

17<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Dear Parents\Carers,

As we end the Autumn term, I'd like to extend my warmest wishes to you and your family.

It has been a successful term at HWS, but more difficult of late with the challenges presented by the situation with Covid-19. There have been many things to be grateful for, not least the way all students have been able to return to a much more normal learning environment and we have been able to provide some of those wider range of activities and opportunities – extra-curricular events, trips, clubs, competitions and enrichment days – that are so important to school life. With that in mind I am pleased to announce that peripatetic music lessons will be resuming in the new year from Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

As you will be aware, we have also been through a long-awaited Ofsted inspection which, though we are still awaiting the final report, is something that we hope to share with families in the very near future. The experience of being inspected was a largely positive one and we are confident that Ofsted very much saw the HWS that we believe ourselves to be.

Recent events have meant that we have had curtail many activities, including our Winter Concert, which has now been recorded to allow the performances to be shared in the New Year. You will also be aware that, because of severe staff shortages, we have had to ask some year groups to work remotely during the last few days. We trust that the situation will steadily improve in the New Year, but we will clearly need contingency plans in place for the possibility of further challenges to come. I will update you during the coming holidays should we need to put in place anything different for January 2022.

Currently we are confident that the Year 13 mock exams in the week beginning 10<sup>th</sup> January will go ahead as planned, so too will the Year 9 Options process begin with the virtual Options Evening on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January, and the Year 11 Mock Results and virtual Parents' Evening on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January.

As part of the response to Covid-19 there have been some changes and developments to the guidance already. Anyone who tests positive for Covid-19 should still isolate for 10 days, but those identified as close contacts (provided they are either vaccinated adults or children between 5 and 18½) need not self-isolate but should take a lateral flow test every day for seven days. If they test negative, they can continue to attend school.

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



We will again be arranging in-school Covid-19 tests for students at the start of term. If you have already given permission for your child to be tested there is no need to give permission again. If you did not give permission before but now wish to do so, then please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/lfdtest21> You will need to do this before the New Year.

We are planning for the tests to take place Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January, the first day of the term. As previously, there will be no live lessons, although we will be asking staff to set work for all students to complete online for the parts of the day where they are at home. Meanwhile, students will come into school on that day at the time they are notified for testing. They will not need to be in school uniform.

There are also plans for a second round of in-school Covid-19 vaccinations. Details for this have not yet been fully confirmed but you should also be aware that children aged 12 to 15 can now book their second Covid-19 vaccination online and there are some walk-in vaccination centres where vaccination can happen without an appointment. Please visit [this NHS site](#) for more information. I will update you with information about the in-school vaccination programme as soon as I have the information.

I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to a new guide for parents and carers on online sexual harassment and how you can support your children to stay safe online. This was published by the Children's Commissioner this week and is a very useful publication, drawing together advice from young people about how they think parents should manage those tricky conversations about such things as sexual harassment, peer-on-peer abuse and inappropriate material and pornography online. That report can be accessed [here](#).

I would like to close by thanking you all for the support you have shown for the school during the past few weeks. I am indebted to my hard-working staff who have coped magnificently with the current challenges. I am also incredibly grateful to our student body who have shown tremendous resilience, determination, and also good humour during this time. But I am aware that, without the wide support of our families it would have been a great deal harder.

Wishing you all the very best for the coming holidays. For those families who celebrate Christmas, I wish you a very happy Christmas, for those who do not, I hope you have a very enjoyable holiday break. I wish you all the very best for the coming New Year.

We expect students to return to school for registration and regular lessons at the usual time of 8:35am on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022. It will be Week One.

Yours sincerely



Patrick Cozier  
Headteacher