

16th May 2021

Dear Parents\Carers,

As we enter the final week of this academic year for our Year 11 and Year 13 students, I would like to begin this letter with particular thanks to those students. Through an exceptionally difficult time, they have risen to the challenges magnificently. I have been heartened by their focus, maturity and good humour. They have been a huge credit to themselves and to their school, and I wish them every success with their future plans. I would also like to thank these students' families for their enduring support, and pay tribute to their teachers and other staff, especially Ms Pinnick, Mr Hartley and the House Teams, for their work in sustaining these young people as they completed a very important phase in their education.

I do hope all Highgate Wood School families are well and maintaining optimism for the future. We are now at Step 3 in the Government's roadmap out of lockdown which has allowed some relaxation of previous rules, with an eye to preparing for further loosening of restrictions in the future. Whilst we need to be cautious in our plans and alert to possible changes in the local situation and the wider context, we are now able to set out our plans for going forward.

As from Monday 17th May, face coverings will not be required in classrooms. National guidance also now allows us to relax the wearing of face coverings in communal areas, but we will not yet be taking this step. The reason for this caution is that we want to continue to minimise the risks of transmission as we move to further relaxation of restrictions after half term. From Monday 7th June we hope to return to having students moving relatively freely around the school, going to specialist classrooms and practical workspaces and also permitting setting and specialist groupings as was the case with some teaching groups before the pandemic began. We are also mindful of the current discussion taking place about the potential spread of the B.1.617.2 (Indian) variant. Whilst we are making this decision regarding face coverings for the 17th May, all other subsequent changes will be kept under review as we monitor that situation closely. With this in mind, we believe that the continued wearing of face coverings in communal areas is an obvious benefit and layer of caution.

We know that this next stage in our return to more normal practice will take significant planning and preparation. Even though the school will be less crowded, with Year 11 and Year 13 students no longer on site, we must ensure that we maintain full Covid-19 security and minimise all risks. We also must ensure that students are fully prepared and ready for the change.

Before the half-term break we will engage students in Key Stage 3 in transition activities, reminding them of all the different areas of the school site and the expectations and rules of

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

travelling from one classroom to another. For Year 8 and 9 this will be a reminder, but for students in Year 7 it will be the first time that they will have been able to visit every corner of the school (except for those who had a tour of the school on Open Evening when they were in Year 6!). During these transition activities we will be addressing those concerns and questions that students have already raised through the recent “return to normal” survey they have completed.

Students in Year 9 should also be aware that they will be sitting assessments in the English and Science during the week beginning 24th May. These assessments will take place in the Sports Hall – in the same way as the assessments for Year 11 and 13 already have, and those for Year 10 and 12 will do so later in June.

The new guidance around Covid-19 restrictions also allows residential school trips to recommence so I am delighted that our Duke of Edinburgh programmes will now resume, and with the prospect of further relaxations we have growing confidence that events like Madfest and Sports Day will happen, and we have already set the date for our Year 6 transition day - Tuesday 6th July.

All these plans are contingent on the current progress being maintained and no change in government guidance. With this in mind I would like to urge families to maintain their current vigilance and safe practices, including maintaining twice-weekly testing amongst those who have agreed to take part, alerting us to any positive covid-19 test result (covid@hws.haringey.sch.uk or 02083427970 ext. 238) and keep them at home whilst ordering a confirmatory PCR test.

Finally, we have been making plans for some changes to our provision for September that we expect to be able to communicate to parents and carers shortly. Please look out for a letter on Tuesday or Wednesday summarising our plans.

With thanks for your continued support.

Regards



Patrick Cozier
Headteacher