

12th November 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that this letter finds you well. It's been a very busy start to this half term with lots happening at HWS. I thought it would be a good time to share some updates with you.

Israel/Palestine Conflict

Since I last wrote to you on this issue, the tragic loss of life carries on and the school continues to have the greatest sympathy for all those affected. As a school, we are constantly reminding our students about our core values of the 4Cs and the importance to show empathy and sensitivity at this challenging time. Below is the message that we have shared a few times with our students in our online whole school assemblies.



We are aware of the recent and ongoing situation in the Israel/Palestine region

We are against all violence and loss of life and hope that one day peace can emerge

We are aware that this situation will be having an impact on some members of our school community and we urge sympathy, care and understanding at this time

We also know that sometimes these situations can give rise to hate feelings and increase incidence of discrimination. This is unacceptable to our school and is contrary to The Highgate Wood Way

If anyone is feeling sad, upset or feels that anyone is showing discriminatory behaviour towards them they should tell a member of staff so that it can be dealt with seriously

Never have the 4Cs been more important - these are the values of HWS and we expect all students to show them at all times so that everyone can come to HWS and feel happy, confident, respected and valued

HWS FAMILY in and out of school

I informed you in my last letter that I had met with Rabbi Sandra Kviat and that I was going to reach out to Bibi Khan at the Wightman Road Mosque. On Thursday 9th November I met with Bibi Khan along with Imam Kazi Abdul Kadir. It was a very positive and productive meeting and I am looking forward to working with them and Rabbi Sandra Kviat over the coming weeks and months to support our school in promoting harmony, goodwill and understanding across our school community.

I met with a group of staff and some year 12 students this week to begin to put together our response to what is happening at the moment in Gaza. We have decided that the immediate priority is to keep reminding our students about the values of humanity, empathy and kindness, that the school absolutely abhors the loss of

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Highgate Wood School supports individual actions to address the issues of Climate Change and promotes the United Nations top 10 recommendations



life, to help students make sense of what is happening and how to support them in navigating the multiple and conflicting sources of information that they have access to. That work starts now.

What we will not do however, is attempt to tell the very complicated story of the history of the region and how we got to where we are. Our view is that there is too much subjectivity, sensitivity and interpretation of the past to expect our youngest students to fully comprehend something that many adults can't – so for us right now we have decided that this is not a priority. I hope that you can understand the stance that we have taken.

In the meantime, we will continue to be vigilant with regards to the safety of all of our students and staff which will involve creating

- clear lines of communication for any student or staff who wishes to seek support,
- safe spaces for students to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences
- multi-ethnic and multi-faith student focus groups to work on initiatives that we can pursue as a school to raise awareness and become involved in positive charitable activities

As I said previously, our school community is a diverse and inclusive one, comprising individuals with various backgrounds, beliefs and perspectives. We value and embrace the diversity that exists among our students, their families and our staff, and we firmly believe in creating an environment where everyone feels respected, valued and safe.

Toilets & Update

I wrote to you in my last letter about the problems that we are having with our toilets currently, namely

1. **We do not have sufficient toilets for the size of the school and the number of students and staff that we have in attendance.**
2. **The state of the student toilets is not good enough.**

Since my previous communication, we have had very positive and productive interactions with Haringey Council to explore how they might help us find good solutions to the above. It is very early stages at the moment, but the conversations have been good and there is a willingness on their part to play a significant role in helping us. However, some of the things that need to be done have a degree of logistical complexity so we are not talking about quick solutions – this will take time. I would like to thank Debby Kuypers (one of our parents and a local architect) for spending her valuable time to come up with some impressive proposals for us to consider for an alternative style of toilet provision moving forward.

In the meantime, we are making an increased effort to be vigilant around the toilets and have discussed with our cleaning contractor the schedules for checking in on the toilets throughout the day. I would like to thank those parents who took the time and effort to write to the local authority officers and the local politicians. I am sure that your letter has had a significant role to play in the current conversation that we are engaged in.

A Message from Mr Cain-Reed (Assistant Headteacher – SENDCO)

Communication: The Learning Support Department are in the process of building a central system into which all information, including diagnostic reports which can inform provisional and approved access arrangements for public examinations is stored. Going forward, please can any diagnostic information in relation to your children's SEND be e-mailed to sendadmin@hws.haringey.sch.uk. This inbox is monitored by the Assistant Headteacher SENDCO, SEND Administrator, and the Advanced Learning Support Assistant attached to each year group, and will ensure that no key communication is missed.

Please continue to submit any SEND queries using the SEND query form on the school's website: <https://hws.haringey.sch.uk/learning/teaching-learning/learning-support-send/>

For any queries which can't be raised via the SEND referral form, please e-mail the Assistant Headteacher SENDCO, Daniel Cain-Reed: senco@hws.haringey.sch.uk. This e-mail address is a dedicated inbox for parents and carers, and will ensure that communications aren't missed and are able to be responded to more quickly.

Haringey EHCP banding descriptors: Haringey has revised the EHCP banding descriptions of children's needs, which aims to help the Local Authority SEND department allocate funding to children with EHCPs in a fairer and

more transparent way. The Local Authority are currently consulting on their proposals.

If you have a child with a Haringey EHCP, please do share your views on the LA's proposals: <https://haringeysendbandings.commonplace.is/>.

Please find the documents outlining the proposals here: [Have Your Say Today - Key consultation documents: existing and updated bandings and top-up information - Haringey Council SEND Bandings Consultation \(commonplace.is\)](#)

As you may have seen in Haringey SEND's monthly newsletter, SEND Power in Haringey has two upcoming events about this consultation.

Parents/carers can come to Chestnuts Community Centre (N15 5BN) on Tuesday 21st November 1 – 2.30pm ([booking link here](#)). They can also join our online event on Thursday 23rd November 6.30 – 8pm ([booking link here](#)).

Walk and Talk in Bruce Castle Park

Haringey SEND have a monthly Walk and Talk for parents/carers of children with SEND in a different park each month. On Monday 4th December they will go to Bruce Castle Park. Please see the flyer attached.

Vaping – The Dangers

As I reported in my last letter, like many schools up and down the country we are seeing a significant increase in the number of young people who are vaping (smoking electronic cigarettes). We are deeply concerned about the health risks involved because of the highly addictive nature of nicotine. Nicotine may be riskier for young people than for adults – there's some evidence that in adolescence the brain is more sensitive to its effects. Nicotine is a toxin and poisoning can happen if larger doses are taken. Nicotine vaping products are covered by regulations to protect users, including maximum nicotine strength and bans on certain ingredients.

However, some disposable vapes on sale are illegal and don't meet UK quality and safety regulations. They might look like the real thing, but they aren't so it isn't possible to know what's actually in them. Non-nicotine vapes are not covered by the same regulations as nicotine vapes and are not without risk. This last point is increasingly worrying for us. There does appear to be a rising trend of young people smoking more dangerous substances, some of which are illegal.

I have included a link to FRANK below, which is a website that can help parents to spot the signs of vape usage and also some explanation as to the various trends occurring and the associated risks. We will continue to remain vigilant in school as best we can.

<https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/vapes>

Lastly and importantly, in the UK it is illegal to sell nicotine vaping products to someone under the age of 18, or for adults to buy these products for them.

Happy Diwali

To those members of our Highgate Wood Family who celebrate... We wish you a wonderful day with your families.



Armistice Day

As we commemorate the end of World War I, let us remember the sacrifices made by those who have lost their lives. Let us honour their bravery and courage, and strive to build a world that is peaceful and just. May we never forget the lessons of the past, and may we always work towards a brighter future. Lest we forget.



A few dates for your diary...

- Thursday 16th November 2023 – **Post 16 Open Evening (5pm to 7pm)**
- Friday 24th November 2023 – **INSET Day – School is closed to all students**
- **Tuesday 5th December 2023 – Global Majority Parents' Forum (5pm to 7pm)**
- Tuesday 12th December 2023 – **Year 9 Parents' Evening**
- Thursday 14th December 2023 – **PSA Pre-Loved Uniform Sale**
- Monday 18th December and Tuesday 19th December 2023 – **Winter Concert**
- Wednesday 20th December 2023 – **Last day of the autumn term – Early finish for students**
- Thursday 21st December 2023 – **INSET Day – School is closed to all students**
- **Tuesday 16th January 2024 – SEND Parents' Forum (5pm to 7pm)**

I have highlighted to new dates that I have added in as changes to the last letter that I sent. Our next Global Majority Parents' Forum will be taking place on Tuesday 5th December. All parents from Black, South Asian, East Asian, South American and other global majority backgrounds are encouraged to attend the meeting. The more the merrier!

Our next SEND Parents' Forum will happen near the beginning of the Spring term. We have not held one this term as I have been keen to afford Mr Cain-Reed some time in his new role to focus on his main in-school priorities and to meet with parents when he had real progress to feedback. Again, we look forward to as many parents to join us as possible.

... And Finally

Thank you again for reading this all the way to the end! These letters that I write to you will be lengthy sometimes because there is simply so much to share. I want to end this letter with some food for thought.



Our meaning as a school is to do all we can to contribute positively to the lives of everyone in our wonderful HWS family. I will write to you again in a fortnight's time with an update. In the meantime, I wish you and your family well!

Regards

Patrick Cozier
Headteacher