

20th March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, thank you for your support in these unprecedented and challenging times. It has been a difficult week at school, but both students and staff have responded to the evolving events with humour, stoicism and most importantly huge amounts of support for each other. I am particularly pleased to let you know that our Headteacher, Patrick Cozier, is on the road to recovery from the lung infection he is suffering.

Our response to government plans for schools from next week

Now that we know that schools are being closed from today for most students, I am writing to inform you of our plans for the next few weeks.

The government has asked that schools repurpose themselves to focus on the welfare of the following groups of students: vulnerable (e.g. with those with an EHCP, a social worker etc.), those entitled to Free School Meals and children of 'critical workers.' I have spoken to other headteachers in Haringey, the Local Authority and the members of our senior team, and these are our plans as they stand:

Students entitled to FSM – we have sourced some supermarket vouchers for these students to see them through the first week, prior to the planned government scheme being implemented. Mr Ashman will be contacting families with details of how they access the vouchers over the next few days.

Vulnerable students and students of key workers – we have sent out messages (and in some cases called) the parents/carers of these students to ask if they want them to come into school from next week. We have put together a plan for a reduced school offer for these students which will include some of the remote learning other students are doing, some sport and some other activities. For these students we will be able to offer an almost normal school day, five days a week. We are providing both breakfast and lunch.

Whilst there has been some discussion of a shared solution across schools, at the moment we are only planning to look after our own students. This view is currently shared by headteachers across the borough.

Highgate Wood School Student Council supports individual action to address the issues of Climate Change and promotes the United Nations top 10 recommendations.



Cancellation of GCSE and A level Examinations

For some families, students and teachers the most upsetting detail of the government's announcement this week is the cancellation of the GCSE and A Level exams due to take place in May and June. The government has stated that it will work with the exams regulator OfQUAL to ensure students receive grades and qualifications that allow them to progress to their planned Post16 and HE destinations. Whilst we are aware the anxiety this may cause some, be assured that we will continue to work with the students and ensure that they are fully prepared for the next stage of their lives and the future challenges. There is due to be a government announcement on this at 5pm today and we will update you on our response to this once we have digested the contents.

Celebrations for Year 11 and Year 13

We will also ensure that their time at Highgate Wood does not come to an abrupt end (though of course many Year 11s will be back with us in the Sixth Form) but is marked with a celebration of their years with us. The PSA has already very kindly offered a contribution for celebrations, yearbooks, hoodies, etc. and we will start to get these things organised once we have some breathing space.

Details about remote learning

Mr Ashman will update you on this in a separate correspondence.

Please keep an eye on the website where we will post updated information as things changes and evolve. We will also have someone in the reception should you need to call the school about anything.

Once again, I'd like to thank you for your continued support of the school and the staff. Over the last few days our staff and students have faced some off the most uncertain and unpredictable events we've experienced in education, and they have shown themselves to be a community of people with real courage, heartening resilience and unrelenting hope that we perhaps need to draw upon more than ever.

With all good wishes for the coming weeks,

Yours faithfully



Craig Hewitt
Deputy Headteacher