

Head's Half-Termly Update

February 2022



Arts & Media School
ISLINGTON

Dear Parents and Carers

The Half-term has flown by very quickly and once again it has been full of many events of note, some of which we will highlight in this update. The school day now operates in a more normal way as students are moving to subject areas and staff are based in their rooms as was the case pre COVID-19. This has been welcomed by all and although we are still managing COVID-19 infections amongst staff and students, it is clear that we are also working hard to ensure that teaching and learning is still our top priority, even during these challenging times.

The first [AMSI News booklet for 2022](#) has been published and I would recommend that you read it to gain further insight into the AMSI community.

AMSI Valentine's Radio Show 2022

I am delighted to say that I took part in this radio show which involved a combination of staff interviews and performances from students. An interesting listen, not just for Valentine's Day but just to make us smile and reflect on how we can entertain each other in unexpected ways.

[AMSI Valentine's Radio Show 2022](#)



Student Voice

We are continually looking at ways to work with our Artists in the Community to build an ambitious programme of artist-led activity at AMSI which has student voice at its heart. Cubitt's Arts led a listening session with our student council to get themes and ideas to work with the artists in our studios. Ideas presented were varied and really interesting e.g. Exploring issues relevant to students like mental health, therapeutic art, expressing emotions through art and amplifying young women's voices. They would also like to learn new skills such as animation, digital art, clay, jewellery, paper mache, filming. These ideas will help to support bids that will be made by Cubitt Arts which will involve our students benefiting exclusively.

Personal Development

Two very important safeguarding assemblies have taken place for the entire school during this last half term: one assembly was on 'consent' delivered by the Islington School Nurses Services and the second assembly was on the theme of 'Respect' delivered by our safer school's police officer and his colleagues. Assemblies have also been delivered on the Holocaust Memorial as well as careers and subject-based assemblies preparing Year 9s for their upcoming options.

In addition, the entire student council has been involved in contributing to the new student friendly peer on peer abuse policy; Year 11 School Council have also begun discussions regarding the Year 11 School prom.

As always, we continue to share the student bulletin directly with the students via the school email system and on the school website. February half-term bulletins can be found here:

[Weekly Student Bulletins](#)

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Teaching and Learning

We are currently in the midst of an exciting time for Year 9 as they chose their options for Key Stage 4. Students have had assemblies from all of the option subjects and have been discussing how subjects differ during Key Stage 4 from Key Stage 3. Further to our text at the end of the last half term we hope that you have been able to have a discussion with your child about their potential option choices. Students will be making their initial choices to discuss with their mentors by the 22nd February 2022. We look forward to seeing parents and carers at the Virtual Options Evening on the 24th February 2022 which starts at 5.30pm.

Year 11 students have all been given advance information for the forthcoming GCSEs where this has been published so revision should have begun and if it has not yet started, it is not too late. The advance information is one part of the package of changes for 2022 which have been shared with your child by their subject teachers. Please encourage them to make a revision timetable and ask them to show you what they have been doing; explaining your work to someone else is a great way of consolidating learning.

Key Stage 4 Prep and Homework Support has been well attended during the last half term and we hope to see even more students attend voluntarily. Key Stage 4 Prep opens at 8.30 am and KS3 Homework Support starts at 2.15 pm. It is a great place to get work done with the addition of support if necessary, please encourage your child to attend to support excellent study habits.

The library has been a huge success and reading across many genres supports writing and creativity; skills which are invaluable in life as well as exams. Please encourage your child to use the library and get them to tell you about what they are reading.

Behaviour and Attitudes

At the start of term, we took the decision to introduce a half-termly behaviour focus, which saw the school community really looking to hone one of our 'Big Ten' rules; these can be found at the back of your child's planner. The focus for this half term was beginning and end to lesson routines - students are to enter rooms briskly, get out their REP (Reading Book, Equipment and Planner) and stand behind their desks until they are invited to sit down by their teacher. This has been successful in ensuring smooth and calm starts to lessons. The focus for the coming half term is on uniform. I will be asking Heads of Year to contact parents if there are issues with students' uniforms, and ask that you work with us to rectify them as soon as possible.

We have also introduced our extra-curricular enrichment programme after school on Mondays for Year 7 operating on an opt out only basis. Each form class is given one exciting extra-curricular activity per half term, which will operate on a carousel basis throughout the rest of this year. Our current offer is as follows:

Leadership and Sports - Arsenal FC • African Drumming • Street Dance • Yoga • Chess

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Students have engaged really well with these sessions, and take up has been high. We are currently looking to engage other outside providers to increase our activity offer in the next academic year. Any suggestions and/or support from parents/carers that align with our creativity focus would be most welcome.

Finally, if I can remind you of the importance of attendance to school. It is the legal duty of parents and carers to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually. Our School attendance target is 97% for all students. At the end of the Spring 1 half term, students with 90% attendance will have missed **10 days of school, or 2 weeks**. There is a direct link between attendance to school and good outcomes for our young people, so it is vitally important that all young people are in school.

Blended Learning

The Music suite has been upgraded with 20 new computers that will support the new Push 2 upgraded controller. Push 2 is an instrument that puts everything you need to make music in one place at your fingertips. It's a powerful, expressive instrument that gives you hands-on control of an unlimited palette of sounds, without needing to look at a computer.

The quality of the Media subject offer has also been upgraded with the addition of 3 state of the art computers which includes the latest Adobe software. Students will be able to use these devices to make substantial improvements to their GCSE Media work.

New Interactive panels have been installed in 3 rooms. These panels will provide teachers with flexibility, reusability, and a variety of tools that make learning fun. Similarly, for students, an interactive display in the classroom allows them to use technology productively.

Reminders

- ❖ School returned on the 21st February 2022.
- ❖ Students must return to school in full [school uniform](#) with notes from home if this is not possible.
- ❖ Regular testing is strongly recommended so please parents/carers continue to do this.
Lateral Flow Test kits are available from the reception area to take home.
- ❖ Wearing masks is now optional in school.

Key Dates Ahead

- ❖ Virtual Options Evening - 24th February 2022.
- ❖ Year 11 Parents' Evening - 21st March 2022.
- ❖ Year 9 Parents' Evening - 16th March 2022.
- ❖ Year 8 Parents Evening - 28th March 2022.
- ❖ End of Spring Term - 1st April 2022 (half day).

Kind regards

Susan Service

Head teacher