

Headteacher's Newsletter - 9th December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

As the end of term approaches, I would like to write not only to share some important information with you about the end of term and start of next term but also to thank you sincerely for your support over the course of this year, which has been a very challenging one for everyone. News of the vaccination programme getting underway brings some much needed hope and optimism and we are really looking forward to getting some normality back in the Summer Term. At the same time, we are concerned about the impact of social mixing over Christmas on infection rates in January. Having experienced a spike in cases following the half term holiday in October, we know we may face a similar set of challenges in the new year. Please ensure that your children are following guidance and regulations to minimise the risks of transmission and help keep the school community free from infection.

Changes to End of Term and Start of Term Arrangements:

You may have seen on the news that schools will be supporting public health teams with contact tracing for the first six days of the Christmas holidays. This means that we may need to contact you during this period by text if your child is identified as a contact of a positive case. Please note the following:

- For the first 6 days after teaching ends, if a pupil tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms within 48 hours of being in school, the school is asked to assist in identifying close contacts and advising self-isolation, as the individual may have been infectious whilst in school.
- If your child develops symptoms of Covid 19, please ensure they are tested promptly and, if they receive a positive result, communicate this immediately to us via the following email address: holidaycovid19information@haggerston.hackney.sch.uk
- Where a pupil tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, the school should not be contacted. Parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace.
- School staff are not asked to remain on-call or conduct any contact tracing more than 6 days after the final day of teaching. Where a school's last teaching day is on Thursday 17 December, there should be no pupil contact tracing required beyond Wednesday 23 December.

In view of this, the Department for Education has recommended that schools make adjustments to the end of term, bringing forward the final day of onsite teaching to Thursday 17th December to minimise risks of transmission at this late stage of the term with Christmas only a few days away. Friday 18th December is usually a half teaching day. This year, we will be delivering online learning only for all students on this date. This will include the usual Celebration Assembly that will be delivered remotely, as well as some online home learning which students can begin working through so that they have less work to complete over the holidays. I apologise for the late notice of this request and appreciate it may present childcare challenges for some families; however, we were only informed of this change by the DfE yesterday. We do feel this is the right course of action to reduce the risk of infection when families get together from the 23rd onwards.

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Headteacher Ms Ciara Emmerson
Chair of Governors Wendy Mason



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One further adjustment to the calendar is that there will be an additional INSET day in January, at the start of the Spring Term. We had already planned for Monday 4th January to be an INSET day but will now also use Tuesday 5th January for staff training. Governors have agreed to this 'additional' date because of the exceptional circumstances we find ourselves in. The pandemic has meant that a significant amount of meeting and training time has been taken up with operational arrangements, reducing the time we have had to complete vital training on teaching and learning which would normally have been done throughout the Autumn Term. Teaching practice is affected significantly by restrictions in the classroom, such as no circulation, and we need to work with staff to develop alternative teaching approaches, which support student learning and progression. We also need to ensure our online learning provision is as effective as it can be and that all staff are confident in the delivery of 'live lessons'. Following lockdown, we have been working hard to adapt the curriculum to address gaps in students' knowledge but this work requires time as subject teams to agree adjustments and develop new resources. One other benefit of placing the two days together at this point in the term is that it will give a slightly longer window between Christmas, New Year and the return to school, allowing for more positive cases to be identified before students return and hopefully reducing the risk of transmission in school at the beginning of term. This will only be effective if students are not mixing outside of their households in the second week of the holidays.

End of Term Reports:

Next week, you will receive communication about your child's first DPR report of the academic year. These will be available to view and download online. We are very proud of how students have adapted to changes, worked hard to catch up missed learning and taken a serious and studious approach to their assessments. Nevertheless, we recognise that it will take time for knowledge gaps to be filled, especially when some students have had further disruption to their learning this term. Please do spend some time this holiday talking to your child about their progress in each of their subjects and making sure your child has everything they need for home learning. In particular: a quiet space to work, access to ICT and all the relevant logins for the DPR and RM Unify. We can support with IT equipment for families who do not have these resources currently. Please email your child's Head of Year if you would like any support with this.

Enrichment:

I am delighted to inform you that our normal enrichment programme for Year 7 and 8 will resume in January, allowing students to elect into their chosen activity for the term. I hope this will be the first of many announcements in 2021 which mark a return to normality at Haggerston. Many of us are missing the annual school production which usually signals the start of Christmas festivities but I know these things will be back stronger than ever in 2021. You will also receive an online copy of this term's 'Haggerston Recorder'; a reminder of all the fantastic things which have still been achieved this term, in spite of challenges. I am particularly proud of the different fundraising activities that have taken place and our students' enthusiasm and energy for helping good causes. It speaks volumes about their 'Character' and 'Community Spirit', and exemplifies 'The Haggerston Way'. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did.

Finally, I would like to end with a thank you to staff for all their hard work this term, particularly in covering for colleagues who were off sick or isolating and for managing the significant additional workload presented by the pandemic. I am also grateful to students who have gracefully adapted to changes and disruption to their

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learning. They have had to accept higher than normal staff absence and supply teachers. Many of the aspects of school life students enjoy the most, such as sports fixtures, productions, assemblies and trips have not been running in the same way, yet the vast majority of students have been appreciative, cooperative and responsible in adapting to change. I will end with a big thank you to parents also. We have really appreciated the positive emails and cards when times were particularly difficult and are grateful for the diligent way parents have communicated with us about their child's health or proactively worked with us to resolve any difficulties with online learning. This collaboration is really important for our students and makes me feel very proud to be a part of this school community. Have a healthy and happy holiday when it comes.

Kind regards



Ciara Emmerson
Headteacher

Upcoming Dates for Your Diary:

Event	Date	Time
Christmas Lunch	Wednesday 16th December 2020	
Final day in school	Thursday 17th December 2020	
Online Learning Day for all Year Groups	Friday 18th December 2020	8.40-12.45
INSET Day	Monday 4th January 2021	
INSET Day	Tuesday 5th January 2021	
Students return for Spring Term	Wednesday 6th January 2021	

Parent Evening Dates - these will be online and will run from 4-7pm.

Year 11	Tuesday 12th January 2021
6th Form	Tuesday 26th January 2021
Year 9	Tuesday 23rd February 2021
Year 7	Tuesday 23rd March 2021
Year 8	Tuesday 27th April 2021
Year 10	Tuesday 4th May 2021

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