

2nd December 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that this letter finds you well. I last wrote you on 12th November, so I thought it was time to write to you again with some updates and relevant important information to share. I hope that you find this letter both interesting and useful.

Israel/Palestine Conflict

The situation in Israel/Gaza continues to develop, and although there have been some positive developments there is clearly much to be resolved before the situation is safe for everyone that lives in the region. Our stance as a school remains the same – namely that we are against all forms of violence and loss of life. Our approach at HWS is to create as much understanding, empathy and harmony within our school community. On Friday I delivered an assembly to all our students where I spoke about the above, but also the importance of kindness. Right now, I can think of no better way to bring together a school community than focusing on treating everyone respectfully and being kind.

The group of staff and students that have come together to lead some educational work on this issue has not met since I last wrote to you, but we will be doing so in the coming days. One thing that we do need to address is the representation of the group. Thus far the group has been self-selecting, and it was noticeable in the first meeting that we had no one from our Jewish community of staff or students involved in the discussion. This is something that I will address prior to the second meeting. If you are Jewish please feel free to encourage your son/daughter to be involved. We will be putting out an appeal this coming week – not just for our Jewish students and staff, but also students and staff of all faith and backgrounds.

I will continue to update you moving forward.

Staffing Recruitment Appeal – Medical Needs Role

We have recently lost our medical needs lead Ms Carly Lawrence who has left the school to take up a new role. We wish her every success. Despite our best efforts, we have struggled to recruit a replacement so we are currently relying on temporary agency staff or our own existing staff stepping away from their substantive roles to cover. We need your help! If you know anyone from a nursing background who may be available and interested in applying for the role, I would very much welcome an opportunity to be in contact with them. If you know of such a person, please e-mail my PA Ms Olakisan on eol@hws.haringey.sch.uk.

A Message from Ms Hamilton (Deputy Headteacher) – Learning Review Day

As you will be aware, we have Learning Review Day coming up on the 7th December. The school will be closed to all students as meetings with your child's tutor will be online. We ask that you please make sure that your child is present when you have your appointment as we want students to be fully engaged in the conversation about their learning and progress.

Ahead of the meetings, we ask that parents and carers ensure that they go through their child's report with them carefully (please remember that we no longer send paper copies home). We want you to discuss each subject's Learning Judgements and Forecast Grades (where relevant) to both congratulate your child and discuss how they might improve their learning where necessary.

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

Uniform – A Consultation with Students

As mentioned in a previous communication we are starting the process of reviewing our uniform at HWS. The purpose of the review is to explore and better meet the following objectives:

- A uniform that is affordable to families
- A uniform which is gender neutral
- A uniform in which girls feel more secure and safe – some girls do not like the current kilt style skirt as it does not always remain discreet as girls walk around the school or in windy conditions
- A uniform which is more flexible to the changing climate – suitable for both extreme cold and extreme hot temperatures

The only thing that I am ruling out of this discussion is the idea of not having a uniform at all. HWS has a uniform and always will as long as I am the headteacher as I very much believe in the benefits to community, belonging, identity and social cohesion. However, what that uniform consists of is open to discussion and at this stage I am ruling nothing in or out. The students will genuinely have a big say in the outcome.

We don't intend to survey parents on this issue, but if you do feel inclined to have a say, then please send me your comments on headteacher@hws.haringey.sch.uk.

I will update you on this in the new year.

Positive Noticing Day

We had our first Positive Noticing Day on Wednesday 22nd November. Students wrote positive notes to each other, which we hope they then subsequently shared with you. Phone calls were made to parents by staff to highlight and congratulate those students showing exceptional consideration in action. This included five phone calls from myself to the parents of one student in each year group nominated by each of the heads of year.

I hope that you and your children enjoyed the positivity and good feeling of the day. We are gearing up for more as we hit the festive season, asking our students to show consideration to others with our annual foodbank collection, our consideration advent calendar and the golden ticket of consideration this month. All staff will have a golden ticket to give to a student who they see showing excellent consideration. The names are then placed into a prize draw in the celebration assembly to receive special prizes. We can't wait for the excitement of the draw!

Safeguarding Webinar

In January, we will be hosting our first virtual safeguarding webinar explaining all aspects of the safeguarding agenda. The date for this is not yet confirmed, but will be in the coming days. Please look out for this via our normal communications on Parent Mail.

A Message about Tassomai from Mr Nayar – Head of Science

As you are aware, we use Tassomai as our main science homework for all KS3 and KS4 students – you should all be receiving weekly emails asking you to log in and view your child's progress. Prior to lockdown, we used it for GCSE students only, with a small cost requested from parent/carers. As we found Tassomai to be so useful we extended it to KS3 and funded it during the pandemic.

As the financial situation of schools has changed, **we would like to request that all parents/carers please contribute £6 per year towards the cost of Tassomai.** Some of you have noticed that it has appeared on Scopay (our online payment platform) and it is through this that we kindly request that payment is made. We have managed to negotiate a substantial discount for the school - as a private subscriber, Tassomai would cost either £29.99 or £44.99 *per month*, depending on school year.

Why do we use Tassomai?

It supports the evidence-based principles of spacing, interleaving and targeted repetition to help students improve their grades. It works by spreading their learning into bite-sized chunks over as long a period of time as possible. This reduces anxiety in students as revision is 'little and often' and does not leave students with a huge amount of revision before assessments. As students answer questions the algorithm begins to learn where their strengths and weaknesses are, allowing the site to target specific gaps in their knowledge - but also making it easier for our teachers to see where your child might need some extra help.

300,000 students in over 500 schools use Tassomai and there is an *exceptionally high correlation* between Tassomai usage and attainment, with **90% of strong users (those completing weekly or bonus goals) achieving a strong pass or better** and **50% achieving a top grade** at GCSEs. In our experience at HWS, students that regularly complete Tassomai perform very well in their GCSEs and are much more confident in the classroom.

If you would like to know more about Tassomai, please go to www.tassomai.com and click on 'HOW IT WORKS'. You can also email admin@tassomai.com with any questions – they are very helpful!

If you have any questions at all about Tassomai or if the payment would cause you hardship, please contact me (Mr Nayar) at dna@hws.haringey.sch.uk.

Parental Communications with The School

As partners in your child's education, at HWS we value open and respectful communication between parents/carers and our dedicated staff. We have had a few recent instances where there have been some challenges with communication that have led to misunderstandings and on occasion unpleasant interactions. We kindly remind everyone to engage with our staff in a polite and constructive manner. Clear and respectful communication is essential in fostering a positive and supportive learning environment for our students.

If you have concerns or questions, please reach out to our staff through the appropriate channels, and let's work together to ensure the best possible experience for your child and the entire school community. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Parent Governor Election Outcomes

Thank you to all of you who put yourself forward for the recent parent governor election. Equally, thank you to all of you who took the time to vote. There were three vacancies to be filled. The result of the election is shown below, based on three points for a first choice, two points for a second choice and one point for a third choice.

1. Bonnie Evans (234)
2. Lee Chan (204)
3. Jake Morris (202)
4. Carl Purcell (157)
5. Chris Scollol (98)
6. Asher Jacobson (92)

Consequently, I can confirm that Bonnie Evans, Lee Chan and Jake Morris have been elected as parent governors. Congratulations to them all!

Christmas Tree in the Windrush Reception – Thank You!

A big thank you to Hornsey Pet and Garden for donating the Christmas tree in the Windrush reception. It is a lovely tree and we are very much looking forward to seeing the final decorated version for the festive period!

A few dates for your diary...

- Tuesday 5th December 2023 – **Global Majority Parents' Forum (5pm to 7pm)**
- Thursday 7th December – **Learning Review Day (School is closed for all students)**
- Tuesday 12th December 2023 – **Year 9 Parents' Evening**
- Monday 18th December 2023 – **PSA Pre-Loved Uniform Sale [This is a change of date]**
- 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)**

Please note that the original date for the PSA Pre-Loved Uniform Sale was the 14th December, but this has now been changed to Monday 18th December before the first night of the Winter Concert.

... 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.



In my assembly to the students on Friday about being kind, I talked about displaying integrity and doing the right thing. I love the sentiment illustrated by the above quote because it sums up so much about the mindset of everyone that works at HWS. We take on the responsibility for always doing the right thing, even when it's not the path of least resistance – and that I believe makes my staff very special people! They are very committed to making a positive difference to our students and this is why we have such a warm, caring and friendly ethos in our wonderful school!

I will write to you again before the Christmas break with an update. In the meantime, I wish you and your family well!

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Cozier".

Patrick Cozier
Headteacher