

29th October 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that this letter finds you well, that you have enjoyed the half term with your child(ren), and that it has been a relaxing and safe time for you all. As is typical, the week has flown by, but as much as we love our holidays, we are very much looking forward to seeing our wonderful students tomorrow morning! This letter contains a few quick updates and some bits of information ahead of our return tomorrow.

Israel/Gaza Conflict

The ongoing situation in this region continues to be very concerning and our thoughts and prayers are very much with those who are directly or indirectly affected by the ongoing events and tragic loss of life.

In my last letter to you I outlined the messaging that we have been sharing with our students internally to support those who are affected. We have also committed to being especially vigilant at this time as we are aware that acts of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia have been on the rise across the country. We have had some incidents within the school that reinforce our understanding that HWS does not exist in isolation from the outside world. We have dealt with those incidents that have been brought to our attention with seriousness and sensitivity, and will continue to do so if the need arises.

We are keen to take further steps to ensure the safety and comfort of all of our staff and students at HWS. We will continue with the messaging we started before half term – reminding our students to abide by the 4Cs and also encouraging students to come forward and let us know if they suffer or witness any kind of discrimination or hurtful behaviours. I am particularly mindful of the vulnerabilities being experienced by our Jewish and Muslim children and staff and will reiterate this in our messages to students.

The next phase for us as a school is to try to bring some clarity of understanding to our students about what is happening in the region and why. We know that the situation is extremely complex and very sensitive. This is why we will proceed carefully so that we can get this as right as we can. Our absolute hope is to give our students a better understanding of what is happening in order to increase empathy for all concerned and ensure that the atmosphere and ethos of our school community remains a harmonious, positive, caring and empathetic one. I met with Rabbi Sandra Kviat before the half term and I now feel far more informed about things from a Jewish perspective. I intend to do the same with regards to reaching out to Wightman Road Mosque. We have a team of staff who are working on this together and we will start to disseminate information to students in the coming days.

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

Year 7 Halloween Disco

On Thursday 19th October, our new cohort of Year 7 students came together for a memorable Halloween Disco at Highgate Wood School. Dressed in an incredible array of imaginative costumes, students had a fantastic evening dancing the night away and bonding with their new friends. The night provided a fun and relaxed setting for students to get to know each other better and we are very grateful to our school PSA for supporting with a very professional smoke machine, light show and lots of spooky decorations.

PSA Curry and Quiz Night – Friday 10th November 2023

The PSA are very, very excited to announce that the tickets for the Quiz and Curry Night are now on sale [here](#). Test yourself with tricky trivia, treat yourself to some delicious curry and kick back with a drink (alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks are available). Tickets are £16 and include one adult entry and a plate of homemade curry with all the trimmings.

Supporting students' sensory needs:

As we continue to support our students' sensory and medical needs in school, we'd like to remind parents and carers that spray deodorants and perfumes have not been allowed in our PE changing rooms since last year. Students are aware of this rule and these items will be confiscated if used in the PE changing rooms. When used in confined spaces, these items can negatively impact certain students' medical and sensory needs, so we do ask that students use roll-on deodorants instead. Many thanks for your support in reminding your children about this.

Contacting the Learning Support Department:

To ensure that SEND queries can be responded to in a more timely fashion, please use the SEND query form on the school website: <https://hws.haringey.sch.uk/learning/teaching-learning/learning-support-send/>

If your child does not yet have a diagnosis of need or an EHCP, please use the senco@hws.haringey.sch.uk to contact the Learning Support Department.

Open Mornings success

The three Open Mornings that we ran in the week before half term were all very successful. All were well attended and the feedback that we received from those families that we visited was very positive. Specific praise was reserved for our year 9 students who led the tours around the school. They did such an excellent job and showed their pride in the school. We are very proud of them all!

A few dates for your diary...

- Tuesday 31st October – **Year 11 Parents' Evening**
- Friday 10th November – **PSA Curry and Quiz Night**
- Thursday 16th November – **Post 16 Open Evening**
- Friday 24th November – **INSET Day – School is closed to all students**
- Tuesday 12th December – **Year 9 Parents' Evening**
- Thursday 14th December – **PSA Pre-Loved Uniform Sale**
- Monday 18th December and Tuesday 19th December – **Winter Concert**
- Wednesday 20th December – **Last day of the autumn term – Early finish for students**
- Thursday 21st December – **INSET Day – School is closed to all students**

School starts at the normal time tomorrow morning, so students need to be on site by 8.30am at the latest please.

... and Finally



"I've learned that
people will forget
what you said,
people will forget
what you did, but
people will never
forget how you
made them feel"

Maya Angelou's words above resonate strongly with me. This sums up so much of what makes HWS a special place to be for our students and staff. For me, it is critical that we don't just teach our students... we care about them. When I spoke to the parents during the Open Evening and Open Mornings before the break I made an important point. I explained to them that when they walked around the building they would not see the most amazing glitzy building – I am very jealous of Heartlands with its high ceilings and wide corridors! However, I said to the parents that I challenge any school to match what we do in terms of the quality and warmth of the relationships between staff and out students. I think that is what makes us special – we know that students will always remember the way we made them feel and we care about that.

At this current time, that is more important than ever. Enjoy your Sunday!

Regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Cozier'.

Patrick Cozier
Headteacher