

Dear Parents, Carers, and Families,

I hope this finds you well as we end the first week of the Spring Term. There is a collective responsibility to the safety of this school community. Our children are highly vulnerable, and so are specific members of our staff team. Thank you to the majority of you who consider the needs of the community in your decision making. I recognise that many of you consider this beyond government guidance measures.

Our week has ended with 3 positive COVID-19 cases through PCR results. Two of the three cases were for pupils that returned to school within their quarantine period following travel abroad. This has exposed the pupils in the class, class staff team, specialist team members, NHS therapists, Caterlink lunch staff, and leadership team to COVID-19 when completely avoidable. This undermines our efforts with extensive safety measures, and our problem solving of 43 staff absences at the start of the week to ensure classes were learning in school. We complete a comprehensive risk assessment process with Public Health England when positive COVID-19 cases are confirmed. The process is time consuming and an example of impact due to these cases is the closure of our timetable for sensory rooms and soft play rooms today and Monday, and changes in our lunchtime and playground schedules to ensure the two classes are in a full isolated bubble. It also means 24 staff members have to take daily lateral flow tests for 10 days, and risk of classes moving to remote learning due to the potential spread of COVID-19. We have limited scope to plan for Monday due to potential symptom development over the weekend, which makes it difficult for families to plan in advance because updates to families get confirmed after the Sunday evening lateral flow test.

Our Autumn term ended with a rise in numbers highlighting the omicron variant. This letter provides 5 reminders. I should not have to provide this but cannot risk additional issues as we navigate an already complex start to the Spring Term with the national numbers for Omicron.

- 1. **COVID-19 Symptoms:** There are three common symptoms for COVID-19. Persistent coughing, high temperature, and change or loss of taste/smell. <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/coronavirus-in-children/">https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/coronavirus-in-children/</a>
- If your child develops 1 of the 3 symptoms of COVID-19: they should not be sent to school. They need to self-isolate and take a PCR test through this link: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test">https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test</a> Please let us know and we can support you.
- 2. Self-Isolation Period Changes: The government reduced the self-isolation period for positive COVID-19 cases from 10 days to 7 if the day 6 and day 7 lateral flow test results are negative. However: the guidance also clearly states that if self-isolation ends early due to two negative lateral flow test results the person with COVID-19 should "limit contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19". This is our school population so please do not presume that our staff will return after day 7. We assess this on an individual basis based on their recovery from COVID-19. Pupils that test positive will be required to self-isolate for 10 days because of the need for support with day to day self-care and inability to socially distance independently.

It is important to read this information in full: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-quidance/stay-at-home-quidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-infection</a>

**3. Travel Abroad:** If you travel abroad it is your responsibility to read the guidance from the government. Those guidance measures and requirements can change and are your responsibility. Any decisions you make should also be considered in terms of our school because we are a special needs school for pupils with vulnerable profiles. It is breaking the law when ignoring quarantine requirements.

https://www.gov.uk/quidance/travel-to-england-from-another-country-during-coronavirus-covid-19

**4. Lateral Flow Testing:** Lateral flow testing is used when there are no symptoms of COVID-19. This is called 'asymptomatic' testing. <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/">https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/</a>

You received a letter on 16<sup>th</sup> December and a home test kit. https://swisscottage.camden.sch.uk/news/2021-12-16-contact-tracing-and-home-testing

- We are recommending an adjustment to the dates for home testing next week. Please complete your child's nasal home test on Sunday evening and then on Wednesday evening. This will match our testing dates for the staff.
- There is a change in government guidance. If your child tests positive on the lateral flow test kit, they self-isolate and do not need a PCR test. Please let us know and we can support you. <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/confirmatory-pcr-tests-to-be-temporarily-suspended-for-positive-lateral-flow-test-results">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/confirmatory-pcr-tests-to-be-temporarily-suspended-for-positive-lateral-flow-test-results</a>
- We provided test kits and have limited reserves. We need to ensure we have enough test kits for the staff to complete their testing across this Spring Term. If you need additional home test kits please use this link: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests">https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests</a>
- 5. Safety Measures: We put extensive safety measures in place and these have evolved throughout the stages of the pandemic. The current summary of safety measures includes measures to avoid COVID-19 entering this community and avoiding the spread. The summary of safety measures is located here: <a href="https://swisscottage.camden.sch.uk/our-school/school-safety-measures">https://swisscottage.camden.sch.uk/our-school/school-safety-measures</a>

If you have any questions about these 5 summary points after reading the relevant weblinks – please email <u>admin@swisscottage.camden.sch.uk</u> and we will aim to provide you with updates on Monday.

Our focus as a school team is on the curriculum, teaching, and progress for your children through meaningful and enjoyable learning as we balance numerous safety measures. We are running the school today with high staff absences, 1 class in remote learning, increased anxieties within staff teams due to the avoidable positive cases for two pupils, and elevated lateral flow testing this morning. Our efforts remain relentless to protect this community, and I thank you in advance for understanding why this update was shared.

Yours Sincerely,

Vijita Patel Principal

## **Additional Information:**

**Evidence for Learning (EfL):** Evidence for Learning is the secure online system we use to share key learning for your child. Teachers will upload your child's EfL journal on the following dates across the Spring Term. This is scheduled around the February half term holiday week.

- Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2022
- Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022
- Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022
- Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022
- Friday, 18th March 2022
- Thursday, 31st March 2022

Contact your class teacher if you need any support to access your child's secure EfL journal.

Reminder of Term Dates: <a href="https://swisscottage.camden.sch.uk/parents/termdates">https://swisscottage.camden.sch.uk/parents/termdates</a>

Tuesday, 4th January: Start of Spring Term for pupils

Friday, 28th January: Staff Training Day - no school for pupils

Friday, 11th February: Last day of Half Term

Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> February to Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> February: Half Term Holiday – no school for pupils

Monday, 21st February: Pupils return to school

Friday, 1st April: Last day of Spring Term

Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> April to Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> April: Spring Holiday – no school for pupils

Tueday, 19th April 2022: Start of Summer Term for pupils



Welcome to our SPRING Calendar of events, workshops and socially distanced meet-ups for anyone in Camden with a child or young person (0-25 years) with special educational needs and disabilities. This term will be a mix of Zoom and In-person events as we continue to navigate the COVID world whilst supporting each other as well as gathering views on how SEND services in Camden could be shaped. *Please join us!* 

**ZOOM Coffee Mornings** are a chance to meet other parents and to get and give feedback on important local issues. We will also have regular guest speakers from the SEND services in Camden. **Walk and Talks** are relaxed walks on Hampstead Heath and a chance to get together with other parents, have a cup of coffee along the way and just talk about anything and everything **Workshops** are held each term on different subjects

You will need to book in to get Zoom links & join our sessions. To book onto anything in our calendar below, get on our mailing list or to find out more please get in touch: Rachel.Dixon@kids.org.uk or Maria.Schultz@kids.org.uk. Text or call Maria on 07826 671 523 or Rachel on 07711 767 258.

We are also on facebook – www.facebook.com/CamdenSpecialParentsForum and you can follow us on Twitter @CamdenSPForum

# January

11 Tue PfA Benefits Workshop (by CPAG) 10.30-12.30 on ZOOM
17 Mon Walk and Talk, 10.15-12.30pm, Hampstead Heath
19 Wed AUTISM Coffee Morning 10.30-11.30am on ZOOM

# **February**

1 Tue Parents Transition Networking Group 10.30-11.30 on ZOOM

2 Wed CSPF forum meeting 10-12pm on ZOOM

7 Mon CAMHS session, for parents with PMLD children on 11-12.30 on ZOOM

22 Tues PfA Transition and Mental Capacity Training Workshop (with Belinda Blank) 10am-2pm – VENUE

TBC

28 Mon Walk and Talk, 10.15-12.30pm, Hampstead Heath

#### March

15 Tue

9 Wed CSPF forum meeting 10-12pm on ZOOM
 14 Mon Walk and Talk, 10.15-12.30pm, Hampstead Heath

22 Tue Parents Transition Networking Group 10.30-11.30 on ZOOM

25 Fri \*\*\* Camden Special Parents Forum WELL-BEING EVENT @ Greenwood Centre\*\*\*

28 Mon CAMHS - parents and carers support session 11-12.30am on ZOOM

AUTISM Coffee Morning 10.30-11.30am on ZOOM

31 Thur Camden SENDIASS Parents Conference – SAVE THE DATE!



# Benefits for over 16's workshop

For parents and carers of a young person with SEND aged 16+

This essential information session will be delivered by Dan Norris, head of advice and rights at CPAG.



WHEN: Tuesday, 11th Jan 10.30am – 12.30pm

WHERE: On ZOOM

The welfare system is complicated and confusing – and it's hard to know what your young person might be eligible for as they move into adulthood.

This session will give you an overview and a better understanding of the existing welfare benefits available to your young person post 16 years - and will allow plenty of time for you to ask questions about your situation.

## Topics covered in this workshop:

Introduction to welfare benefits
PIP and the points system
Universal Credit
ESA

\*\*\*\*BOOKING ESSENTIAL\*\*\*\*\*\*
For Camden Parent/Carers with YP with SEN

To book onto this workshop please email maria.schultz@kids.org.uk/call or text 07826 671 523

Please do keep an eye on Facebook, ask to join our contact list and keep in touch. https://www.facebook.com/CamdenSpecialParentsForum



# Virtual Preparing for Adulthood Drop in

20th January 2022 9:30am - 12:30pm

&

17th February 2022 9:30am - 12:30pm

This is for parents of children from 13 years old. This is an opportunity to meet with Social Care and Education officers to discuss your child's journey into adulthood and any questions you may have.

We have 6 slots available. Each slot will take 30 minutes.

Should you require an interpreter please inform us in advance.

To book a slot please contact Crina Popa on <a href="mailto:crina.popa@camden.gov.uk">crina.popa@camden.gov.uk</a> or on 0207 974 4867 (Monday – Friday)





