

17<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we approach the last few days of what has been a very busy and productive term, I wanted to take this opportunity to spread some thanks.

### Thank You Everybody!

Thank you to our amazing students who have done so well and adapted so quickly after our difficult start to the term. Thank you to my incredible staff who continue to do everything possible to support our students to do their best. Their unwavering commitment is impressive as is the ethos and culture of warmth that they create across the school. Thank you to my governing body for their staunch support, particularly at the start of the term when we were going through such a challenging time recovering from the severe cyber-attack. Thank you to all of you parents and carers for your support, understanding and partnership. Without you, this doesn't work the same.

### Attendance to School – A Message from Mr Mansfield (Deputy Headteacher)

At HWS, our belief is that excellent school attendance is a critical factor in your child's achievement at school and we are committed to helping every child and their family to achieve this. Excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

For your child to gain the greatest benefit from their education they should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We appreciate that the barriers to accessing education can be wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual students and families. Improving attendance is everyone's business: effective communication and joined-up working are paramount.

Our recently updated Attendance and Punctuality Policy can be found here:

<https://hws.haringey.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Attendance-and-Punctuality-Policy-2023-FINAL.pdf>

The policy is too long to be covered in this letter to parents, so we have selected one aspect to focus on as we approach the start of a new year.

### **Term Time Leave of Absence and Holidays**

The school will only consider a formal application (See Appendix E in the policy) for a leave of absence at least one month in advance of the dates requested. Only exceptional circumstances will warrant a leave of absence. We will consider each application individually and take into account specific circumstances. Our policy is not to authorise any family holiday during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

## CONSIDERATION • COOPERATION • COURTESY • CONTRIBUTION

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



5-Minute showers



Drive less



Lights off



Local produce



Refill and reuse



Meat-free meals



Zero waste fashion



Bring your own bag



Recycle



Unplug



The following factors will be considered:

- Can this event take place in the school holidays?
- What is the current level of attendance and any unauthorised absences over the year to date?
- Any leave of absence taken previously.
- The time requested and any potential clashes with an examination/assessment period.
- Age and year group of the student.

Unfortunately, the school will not consider:

- The availability of cheaper holidays.
- The availability of the desired location.
- An overlap at the beginning or end of school term.
- The working pattern or availability of parental holiday entitlement.

Any period of leave taken without the authorisation of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may be referred to the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice fine, as consistent with the approach of Haringey LA across all schools.

It is also important to note that a child's name can be removed from the school register even if the student has been granted a leave of absence if:

- s/he has not returned by the agreed date
- the Headteacher is not satisfied that this is because s/he is ill or the absence is unavoidable

Obviously, we are talking about quite extreme measures for extreme cases, but we felt it was important to be clear about the procedures that are followed by HWS in line with Haringey local authority and other schools in the borough.

#### Year 9 Options Evening on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Apologies that in my last letter I failed to include the Year 9 Options Evening in January in my 'dates for your diary' section at the end of my letter. This evening is an important one for all year 9 students and their parents/carers. At this evening...

- We will talk to you about the process involved in your child choosing their GCSE subjects for next September
- We will share some guidance with you about how to guide your child towards making the right choices for them
- You will have a chance to talk to subject teachers from all department areas about the content of each GCSE subject, the nature in which they are assessed and the skills and qualities needed to succeed

We very much look forward to seeing you on the 9<sup>th</sup> January at 5pm.

#### Year 11 Pre-Public Exams (previously known as Mock Exams) + Start of Term Arrangements

The Year 11 Pre-Public Exams will start straight after the Christmas holiday on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January and will last for two weeks. Year 11 students need to arrive by 8.30am via the Montenotte Road Entrance. They should then head straight to back playground to line up for their first Pre-Public Exam which is English Literature. We expect students to find a balance over the holiday in terms of preparing. Some revision will be necessary for sure, but we also expect students to enjoy some down time to relax, re-charge and to enjoy being with their families. We wish them all the best!

Please note that years 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13 students will have a late start that day. They should arrive at their usual entrances at 10.55am for Tutor Time at 11am. They will begin their lessons from period 3. It will be a Week 2.

Advice on Apprenticeships – Some Information from Mr Grimmett

Along with this letter, I have attached an information and guidance document for parents about apprenticeships. If you have any questions or queries about the information shared, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Grimmett on [dgr@hws.haringey.sch.uk](mailto:dgr@hws.haringey.sch.uk)

A few dates for your diary...

- Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023 – **PSA Pre-Loved Uniform Sale**
- Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December and Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 – **Winter Concert – Please come along and support our amazing musical students!**
- Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023 – **Last day of the autumn term – 12.15pm finish**
- Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2023 – **INSET Day – School is closed to all students**
- Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – **Start of Term – 8.30am for Year 11, 10.55am for all other students**
- Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – **Year 9 Options Evening (5pm Start)**
- Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – **SEND Parents' Forum (5pm to 7pm)**
- Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – **Year 10 Parent/Carers Evening**
- Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – **Year 13 Parent/Carers Evening**

... And Finally

Thank you again for reading this all the way to the end! I know that long letters are not always much fun, but I do try to include as much information that I assume will be useful. As ever, I will end with a quote.



We are nearly there! I always say to my staff that I love my job and there is no other role out there that I would rather do. However, no matter how much we love what we do for a living, there is never any shame in admitting that you love your holidays even more!

It has been a long term for us all, students, staff and families. We have all worked hard and we deserve a rest. Please do enjoy the break with your families. For those that celebrate Christmas, a very merry Christmas, and for those who do not, happy holidays!

I will write to you again in the new year.

Regards



Patrick Cozier  
**Headteacher**