

8th May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Update from Highgate Wood School

We hope that you have enjoyed the shorter four day week and that by the time that you receive this letter you are well on the way to enjoying this bank holiday weekend. It has been a busy four days at what I now call 'virtual' HWS.

This is the fourth of our weekly update letters and I wanted to start by saying a big thanks to our staff who continue to work hard to provide a good learning experience for our students. I am eternally grateful to them for their efforts. Equally, I am really proud of the engagement of our students under very challenging circumstances. The gallery of work available on our website is testament to the quality they have produced.

Having talked about a four-day week, it isn't four days for everyone! Our Small School on site providing for the children of our key workers and vulnerable young people was open today as usual. I am thankful for the staff who continue to volunteer to come in on days like today when they are under no obligation to do so. This is what HWS is about – we want to keep making a positive difference to the experience of our students and the commitment of our staff to doing so is inspiring.

CHANGES FOR SEPTEMBER – A NEW SCHOOL DAY

Starting from September there will be some changes to the structure of the school day.

Split Lunches

One of these changes is that we will be moving to a split lunchtime. When we surveyed parents and carers earlier in the year a large proportion of you across all year groups commented about the lunchtime experience and voted in favour of moving to split lunches. We agreed with you!

This means that our students will have a different lunchtime in the school day depending on which year they are in. We are mindful that the transition to secondary school from primary can be an exciting one but for some also a challenging one. We have listened to the recent feedback from year 7 parents that bringing the time for lunch slightly earlier will help support their child's transition, and again, we agreed. Therefore, we have decided that our Year 7s, along with Years 9 and 11 will have an earlier lunchtime.

This means that

- Years 7, 9 and 11 students will have three lessons, and will then go to lunch at the earlier time of 12.15pm.
- Years 8, 10 and Post 16 students will have four lessons before having lunch at 1.15pm.
- Due to having to provide for fewer students during each session, lunch will last for forty minutes (a reduction from the current fifty minutes).
- There will be designated areas where year groups will spend their lunchtime once they have eaten their lunch in one of the allocated eating areas.
- All students will begin period 5 at 1.55pm

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



5-minute showers



Drive less



Lights off



Local produce



Recycle



Meat-free meals



Zero-waste fashion



Unplug



Refill and reuse



Bring your own bag

Registration/Tutor Time and Reading Time Moved to the Start of the Day

After a number of years of beginning each day with period 1 and having tutor time after break, we have decided to move registration back to the start of the day.

In the parents' survey that was completed earlier this year referred to earlier, there was a strong indication from parents that starting the day with registration would be an improvement. We have agreed with this as we feel that starting the day with your tutor checking that students are properly prepared learning is a positive thing. It will mean that tutors will be able to do things like check equipment and uniform to resolve any issues before lessons start. Reading time and assemblies will now also take place at the start of the day before period 1.

School Finishing Time Brought Forward

Due to the reduction in the lunch period and a small reduction in the length of break time, the school day will finish earlier in the day at 2.55pm. This will provide us with an opportunity to increase the number of after school clubs and activities available for students. We will provide more detail on this later in the summer term. I would also like to stress that the length of lessons will not change, so although the day is shorter, lessons are not. There is no loss of learning time.

We hope that these changes will help us to create an even better experience for our students at HWS. Should you have any queries about this please contact Ms J Burniston (jbu@hws.haringey.sch.uk) or Mr D Mansfield (dma@hws.haringey.sch.uk).

REGULAR CONTACT HOME

As part of our efforts to support our children and families at HWS during this lockdown period, we have made a commitment to ensure that every single student in years 7 to 10 and year 12 receives at least one telephone call every week from an allocated member of staff. From this Monday onwards, you and your child will receive a call from either their form tutor or an associated member of staff from the house team/post 16 team.

The vast majority of the phone calls will be made from the homes of our staff on their personal phones (as we remain in lockdown). As a means of preserving their privacy, staff have been asked to use the 'withhold your number' feature when making contact. This means that parents receiving calls will not see the number that is calling, which I know for many people is a reason to not answer calls. I would ask you to support us by accepting the call from a withheld number, as the call is likely to be from one of us!

We are looking forward to speaking to you all.

CLOSING THE GAP – HELPING STUDENTS CATCH UP

We get quite a bit of communication at the moment from parents anxious about the amount of engagement that their children are showing. They are concerned about work not being complete and about their child falling behind during this period. We would like to reassure parents and carers that we are doing all that we can to avoid this scenario. We have already reorganised the curriculum that the students are following during this period to minimise the impact of any gaps between children's progress that may emerge. We are also talking to teachers at the moment about what we might be able to do to increase the input and feedback that students are receiving. Finally, we are asking our staff to plan for what they will do when students return to ensure that progress is maintained and that any negative impact of this period is minimised.

We would remind you that we want students to do all that they can with their home study, but to not be overly concerned or stressed if there are some bits of work that they cannot do and hence have remained incomplete. I hope this helps to clarify things and ease the pressure somewhat.

TRANSITION – YEAR 7 AND YEAR 12 FOR SEPTEMBER 2020

We are going through the normal processes for supporting the year 6s who are joining us in September. We are providing all the necessary information for those families to ensure that the 270 students who will be joining Highgate Wood School are properly prepared. Of course, we know that it is unlikely that our usual transition day in July will take place. However, we are already thinking about alternatives to this. We will keep those families updated across the summer. In the meantime, should you have any queries, please contact Ms J Burniston Acting Assistant Head (jbu@hws.haringey.sch.uk).

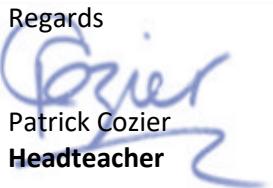
Similarly, we are currently continuing to interview and recruit year 11 students to come and join our sixth form. We are confident that we will have a large year 12 cohort as recruitment is going well. I would also like to take this opportunity to remind parents of our year 11 to encourage their sons and daughters to check out the A level preparation booklets available on the school website.

... AND FINALLY

I would like to thank all of our families for their continued support!

Have a great weekend. Take care and stay safe!

Regards


Patrick Cozier
Headteacher