

Head's Half-Termly Update



Arts & Media School
ISLINGTON

Dear Parents and Carers

We have come to the end of a half-term which has focused explicitly on developing positive routines to support teaching and learning as we start a new academic year. Our students have presented themselves well in their uniform daily and it gives me great pleasure to see them enter the school with smiles on their faces everyday. We are continuing with our arrangements as planned for the next half-term to reflect the safety precautions associated with COVID-19 with some changes which come as a result of reviewing the operation of the school in a timely manner. Hence, after half-term Year 7 and Year 8 will have one lesson a week in the laboratories to facilitate practical lessons. The staggered start and finish times will be in place for the whole year but we now have an [extended KS3 curriculum programme](#) that will complement our provision and extend the school day as you wish. We will also continue with parental consultation by phone for the next half term and review as we progress through the year.

Homework Focus

This term we have seen the launch of our [KS3 and KS4 Homework support](#) sessions. Research suggests that homework supports better outcomes and we have set over 14,000 pieces of homework since September for which 95% have been submitted on time. Please encourage your child to attend these sessions as they are an effective way to support their learning; every time your child attends voluntarily they are entered into a half-termly draw for a £15 Nandos voucher; this half-term our winners are Ruby (Year 11) and Angel (Year 8). There are several other factors that contribute to successful outcomes for students, but the skill of working independently on homework is one of our many strategies for raising achievement.

Blended Learning

Students in Year 7 and Year 8 have been issued with chromebooks this half-term. Our blended learning approach will combine online educational materials and traditional teaching methods to enhance Teaching and Learning at AMSI. We want students to build their digital literacy skills and resilience to enable them to work independently, creatively and be able to collaborate through Google Suite Apps with teachers and peers anywhere and at any time.

Students will be expected to bring their Chromebook to school every day as part of their equipment. They will not necessarily use them for the entire lesson or even in every lesson, but will be used when appropriate to enhance learning in the classroom.

Student Voice

Students have been elected to represent their form class and year groups and we have started to have meetings with the School Council. The School Council consists of 2 students from each form class equating to 10 students per year group and 50 student voices overall representing the entire school. Of these 50 students, 2 from each year group are elected as the school council leaders; these leaders will present to the senior leadership when appropriate and necessary on issues that they have identified as being important for consideration.

Cornerstones Focus

There has been a real push on students' learning, recollecting and reflecting on the cornerstones; this process has involved a quiz which has taken place this term and students have been tested on their knowledge of the school values with immediate results released via the google form.

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Behaviour and Attitudes

We have launched our new achievement and behaviour policy, and are currently in the process of reviewing it. The aim of policy is to put our 4 cornerstones at the heart of our rewards programme for students, and we look forward to the end of term when we will be able to host our end of term rewards assemblies! Student feedback on the new behaviour policy has also been largely positive on the behaviour policy, with students appreciating the clear, stepped approach to sanctions.

We have also had some excellent assemblies on Healthy Relationships delivered by the organisation 'Just As You Are', which is led by an AMSI parent! These assemblies were age appropriate, but covered themes such as healthy relationships and consent - both vital parts of the governments Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum.

Lunch-time Arrangements

This will change after half-term with all students having access to hot and cold meals at the same time; this means that all students will be invited to eat in the canteen and leave the area as soon as they're finished so that other year groups can be accommodated. The KS3/4 staggered lunch breaks will continue but students will no longer have to be confined to movement within specific timings, nor will year groups be on rotation for the cold lunches. Year 7 and Year 11 will be permitted to enter the canteen area first as the priority groups for each sitting.

Reminders

As the winter months approach, I would like to remind you of the importance of regular attendance to school - our target for every student is 97%. We know that there is a direct link between a student's attendance and their outcomes - quite simply, those that attend more, achieve better grades. Therefore, please do not keep your children off school unless they are really too ill to come into school - for instance, if they have a headache, it will most likely pass after a short period - if they are in school, they can continue their learning. If there are issues, please do not hesitate in contacting one of our welfare team.

Finally, I would like to remind you to keep regularly using the Lateral Flow Tests to minimise the disruption that COVID-19 cases will cause, even over the half-term. We know that COVID-19 cases are on the rise, and the cases are most prevalent amongst young people. Therefore, testing is vital to ensure that we are not spreading it unknowingly. If your child tests positive for COVID-19, please do not send them into school, and inform us as soon as possible. You should also book a confirmatory PCR test at the earliest opportunity.

Have an enjoyable half-term break and we look forward to your return on the 1st November 2021 in the usual manner.

Kind regards

Susan Service
Head teacher