



Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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Dear Parents / Carers,

I must start by congratulating all members of the school community for making this half term such a success. There have been many challenges for us all, but on my frequent walks around the school I have daily confirmation that it is right that we are all here. Every day I see pupils engaged with their learning and benefiting from being back with their teachers and peers. It is very understandable that pupils, parents and carers may have some anxieties about school, for a range of reasons, but the benefits of attending school are abundantly clear. I am sure that you will appreciate that school staff may also have their own worries and concerns about coming into work and I hope that you will join me in thanking them for showing such dedication over recent weeks and for maintaining such a high standard of educational provision.

Parents/carers should be aware that we have always sought to provide the best possible educational experience within the guidance provided by the government, with paramount importance given to following health and safety advice. We are working in a unique set of circumstances, with ever-changing (and at times contradictory) guidance, and often unhelpful and misleading media attention given to schools. This is not a situation that can ever be resolved to the satisfaction of everybody and I would like to give my thanks to those parents/carers who have contacted the school to express their appreciation and indeed to offer their congratulations for what we have been doing. We are very aware that the impact of this pandemic has affected some of our families (both pupils and staff) very deeply and so these messages of support are hugely welcome and have helped maintain morale at this difficult time. Please note that we have made some minor adjustments to our Risk Assessment in the light of new government guidance and this is available to view on our website.

Regrettably we have had a very small number of instances where parents/carers have not communicated appropriately with school staff, showing rudeness and discourtesy. We always take concerns or complaints seriously, whether legitimate or not, but these must be raised in the appropriate way and should never be done in a manner that makes our staff feel uncomfortable. The Governing Body have made it clear that they will not tolerate any form of aggressive or intimidating behaviour towards staff.

Self-isolation

The rules for self-isolation are very clear. If a pupil presents with any symptoms of Covid-19 (fever/temperature, persistent cough, loss of sense of taste/smell) then **they must not attend school and must isolate for 10 days**. All members of their household must also isolate for 14 days from when symptoms first presented. Anyone with symptoms should request a Covid-19 test and can return to school if the test is negative. If a pupil receives a positive test then the school must be contacted immediately and we will consult with local Public Health regarding further measures that may need to take place at school. **If any member of a pupil's household presents with Covid-19 symptoms then the whole household must isolate for 14 days (or until a negative test result is received by the person with symptoms)**. Please be assured that pupils who are unable to attend due to self-isolation will not have this counted against them for their attendance record.

"This is an OUTSTANDING school" - Ofsted 2016



Online behaviour

One area of concern that has increasingly arisen recently is that of pupils' online behaviour. As a result of the pandemic, we are all relying on the internet more and more and as a school we are encouraging our pupils to make use of Google Classroom to support their academic progress. Some of our pupils are clearly struggling with managing the boundaries of the online world. We are seeing instances of pupils staying up very late messaging each other using social media, and in some cases emailing staff late at night. As a school we recommend to our staff that they do not send or respond to work emails outside standard work hours as this is important for staff wellbeing. We would strongly encourage parents/carers to put in place controls to prevent their children from accessing social media for extended periods, particularly late at night. It is very reasonable, and in fact commonplace, for parents to remove all devices after a cut off time each night. It is also recommended that parents/carers monitor social media and ask to see their child's account regularly. We will sanction pupils for inappropriate use of social media and/or 'cyberbullying', including reporting incidents to the police where appropriate. Although such extreme cases are rare, they could usually have been avoided had pupils known that parents/carers would check their posts. The latest HfL Online Safety Newsletter gives some very helpful advice in this area: [Online News](#)

Extra-Curricular Activities / Enrichment Programme

Our enrichment programme has been a great success this half term with hundreds of pupils accessing the clubs and activities on offer. All clubs operate in line with our recent risk assessment. Enrichment clubs will either be for specific year groups bubbles or for a small number of regular attendees. All attendance at enrichment clubs will be recorded centrally to help with track and trace if appropriate and will be rewarded by House Points. Please see the enrichment pages of our website to view the full programme of activities. Special congratulations must go to 7 Seacole who as a form have attended more enrichment clubs than anyone else this term and to Hansini Balla in 8 Franklin who has attended more enrichment clubs than anyone else in the school!

House points

The House competition is already hotting up with pupils winning House Points for positive behaviour such as attending enrichment clubs, 100% attendance, excellent academic work and effort and winning House competitions. Pupils who represent the school will also receive five House Points. Pupils can also lose House Points for negative behaviour such as homework referrals, lateness to school and detentions. Congratulations to the following pupils who have gained the highest number of House Points so far this year:

1st	Lily-Jade Tennyson	7Pa	94
2nd	Mya Lambert	7Ha	90
3rd	Olivia Hoy	7Pa	87

Also congratulations to these pupils who have gained the highest number of points for their Houses:

Austen	Libby Porter	8Au	82
Franklin	Emily Parry	8Fr	77

Hadid	Mya Lambert	7Ha	90
Parr	Lily-Jade Tennyson	7Pa	94
Seacole	Pritiga Juvanethan	7Se	86

Free School Meals

We encourage every parent and carer who thinks that their child might be eligible for Free School Meals to contact HCC. There are significant advantages to receiving free school meals in that once on the list, pupils may receive assistance in paying for school trips, qualify for a bursary to help towards their Sixth Form studies and then meet the criteria for a grant towards university education. Pupils receiving free school meals have the value of the main meal (currently £2.40) automatically deducted from the cost of purchases made at lunchtime. This ensures that confidentiality is maintained. Further information can be found on www.hertsdirect.org/freeschoolmeals

Drop-off zone/collection of pupils

A reminder that parents should not use the drop off zone to collect pupils at the end of the school day. The gate into school may sometimes be open to allow Reg's Coach to enter or for parents/cares collecting pupils with mobility issues, however it should not be used by other parents as this blocks access. Please continue to avoid using the area of Woods Avenue immediately outside school for pick up. There are local car parks in Hatfield Town Centre and quieter streets a short walk from school that will avoid causing congestion outside the school, which is not only inconvenient but potentially dangerous. We would also ask that you show consideration for local residents and not block local roads, in particular Oaklands Wood cul de sac which is for residents only parking.

Uniform/masks

Thank you for your support with providing appropriate winter uniform. The pupils continue to look smart and hopefully have enough layers to stay warm despite our well-ventilated buildings. We are working with our facilities management company to ensure that we can maintain comfortable temperatures as winter sets in, whilst maintaining good ventilation. It is now extremely rare that we have to remind pupils to wear a mask in corridors and indoor public areas. However, we are still having to give out disposable masks each day so please do try to make sure that your child has a supply of masks, with perhaps some spares kept in their locker for emergencies.

Please email the school with any response to this newsletter or any subsequent query as your opinions and views are highly valued. I am not always able to respond personally to every piece of feedback but assure you that all points of view are noted and frequently acted upon. Please also continue to follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, links to which can be found on our website. Once again, thank you for your support and please pass on congratulations to your child. Overall attendance so far this term is 94.6% which is significantly above the national average and demonstrates the level of commitment our pupils are showing.

Wishing you and your families and restful half term.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A Wood
Headteacher