



Friday, 17 December 2021

## End of Term Message from the Head of School

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we draw the first term to a close, I am delighted to report that we have experienced an exceptional term at Toot Hill School, following an academic year filled with so much uncertainty and disruption.

It is with great relief that we have not yet enacted our contingency plans with regards to Covid-19, having not experienced a huge increase in positive cases at any one time. Long may this continue! This has enabled our school to operate in its usual manner. Undoubtedly, families have continued to be affected by the pandemic and we thank you for your resilience and support during what is still a difficult time for all. I would like to stress that the school still maintains its intense in-day cleaning and after-school deep cleaning schedules as well as encourages all students and staff to take twice-weekly lateral flow tests. We ask, in accordance with government guidance, that students continue to take these tests over the Christmas break.

You have already been sent the details regarding our asymptomatic testing schedule for the start of next term. This staggered return is not what any of us wanted but it is important we adhere to government guidelines to prioritise a safe return for all. At the end of this message, I include an appeal from the Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi.

This term has seen the return of so many 'norms' we often took for granted before the pandemic. However, such enrichment opportunities are vital to the development of our students so they become truly fulfilled and well-rounded individuals who can make a positive contribution to society. Consequently, we have welcomed the full return of Extended Study and I invite students to consider new activities when returning to school in January. There will continue to be a rich plethora of opportunities for our students on offer, be it in academia, performing arts and sport.

Only recently, Year seven students Oscar and William, along with year eight pupils Lewis and Ben, competed in the English Schools' Swimming Association (ESSA) event at the London Aquatic Centre on Saturday. The world-class venue at the Olympic Park hosted swimming at the London 2012 Olympic Games. Our team won heat two of the 4x50m medley, with Lewis (backstroke), Ben (breaststroke), Oscar (butterfly) and William (freestyle) clocking their personal record time of 2:14:76. An extremely competitive final saw the boys finish fifth in a time of 2:16:51. Lewis in Year 11 has also experienced incredible success in swimming on a national level.

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Executive Head Teacher: **Sandra Paley** BSc (Hons), PGCE, MEd | Head of School: **Christopher Eardley** BSc (Hons), PGCE, PhD

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Following over two years of intensive curriculum development, our key focus as a teaching staff is the successful enactment of our ambitious curriculum through exceptional teaching and learning. After all, a curriculum is worth little if not successfully implemented. It has been delightful to see all of our teaching staff continue to engage in professional learning this term with the clear goal of uplifting learning for all students to even greater heights.

We strongly believe that exceptional student behaviour underpins outstanding learning. Consequently, the start of the term saw a focus on our behavioural routines and standards that once engrained help students develop strong character. I am pleased to report that focusing on the 'why' with regards to learning routines and other protocols has made a profound difference to student behaviour and their understanding of the value of exceptional behaviour. As we continue to narrate the positive and reward great behaviour, I believe we are seeing a marked positive shift in the culture of our school where exceptional behaviour for every single student is the social norm.

We strongly believe that our school uniform plays an integral part in ensuring an exceptional culture exists in our school. I would like to take this opportunity to remind families that every student should come to school wearing a blazer and that hoodies are not allowed in school. Your support in this matter is greatly appreciated so we see a strong and consistent start to next term.

Central to the development of our school is ensuring the voice of all stakeholders is heard. Furthermore, this enables every student, parent, carer, governor and member of staff to feel truly valued as part of our inclusive learning community. Consequently, we have introduced year group prefects and student representatives this year and will soon elect two Head Students. This infrastructure is the first step in our new approach to ensure every student's voice is heard and that they play their part in shaping the direction of our school. We will be looking to increase parent and carer involvement next term so your voice goes way beyond school survey responses.

Finally, I would like to wish you and your families a fantastic Christmas and a happy new year. Our students fully deserve a superb break with loved ones.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Eardley', written in a cursive style.

**Dr C Eardley**  
**Head of School**

## **A Message from Nadhim Zahawi, Secretary of State for Education**

### **Vaccinations and LFD testing**

Your support with the vaccination programme has enabled over 1.25 million 12-15 year olds and over 800,000 16-17 year olds to receive their first dose. In light of rising case rates and the new variant, vaccinating young people and education and childcare staff is more important than ever for keeping them, their friends, family members and teachers as safe as possible. As we approach the winter holidays, take up of the booster jab is also critical for eligible students to protect everyone from serious illness and provide the best defence possible. 12-15 year olds who have not been vaccinated can book an appointment out of school on the National Booking System, and from 20 December those eligible for second doses will be also be able to book.

I ask that:

- All education and childcare staff and eligible students are aware of the latest information on the booster programme and how to book a booster and parents and students are aware of the vaccination offer for students
- All education and childcare staff and students of secondary age and above continue to test, and importantly report those test results, twice-weekly
- Visitors to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test before attending a school or college event
- FE students and all education staff to self-test twice a week and test at home either the evening or morning before they return to their education setting in January before continuing with twice-weekly at home testing
- All pupils take one COVID-19 test on-site on return in January and all other staff and eligible students to take one self-test at home either the evening or morning before they return to their education setting in January before continuing with twice-weekly at home testing

### **Daily Testing for contacts of COVID-19**

From 14 December, a new national approach to daily testing for contacts of COVID-19 has been introduced. All adults who are fully vaccinated and children aged 5 to 18 years and 6 months, identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 – whether Omicron or not – should take an LFD test every day for 7 days instead of self-isolating. Children under five years old do not need to take part in daily testing for contacts of COVID-19 and do not need to isolate.

Once notified by Test and Trace as a close contact, all eligible staff, pupils and students are strongly recommended to take a LFD each day for 7 days and report the results through the online reporting system and to their setting. If they test negative, they can continue to attend their education setting. Outside of the education setting, they should continue to follow national guidance. This approach should also be adopted over the Christmas holiday and on return in January.

Once again, I thank you for your support in these efforts, and I hope that you have a restful Christmas break.

The Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP  
Secretary of State for Education