



THE HOLMEWOOD SCHOOL



**National
Autistic
Society**

**Accredited
Advanced
2020**



Newsletter

Friday 24th June 2022

Dear Families,

It's been another busy week at The Holmewood School but one that comes with the conclusion and relief of the last exam! I want to say a very well done to all our KS4 and Sixth Form students who have sat exams this season. I have been very impressed with your resilience, your perseverance, and your positive attitudes....even when deep down you were anxious or worried.

I'm also very grateful to our team of staff who have supported students. Special thanks go to Ms Aka, our exams officer, all the invigilators, our admin team (especially Mr Hardwick), and the clas staff and therapists who have given emotional support to get through the period. Thank you very much to all of you.

Now that exams are over, I hope the upper school students can focus on looking forward to some of the community and social events we have planned.

At the Lower School life has continued as normal. I thoroughly enjoyed the TED Talks on Friday last week and was astounded by the levels of confidence in our students. This round, we had several younger students talk for the first time and they did so well.

Likewise, the older and more experienced students were excellent role models about how to engage an audience. Very well done to all.

This week I've also loved hearing from the speech and language therapists about progress in relation to some young people's understanding of autism and understanding

of self. This work is so important in ensuring our students grow up to be happy, confident young adults.

In last week's newsletter, I outlined the changes in leadership coming up to cover my maternity leave. With just a few more weeks to go, please know that I'm happy to answer any questions that parents may have.

On the subject of changes, I also need to inform you that both Ms Mayuri (our OT) and Ms Rattan (our OT Assistant) will be leaving us at the end of term. Ms Bruce (OT) and Ms Moeller (OT Assistant) will remain consistent in their roles and we will hopefully be able to confirm a new OT to join the team in due course. We wish Ms Mayuri and Ms Rattan all the best. After nearly ten years at Holmewood they will both be greatly missed.

Best wishes to you all for a happy and relaxing weekend.

Lisa Camilleri

Executive Head Teacher

Dates For Your Diary

- Tues 28th June - Sports Day at Dwight Fields (9am - 12.30pm)
- Tues 5th July - Pride Holmewood celebrations at the Upper School (1.15pm - 3pm)
- Tues 12th July - Student of the year ceremony at the Lower School
- Wednesday 13th July - Summer fayre at both sites in the afternoon
- Thurs 14th July - End of term
- Fri 15th July - Inset day

Autumn term student return date: Wednesday 7th September 2022

After Exams

We know that our young people are bright and have many areas of strength when it comes to the academic curriculum. This is something we always discuss with parents at admission because while we always want our students to succeed and exceed expectations, we have to keep in mind the barriers to learning that are in the way.

I would say for our students (and many across the country), anxiety is the main barrier. Neurodiverse people often rely on structure and routine to help them cope in an unpredictable world, but exams pose a new challenge. Exams are unpredictable, they require a change in routine and the stakes are high.

No matter what we say to the young people about GCSE results, that they can re-sit, that there are other avenues of achievement and so on, they still feel acute pressure. Our young people also feel the added pressure of comparing themselves to their mainstream

peers. They may want to follow the same trajectory as their friends in other schools, and they may have expectations of grades (and the number of GCSEs possible in a year) that come from an unrealistic mainstream expectation.

Moreover, they may feel pressure to perform in their special interest subjects. However, as we have seen in years past, our young people do not always perform as expected under exam conditions.

The linear exam process just isn't ideal for all of our students but unfortunately we cannot change how grades are awarded in this country. What we can do is support students to do their best, all the while reminding them that there is more than one road to success.

I want to thank parents for their dedicated support of the students taking exams. I know it has been tiring and stressful, but I am so proud of how far they have come and the resilience they have shown.

While many mainstream students may be taking leave, we have a full programme of after exam activities in place starting today and taking us right up to the summer holidays. With the additional SEND needs of our students we are aware that this routine will support them to have a more regulated summer holiday.

Activities will focus on project work, life skills and social interaction and while their work won't all go towards an exam, I'm sure you'll agree it's important work nonetheless.

Have a lovely weekend.

Ms B Young

Head of Upper School

Sharing Best Practice

Last Thursday, Miss Wiltshire and I were invited to give a lecture at The Institute of Education, UCL.

The course leaders of the PGCE Psychology and Sociology students recognised that their student teachers had not been exposed to enough information relating to specialist education in general but more specifically good autism practice.

With this in mind, Miss Wiltshire and I delivered two sessions to fifty student teachers on how to navigate EHCP outcomes and provision within the classroom and how to develop supportive strategies to support autistic children and young people in mainstream settings.

We have received wonderful feedback from the students and course leaders and it was a real privilege to have the opportunity to share our knowledge and experiences.

Coming from a mainstream background myself, I had little to no training in this field

before joining Holmewood. We are hoping by helping others understand how to adapt and embed EHCP targets in the classroom as well as support others to gain a better understanding of autism that this will, in turn, have a positive impact on the lives of young people.

We were moved by the student teachers' enthusiasm to be change makers, inspirational teachers and positive role models.

I am thankful to work in a school that encourages this important work and acknowledges the positive difference it can make. I was extremely grateful too, to Miss Wiltshire, our Autism specialist Lead. She was kind enough to stay behind during lunch and answer all the questions the student teachers had.

More importantly, I wish to thank you, as parents, for trusting us to educate and nurture your children. It is them who have given me the confidence to be an advocate.

Ms Lyons

Assistant Head



Welcome from District Class!

In English, we have been looking at poetry about the sea. We have been studying The Titanic in preparation for writing an independent poem on this topic next week.

In PE, we have been practising the skills for Sports Day on the 28th June. We have looked at throwing javelin, discus and shot put. Two weeks ago, we were supposed to go to Islington Boat Club, but it is currently closed so we couldn't go. Mr. Rose has planned a special trip to go bowling instead on the 30th June.

In Maths, we have been learning about percentages, and converting them to fractions and decimals. We have also been looking at solving worded problems.

We have our final Forest School session for this year today, as we have a class trip to the ice-cream farm next Friday.

In Drama, we have been learning about how to politely and positively change the direction of where the scene is going. We have also been thinking about how to work in groups, and give positive feedback to others on their work.

In Science, we are continuing to look at animals, particularly in terms of inheritance and evolution. We have been thinking about the different theories of evolution, and how animals have adapted to different environments over generations.

Ms Lutman

District Line Teacher



Dear Parents,

Exams have finally come to an end and all of our students have done really well. Their maturity, resilience and ability to cope with various stressful situations are admiring and we could not be more proud!

In an attempt to release their exams stress a group of students in our class have come up with the idea of a Water Cooling Event. We thought the idea was genius and Mr Brown and Miss Johnson took the lead and organised it as a whole upper school event. It took place last Friday in a dodgeball style water fight and was an excellent opportunity to not only to distress but also to cope with the 33 degrees weather. Students and staff had so much fun!

We are now looking forward to a busy last few weeks filled with lots of fun activities. We have a Sports Day followed by Go Ape and our Ninja Warrior reward trip.

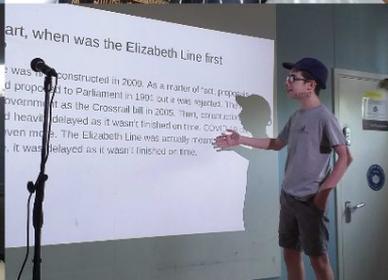
Timetables are updated with picnics, trips to Camden and Highgate Cemetery and social time outside the classroom.

Well done again to all of our students taking the exams and we wish a lovely weekend!

Northern Class Team

The Holmewood Gallery



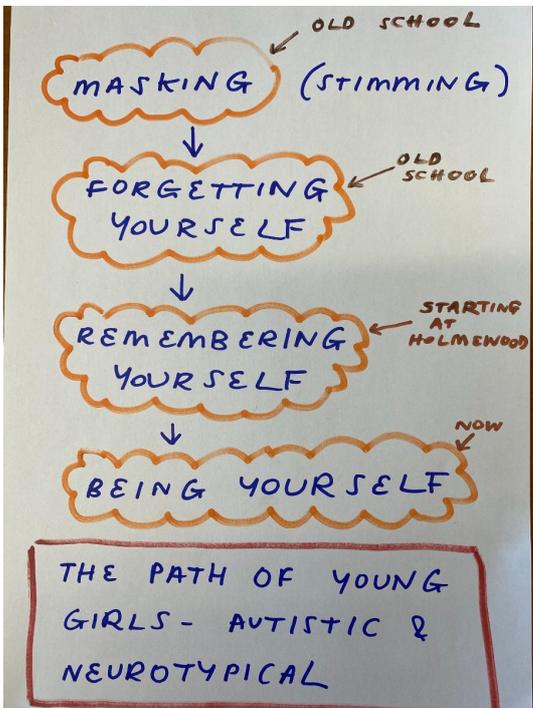


Artists of the week:
Layla M & Kevin (16th June 2022)











Designated Team For Child Protection And Safeguarding

If you are a student and have been harmed, or are at risk of harm, these are the people who can help. You can also talk to us if you are worried that another student is at risk of harm.

Lower School			
			
Ms D'Silva (Assistant Head and Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer for Lower School, Level 3)	Ms Lempaszek (Head of Welfare & Behaviour, Deputy DSO for Lower School, Level 3)	Mr Gibbs (Humanities & PSHE Teacher, Deputy DSO for Lower School, Level 3)	Ms Camilleri (Executive Head, CEOP Ambassador and Deputy DSO, Level 3)
Upper School			
			
Mr Lamb (Deputy Head and Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer for Upper School, Level 3)	Ms Young (Head of School and Deputy DSO, Level 3)	Ms Young (Assistant Head and Deputy DSO, Level 3)	Ms Camilleri (Executive Head, CEOP Ambassador and Deputy DSO, Level 3)

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