



# The Hemel Hempstead School

## News

15 January 2010

[www.hhs.herts.sch.uk](http://www.hhs.herts.sch.uk)

### HeadLines

First of all, may I wish you all a very Happy New Year and welcome you to the first newsletter of 2010, much delayed though it is.

It's been a snow affected start to term and I cannot but express my sympathy at the disruption and inconvenience suffered by all of us in our different ways. Contrary to media opinion, headteachers do not like closing schools and teachers want to be in the place where they can ensure that their examination classes are focusing on priorities and all their other students are learning. Given the lost days of last week, we are finding ways to regain the time by altering the dates of INSET days and postponing other unessential activities. We will inform you of any modifications to the pattern of the year, shortly.

I understand that it may have seemed odd last week that some schools in Hemel Hempstead were able to open and some not, especially on Friday. Despite best efforts to clear our site, it was still unsafe. However, we were determined to open this week, whatever the weather, in order to facilitate the taking of the exams and the continuation of learning. Yesterday's snow and today's different road conditions have been challenging, but we have tried to do our best to stay open for as long as possible whilst enabling everyone to reach school safely and return home safely. We have also tried to keep everyone informed via county services, the website and text.

Of course, I write as though I have experienced all this at first hand. I haven't because I have been recuperating from a major operation whilst Mr Jordan and the senior leadership have held the fort. May I express my thanks to Mr Jordan for all that he has done in the most trying of circumstances over the past week including clearing paths himself. I could not wish for a better Deputy Headteacher.

I look forward to returning to the fold next week.

In the meantime, I wish all students taking examinations the very best. I also send my best wishes to the students taking part in the school musical 'The Pajama Game', to the staff who have struggled in from great distances in terrible weather and, again, to those of you who have had to disrupt your work in order to look after children.

As I write, rain is washing away the snow on the fens and I trust that we will soon observe glimmers of spring in Dacorum too. But let me leave you with the classic poem by Robert Frost: 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening'

#### **Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening**

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village, though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

**Sandra Samwell, Headteacher**

## IMPORTANT LETTER TO PARENTS

A letter will be sent home with all students next week regarding the cancelling of the INSET day 12<sup>th</sup> February. Please look out for this letter, complete the reply slip and return it promptly to Student Services. Thank you.



## ARTS NEWS

Despite the weather, the show must go on, and the challenge of getting a full musical up to performance standard is being tackled with a will by the staff and students involved. Much valuable rehearsal time has been missed because of snow closures, but so dedicated are the cast and the teachers that they have opted to come in at weekends as well to try to get the show on the road! The Art department are also increasing their contributions as the opening night draws closer, and this week is scheduled to see the start of set painting, a massive job by any standards.

Plans are also being drawn up for our participation, alongside Mgezwa School, in both the National Arts Festival in South Africa next year and the Cultural Olympiad in London. We are seeking funding at the moment for this ambitious project, so any kind readers out there who think they may be able to help in cash or in kind, please contact Mrs Botha or any of the Dance team at the school. If you can do nothing else, please do come along to the fundraising performances that are being planned to finance our dancers going out there, and their dancers coming back here to perform.

*Ms Darby, Assistant Headteacher*

## UNIFORM REMINDER

We have allowed students to wear sturdy footwear during the snow, but it is important to keep up the normal standards of uniform.

From Monday, therefore, the usual sanctions will apply for infringements of the uniform code. If the weather continues to be cold, students may wear:

- Plain black or navy blue scarf, hat and gloves
- The school jumper beneath their blazers
- A plain black or navy coat

Students may not wear sweatshirts (even school sweatshirts) or garments of any other colour.

Please help us to maintain the high standards for which this school is known.

*Ms Darby, Assistant Headteacher*

## Diversity News

**Makar Sankranti/Lohri** (Hindu) Harvest Festival  
**14<sup>th</sup> January**

Sankranti means to go from one place to another place (to change direction). It also means one meets another.

Makar Sankranti is celebrated in mid-winter and marks the transition of the sun from the Sagittarius to Capricorn during the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere.

People take dips in rivers and worship the Sun God especially in the holy Ganges river. The dip is said to purify the self and bestow 'punya' (merit). Special puja (act of showing reverence) is offered as a thanksgiving for good harvest.

*Mrs Ramnarine, Diversity Co-ordinator*

## Year 11 Maths Revision Sessions

Every Monday from 3.40 pm to 4.40 pm the Maths Department are running revision sessions for Year 11 students. They will begin on MONDAY 18<sup>th</sup> JANUARY upstairs in South Block. Notices will appear in the Maths Department and in registers over the next few days to show you which topics we will focus on each week. I would strongly recommend you all attend as many of the sessions as possible. There will be plenty of teachers on hand to help you all.

*Miss May, Learning Leader: Maths Department*

## HEADTEACHER'S COMMENDATIONS

*For Excellent Work in History*

Christabel Dodd 8F

# PTA News

## Quiz Night

We have arranged a quiz night for Saturday 27th February at 8pm.

Once again it will be held in the 6th form block and hosted by James Chappelow. Tickets are £4 each and bring your own food and drink. We will be holding a raffle. Teams should be no more than 8 and there will be prizes for the winning team.

Entry forms should be with you soon so please get a team together and come along and join the fun.

## Jumble Sale

This is to be held on Saturday 13th March at 10am.

Please start collecting your unwanted items together now as we have the room to take them from you. As ever we would appreciate only good quality items - if you think it needs to be binned then please bin it as we do not have the room for unsaleable items.

## Next meeting

Our next meeting is on Monday 18th January at 6pm in the library, please come along and join us, we would love to see you.

**Judith Stallworthy, Chair HHS (01442 393266 or mobile 07749 727350), email s.stallworthy@sky.com**

**Absence on the first day of term:** As some students did not attend school on the first day of this term (4<sup>th</sup> January) please may we remind parents to always check our website ([www.hemel Hempsteads school.co.uk](http://www.hemel Hempsteads school.co.uk)) and/or refer to the Newsletter to determine whether or not an INSET day has been arranged. INSET days (staff training days) do not necessarily take place at the start of every term.

## CLOSURE NOTIFICATION

In the case of severe weather or other emergency, if parents are in any doubt as to whether the school is open, please refer to the school website ([www.hemel Hempsteads school.co.uk](http://www.hemel Hempsteads school.co.uk)) to see the latest information. If the school website is unavailable please try the county website ([www.hertsdirect.org](http://www.hertsdirect.org)). In the case of severe weather the information will be linked to the home page. If this is not the case, insert 'Emergency school closures' in the 'Search' area, click on 'Emergency school closures' and follow the link to find the directory of school closure information. We will also notify BBC Three Counties Radio (103.8 FM or 630MW/1161MW) and Heart FM (97.6 FM) as early as possible. The notifications will either be read on air or displayed on the radio station websites.

## Dates for Your Diary



### \*\*\*Gold Week\*\*\*

**11<sup>th</sup> Jan – 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb** Years 12/13 Public Exams

**18<sup>th</sup> Jan** Year 10 Science Module  
Year 11 Science Module re-sits  
HHS Meeting, 6 pm

**20<sup>th</sup> Jan** Year 10 Science Module  
Year 11 Science Module re-sits

**21<sup>st</sup> Jan** Year 9 Options Information Evening, 7 pm  
Years 12/13 Science and Maths talk, 7 pm

**22<sup>nd</sup> Jan** Post Year 11 Options Carousel

### \*\*\*Blue Week\*\*\*

**25<sup>th</sup> Jan** Year 11 Creative and Media Diploma  
Parent Consultation at JFK  
Year 11 Science Module

**26<sup>th</sup> Jan** Year 11 Mock Exams Results Day

**27<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> Jan** School Musical 'Pajama Game'

**27<sup>th</sup> Jan** Year 11 Science Module

**28<sup>th</sup> Jan** Dacorum Rotary Technology Tournament

**1<sup>st</sup> Feb** Year 12 D of E Gold Planning meeting

## House Christmas Decoration Competition

The House Christmas Decoration Competition reached new heights in 2009. The House Captains, ably assisted by many younger students, worked extremely hard to decorate selected areas of the school. Mrs Burstin from the Art Department was the judge for this House Challenge and placed the Houses in the following order:

**Joint 1<sup>st</sup> – Pendley and Chalfont**

**2<sup>nd</sup> – Ashridge**

**3<sup>rd</sup> – Latimer**

**4<sup>th</sup> – Flaunden**

**5<sup>th</sup> – Nettleden**

Mrs Burstin made the following observations about the standard of the decorations which I quote in full –

***'I thought every House had thoughtful and careful displays, they have obviously taken great trouble for the younger students – not only to make decoration, but to display them so creatively. The task was completed to a very high standard with careful thought given to the space they needed to fill. Each House had a thoughtful Christmas message to give to the school.'***

Congratulations Pendley and Chalfont!

**Mr Mitchell**

# SPORT



## Fixtures

<b>Monday 18<sup>th</sup> Jan</b>	Year 7 District League Netball v JFK (A) U15 Girls County League Basketball v Queens (H)
<b>Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> Jan</b>	U15 County Cup Football v Verulam (A) 2 pm k.o.
<b>Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> Jan</b>	Year 8 Rugby v Tring (A) 2.30 pm k.o. Year 8 District League Netball v JFK (H) Year 8 Boys Basketball v Adeyfield (H) Year 9 District League Netball v Longdean (A)
<b>Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> Jan</b>	U15 Girls Basketball v Westfield (H) U14 County Cup Football v Verulam (A) 2 pm k.o.
<b>Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan</b>	Football v St John Lawes tbc

**IMPORTANT NOTICE: Whilst support for school fixtures is always welcome, please would parents/supporters sign in at Reception if a fixture falls during the school day.**

*Miss Bevan, Learning Leader: PE*

### **A PE reminder to all students and parents:**

Please make sure that you bring *all* of your PE kit to lessons, especially at the moment while the weather is so unpredictable. You should make sure you bring rugby shirts as well as white tops, shorts, trainers, white or royal blue socks, also school track suit bottoms if you possess them. Once the snow has gone you will know whether you are due to play football or rugby and therefore require boots.

*Mrs Cracknell*

### **Year 9 Tate Modern and The Globe visit**

Can any student who has yet to pay for the combined Art and English trip to Tate Modern and The Globe on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> February please give their £15 to Student Services as soon as possible. Additional letters are available from Student Services, Ms Redfern or Mrs Lane.

### **Gold Letters issued recently:**

**Letter 108** Post-16 Options Forum

**Letter 109** Voluntary Contribution

**Letter 110** Year 10 Immunisations

*All Gold Letters can be viewed on our website:*

*[www.hhs.herts.sch.uk](http://www.hhs.herts.sch.uk)*

### **Careers Department Information**

University is great for many people and the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service ([www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk)) shows students the courses available. There is, however, a website that is dedicated to helping young people make informed decisions about their future by showing opportunities outside university.

[www.notgoingtouni.co.uk](http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk) shows the other side and can be described as the 'non-graduate UCAS'.

This website provides a platform for young people to engage with employers and training providers and shows that you can have a successful career without university. Despite its name, it is not anti-university.

The website is packed full of apprenticeships and lists apprenticeship employers, ways to get a degree debt-free, alternative forms of study, employer-funded study, traineeships, cadetships, pre-university internships and gap years.

*Miss Sue Bond, Careers Coordinator*

### **Sickness/absence line**

Please will all parents contact us daily if your child is sick, going to be late in due to a medical appointment, or is absent for any other reason. Please call our sickness/absence line on 01442 390103 by 9am if possible.

School policies can be viewed on our website under 'about HHS/School Policies'. If you require a hard copy of any of the policies please get in touch with the School Office.