

Dear Hollygirt Parents,

Is it really a year? The time has flown!

In my newsletter last week, I mentioned that the upcoming Holly Leaves magazine details just a few of the initiatives and successes of the school year and there really are so many, not least our recent inspection report.

I said that I would write separately to let you know some of the changes for the coming year. Last Friday, I held an assembly in the Senior School to talk to our lovely students about these changes too.

Firstly, the timings of the day for Senior School have changed – school starts at 8.40am for Seniors and Juniors remains the same at 8.45am. Senior lunch will be later (not a problem because students can have toast in the morning and the ever-popular vegan sausage rolls at breaktime). There is still the same number of lessons – the same amount of teaching and learning- just arranged differently. The junior school lunchtime remains the same and this means that from Y3 upwards, juniors will be able to have lunch in the senior school dining / assembly hall.

Our numbers are growing (we still guarantee the small class size) but we have had to order some new chairs and tables for the dining hall and with the new blinds that are being fitted over the summer (and of course, the new toilets in the senior school), we should be looking fairly smart for September.

We introduced a **new PE kit** in January and have said that as long as the students are wearing the new PE kit from September and because it is so smart, there is no need to change on PE days -PE kit can simply be worn on PE days; it saves changing and is practical and warm. White or black trainers are fine.

We introduced **trousers** this year and knee-length grey shorts for girls this summer (these could be worn with black tights in the winter?) All trousers should be grey please and shoes not trainers worn on non-PE days. In essence, we are trying to work with you and also be mindful and respectful of our students' wishes. I wanted to reduce the formal request part of the uniform but maintain a smart look! I know the blazer continues to be an expensive item; it does make us distinct. I am open to conversations regarding this item. Would you believe me that I am actually telling children to take it off in the warm weather!

From September, we have increased the pastoral time given to students by 5 minutes every day (just reducing registration time slightly; children MUST be in school at the latest 8.40 am) and by giving an extra session with form teachers every fortnight instead of assembly. We have increased the number of permanent form tutors and come away from the tutor mentor system. Your child's form tutor is the only tutor (there is a Deputy form tutor for any occasional days when staff are absent) and the form tutor is the main go-to point for anything that is initially a pastoral matter. The form tutors are supported by the Heads of Key Stages (KS3 Ms Hook and KS4 Ms Brimblecombe).

We are increasing the wrap around care – more details to follow for September 2022. We are also starting to look carefully at our extra-curricular provision (especially seniors) and hope for lots more exciting ideas after school. However, senior homework club remains a staple and now you can even have tea here either during or afterwards in after school club.

Y10 will be getting lockers as we move their registration rooms over to the main senior school building which saves a lot of time in the mornings and they will need a padlock of their choosing.

We are starting a scholars' programme next year for all of our academic scholars in all years -more of this anon. There will be some additional scholarships in the junior school. We are proposing two Art scholarships in Y5 which will give some specialist lessons here. Furthermore, we will be looking to Y7 and Y10 for some musical talent / enterprise / commitment which may be rewarded with music lessons.

Accompanying this letter are Music registration forms and reading lists for Y3 upwards. The holidays are long and phone time needs breaking up with **purposeful endeavour!** The reading lists can be moved up and down between year groups -they are not set in stone. I've also included a top-tips for parents on reading with your children. If your child is interested in taking music lessons please complete the attached form by 1st September (only new requests required – existing lessons will remain)

As a Senior Leadership Team, we are looking at our parent communications and trying to streamline current systems – we may well ask you a few questions around this. We have many exciting plans for next year including a revitalised extra-curricular provision; whole school literacy focus; developing our in-house staff talent; using the research in cognitive science to further benefit our students and working with our trustees to consider the next few year's strategy as a school.

Onward and Upward: From the bottom end, we have increased Nursery free hours from 15 to 30 - so please do tell your friends with little ones. We are also offering some 'learning scaffolding' sessions for parents who choose to stay with us from Nursery to Reception. **At the top end, the trustees have approved a Sixth Form to start in 2023.** This is subject to confirmation from the DfE 'material change in status' request that we have submitted. We are so thrilled with this news.

Thank you for my warm welcome and your support over the year; your children are polite, humorous and engaging and I have loved getting to know each and every one of them. My thanks to my Senior Leadership Team, the Hollygirt staff and trustees who have made me feel so welcome and who work so hard for the school. Hollygirt is a truly unique place and I am very privileged to lead this community.

Enjoy your children and the family time. Rest; recharge and get ready for Hollygirt 2022-2023!

All good wishes,

Helen Barsham

Open Morning is compulsory attendance for all students on 17th September (Morning)

Prize giving is earlier this year Sept 21st 7-8.15 pm

Southwell Ploughing Show 24th September – come along and visit for a lovely day out.