



# Normanhurst School

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## HEADMISTRESS

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2 September 2014

### Headmistress's Letter

Dear Parents

I hope that you enjoyed a relaxing summer break with your families. I am looking forward to seeing the pupils as they return to Normanhurst this week, or start with us for the very first time.

School begins at 8.40am on Thursday 3 September. The day begins with an extended form time so that classes can be given their new routines and timetables followed by an assembly; lessons will begin with period 2. There will not be PE for Years 1 and 2 on Thursday morning this week.

If your child starts school this week, I hope both they and you settle quickly into the Normanhurst community. If you have any questions please feel free to email or speak to your child's form tutor; I am sure we will be able to help the transition run smoothly.

New pupils joining from Year 1 to Year 6 will have a 'buddy' to help them settle in and the class teachers are available every afternoon for a brief chat when they bring the children out to meet you. As you take your child to the classroom in the morning, you will quickly become familiar with their class teacher and routine.

The new senior pupils in Year 7 have had induction days 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.

Settling-in reports will be sent home for all the 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 29 September. Details of this event will be sent to you shortly.

### Developments over the Summer Holiday

This summer has been a busy and exciting time for the Oak-Tree Schools. A considerable building programme has taken place at Normanhurst. We now have new toilet facilities for girls and boys, a large Art and Graphics studio and spacious Music room, as well as a PE department base, a tuition room and a covered bag area for Years 6 to 8. Although there is some external finishing off to complete and furniture yet to arrive, the rooms are ready to use due to the tireless work of the contractors and our own maintenance team. We are looking forward to making the most of the lovely new teaching spaces.

Parents will also have received a letter from Mr Hagger, the Managing Principal of The Oak-Tree Group, sharing the exciting news that a fourth school now joins us. Braeside School becomes part of the family and there will be a number of opportunities for junior and senior pupils to work collaboratively across the schools, as we do with Oaklands and Coopersale Hall Schools currently.

### New Members of Staff

We welcome a number of new teachers this term: Miss Bonella joins the languages department teaching French and some Spanish; Miss Butler is the senior computing coordinator, teaching computing, technology and maths; Miss Greenin is the Year 1 teacher and Miss Stone is the Year 3 teacher. Mrs Bickford joins the EYFS team teaching Upper Kindergarten with Mrs Fisher this term.

Mrs Fisher is retiring from her role as EYFS Coordinator at the end of the Autumn Term and Mrs Bickford, who held the role previously at Oaklands School, will take over in January 2016. We are very fortunate that there is a whole term for Mrs Fisher and Mrs Bickford to work together so all of the children, parents and staff know her well before Mrs Fisher retires in December.

Finally we have a new Normanhurst caretaker, Mr Stephen Holder, joining the maintenance team this term, as Martin Elliot's role develops and he takes on some sports coaching and works across the Oak-Tree Group of Schools.

### **Breakfast Club**

We are delighted to say that we are extending the Breakfast Club session, at no additional cost for parents, from the start of this term: the session starts 15 minutes earlier running from 7.30-8.30am. This facility is available for children from age 3 up to the end of Year 6. If you would like to use the Breakfast Club, and are not currently doing so, please contact the school office for more details.

### **Morning Routines for EYFS and Junior Pupils**

Parents or carers take children from Kindergarten up to Year 6 directly to their classrooms in the morning from 8.30-8.40am. Please do not arrive before 8.30am as the teachers are preparing for the day. This is a 'drop-off' and class teachers will have activities for the children to do, so we ask you to ensure that you have left the classroom by 8.40am when the register is taken and the school day begins. If you arrive late for any reason, after 8.40am, please report to the school office with your child on arrival rather than going to the classroom.

On Tuesdays and Fridays the children from Year 1 to Year 6 have singing practice with Mr Henderson-Jones from 8.30-9.00am.

Once every half-term there is a 'drop-in' morning for the children from Year 1-6, to which you are invited. On these mornings you come into the classroom and your children will show you the work they have been doing. These 'drop-ins' finish promptly at 9.00am so that the first lesson of the day can begin. We will ring a hand bell when the session is over and your cooperation in leaving promptly is much appreciated so that the children do not miss learning time. The 'drop-ins' are not times for teacher feedback about your child's progress. We are aware of the sensitive nature of conversations about individual pupils, so we ask you to arrange an individual meeting with the class teacher at an alternative time if there are particular issues you wish to discuss.

### **Morning Routines for Senior Pupils**

Senior pupils should arrive at school from 8.15am, when staff are on duty and the library is available for pupils, or they may wait in the playground. Pupils may not go into the main school buildings until the bell rings at 8.40am for the start of the day. All pupils should be in school by 8.40am when registration begins. Senior pupils arriving after this time should report to the school office before going to their form room.

There are clearly labelled bag areas for pupils in the seniors. These are places to leave sports bags, and school bags during assembly, lunch and break times. Pupils may also have a locker and should see Mr Beint to request one.

### **Pupil 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](mailto:absence@normanhurstschool.co.uk).

Try to book medical, dental and orthodontic appointments out of 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; I will then confirm whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Requests must be made in advance.

### **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. Please also ensure that they have their PE kit with them because they need to wear it and go to the PE lesson with the rest of the class, even though they will not participate.

### **Extracurricular Opportunities**

The confirmed programme of extra-curricular activities will be sent to parents this week, with the programme of activities starting in full on Monday 7 September.

There will be a number of extra classes for Year 11 after school from 3.30-4.30pm, with the purpose of helping students make maximum progress this year and thus achieve the best grades possible in their GCSE examinations. I ask all Year 11 parents to support us by ensuring your son or daughter attends the classes.

### **Homework Matters**

Senior homework timetables for Years 7-9 and Years 10-11 will be sent to parents over the coming week. Extended pieces of homework will be set with sufficient time to complete, usually including a weekend. Quality of homework is a significant contributor to pupil achievement 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.

Junior parents received a welcome letter from the class teacher after the moving-up day last term, with all the details about homeworks, tests, topics and routines, so that you know when PE or swimming kits are needed. 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 and 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.

As you will be aware from the media, the Department for Education is changing the way that learning is assessed and reported, beginning to roll out in schools from this September. We are also revising our assessment and reporting format this year. Pupils' work will be marked with clear comments and direction for improvement. Pupils will be given time to respond to the feedback and to improve their work. Tests and assessments will be given a mark or percentage. Reports will indicate both how your child is performing in relation to expectations for a pupil of their age and how well they are progressing from their starting points.

### **Open Evening Thursday 8 October 2015**

The school has its main Open Day on Thursday 8 October from 6.00pm. The school day runs as usual, but many pupils will be asked to return at 5.30pm to participate. Some pupils will be in classrooms, others will be guides showing visitors and prospective families around the school. I hope pupils enjoy talking about school and sharing their experiences.

Current parents are also welcome to attend and to look around the school. Junior parents find this particularly helpful as they have the opportunity to learn more about life in the senior part of the school.

There is an additional EYFS School in Action Open Morning from 9.15-10.30am on Friday 9 October.

### **Contact Details and Medical Information**

The school office asks parents to check that the contact information and medical details we have for your child are correct. Please log onto your parent portal and inform the office of any changes required.

### **New Parents' Portal Access**

New parents will receive an email 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 contact the school office.

## Normanhurst School Parents' Association

The NSPA works extremely hard to organise events and to enhance the pupils' experiences in school. The first big event this year is a games competition evening on Friday 25 September; the committee will send out details to parents once term has begun. If you would like to become involved with the association or to help at events, please contact the school office who will put you in touch with the committee.

### Forthcoming Events

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|--------------------------|---|
| • Thursday 3 September   | Term starts at normal time, including breakfast club                  |
| • Tuesday 8 September    | Y10 Parents and Pupils GCSE Meeting – hall 5.00pm                     |
| • Friday 11 September    | Individual school photographs for all pupils                          |
| • Tuesday 15 September   | Y1-6 Drop-in Morning – 8.30-9.00am                                    |
| • Tuesday 15 September   | Kindergarten and Reception Parent Drop-In – 3.15-4.30pm               |
| • Tuesday 15 September   | Y11 Parents and Pupils 6 <sup>th</sup> Form Options Eve – hall 5.00pm |
| • Thursday 17 September  | Y3 Overnight Adventure Camp with Oak-Tree schools                     |
| • Thursday 17 September  | Belin Trip Meeting for Parents and Pupils – hall 5.00pm               |
| • Friday 18 September    | Y11 GCSE Geography Field Trip   |
| • Wednesday 23 September | Y1-6 Trip to Lee Valley Countryside Live                              |
| • Friday 25 September    | D of E Qualifying Expedition  |
| • Friday 25 September    | NSPA Games Competition Evening times tbc                              |
| • Monday 28 September    | Harvest Festival – URC Church 9.00am                                  |
| • Tuesday 29 September   | Y7 Parents Informal 'Meet the Teachers' event – hall 5.00pm           |
| • Monday 5 October       | Y7-11 'Breaking the Cycle' Presentation in PSHE                       |
| • Thursday 8 October     | Open Evening – 6.00-8.00pm  |
| • Friday 9 October       | EYFS Open Morning – 9.15-10.30am                                      |
| • Tuesday 13 October     | EYFS and Junior Individual Parents' Meetings – from 4.00pm            |
| • Tuesday 13 October     | Y7 Parents: Supporting Learning at Home – library 5.00pm              |
| • Friday 16 October      | NSPA Pamper Evening – hall 7.00pm                                     |
| • Friday 16 October      | Y11 Short Reports sent out  |
| • Monday 19 October      | Half-term Break – back to school on Monday 2 November                 |

I look forward with great anticipation to the forthcoming school year. I hope you and your children are also looking forward to the exciting opportunities and challenges ahead.

As always, if you have any issues or ideas you would like to discuss, please contact your child's form teacher or telephone the school office to arrange an appointment with a member of the Leadership Team.

With my very best wishes

Yours sincerely



Mrs Claire Osborn  
Headmistress

