



Norman Hurst School

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HEADMISTRESS

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2 September 2020

Dear Parents

Re: Headmistress's Letter

I hope that you enjoyed the summer break with your families whether you have travelled abroad or experienced a staycation. I hope you and your children are looking forward to the new academic year which begins for them on Thursday 3 September. We are incredibly excited to be welcoming all pupils back to school.

The Year 7 classes came into school on Wednesday 2 September from 9am until 12pm for the second part of their induction. They had 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. On Friday 4 September, Year 7 will participate in a team building afternoon. This will encourage 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 Wednesday, I am looking forward to seeing these.

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 has been busy over the holidays preparing for the start of term. The windows at the front of the school have been replaced and the front of the school painted, providing a fresh look to the front of the school. The pathways at the front of the school have also been extended and retarmacked, and we await the delivery of our new bike rack, encouraging cycling to school. I hope you will all agree the school looks fantastic.

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 or a Zoom call can be arranged. I would like to ask you to bring your child to the gate in the morning, and there will be member 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.

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 Norman Hurst 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.

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 29 September**. Details of this event will be sent out soon and we hope you and your child will all be able to join us.

You will be receiving a number of emails requesting information **over the next 7 days**, please could I request that these are completed as soon as possible to ensure we have the most up-to-date contact details and medical information. It is a requirement that all schools have at least two emergency contacts, who would be available if needed during the school day. Please would you ensure we have this important information within the first two weeks of term. Please also inform us if your child's medical information has changed or if they have any food allergies or intolerances. We need to have this information, including any relevant medical notes. Can I ask if you have any concerns that you contact the school office who will be happy to assist you.

New Members of Staff

We welcome two new teachers to the staff this year. In the juniors we have two changes to the team: We welcome Miss Low Ten Que as Head of Juniors. She began to visit the school last term, is thrilled to be joining Normanhurst School and looks forward to meeting you all in time. Miss Low Ten Que will be at the gate to say good morning and welcome the pupils each morning.

Miss Sainsbury will be teaching Year 2. She is incredibly excited about joining Normanhurst and brings energy, experience and ideas to Normanhurst. She will be in her classroom in the mornings, but will be at the gate at dismissal.

Excellent GCSE Results

The former Year 11 celebrated excellent GCSE results last week although they were unable to sit their exams this Summer. We are incredibly proud of them as they all deserved the grades they achieved and showed great resilience in dealing with the decisions that were made nationally to cancel their public examinations.

Nearly all pupils were able to take up places at their first choice school or college. 99% of all grades were good 'passes' which means grade 4 or above. Half of grades awarded were grades 7-9, which equates to the old A and A* grades. Once again the pupils achieved particularly well in Maths with 96% pass rates, combined Sciences with 97% pass rates and English and English Literature with 100% pass rates. Option subjects also had excellent results with 100% passes in Art, Business Studies, Computer Science, French, Geography, Graphics, History, Spanish, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Morning Routines for EYFS and Junior Pupils

We would normally invite parents from Year 1-6 in once every half-term for the opportunity to attend a 'drop-in' morning. On these mornings parents would be able to come into the classroom and your children would show you the work they have been doing. These 'drop in' mornings are currently on hold; however, we do hope to reinstate them as soon as restrictions allow us to.

Morning Routines for Senior Pupils

Breakfast Club is available in the hall for junior and 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 or Room 3. 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. Pupils from Year 5-11 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 Clair if they need to be allocated one.

Arrival and dismissal

The morning dropping off for all pupils will be during the staggered arrival time from 8.15-8.40am. We have made some **changes to the entrances** that different classes will be using and these will be under regular review. When we return to school on Thursday the arrangements are as follows:

- **Reception and Year 1** – use the double gates at the front of the school
- **Kindergarten** – use the double gates at the front of the school - Mrs Fisher will greet the children
- **Year 2** – use the single gate at the front of the school
- **Year 3** – use the single gate at the front of the school
- **Year 4** – use the double gates at the front of the school
- **Year 5** - use the gate at the rear of the school. Staff will be at the gate to welcome and direct pupils.
- **Year 6** - use the gate at the rear of the school. Staff will be at the gate to welcome and direct pupils.
- **7M** - use the front gates and go to room 22, your form room
- **7S** - use the gate at the rear of the school and go to room 4, your form room
- **8B** - use the gate at the rear of the school and go to the Library, your form room
- **8R** - use the front gates and go to room 11, your form room
- **9E** - use the gate at the rear of the school and go to the Art room, your form room

- **9J** - use the front gates and go to the Laboratory, your form room
- **10B** - use the gate at the rear of the school and go to room 3, your form room
- **10C** - use the front gates and go to room 18, your form room
- **11D** - use the front gates and go to room 21, your form room
- **11T**– use the gate at the rear of the school and go to room 15, your form room

Temporary access arrangements

If your child is using the gate at the rear of the school, please could I ask you not to drive past the rear gate and stop, but stop safely on surrounding roads and walk. Pupils should enter via the Buxton Road end to access the rear gate. Staff will be present at the gate to support, we really appreciate your support as the above guidance is very much in the interest of safety and keeping our pupils safe. This is a temporary arrangement and will be reviewed regularly with the view to returning to the use of the front gates at the front of the school building.

New Initiatives

We shall be introducing the 'Gift a Birthday Book' scheme. This is not compulsory, but we would like as many pupils and teachers to get involved. On your child's birthday, they will donate a new copy of their favourite book to the school. On the inside of the cover it will be acknowledged who has gifted the book to Normanhurst School and the reason why they have loved the book. This will be presented in the weekly assemblies and then take its place in the library for other pupils to read.

Mental Health continues to remain high on the school's priorities and the current climate stresses how important this is. We already have two Mental Health First Aiders in school and have plans to increase this. We also will have staff trained as Mental Health Champions throughout the school, trained by Place2Be. Once restrictions allow, we hope to also be introducing Pupils Well-being Ambassadors who will be trained to support the pastoral structure for peer to peer.

We will continue to embed newly introduced initiatives from last year such as the timing of mock exams for Y11, and end-of-year exams for Y10.

Year 11 mocks will take place just before the Christmas holidays, and there will be a second set of mocks before Easter. Year 11 will have individual meetings with Mr Clair, Mrs Coates or Miss Orgill to help them set ambitious targets for their progress towards the final exams.

We will begin an Inclusion and Diversity curriculum audit, as we feel it is a valuable opportunity to review our current offer to ensure as a diverse school we are reflective of our Normanhurst community. We will be working with Claire Osborn in her new role as Educational Principal on this, and look forward to sharing some of our findings at a later date.

There is a sixth form transition meeting for parents and pupils on Tuesday 15 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 closer to the time to inform you of the details.

There is a meeting for all Year 10 parents on Tuesday 22 September at 5.00pm when we will be outlining the next GCSEs and giving important information about the GCSE exams to parents and pupils. Year 10 families should make every effort to attend.

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 grade.

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 will attend school in their winter uniform.

Pupils' hairstyles must be smart and suitable for school. As detailed in the Parents' Handbook sent home electronically in August, 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.

Please remember that pupils are not allowed to wear earrings at Normanhurst. This includes children in Kindergarten and Reception. Please do not send pupils into school with earrings in place, even if they are covered with sticking plaster. If you do need to do this temporarily, please would you email your child's form tutor with details.

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.

Pupils' mobile phones will be collected during the morning form time and they will be kept safe 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 could you discuss this with your child to ensure they understand this rule. Your support is appreciated in this matter.

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. Pupils will come to school wearing their PE kit. They will not need to bring their uniform into school on these days. 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.

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, on Monday 7 September.

Breakfast Club, After School Club and Homework Club all begin on Thursday 3 September.

There will be a number of extra booster 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. It will be incredibly important for the pupils to attend these classes and I ask all Year 11 parents to support us by ensuring your son or daughter attends the classes.

Homework Matters

We are continuing to use the 'Show My Homework' which is now called 'Satchel' online homework portal this year for Year 1 to Year 11. 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 Low Ten Que (Head of Juniors) and Mrs Coates (Assistant 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.

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.

Junior parents received a welcome letter from the class teacher after the moving-up day last term, with all the details about homework, 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.

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.

Developments at Braeside School

As you may be aware, Braeside has been a 'split site' school with the Juniors on Palmerston Road in Buckhurst Hill and Seniors on the High Road next to the cricket ground. After extensive forward planning, over the summer the two halves were brought together to form a new 'all through' school on the larger High Road site for all children. All classrooms and communal areas were renovated over the break and I wish the team well for tomorrow's inaugural reopening.

Year 3 Camp

Oaklands normally hosts the annual Oak-Tree Year 3 Camp during the third week of September on the two school fields. Due to current circumstances, this is unable to take place now, but I am sure that our Year 3 pupils will be

excited to know that we have already made a provisional booking for the camp to take place over two days, Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 March at the end of the Spring Term 2021.

Forthcoming Events

As per the current government guidelines, we are unable to organise large gatherings on site until we are cleared to do so. This significantly reduces the number of events that we are able to hold. Although we are working to organise some events, such as Harvest Festival, in different formats for the children, it means that we will not be able to hold the annual Group Fireworks Display at Oaklands that was planned to take place at the start of November. Similarly, we will not be holding our normal Open Evening in October and will be arranging some innovative virtual alternatives.

Important Dates for the Diary

Wed 2 Sep	09:30 – 12:00	New Y7 Induction Morning – second half
Thu 3 Sep		Pupils return
Wed 9 Sep		Y8 Boys and Girls HPV Vaccine
Mon 7 – Fri 11 Sep		Y1-6 Baseline Assessments
Tue 15 Sep	15:30 – 16:30	Y2-6 Maths Information Parents Meeting (Zoom)
	17:00 – 18:00	Y11 16+ Transition Evening
Tue 22 Sep	15:30 – 16:30	KG&Rec Getting to Know You/RWI/Maths Info Parents Meeting
	17:00 – 18:00	Y10 Yellis Tests/Being Successful at GCSE Parents Meetings
Fri 25 Sep	08:00 – 08:30	Y1&2 RWI talk to Parents
Tue 29 Sep	17:00 – 17:45	Y7M MidYIS/Informal Parent Teacher Evening/Meet the Teacher
	18:00 – 18:45	Y7S MidYIS/Informal Parent Teacher Evening/Meet the Teacher
Fri 2 Oct	09:00 – 12:00	Individual Photos
Tue 13 Oct	16:00 – 18:30	KG-Y6 Parents Evening (specialist staff in hall)
Wed 14 Oct	16:00 – 18:30	KG-Y6 Parents Evening
Fri 16 Oct	18:00 – 19:30	Past Y11 GCSE Presentation Evening
Mon 19 – Fri 30 Oct		Half Term
Fri 6 Nov		Flu spray Rec - Year 6
Tue 24 Nov	17:00 – 18:30	Y9 Options Evening
Mon 30 Nov – Tue 8 Dec		Y11 Mock GCSE Exams
Tue 1 Dec	16:00 – 18:30	Y9 Parents Evening
Fri 11 Dec	12:00	Last day of term

I am very much looking forward to this exciting new school year; I hope you are too.

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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