



Normanhurst School

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HEADMISTRESS

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4 September 2017

Headmistress's Letter

Dear Parents

I am very much looking forward to the start of the Autumn Term and to welcoming pupils to school for the new academic year. I hope you and your families have had a relaxing and enjoyable summer break, and that you, too, are looking forward to the new term.

The Year 7 classes are coming into school on Tuesday morning from 9.00 – 11.00am for the second part of their induction. They will have time with their form tutors and with some of the new prefect team getting to know school better and being allocated their lockers and timetables.

The Autumn term starts at 8.40am on Wednesday 7 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 be PE/Games for Year 4 after morning break and for Year 2 in the afternoon, so please remember to come to school with PE kits. Juniors may wear the summer uniform this half-term if the weather is warm.

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 and we are very much looking forward to getting to know you over the course of the coming year.

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 bring 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 3 October at 5.00pm. Details of this event will be sent out soon and we hope you and your child will all be able to join us.

Summer Holiday Work

The maintenance teams across the Oak-Tree Group have been very busy this holiday across the four schools. Normanhurst has had an ambitious building project taking place. There are three super new classrooms in the main school buildings and the first floor landing above the school office has been transformed. The new classrooms are light and airy, with high ceilings. I'm sure the pupils and staff will appreciate the transformation.

There is still some finishing off to be done and we will be laying new carpets on the stairs and landing in the half-term break.

There have been a number of other projects taking place in addition to the major building work. The pupil toilets have been redecorated and have new doors fitted; the Year 6 classroom has new carpet; we have increased the number of bag racks for pupils to store their sports bags and these are freshly labelled so classes know exactly where to leave their kit. We have new security on the back gate into the school and there is keypad entry and exit for staff only from the back gate. We have created a new music peripatetic teaching room in the new block near the music room. This means the two music practice rooms are now both in the new block and near to the music department. The former music practice room near the languages room is now an additional learning support room and this is where Mrs Fox will be based for the dyslexia tuition and where the Learning Support team will have individual support lessons.

Happy News

I am thrilled to share the news that Mrs Willemse's twins have been born. Xander Nicolas and Lillime Frances were born on Thursday 24 August. Mrs Willemse and the babies are doing well and are at home.

New Members of Staff

I am delighted to welcome a number of excellent new members of staff to Normanhurst this term, some of whom junior parents met at the Moving Up Day in June.

Mrs Caroline Keane and Miss Sarah Greenin join the junior team, teaching Year 1 and Year 2 respectively. Mrs Marianna Papa joins the Early Years team as the Upper Kindergarten teacher.

Miss Elizabe Leeuwner joins Mrs Cooper and Miss Wren in the Science department as an additional Science teacher. She will be working at Normanhurst and also at Braeside.

Mr John Nouchin joins the Maths department and he too will be spending time at both schools.

Mr Aiden Locke joins the English department full time and Miss Myeong-jae Kim is our new Music teacher.

Mr Stuart Blake joins the PE department as an additional PE teacher; he will also be helping with the new girls' football team that we are starting this year.

And finally, Ms Stephanie Miller joins the office team looking after admissions.

Excellent GCSE Results

The former Year 11 celebrated excellent GCSE results last week with some outstanding performances across the curriculum. Pupils were able to take up places at their first school or college, and some have 'upscaled' on the basis of their good results to more demanding sixth form courses.

We were particularly delighted with the results in the tough new English, English Literature and Maths GCSE exams, which are now graded 1-9 with 9 as the exceptional top grade. 97% of our pupils gained a good grade in English and in English literature and 90% in Maths. This is significantly above the national figure.

92% of all grades awarded were a C grade or above, with a significant increase in the number of top grades. Some examples to highlight in addition to English and Maths are: 100% good passes in Biology, Chemistry and Physics; 100% passes in History with 72% A*/A; 100% in Art with 80% A*/A; 100% in Graphics with 83% A*/A; 95% in RS with 50% A*/A. All pupils taking IT and Drama gained a good grade.

Morning Routines for EYFS and Junior Pupils

Parents or carers take children in Kindergarten and Reception directly to their classrooms in the morning from 8.30-8.40am. Parents also drop off their children in Years 1-6 at their classrooms between the same times. 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, the register is taken at 8.40am 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 from 8.30-9.00am in the school hall.

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 individual 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.

The dates for the drop-ins are on the school diary and the dates for this term are at the end of my letter.

Morning Routines for Senior Pupils

Breakfast Club is available in the hall for seniors from 7.30am. From 8.15am each morning staff are on duty in the playground to supervise seniors. The library is available 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.

Senior pupils have clearly labelled bag racks where they should leave sports bags until their lesson, 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.

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 and returned to them; I will then confirm whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Requests must 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.

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 was sent to parents before the holiday. The programme of activities and clubs starts in the first full week of term, on Monday 11 September.

Breakfast Club, After School Club and Homework Club all begin on Wednesday 6 September.

There will be a number of extra classes for Year 11 after school 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. I ask all Year 11 parents to support us by ensuring your son or daughter attends the classes.

Homework Matters

In a new development, Normanhurst is piloting using the 'Show My Homework' online homework portal this year for Year 6 to Year 11. Staff are being trained on the INSET days and we hope to roll out the programme in the first few weeks of term.

All senior teachers will post the homework online for pupils. Pupils, parents and teachers will all have log-ins to be able to see the homework set. Teachers will upload the tasks and can upload resources for pupils to use to complete the work. Sometimes pupils may be asked to upload their completed tasks for marking, or for the teacher to see.

We will still issue pupils with a homework diary to use initially, but once 'Show My Homework' is up and running we will not be using this as the place for pupils to write down their homework.

As previously there will be a published homework timetable so that 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 senior 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.

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 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.

Open Evening Thursday 5 October 2017

The school has its main Open Day on Thursday 5 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 6 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 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 contact the school office.

Dates for the Diary

Tue 5 Sep	09:00 – 11:00	Year 7 Induction Morning
Wed 6 Sep		Pupils return
Fri 8 Sep	09:00 – 11:30	Individual Photographs
Mon 11 Sep	16:00 – 16:30	Y6 internet awareness talk JA in classroom
	19:15 – 21:00	NSPA Meeting
Tue 12 Sep	15:30 – 16:30	Y2-6 RWInc. English talk to parents
	17:00 – 18:00	Y10 Parents meeting 'Being Successful at GCSE'
Tue 19 Sep	08:30 – 09:00	Y1-6 Parents' Drop In Session
	15:30 – 16:15	Rec & KS1 Getting to Know You/RWInc talk to parents
	17:00 – 18:00	Y11 16+ Options Evening
Thu 21 – Fri 22 Sep		Y3 Overnight Camp at Oaklands
Tue 26 Sep	15:30 – 16:15	KG Getting to Know You/RWInc talk to parents
	17:00 – 18:00	Spain trip parents' meeting
Thu 28 Sep	09:00 – 11:00	Y1-6 Lee Valley Regional Park for Countryside Living trip TBC
Fri 29 Sep	09:00 – 15:30	Y2,3&6 Madame Tussaud's trip TBC
Mon 2 Oct	09:15 – 10:30	Harvest Festival Assembly at URC
Tue 3 Oct	17:00 – 18:00	Y7 Informal Parent/Teacher Evening
Wed 4 Oct	09:00 – 13:00	Y5 Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge trip
Thu 5 Oct	18:00 – 20:30	Open Evening
Fri 6 Oct	09:00 – 11:00	EYFS Open Morning
	12:45 – 14:15	Y1&2 Discover Story World, Stratford trip
Tue 10 Oct	17:00 – 18:00	Y7 'How to support your child at home'
Fri 13 – Mon 16 Oct		PGL PE Residential trip
	17:30 – 20:00	GCSE Presentation Evening
Mon 16 Oct	10:30 – 15:30	Y3-6 Classical Concert at Barbican trip
Tue 17 Oct	16:00 – 18:30	KG-Y6 Parents' Evening
Sat 21 – Tue 24 Oct		KS3/4 Spanish Trip
Mon 23 Oct – Fri 3 Nov		HALF TERM
Tue 7 Nov	09:00 – 15:30	Y3-6 Bletchley Park trip TBC
Thu 9 Nov	09:00 – 15:30	Y1-6 Remembrance day workshop
Fri 24 Nov	08:30 – 09:00	Rec-Y6 Parents' Drop In Session
Fri 1 Dec	13:30 – 15:30	EYFS Festive Fun Day
Tue 12 Dec	14:00 – 15:00	Christmas Carol Service, St Peter & St Paul's Church
Wed 13 Dec	12:00	Last day of term
Mon 15 Jan	08:45 – 09:45	Coffee Morning - Kindergarten
Mon 22 Jan	08:45 – 09:45	Coffee Morning - Reception
Mon 29 Jan	08:45 – 09:45	Coffee Morning – Years 1&2
Mon 5 Feb	08:45 – 09:45	Coffee Morning – Years 3-6
Mon 19 Feb	08:45 – 09:45	Coffee Morning – Seniors
Fri 10 Mar	09:00 – 11:30	Open Morning
Thu 6 July	18:00 – 20:00	Speech Day

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

The Leadership Team, your child's form tutor or I are very happy to discuss any questions or concerns that may arise. Last year there was one complaint, resolved at the informal stage of our process. 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



Mrs Claire Osborn
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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