

12th December 2020

Dear Parent\Carer,

We are approaching the end of what has been a very challenging term. I am delighted we have reached it safely and successfully, with students engaged and happy in their learning and also in their friendships and social groups. I am also pleased that, for the last week, we are likely to have an almost full complement of children. This is due to many groups already having returned following the spike we experienced in Covid positive cases and self-isolations recently, and also the changing regulations reducing self-isolation time from 14 to 10 days. We will be alerting all families whose children are still self-isolating of the new dates for their school return over the weekend. For many that will mean coming back on Monday.

I would like to again extend my huge thanks to our remarkable staff who have had to deal with what has been an extremely difficult situation and have done so with tremendous professionalism, caring and also good humour. Thanks also to our families for their continuous support and their patience and understanding.

Last Day of Term, Thursday 17th December

In line with many other schools, we have decided to follow the government's suggestion of moving one of our INSET days to the end of this term, allowing staff an extra day to recharge and refresh themselves after such a long and challenging term. Luckily (unlike some schools), we are able to do this without having to change our INSET plans in any significant way as we have an INSET day scheduled for 30th April which was actually a school closure day for all students and staff with the INSET taking place through additional afterschool training sessions (which are unaffected and will still take place as planned). This means that school will close for students for the holidays at approximately 12:45pm on Thursday 17th December. I outline the full schedule for the last week of term later in this letter. Friday, 30th April 2021 originally planned as an INSET day will now be a normal school day with all staff and students in attendance.

Increase in coronavirus cases in north east London

You will be aware that the Health Secretary announced on Thursday 10th December that mobile coronavirus testing units will be sent to schools in areas across north east London. This was to combat a rapid increase in cases among the 11-18 age group in those areas. Please click [this link](#) for fuller information about this. Haringey are not amongst that identified group of local authorities, but we have been alerted by Haringey's Director of Public Health, Dr Will Maimaris, that there has been an increase in cases in Haringey which is concerning. He urges everyone to continue to keep to the guidance. Please visit the information on [Haringey's web pages](#) to keep up

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

to date with this developing situation, and be alerted to any changes. I will also let you know of any changes and developments relating to Highgate Wood School for the coming spring term towards the end of the holidays.

Pastoral Review Day and School Survey

Thank you for the many positive comments received following our Pastoral Review Day. Despite the challenges of having to run this remotely, it seems to have been very successful for many students and families, able to discuss in details their child's progress and school experiences and make some useful plans for improvement. Indeed, many have suggested that we retain the "virtual" model for parental meeting after the current situation has passed.

On the day we also asked parents to complete a survey. We have already received many responses. Having read through a number of these I am already getting a clear sense of your views. Most parents and carers are happy with what we do as a school and that fills me with immense pride. We want to be a school that serves its local community well. However, there are areas that we need to continue to develop to be the best we can be in these difficult times. One of the key finding is the need for further work on our remote learning provision for individual students who are self-isolating.

When groups are at home and we are able to provide "live" lessons things are working well, but where individuals are self-isolating, we do need to do more to ensure consistency and also to maintain effective student engagement and motivation. For the start of next year, we will be putting in some additional systems that will help to address this, and we will be informing you of these before the new term begins.

It is not too late to have your say... if you still wish to complete the survey you may do so by visiting [this link](#). Your views are extremely important to us and we do pay close heed to them when planning for the future. Once we have closed the survey, we will feed back in more detail about our key actions in response to what you have said.

Coats and classrooms

An issue that has become apparent in recent days is the conflict between keeping windows open for ventilation and keeping rooms warm during the wintry weather. This has been exacerbated by some problems with our boilers that are now working under additional strain. In order to help address this, when necessary students will be allowed to wear their outside coats in the classroom. We are also exploring heating solutions to help improve the situation.

End of Term Arrangements

As usual, the penultimate day of term will be a non-uniform day. We will ask all students to contribute £1 to come into school in non-uniform on Wednesday 16th December. Please ensure they are still dressed appropriately for the winter weather and also for a day at school. The money raised will be donated to the school charities.

During the course of Wednesday, we will also announce the name of House whose students have gained the highest number of achievements points this term. Students in that House will have an additional non-uniform day on Thursday 17th.

Students will attend their usual lessons for Periods 1, 2 and 3 on Thursday and will then have a short tutorial time before being dismissed for the Christmas Holidays. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 will be dismissed at 12:45pm. Students in Year 10 and 11 will be dismissed at 12:55pm. They will need to leave from their usual school exits.

FSM Vouchers over Christmas

As I mentioned last week, Haringey has agreed to fund supermarket vouchers over the Christmas break for those students who are eligible for Free School Meals. We are distributing those vouchers through Wonde and families should have already received notification. If you have not received this please contact Mr Ashman tas@hws.haringey.sch.uk

School Contact over the holiday break

Please be aware that I am strongly recommending my staff to avoid looking at their school emails over the Christmas break. I believe it is important they are able to use the holidays to fully rest and recover so they are able to return to school in January restored and ready for the new term.

Nevertheless, please continue to update to use our "hotline" for reporting positive test results is: 0208 342 7975 and our "hot email" is covid@hws.haringey.sch.uk.

... And Finally

At the end of a remarkable and challenging year, I would like to thank you all for your continued support. For those of you who celebrate Christmas, have a good Christmas! For those of you who don't, please enjoy the break. I wish you all good health for the holiday period and the very best for the New Year ahead.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cozier', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Patrick Cozier
Headteacher