

30<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

### Update from Highgate Wood School (No. 13)

Welcome to the last Highgate Wood School update for this academic year. As has been said previously, these have been the strangest of times and they have made the end of the year feel somewhat different to how it usually does. Nevertheless, staff and students have been working incredibly hard throughout this academic year, and in particular during this period. We have really missed our students during this time. I invite you to view our well done messages to students on the home page of our school website. It is testimony to how much students, as well as staff, have worked over the term. The summer break and the rest is certainly well earned.

This final update of the year gives parents more detail about the plans for our September return. Rather than including these details in the main body of this letter I am attaching a booklet which provides the information separately. We will be adding to the information in the booklet over the coming weeks, including the additional guidance we expect to receive from the government, and will issue it again before the start of term.

The extent and importance of the changes is significant, so I also summarise some of the information below.

### Planning for September return

In my previous letters I have spoken about the government's decision to re-open all schools fully from September. Unfortunately, Covid-19 remains a threat to the health and well-being of our school community so we have had to make some significant changes to the way that we would ordinarily function. This is based on the Department for Education's guidance and recommendations.

To facilitate a full opening to all students, the Department for Education recognises that it is not feasible for students to continue sitting a significant distance apart. Instead, the guidance focuses on how schools might:

- **Group students**
  - Ideally class groups should be as consistent as possible, but there is recognition in the guidance that to facilitate the curriculum, year group 'bubbles' can be implemented
  - Members of staff can work across each year group 'bubble'
- **Put in place classroom measures**
  - Students should sit side by side and face the front
  - Staff should avoid close face to face contact and minimise the time spent less than 1 metre from anyone

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



- **Put in place measures outside of the classroom**
  - Year group 'bubbles' should be kept apart – i.e. assemblies or other 'gatherings' should only involve one year group
  - Movement around the school should be kept to a minimum, with a view to reducing busy corridors
  - Staggered break and lunch times should be considered
  - Staff spaces should be planned to help reduced staff contact
- **Put in place measures for arriving at and leaving school**
  - Schools should consider adjusting start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school

### **HWS response to Government Guidance**

To put in place measures that meaningfully 'reduce contact' in the ways suggested by the Department for Education will be challenging in any school. At Highgate Wood, we have done everything we can to act upon the advice provided with a view to keeping everyone healthy and safe.

The school has worked tirelessly to ensure that, when students return to school, the amount of teaching time is not affected and that they are able to access a broad and balanced curriculum. To facilitate this provision, it will be necessary to make the following adaptations to the operation of the school:

#### **1. There will be staggered start times each day by year group and also different entry points**

Students in different year groups will start their school day at different times, and will come into school from different entrances. The details are included in the attached booklet.

#### **2. The structure of the school day**

There will be different timings to the school day, allowing for the different start times, different lunchtimes and also enabling Key Stage 3 students to end school 15 minutes before the other year groups. The details are included in the attached booklet.

#### **3. Break time and lunch time**

- Break times and lunch times will be staggered across the day. Food at break time will be from a limited range (most likely cold foods). At lunchtimes we will serve hot food, but the range of food will be limited.
- Students will have designated areas of the playground to avoid year groups mixing with each other

*We are encouraging those who are able to supply their children with a packed lunch (particularly break time snacks) do so where possible – of course this does not apply to students who are eligible for free school meals.* Further details are included in the attached booklet.

#### **4. Minimising movement in year 7, 8 and 9 and impact on the curriculum**

- Students from years 7, 8 and 9 will have their own designated areas where all their lessons will take place. They will be taught in the same teaching groups throughout their curriculum
- All practical subjects in Key Stage 3 will be taught in general classrooms – which will mean that there is a significant reduction in practical activities
- All Key Stage 4 and Post 16 groupings will not be affected by the protective measures we have put in place. Students in KS4 will be taught in their English, maths and science sets and in their normal chosen subject groups. All practical based subjects at Key Stage 4 and post 16 will be taught in specialist classrooms.

- Year 10, 11, 12 and 13 students will be able to move around the building at lesson changeover, but will be supervised by staff so as to maintain social distancing as much as possible

Please see the attached booklet for further details.

### **5. Clubs, music lessons and the Learning Resource Centre**

For the first half of the term we will not be running any of the regular before or after school clubs, and music lessons will be postponed. It will not be possible to borrow books from the library. Further details are included in the attached booklet.

### **6. Equipment**

Students will need to have their own equipment to school and this must not be shared with others. The school will be buying sets of essential equipment for some students. Please see the attached booklet for further details.

### **7. Supporting students returning to school**

All departments are currently adapting their existing curriculums to take account of the loss of learning time through the summer. We have also developed a PHSEE and Personal Development programme for all students to help them deal with the emotional and social challenges that school closure and the covid crisis has brought. Further details are included in the attached booklet.

### **8. Student dress code expectations**

We expect our students to return to school in September in full school uniform. We will allow students to wear face masks/coverings if parents/students feel very strongly about this. However, we are mindful that the Government is clear in their guidance for schools that personal protective equipment (PPE) is not necessary in schools. Further details, including information about ties, are included in the attached booklet.

### **Start of Term Arrangements**

Please find below the additional arrangements for the first few days of term:

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September and Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September** will be two of our designated five staff training days so there will be no students in school. We will use that time to allow staff to prepare for the start of term, and in particular operating in a very different way

- **The first day of school for years 7, 11 and 13 students will be Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September. All other year groups stay at home**
- **For years 8, 9, 10 and 12 the first day will be Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September. All other year groups stay at home (apart from year 7 who will attend both days)**
- No curriculum teaching will happen on those two days. They will be designed to familiarise students with the new systems. We will use this opportunity to take students through all of the changes that we have put in place for the start of term and outline our expectations and avenues of support. Students will spend the allocated time with their nominated form teacher in their teaching groups (years 7 to 9) and their form tutor in their tutor groups (years 10 to 13)

Further details, including timings for these days, are included in the attached booklet.

## **Staff Leavers**

As always at this time of the year, we take the opportunity to say goodbye and thank you to those members of staff who are leaving us to move onto new challenges.

**Staff Member:** Ms D Spence

**Subject/Department:** Assistant Headteacher/PE

**Number of Years of Service at Highgate Wood:** 33

33 years! Ms Spence has been at HWS through all the significant changes and throughout has remained consistent and true to who she is as a professional and a person. As our child protection and safeguarding lead, she is supremely knowledgeable and her experience will be missed – but it's more than that. She is compassionate and caring; committed to our students and has always put them first. Ms Spence's reputation across the borough is also very high – everyone that she works with thinks that she is brilliant! She is leaving to take a well-deserved retirement.

**Staff Member:** Mr J Rowlands

**Subject/Department:** Head of Da Vinci House/Science

**Number of Years of Service at Highgate Wood:** 9

Mr Rowlands has been an excellent member of staff at HWS. He has been a great Head of Da Vinci House and skilled teacher of science. Mr Rowlands has always maintained a focus on doing the right thing for the students – giving them that chance to change and do better – a fantastic leader and a fantastic person. He will be sorely missed by all the students in Da Vinci. He is leaving us to take up a post as Head of Science at a school nearer to his home.

**Staff Member:** Mr P Adams

**Subject/Department:** Head of PE

**Number of Years of Service at Highgate Wood:** 8

Mr Adams has been a magnificent Head of PE. He has always been ambitious for his department and the school. He has always been professional in his approach as a leader and is a brilliant teacher. He is leaving to take up a similar post nearer to home.

**Staff Member:** Mr C Hewitt

**Subject/Department:** Deputy Headteacher/Sociology

**Number of Years of Service at Highgate Wood:** 7

Mr Hewitt has been an amazing deputy. In his time at HWS he has brought fresh ideas and always maintained high expectations for the school. He has made a genuinely positive difference to the way that we do things as a school and to our recent successes. He is calm under pressure as he showed when he was the Acting Headteacher during my period of illness in March. He is leaving to take up his first headship... a well-deserved promotion.

**Staff Member:** Ms S Tinsley

**Subject/Department:** English

**Number of Years of Service at Highgate Wood:** 5

Ms Tinsley has been a very strong member of the English department. She is an inspiring teacher hugely respected by her peers and her students. I know that she will be terribly missed. She is leaving us to pursue other life passions.

**Staff Member:** Ms B Eades

**Subject/Department:** Acting Head of REP

**Number of Years of Service at Highgate Wood:** 4

Ms Eades has been brilliant over the last four years. Twice during that time she has stepped up to be Acting Head of REP and has done an amazing job. I have nothing but gratitude for her good work. I know that colleagues and students will feel the same. She's leaving us to take on a similar role back up North nearer to family.

**Staff Member:** Mr J Hales

**Subject/Department:** Geography

**Number of Years of Service at Highgate Wood:** 2

Mr Hales has done a really good job in the Geography department. He has always been a calm and measured influence in the classroom and within the department. We thank him for his support for our students.

**Staff Member:** Mr B Gill

**Subject/Department:** Geography

**Number of Years of Service at Highgate Wood:** 6 months

Mr Gill was with us for a short time, but in that time supported the Geography department well. We are extremely grateful for his contribution during this time.

I am sure that all families will join us in thanking all of our outgoing staff for their commitment and contribution to HWS and wish them all the best in their future careers.

On a separate note, we are very sad to announce the death of one of our HWS colleagues John Courtney. Mr Courtney worked at HWS for an impressive 24 years, initially as one of our cleaning staff and in recent times as the provider of tea and coffee refreshments – hence he was affectionately known by staff as ‘Coffee John’. Our sincerest condolences go out to Mr Courtney’s family at this difficult time. We appreciate his loyal service and will miss him terribly.

#### **Parent/Staff Association (PSA) - Thank You!**

HWS has always enjoyed a very positive relationship with the PSA and this has continued this year. I would like to thank the PSA and our parents for their ongoing support and for their fundraising efforts. This year, your generosity has really made a positive difference to the school and has allowed and is allowing us to achieve things for the students that would otherwise be impossible. The breakdown of funds raised are:

- Parent support helped the PSA raised funds of £18k (this despite no MADfest and other popular events)
- Our Parent/Carer Fund (PCF) benefitted from your generous donations to raise £14k in its first year! Thank you so much.

As mentioned above, this money is being spent wisely to make a positive difference to the experience of HWS students. For example:

- £30k (made up of £8k from PSA funds, £8k from the Lottery fund and £14k from the PCF) towards changes designed to improve the dining experience for our students by
  - An increase in the size of the school canteen
  - Provision of covered outside eating space
  - More indoor/outdoor seating
  - Creation of a 6th form eating area
- £14k towards equipment, enrichment, environment and the Hardship Fund including

I wish to again extend my thanks to the PSA for their support and in particular to Tahra Zafar and Lindsey Reed who do so much for the school in their roles of Chair and Vice Chair of the PSA respectively. I know that Lindsey is shortly going to hand over the reins of her role so a special thanks goes out to her for all of her support and contribution over the last four years.

#### **Year 11 and Year 13 Exam Results This Summer – A message from our Exams Officer Ms Short**

Ms Short has asked me to ensure that you are all aware we can only give exam results to students directly (on the results day or after). If a student cannot come in they can contact Ms Short on her direct email ([lsh@hws.haringey.sch.uk](mailto:lsh@hws.haringey.sch.uk)) to give permission for a nominated person to collect the results on their behalf. Another option is to post to school a self-addressed envelope with a request from the student for the results to be posted. Any requests can only come from students and not from parents as exam results belong to the student.

### **Parent/Carer Fund (PCF)**

As mentioned above, we are indebted to the PSA and also the Parent Carer Fund which has made such a contribution to the work that is now taking place to improve Highgate Wood School in readiness for September opening. As I am sure you appreciate, budgets will continue to be tight over the coming months, and demands for expenditure will be high. Fundraising is going to become even more critical. The PCF fund allows parents and carers to donate to the school, and for the fund to also claim Gift Aid on the donation, to enable further developments to take place. For more information on the Parent Carer Fund please visit <https://bit.ly/hwsfundraising> on the school website, or you can go direct to <http://bit.ly/hwsdonate> to set up a donation.

We are always grateful to receive any donations that families can afford to make. However, I would like to continuously impress upon you that all donations are voluntary and that no one should ever feel pressured into donating money that they cannot afford.

### **Mental Health and Well-Being**

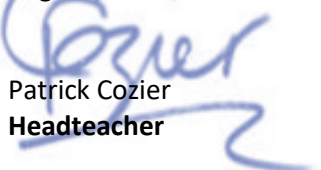
For anyone who is struggling during this period, help is available via Haringey Local Authority. The main information can be found [here](#). Again, rather than repeat the links and notices regarding other support and helplines for parents and carers, we have published these on our Covid blog at <http://bit.ly/hwscovid4>.

### **Enjoy the summer**

And finally, thank you again for your continued support during this very unusual period. I wish all of our students and their families and my staff a very enjoyable summer break!

Take care and stay safe!

Regards



Patrick Cozier  
**Headteacher**

**Attached:** HWS: Return To School September 2020