



Heathcote School & Science College

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Headteacher: Emma Hillman NPQH, MSc, MA



Dear Parent/Carer,



I hope you are enjoying some family time and you manage to have some time off together. I wanted to update you with a few things after the first half of term. **Please do read this letter carefully to ensure you are up to date with school events and issues.**



Communication

We hope to start a weekly parent/carers briefing in the next half of term which is a response to your feedback and will provide one place for information about events and news. This will go out on Parent Mail and be on the school website.



Staffing

We only lose one member of staff this half term. Mark Harris, our Site Services Manager for the Sixth form and Humanities buildings, is heading to a new school and the Assistant Officer has been successful in becoming the new Manager. Martin Cox has worked at the school for a long time and we are delighted with the appointment and are now advertising to replace his post. We wish Mark all the best.



At Easter, Mr Seymour, Head of PE will be leaving to go to another school and will be replaced by Mr French. We wish him luck and are delighted to welcome Mr French who comes with an excellent reputation and I am sure sport will go from strength to strength. There have been some great victories this half term with the Year 7 and Year 8 girls' football teams being particularly impressive. The Year 8s came second in the borough and the Year 7 borough champions will be attending the regional final next week.



supporting individual excellence



Ms Gooden will begin her post as head of Languages after Easter and we wish her all the best. We are delighted to have her as we have managed for one term without a Head of Department due to Ms Senior's move. She is a very experienced Head of Languages who has very impressive results at her current school.



We have also appointed Mr Mardadi to join the English department in July. He trained with us and we were so impressed with him that we offered him a chance to apply for a full time role with us which he did and was successful in this application.

Challenge Week

We have our second Challenge Week during the first week back (and second week too for Year 11 and 13). As before, this is a mixture of assessment and enrichment with a trip for most pupils at the end of the event and timetables have been sent out. I hope your child has been revising in advance of these assessments. We have taken all your feedback on board re the reports and sharing of information via these and will be trialling some changes for the next reports in April.



Safeguarding

Just before half term, we received this from the Waltham Forest Safeguarding Team and I am providing you with this information to help keep you and your family safe but I have no further details at this time.

I am writing to advise you of an incident that took place near a school in Leyton on Wednesday evening. The incident involved the attempted abduction of a child whilst in the care of their parent on their way home from school. The police are fully aware of the situation and are raising awareness with local neighbourhood policing teams.

Can you ask staff and parents/carers to be extra vigilant and remind parents/carers to ensure their child understands the importance of keeping themselves safe by adhering to their directions when out in the local area, especially during the school holiday periods.

In addition, a parent reported to us that their child was approached by an adult male wearing a Nike tracksuit who offered to take him to the shops to buy him 'what he wanted'. This has been reported to the Police and they are aware of the description and details. Again, please be vigilant and ensure your children know what to do if they are approached in the street. I have attached a useful information leaflet to support with these conversations.

Finance

Please ensure you regularly check Parent Mail to ensure you have paid for all outstanding items. As I have explained in previous letters, this is especially important at the end of the financial year and in this financial climate.

Catering

I will be sending further details about some increases in the cost of food that are being planned for the future by Waltham Forest Catering. In addition, pupils will not be allowed to go overdrawn to buy food from the start of the Summer Term. We will, of course, never leave children unable to eat and we will make alternative arrangements if there is no money on the account. We will follow this up with a meeting with you to discuss options and whether we can support you further if this is the case.

On another note, the Waltham Forest Catering Team scored another 5 in an environmental health inspection in the last week of half term which we are delighted about.

Uniform Issues

We have a strict uniform policy that we need your support in enforcing. Please ensure that your child does not bring a hoodie to school or wear shoes or shoe-style trainers that are not leather or leather look. Also, can we remind you that pupils can only wear one small piercing in each ear. No other piercings are allowed. This is causing conflict with staff and pupils. All new parents sign a form to say that you will support our uniform policy and specifically 'ensure our child wears the correct school uniform and follow the earring and nail rules'. These rules are the same in all secondary schools in the borough and we would ask that you are firm about these expectations.

Banned Items

Currently some pupils are also choosing to bring in banned items. Banned items that are being regularly seen are:

- Phones
- Headphones
- Hoodies
- Fizzy drinks and sweets

Please note that after half term if these items are seen they will be confiscated as per the Behaviour Policy. Phones, earphones and hoodies will be taken until the end of the day and can be collected from 717 (Ms Warden) at 3pm. Fizzy drinks and sweets will be disposed of. Refusal to hand over banned items will result in the IEU. Persistent breach of this will result in further actions.

To support with the phone rules, please can I ask that you as parents/carers not to call or text your child during the school day. If there is an emergency, please contact reception and we will get your child to call you. If there are any issues that we need to be aware of, please let us know so we can make arrangements to support.

We have also noted that some pupils are calling parents to collect them when they feel sick or unwell. Please note this is not protocol and can cause safeguarding issues. We expect pupils to be seen at the medical room if they are feeling unwell where we have trained First Aid staff. They will then observe and monitor your child. If they deem that he/she is unwell, we will contact you to collect them.

Attendance

Attendance is a major priority for us as a school and currently it is not as good as we want it. We aim for pupils to have 95% attendance rate this is a nationally recognised standard that gives pupils the best chance of achieving. To support with this, please can we remind you of the following:

- Contact the school via phone or parent mail on the first day of absence
- Provide medical evidence for any appointments attended or days of sickness.
- Try to make all appointments early morning or late afternoon to reduce the amount of time missed from school
- Return to school after an appointment
- If your child feels unwell, see if your child can attempt a half day at school at least.
- Do not take holiday in term time. (You will be fined for this).

Please note for us to authorise the absence we will require medical proof, this does not need to be doctors note, it can be an appointment card or a picture of the medication that your child is taking. If your child's attendance drops below 93% and we do not receive any evidence for further absences, they will be marked as unauthorised. 12 or more unauthorised absences could result in a fine or action being taken by our EWO.

Mural Opening Event

These are now complete - Mik Richardson, the artist, and the pupils have worked so hard to bring art and colour to the school. They look fantastic and there will be an 'opening' event on March 12th. Further details to follow. Here is an example of the last mural which was put up this half term and gives a very clear and poignant message to all of us.



I wish you all the best for the rest of the holiday and look forward to welcoming all pupils back in full school uniform at normal time on Monday 24th February. We will be checking uniform on the gate and am sure standards will be as high as ever. Please don't forget Monday 9th March is an INSET day and also that the term dates for next year are on the website. I wish everyone luck for next week.

All the best

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Emma Hillman'.

Emma Hillman

Headteacher