit bottoms.

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.

Reporting throughout the Academic Year

This year parents will be receiving the school's updated reports about their child's progress at the following times of the year.

- Lower Kindergarten (Summer term)
- Upper Kindergarten (Summer term)
- Reception (December and Summer terms)
- Junior (December and Summer terms)
- Senior (December, Spring and Summer terms)

Parents will continue to receive feedback on subject areas across the curriculum with targets. In the juniors, the reports will include an achievement grade for English and Maths, as well as an attitude to learning grade. For all other subjects an attitude to learning grade will be included. In the seniors, we will no longer have short reports. We will be providing more detailed feedback including an attitude to learning grade three times during the year.

As we continue to have an open door policy for parents, please do not hesitate to contact staff if you have any questions on how your child is doing.

Year 11 Mocks Wednesday 22 November – Friday 1 December

GCSE Mock Exams for Year 11 begin on Wednesday 22 November. These will take place at school and in the United Reformed Church hall. I am pleased to hear that pupils have been working hard during the school's booster classes. These have been important preparations and I have been proud to see the pupils so committed towards their studies. Year 11 have been provided with the Autumn Academy timetable. It is essential that there is 100% attendance and pupils come to school with the right mind set to boost their academic performance ahead of the mock exams. Can I thank all parents in advance for their support.

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 at the end of this letter. 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.

Normanhurst School Parents' Association (NSPA)

This term we would like to say thank you to NSPA who have agreed to support the Year 11 Prom, Year 6 Graduation and Yearbooks, the play kitchen in early years, 6 new cameras for school photos and table tennis bats and balls for the playground.

The NSPA recognises that family lives are busy, but appreciate 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: normanhurstschoolpa@gmail.com. She would be delighted to let you know more about the NSPA. It is never too late to get involved.

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 themed days. They have been balancing healthy tasty dishes with a good choice 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 experiences, listening to their suggestions and hearing their perspectives on school life.

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 evenings along with our annual Harvest Festival. 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 have such good attendance at face-to-face events as well as online events.

Staff Update

Miss Osbourne, the Head of Maths, will be leaving us at the end of this term. We would like to wish her the best of luck for the future and we would like to thank her for her time at Normanhurst. I am pleased to say we have appointed Miss Jass to be the new Head of Maths. She joins Normanhurst from Valentines High School after 17 years of service. She is an experienced teacher who is currently second in department in their large Maths faculty. She will join Normanhurst in January 2024. Miss Jass taught our Year 10 pupils during the interview process and I very much enjoyed observing the progress being made. We look forward to welcoming Miss Jass next term.

Important Dates for the Diary

Tue 7 November	08:30 – 09:00	KG-Y6 Drop-in Morning
Thu 9 November	11:10 – 18:30	Y9 theatre trip A View from a Bridge
Fri 10 – Mon 13 November		Senior trip to Iceland
Thu 16 November	09:15 – 15:45	Y8 BBC Earth Experience Earl's Court
Fri 17 November	08:30 – 09:45	Y10&11 Coffee Morning
Mon 20 November	19:00 – 20:00	NSPA AGM & Meeting (hall)
Tue 21 November	17:00 – 18:30	Y9 GCSE Options Evening
Thu 23 November	09:30 – 16:30	Y10 GCSE Music Royal Festival Hall & Handel Hendrix House
Fri 24 November	08:30 – 09:45	Y7-Y9 Coffee morning
Mon 27 November	09:00 – 15:15	EYFS Festive Fun Day
Fri 1 December	08:30 – 09:45	Y3-Y6 Coffee Morning
Tue 5 December	16:00 – 18:30	Y9 Parents' Evening
Wed 6 December	09:15 – 10:15	KG-Y1 Nativity
	14:30 – 15:30	Y2 Nativity
Thu 7 December	13:00 – 15:30	Rec-Y8 Pantomime Trip Aladdin
	19:00 – 22:00	Y10 Old Vic Theatre trip A Christmas Carol
Mon 11 December	16:00 – 18:30	Winter Fair
Wed 13 December	14:30 – 15:30	Carol Service
Thu 14 December		Last Day of Term
Friday 15 December – Monday 8 January		Christmas Holiday. School resumes on Tuesday 9 January 2024

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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