



# Normanhurst School

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## HEADMISTRESS

Mrs Jacqueline Job B.SC., NPQH

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3 March 2021

Dear Parents

### Re: **March 2021 Head's Letter**

We are excited to be welcoming the pupils back to school on Monday. They have done a tremendous job learning from home, but they are very much the heartbeat of our school and we have missed them being with us. Thank you again for your incredible support and kind words to the staff throughout this challenging period; they have lifted our spirits and have been very much appreciated.

### Arrangements for the Children returning to school

#### Morning drop-off

The morning dropping off for all pupils will be during the staggered arrival time from 8.20am until 8.40am. Please bring your child to the front gate in the morning, and there will be member staff to welcome them. Pupils will go straight to their classrooms and be met there by their teachers. As advance notice, the dropping-off time for pupils will start at 8:25am after the Easter Break.

#### End of Day Collection

Please collect your child from the same gate you used in the Autumn Term. Throughout this lockdown period we have trialled asking parents to form a socially distanced line along the wall from the gates. We will continue to use this for the remainder of the Spring term and Summer term. Therefore, we kindly ask parents to do the following:

- Form a socially distanced line from the gate where they need to collect their children. Staff will be outside school to support this.
- Wear masks for drop off and pick up as requested in Mr Hagger's recent letter.
- Avoid congregating in groups outside the school; it makes it incredibly difficult to maintain social distancing, and creates a difficulty for the public to pass. Please leave as soon as possible after collecting your child.

#### Collection times will be as follows:

- Kindergarten and Reception at 3pm
- Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 at 3.15pm
- Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 at 3.30pm
- Years 7, 8, 9 at 3.40pm
- Years 10, 11 at 3.45pm

#### Clubs and Wraparound Care

From Monday 8 March 2021 the Breakfast club will run from 7.30am in the hall and After School Club will run until 6pm. Please contact the school office to book your son or daughter into these clubs. Pre-booking is required to ensure that we have the appropriate staffing levels in place.

Our Summer programme of extra-curricular activities, including after school activities will start after Easter. There will be no other extra-curricular clubs running this term in order to preserve the bubbles that will be reformed.

#### Bubbles in School

We will be continuing to operate in the bubbles we established in the Autumn Term, including the staggered break and lunch times that worked very effectively.

### **Keeping our Community Safe**

Please can I reiterate the points made in Mr Hagger's letter dated 23 February 2021, and repeat how important it is to ensure that we adhere to the rules and not do not socially for children's play dates and parties until we are permitted to do so. I appreciate this is an enormous joint effort, but together we need to keep all members of the school community safe.

I would also ask for the junior children returning to school to be tested prior to the return on 8 March. Please could we ask for testing results to be shared with the school office via [covid@normanhurstschool.co.uk](mailto:covid@normanhurstschool.co.uk)

### **Testing for the Senior Pupils**

As explained in Mr Hagger's letter, we will be completing three tests on school site for pupils in Years 7 to 11, before home testing begins. This is in line with the government guidelines and will enable the pupils to know what to do when testing happens at home. Testing with senior pupils will take place on Monday 8, Thursday 11 and Monday 15 March. After this date, pupils will continue testing twice a week from home with the home-testing kits that we will distribute.

Senior parents are required to complete the online permissions form in advance. The link has been sent out this week so please do give this your attention if you have not done so already.

### **Masks in School for Seniors**

All senior pupils from Year 7 to Year 11 will now be expected to wear a mask in class as well as when moving around the buildings. This is reflected in the updated COVID-19 Risk Assessment which parents can view on COVID-19 area of the website. Masks will not be worn during PE lessons. As previously, all members of staff will be wearing masks on site and in class.

### **A Reminder about Absences from School**

The government made it very clear that all pupils are expected to return to school on 8 March. 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) by 9am.

If your child is isolating (owing to a family member having COVID-19), is unwell with COVID-19 (or has symptoms) or has to quarantine from travel, these absences will be recorded as a COVID-related absence. Please notify the school using the [covid@normanhurstschool.co.uk](mailto:covid@normanhurstschool.co.uk) email address.

However, if you choose to keep your child off school because you do not want them to return, the Government guidance states that the absence should be recorded as unauthorised. 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.

Do not send your child to school if they are unwell in any way. Children will be sent home if they display any signs of illness. No child should attend if they display any symptoms of Coronavirus, or if they should be self-isolating.

### **PE Lessons**

From Monday 8 March the PE curriculum will continue as it was in the Autumn Term, according to the published timetables. The pupils will be at various venues for their lessons and will need to come to school in the Normanhurst PE kit with a full Normanhurst school tracksuit or hoody on the days when they have PE.

We encourage pupils to bring their tracksuits as the weather is very unpredictable and the majority of the lessons will be outside. We have however, managed to secure some spacious indoor venues, to be used if necessary for the individual bubbles. Pupils will be participating in football (shin pads required), netball and athletics. Pupils will need to come to school in trainers, and have a change of footwear such as football boots or Astroturf boots for the lessons that will be outside. Pupils will change back into their trainers after PE to return back to school. Please contact Mr Banks or any of the PE staff if you have any further questions.

## Uniform

Children will be expected to return to school wearing their full uniform, including a blazer and school shoes. This is in line with Government guidelines. On PE days children should wear their PE kits.

Although junior pupils would normally wear winter uniform until Easter, they can wear the summer uniform for the remainder of this term, if they have outgrown their winter uniform already.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

Pupils' Mental Health continues to be our priority as all pupils return to school. More than ever, we will be focusing on the wellbeing of our pupils as they navigate change and return to school. We recognise that pupils have been apart from their friends, therefore, we will be finding opportunities to discuss, collaborate and work together.

We have written several times over the last few months with information about how to help with children's mental health and wellbeing at home. As you will be aware, there are some guides and resources available to download from our website.

Some of our children might be experiencing anxiety or separation issues with less than a week to go until the full return, and Essex County Council has also provided some excellent resources that might help:

- The [Essex Wellbeing Service](#) has developed a navigator service to both signpost and provide a triage service where necessary to support the children's emotional wellbeing and mental health needs on the return to education. To access this service, call 0300 303 9988 from Monday 8 March.
- Recovery and Return to Educational Settings suite of resources has two downloadable webinars for families:
  - Part 1: [Looking after yourself](#) (28mins)
  - Part 2: [Looking after your family](#) (39mins)
- Essex Local Offer: [Coronavirus support wellbeing and mental health](#)

Public Health England has also published advice for parents on looking after the mental wellbeing of children during the pandemic, which is available to download [here](#).

National and local research findings are indicating that social, emotional and mental health needs continue to be a priority and concern. As ever, please do not hesitate to contact us directly if you feel you need any specific support. Please be assured that Ms Prior, as Mental Health Lead and our other Mental Health Champions are here to provide support where we can.

## Year 11 GCSEs Examinations 2021

You may be aware of the many changes to the way GCSE results will be awarded this year. There will be no final exam as such but a continuation of assessment throughout the Summer term. Mrs Osborn, Group Educational Principal, will be writing to Year 11 parents tomorrow to explain the process and our approach as a Group.

It essentially means that pupils in Year 11 will not have the previously scheduled 'mocks exams', but will instead have continuous regular assessments through the term until Friday 11 June. Teachers will of course, continue to teach, provide revision and booster sessions, and share assessment results throughout this period. There will be opportunities for Year 11 parents to gain feedback about their child's progress.

## Assessments and Examinations for Years 7 to 10

When the pupils return to school, teachers be reviewing the learning and making teacher judgements on the progress of all pupils over the lockdown period. This will enable teachers to identify with individual pupils the areas requiring focus for the forthcoming term. They will continue to teach and further the pupils' understanding as well as providing support where misconceptions have occurred.

We plan to run the scheduled end-of-year assessments and examinations in May and June. Year 10 exams will take place from Wednesday 19 May to Friday 28 May. End of Year exams will take place for Year 7 to Year 9 from Monday 7 June to Friday 11 June.

## Junior Assessments

We are eager to have the junior pupils back in school and will be focusing on getting the pupils back into good routines at school. Teachers will be looking carefully at the children's learning and progress over the lockdown period in the three weeks leading up to Easter. Therefore, we have decided to move the formal assessment week to Tuesday 20 – Friday 23 April. These assessments after the Easter holiday will enable teachers to judge the children's current learning levels and they will be able to share with parents individually any target areas for development.

## Parents' Evenings

Junior Parents' Evenings will take place after Assessment Week from Tuesday 4 to Thursday 6 May.

- Reception to Year 3 on Tuesday 4 May
- Years 4, 5 and 6 will happen on Tuesday 4, Wednesday 5 and Thursday 6 May.

These appointments will happen via Zoom and specialist teachers will be available on Tuesday 4 May via the teachers' link. Parents will receive the invitation to book the Zoom appointments in due course.

## Year 9 GCSE Options – Individual Meetings

In the first week back in March the Leadership Team will be meeting individually with each pupil in Year 9 to discuss the option subjects they would like to take for their GCSE courses next year. We look forward to taking this opportunity to have a face-to-face conversation about their preferred subjects, hopes and aspirations.

## British Science Week 8 – 15 March 2021

### Junior pupils

During British Science Week, junior pupils will be participating in a collection of CREST Star and SuperStar activities. The pupils will be exploring everyday problems, through hands-on investigation, decision making and discussion, to discover the contribution Science can make.

### Senior pupils

This year's focus has been on sustainability and careers. The senior pupils this week have the opportunity to attend a virtual Careers fair from Monday 1 to Friday 5 March as part of National Careers Week.

They have the opportunity to interact with Stem Ambassadors from various fields during daily live virtual secure Q&A sessions. This opportunity has been provided due to our collaboration with the Stem Learning Centre as part of a 10 week virtual [mentoring programme](#) for our Year 11 students. Next week, the pupils will also be introduced to various STEM related careers when we will spotlight a 'stem person of the day' throughout the week.

## Mobile Phones in School

This is a gentle reminder that 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, as previously, 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.

### **Year 9, 10 and 11 Study Workshops**

You may recall the NSPA sponsoring two workshops one for Year 9 called Super Speed Study Skills and the Year 10 and Year 11 Exam Busters workshop. These workshops have been rescheduled to Friday 7 May.

**Year 9** will participate in the Super Speed Study Skills workshop which is an effective, immersive workshop to inspire pupils to take control of their studying. It will include:

- How to maintain motivation when studying
- How to raise standards of learning and cognition
- How to encourage the adoption of a range of learning techniques

**Year 10 and 11** will participate in an Exam Busters workshop, which empowers pupils with exam preparation tips, revision tools and stress management techniques. It will include:

- Stimulating a positive attitude towards learning, revision and exams
- Upskilling pupils with effective memory techniques
- Providing a comprehensive exam tool kit.

Both workshops will be a fantastic addition to the students' skill set.

### **The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme – Year 9 and Year 10 Pupils**

We now have the amazing opportunity to start the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award earlier than anticipated. Pupils participating will now be able to undertake in their required practice expedition in a COVID safe way on Saturday 1 May and Sunday 2 May. Their final assessed expedition will be on Saturday 14 May and Sunday 15 May. This is a great opportunity for the award to be completed before the summer holiday. Mr Banks will be sharing additional information with you very soon.

### **'Gift a Birthday Book' Continues**

A reminder that we will be continuing the 'Gift a Birthday Book' scheme. This is not compulsory, but we would like to encourage pupils, families and teachers to become involved if they would like to. On your child's birthday, they can donate a new copy of their favourite book to the school. A bespoke certificate will be placed inside the front cover, with the name of the person who has given the book, the date and the reason why they love it. This will be presented in the weekly assemblies, shared on social media and then placed in the library for other pupils to read.

### **Staffing Update**

This term we say goodbye to Mrs Taylor who is relocating to Cumbria to be closer to family. We would like to thank her for her commitment, thorough teaching and kindness. She has nurtured so many children and encouraged our pupils to enjoy their learning. We welcome Miss Griffin to Normanhurst, who will replace Mrs Taylor, after Easter. Miss Griffin has several years of experience teaching in Key Stage 1 and has already begun a handover with Mrs Taylor. I will be writing to Year 1 parents with further details of an appointment time to meet Miss Griffin.

We also say goodbye to Mrs Asghar, one of the Science teachers in the seniors. We would like to thank her for her hard work and commitment shown towards the students. We wish her the best of luck for the future. We are delighted to be welcoming back Ms Wren who last taught at Normanhurst in 2019. Ms Wren is an experienced Science teacher and returns to Normanhurst School offering years of experience in the independent sector.

We would also like to say congratulations to Mrs Jayaram, Acting Head of Science, as she is expecting her second child and will go on maternity leave during the Summer term. Mrs Cooper will be returning to Normanhurst following her maternity leave in September as Head of Science but will be supporting the Science Department during the Summer term.

### **Staff Shielding**

At Normanhurst we have two members of the learning support team shielding because of health conditions: Ms Nevill and Ms Chaudry. They hope to be able to return to school very soon.

### Important Dates for the Diary

Wed 3 Mar	17:00 – 18:00	Current Y5 & Seniors Ski Trip 2022 Zoom Launch
Fri 5 Mar	09:30 – 11:30	Virtual Open Day
Wed 10 Mar	09:30 – 12:00	13+ exams
Wed 24 Mar	09:15 – 12:00	Y9&10 Spotlight Talks: Inspiring Careers Excellence
Thu 24 Mar	09:15 – 12:00	Y9&10 Spotlight Talks: Inspiring Careers Excellence
Fri 26 Mar	12:00	Last day of Term

With my very best wishes

Yours sincerely



Jacqueline Job  
Headmistress



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