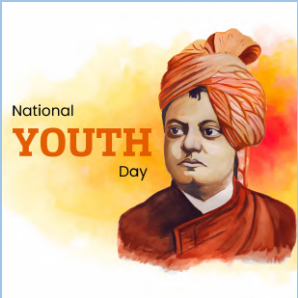


Friday 12th January 2024

School Leadership Messages	Contents										
<p>School Attendance</p> <p>DfE Guidance: 'Is my child too ill for school?'</p> <p>Please read this NHS guidance which the DfE have asked us to share, aimed at supporting parents and carers in decision making regarding absence due to mild illness.</p> <p>Please also refer back to the item included in the Newsletter dated 21.12.23 to remind yourself of the processes around notifying us of non-attendance to school (available online here). Remember that you are able to monitor the attendance of your children (to school and to lessons) via the SIMS app.</p> <p>Returning to school after a break</p> <p>We know that for some students returning to school after a break is difficult. Please speak with your child's form tutor if you need any extra support getting them into school. This guidance from Childline may be useful reading for you.</p> <p>Positive Points Top 10</p> <p>Well done to the following students who are the top 10 positive points scorers this week.</p>	<p>CoHeads' Weekly Roundup</p> <p>Fortismind</p> <p>Parent Information Event</p> <p>LINC Department</p> <p>Departement News & Notices</p> <p>Community Events</p> <p>Safeguarding information</p> <p>Calendar</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>17.01.24</td> <td>Y9 Parents Eve</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18.01.24</td> <td>CoverUp</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24.01.24</td> <td>Y9 Options Evening</td> </tr> <tr> <td>02.02.24</td> <td>Y11 & 13 Mock exams report</td> </tr> </table>	17.01.24	Y9 Parents Eve	18.01.24	CoverUp	24.01.24	Y9 Options Evening	02.02.24	Y11 & 13 Mock exams report		
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Co-Headteachers

Weekly Roundup

The new term has started with a cold snap. April may be the cruellest month (T. Elliot ©) but January definitely feels the coldest. While the Met Office is not forecasting snow for next week in London, we will be watching the weather closely as we know that Muswell Hill can sometimes have its own weather system. During this cold spell it is really important that our students are dressed for the weather. Unless it is snowing or raining, students will be outside at break and lunch times (Y7 do have a lunchtime Common Room and the warm, dry Library is open) and need to dress appropriately. We are still seeing students wearing Crocs, despite the Fortismere ban and some are arriving without coats. There are many demands on family finances at the moment and if any of our families are finding providing warm clothing challenging, please contact the school for a confidential conversation and we'll see if we can help or signpost.

The main message on the front page today relates to attendance. For much of this week, discussions on national school attendance have featured heavily on Radio 4. School attendance has not recovered since Covid and Fortismere, which traditionally had attendance figures significantly above average, has now slipped back. As you are aware, if students are not in school, they are neither learning nor socialising. The Children's Commissioner produced a report in November: '[Missing Children, Missing Grades](#)' that examines the impact of lost learning time. It's quite a technical report with schools as its target audience but Dame Rachel de Souza is clear on the role that parents and carers have and states that: "establishing a strong attendance culture must start with establishing strong relationships with families". At Fortismere, we aim to work constructively with our families to support strong attendance. This will mean supporting and challenging families and also, brokering additional support for students and their families where necessary. However, all this is taking place with a backdrop of declining resources in a tough financial landscape. Nonetheless, we will continue to prioritise attendance and so if that term time ski trip looks tempting...!

Y13 and Y11 have begun their mock exams this week and we have been impressed at the maturity of their attitudes, combined with good timekeeping and organisation. There is no study or exam leave for either year group (attendance!) but when afternoon exams finish before 3.20pm we will let students leave early. There is pastoral support on hand for students who are anxious about the exams and we aim to make the experience as smooth and stress-free as possible for students.

Y9 are beginning the process of choosing their options and there will be a range of opportunities for parents and carers to find information and ask questions of the school. Parentmails have been sent home and all the information is available [here](#) on the website.

It looks like the cold spell will last into next week so we wish all our families a cosy and warm weekend.

Fortismind - Supporting Mental Health at Fortismere

Houseplants for Wellbeing

This week is Houseplant week! Studies have shown that having houseplants not only looks nice and has positive environmental outcomes, but can also be beneficial for our physical and mental health. The **psychological benefits** of having indoor plants have been shown as: improved mood; reduced stress levels; increased work productivity and speed of reaction; improved attention span and even increased pain tolerance. The **physical health benefits** of indoor plants are reported as: reduced blood pressure; reduced fatigue and headaches and decreased post-operative pain. If you are sceptical and want to read more about why plants can help to improve your mood [see this article](#) for details.

So this weekend, if you don't already have one, consider getting yourself a houseplant - it could help improve your mental health, and it will definitely brighten up your space. If you're not sure what houseplant to start with, have [a look here](#) for some ideas and tips.

Miss Jones

Mental Health Champion

Parent Information Event

Supporting SEND & Neurodiversity at Home - Tuesday 23rd January 2024 at 4.00-5.30pm

We are pleased to invite parents and carers to an in person information session delivered by our educational psychologists. The session is aimed at supporting parents and carers of children with SEND at home but all parents are welcome to attend. The session will focus on neurodiversity in young people and will provide an overview, strategies, guidance and advice about what parents can do to help, encourage and reinforce from home. The event will include an hour long presentation and 30 minutes for general questions to the educational psychologists. The session will be held at Fortismere in North Wing and start promptly at 4pm.

If you would like to attend, please email lincadmin@fortismere.org.uk as soon as possible. In order to plan for the event we need to know how many parents are interested in attending. Depending on numbers, places may be limited so please respond promptly.

Mr Fari

LINC Department

Meet the Team...

This week, I'm introducing you to Simisola Obasa, one of LINC's Higher Level Teaching Assistants and our Numeracy Lead.



Why did you want to work in the LINC department? I wanted to be a part of a community that puts inclusivity at the centre of its work, to help children, particularly the most vulnerable, to overcome obstacles (academic or personal) and support them to feel a sense of achievement. This is very rewarding.

What's the best thing about your Job? Being able to facilitate a safe-space for children who may be deemed as 'different' in society; an environment where they feel understood and one that allows them to be a part of the wider community. In my role, I am able to witness students' growth and development throughout their school journey, and to remind them to reach for the stars, no matter what challenges they may face.

What would you like to share with the school community this week? I would like to write about the life of Stephen Hawking, highlighting how his disability was not a barrier to his exceptional achievements

A Brilliant Mind Triumphant Over Physical Limits - Stephen Hawking was a renowned scientist who left an inerasable mark on the scientific community with his ground-breaking contributions to our understanding of the universe. It's not just his intellectual prowess that sets him apart, but also his remarkable ability to prevail in the face of physical limitations. Hawking was born in 1942 and showed an early interest in the mysteries of the cosmos. In 1963 he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a debilitating neurodegenerative disease that progressively weakens the muscles. Doctors predicted a life expectancy of only a few years. Despite the physical challenges posed by ALS, Hawking refused to let his disability define him and continued his studies, earning his Ph.D. in theoretical physics from the University of Cambridge in

1966. Gradually he became confined to a wheelchair and reliant on a speech-generating device but his mind soared. His contributions to the scientific community were revolutionary and earned him international acclaim. His bestselling book "A Brief History of Time", brought complex scientific concepts to a broader audience and showed his ability to communicate profound ideas in a way that transcended the limitations of his physical condition. Hawking's speech-generating device, operated by a cheek muscle, allowed him to express his ideas despite the gradual loss of motor function and maintain an active public life.

Hawking's ability to persist in the face of adversity became an inspiration for people worldwide, especially those with disabilities. Frances Ryan, Guardian journalist wrote *"Hawking won the world's respect and gave disabled people like me hope. Growing up disabled, I had few role models. But this brilliant, witty scientist helped shift the negative stereotypes many face."*

Stephen Hawking's invincible spirit, coupled with his ground-breaking scientific contributions, have inspired generations to reach for the stars, no matter the challenges they may face.. As Hawking himself said *"Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet.....And however difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at. It matters that you don't just give up."*



For further information on neurological conditions - [The Brain Charity](#) and [Children's Neurodisability Service](#)

Library News

Top Tips to Keep your Children Reading



Top Tip No. 13: Know what your child is currently reading. Make sure they are not carrying the same book in their school bag that they've had since September and which is only brought out for the 10 minutes reading at the start of English lessons! (A sure fire way for them to lose interest – by the time they reach the middle of the book, they'll have no idea what the beginning is about!)

CoverUp

The next meeting of our parent/staff reading group is on Thursday 18th January, 7pm in the library. We're looking forward to discussing the parent/child relationships in "The Blue Book of Nebo" by Manon Stefan Ross and "Room" by Emma Donoghue. Do come, all welcome, refreshments available!



Library Closures

The library will be closed from 2pm on Thursday 18th January – apologies for the inconvenience. (It will re-open in time for our reading group mentioned above!) It will also be closing at 4pm on Wednesday 17th January.

Recommended Reads of the Week

Just a reminder that you can search for books, authors, topics, series etc on our library catalogue from home as well as from school. Under the Student tab on the school website click on the [Library link](#) (3rd one down). We've used the app to good effect this year with a couple of very popular book displays – "Planes, Trains and Automobiles" and "Detective Stories". Here are some of the Who Done It books that are flying off our constantly replenished display.



PE & Sports News

Changes to Sports Clubs Timetable

This term due to exams our Sports Clubs Timetable has changed temporarily. There is still lots on offer so please encourage your children to take a look and come along to the variety of sports and activities on offer at lunchtime and after school. The new year is also a great time to start a new sport or activity! New Clubs for the spring term include - Basketball KS3 (Tuesday after school), GCSE Handball (Thursday) and there is still hockey, cricket, dance, gymnastics and basketball KS4/5 on offer. Full details are in the **Sports Club Timetable** attached to this newsletter.

If your child would like to join the **Gymnastics Club** please complete the Gym Club Form which is also attached to this newsletter.

Ms Vangucci

U13 Indoor Cricket Competition

Well done to our Year 7/8 Girls for representing the school so well in the recent Haringey Indoor Cricket Competition. Hollie, Lora, Emily, Felicienne, Carolina, Nicole and Izzy all played really well and made some great runs and catches. We came 3rd overall.

Cricket training is on Thursdays after school and is run by James Parslow, a visiting coach from North Middlesex Cricket Club. Students in all years are welcome to join - please come along



Middlesex Cross Country Championships

Well done to Fortismere's Amy Kirk Year 10, who took part in the Middlesex County Cross Country Championships at Greenford recently. Amy finished in 3rd place in the U15 Girls race and helped her club to win the team trophy. Amy has been selected to represent Middlesex in the Inter-counties Championships to be held at Nottingham in March. Congratulations Amy!



Upcoming Fixtures

Monday 15th January	U15 Girls Cricket Haringey Competition at Fortismere
Wednesday 17th January	Year 8 Indoor Athletics Competition at St Thomas More School

Community Events

Dance for Ukraine 3 Fitness Fundraiser - Saturday 3rd February 11am-1pm Fortismere

Gemma B Fitness is raising money for an East Finchley based organisation called [Driving Aid to Ukraine](#). A group of top-class instructors are putting on a fun two hour fitness fundraiser to be held at Fortismere School on Saturday 3rd February in SW Hall. This is the third event and there will be great music, amazing zumba and a relaxing cool down to finish. Places are limited so book a place now. Full details and booking information can be found [here on their crowdfunder page](#)

Safeguarding at Fortismere

Safeguarding Contacts

If you wish to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Ms Sullivan) about any safeguarding matters or concerns please email safetalk@fortismere.org.uk alternatively contact your child's Head of Year

Year 7	Ms Fox kfox@fortismere.org.uk
Year 8	Ms Jackson kjackson@fortismere.org.uk
Year 9	Ms Cuenca icuenca@fortismere.org.uk
Year 10	Mr Aldridge saldridge@fortismere.org.uk
Year 11	Ms Boot aboot@fortismere.org.uk