

The Harefield Academy

Achievement through Active Learning

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Dear Parents/Carers,

As we draw towards the end of a long term, I am writing to thank you for your support in a period of continued challenge aligned to the pandemic, and to share details of our end of term arrangement as we all look forward to the Christmas period.

We have continued to see students' learning affected by both their own and indeed staff absence. This is always a difficult time of year in schools with the usual array of winter illnesses, but particularly so when we are contending with enforced absence through Covid. We know that our students and staff are often very diligent and resilient in coming to school when they don't feel 100%, but unfortunately the isolation requirements of Covid have meant that we have been significantly impacted by higher absence rates, even where members of the community feel able to continue attending. I would therefore like to thank you for ensuring regular testing has taken place. Whilst we have been impacted by higher rates of absence, we have thankfully not experienced the significant outbreaks of many schools where it has become a challenge to remain open. We have, however, had to occasionally merge classes and have had a higher than desirable number of cover lessons in recent weeks. Again, I thank you for your patience and understanding in this matter which we are keeping a close eye on and working hard to ensure minimises impact on student's education. Please may I remind you of the importance of logging test results, including negative ones. Students should be able to do this themselves and it is helpful in terms of infection control to get in the habit of doing this after each test. This supports Public Health England to effectively monitor changes in local trends.

In addition to the impact of increased absence in schools due to Covid, we are also still in a period of flux regarding final exam arrangements for Years 11 and 13. Mrs Timmins has been communicating with Parents/Carers regarding contingency arrangements as these emerge from the exam boards. We hope very much that there will be no further changes and again thank those families with children in exam years, for their support in ensuring effective engagement in all assessment activities such that students can demonstrate the very best of themselves despite the known interruptions to their learning during the last 2 years.

We hope very much that you are all looking forward to the Christmas break, having not had the usual freedoms to celebrate last year that are ordinarily associated with the festive season. We would like students to enjoy the build up and as such have planned a **Christmas lunch and Christmas Jumper Day on Friday 10th December.**

Students will be able to wear Christmas jumpers as part of a mufti day and are asked to bring a £1 donation which will be split between Save the Children and STARS fundraising. Students will be able to enjoy a Christmas lunch slot which can be paid for in the usual way by ensuring their Parent Pay account has lunch funds topped up.



Our final day of term is **Friday 17th December when we will finish at 1pm**. We return to school on Tuesday 4th January for an INSET day and will be welcoming students back on **Wednesday 5th January for the start of term**, this will be week one of the school timetable.

All that remains is for me to wish you all a happy and healthy run up to the festive break and indeed an enjoyable time with your families over Christmas and the New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Tash Hurtado, Headteacher