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THE HOLMEWOOD  
SCHOOL



National  
Autistic  
Society

Accredited  
Advanced  
2020



## Newsletter

# Friday 28 May 2021

Dear Families,

Can you believe we are already at half term? Once we return after the break we will have just six more weeks before we finish this academic year. Please look out for details of various events taking place over the rest of the summer term....we have plenty to look forward to!

This week has been very exciting as students began their First Aid training. By the end of the summer term, all students will have had a chance to participate in these sessions and will learn some vital life saving skills. Here are a few photos of some of our Lower School students taking part:



Today I'd also like to say a big well done to all the students who sat exams this week. The extra information from these assessments will secure the teacher assessed grades that are being assigned for this year's GCSEs and A Levels. I was so impressed by the attitude and dedication of all students this year and they deserve a good rest over the break.

Wishing you all happy and relaxing half term

**Ms Camilleri**

Executive Head Teacher

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## Dates For Your Diary

- **Mon 31st May to Fri 4th June** - Half term holiday
- **Mon 7th June** - Inset day
- **Tues 8th June** - Summer term (2nd half) starts
- **Wed 14th July** - End of term

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## Time Travel At The Holmewood Upper School

If I could time travel back to September 2020, I would tell past Bridget to keep smiling. I would encourage her to keep going and I would say that although there will be untold hardship, amazing things are on the horizon.

Our Social Thinking guru Michelle Garcia Winner says that figuring out how to respond in the here and now requires **time travel**. She uses this term because she knows this idea appeals to teenagers, especially those on the autism spectrum. She says '**remembering**' (thinking back about the past) and '**imagining**' (dreaming about the future) are ways that we can time travel in our brains in order to set goals in the **here and now**.

So let's time travel together.

Using Garcia-Winner's model, I shall start with the **here and now**. My recent observations around the school make me confident that we are on the right track.

- I have been seeing our students diligently working towards their exams in a time of uncertainty. I am so proud of them for the resilience they have shown but I know they would not have been able to do it without the wrap-around support at school and home.
- In the playground the students are gaining confidence. They are forging friendships and taking risks in the social world. With risk comes reward, but also loss. I can see the staff working hard at supporting students with the highs and lows of making friends.

Next comes the **remembering** phase.

- Established staff joined newly appointed people at Muswell Hill in September at a brand new site. We spent one day setting up together and then we hit the ground running.
- We welcomed new students and old, all of whom had been through varying periods of disengagement from education due to the ongoing pandemic.
- We set a high expectation early on, and coupled with the calm environment of our beautiful site, the students rose to the occasion.
- We suffered a great setback in the form of a second lockdown and over the past months we have been reemerging with various and sometimes unseen wounds.

Then in Garcia-Winner's model we have the **imagining** phase. Our school vision helps us imagine a future - that we are a diverse and inclusive community of excellence, creating ambitious learners ready to lead confident, independent and happy lives.

Finally we must return to the **here and now** in order to **respond**. We must ride on the

giving others the gift of our time and our patience. As always, we must support our students by explicitly teaching them the skills they need and explaining the relevance of these skills to their future success.

I will end with a very serious quote from one of my favourite movies about time travel.

‘All we are is dust in the wind, dude.’

*Ted, philosophizing with Socrates.*

Bill and Ted’s Excellent Adventure

**Ms Young**

Head of Upper School

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## 5k In May Challenge



This week, Metropolitan and Circle students completed the 5k in May challenge by walking 5000m around Muswell Hill and Woodside Park respectively.





In total, Holmewood raised £70 for the British Dyslexia Association.

Well done to everyone who took part.

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## Grit & Gratitude

During this month of May we have been reflecting on our mental health. Living through a pandemic has provided us with different challenges and made us reflect upon what daily practices can help to keep us mentally and physically healthy. Here are three of my practices for keeping calmer!

1. **MOVE:** this always helps release any tension the body may have stored. I'm really enjoying our OT, Ms Tokekar's lovely virtual yoga classes and this month I've challenged myself to run 50km for MS (Multiple Sclerosis) charity and 5km for the BDA (British Dyslexia Association).
2. **KINDNESS:** this month I'm raising money for charity. Over recent months, I've been sharing my baking (with various degrees of success!) and I often share cuttings from my houseplants with neighbours and friends.
3. **GRATITUDE:** I try and recall two things I'm grateful for each day. This is something I ask my own children to think about too.

Staff, students and friends and family of THSL have also signed up for the 5k in May for dyslexia. Parents/carers/students please get your trainers on and join us; there are still a few days of May left. The link to sign up and donate £5 to the BDA is here: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/support-us/challenges/5kmay> share your running selfie's with us to [mgallagher@thsl.org.uk](mailto:mgallagher@thsl.org.uk) so we can add them to our THSL 5k run in May collage to celebrate our success.

Check this podcast out for inspiration: **Podcast: Run for heroes** Giving make you feel better

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- Our centre has completed a Centre Exams Policy which details exam processes for 2021. Once this has been approved by the JCQ, it will be available to read on our website.
- Recently, parents/carers will have received a letter explaining our grading and appeals process, more information on appeals to follow as soon as we receive new guidance.
- Exam training for all staff has taken place this week to ensure that a consistent and fair process is in place.
- Every Tuesday between 2-3pm a drop in session is available for staff to discuss any questions about exams and access arrangements. We also invite parents to contact either Ms Aka (Exams Officer) or Ms Gallagher (Specialist Teacher-SpLD and access arrangements) if you have any questions about your son / daughters exams or access arrangements.
- Continuing learning and improving is important to me. One benefit of more screen time is the wide amount of training and professional development available. This webinar was recently shared with me and looks interesting, if you would like to attend:

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**PRESENTS OUR  
NEXT EVENT**

**UNDERSTANDING DCD (DYSPRAXIA), SENSORY  
PROCESSING AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE LEARNING  
ENVIRONMENT**

**By JENNY MEYER**



Jenny Meyer is an occupational therapist, specialising in sensory integration. She works with all age groups from pre-school children to young adults. Jenny is also a specialist literacy teacher at Fairley House Senior School, where she teaches reading and word study. Her previous roles include working at the Hope Centre and at Broughton House and College, a specialist school for adults with autism. Jenny's talk will focus on understanding developmental co-ordination disorder, sensory processing and the effects they have on the learning environment.

**The talk will be delivered by Zoom, on Thursday June 17<sup>th</sup> at 8.00pm**

**Free for members of Harrow Patoss and £10.00 for Non-Members**

**To book a place, please contact Margaret at: [mpereira@uwclub.net](mailto:mpereira@uwclub.net)**

**Please note, the Zoom joining details will be sent a few days prior to the event**

The course costs £10 and places can be booked by emailing Margaret Pereira directly:  
[mpereira@uwclub.net](mailto:mpereira@uwclub.net)

Finally, if you can and would like to support my fundraising this month, I would be extremely grateful. Here is the link for our fundraising page:  
<https://www.themay50k.com/fundraisers/Gallaghergirls>

With warm wishes,

**Ms Gallagher**  
Specialist Teacher



Dear Parents and Carers,

I trust you are well and keeping safe.

Here in Metropolitan, the students have been sitting their exams and assessments. I am so proud of them and the hard work they have put into them. They should all feel very proud of themselves.

We have had a brilliant term with the students of Metro, who have had a great opportunity to experience the outdoors during DofE sessions with Ms Mansfield such as cooking sausages and s'mores in the forest, learning new cooking skills and being able to create their own recipes from limited resources; and being able to express their creative imaginations during their art lessons.

During the cooking session over the last two weeks, the students have been leading the session and working as a team to create something edible to eat for lunch. The class was split into three groups where they discussed with each other what they should make from a range of different ingredients on their tables. Once decided, the students then worked together to create a recipe sheet which they followed in order to make something to eat.

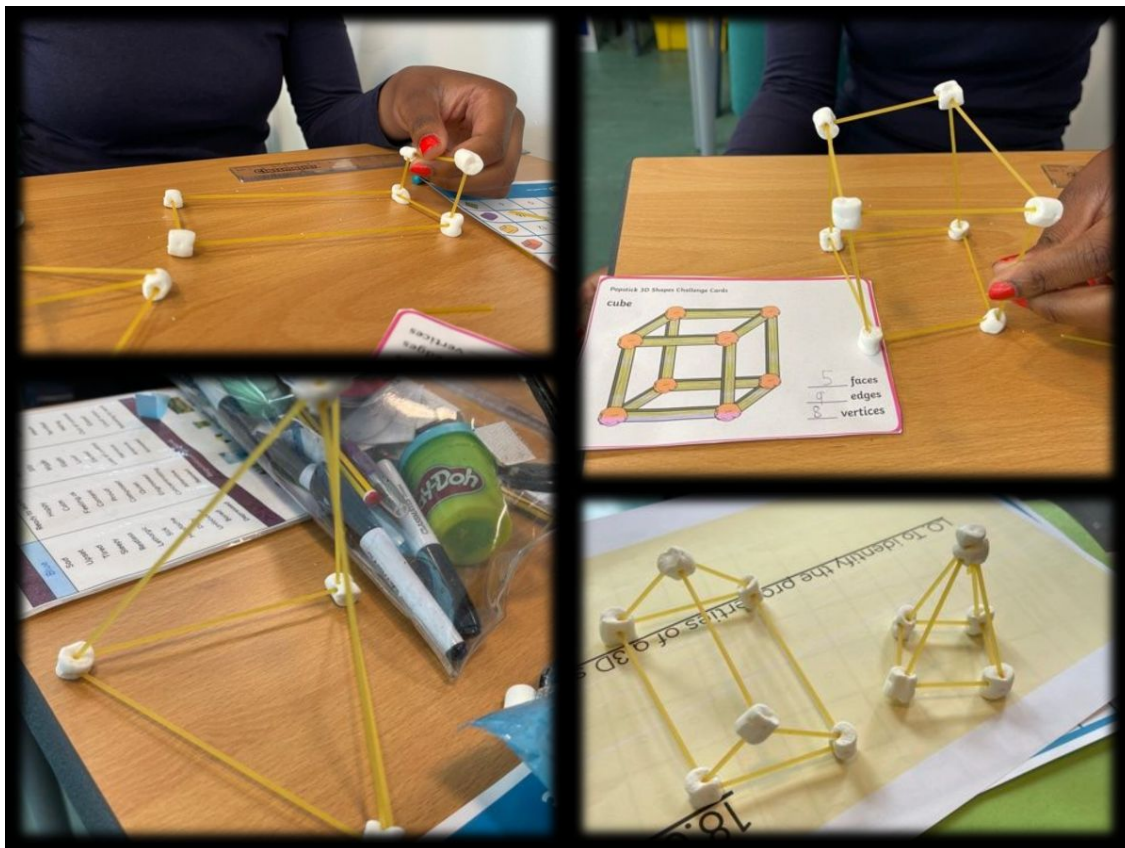
I am so impressed with all of the students. They all worked as a team and managed to follow instructions given. Well done to all of Metropolitan and Faye in Central Class.





This is a hard concept to grasp, especially when there are many numbers involved to describe the properties. Mr Lamb and Mr Boateng joined Metropolitan for one session where the students were using spaghetti and marshmallows to create 3D shapes. Of course, the leftover marshmallows were consumed! What's a lesson without edible resources?

Well done to Metropolitan for their amazing work and encouragement to each other.



As restrictions are starting to ease, we thought we would celebrate as a class, so we went up to Jennys on the high road for breakfast.

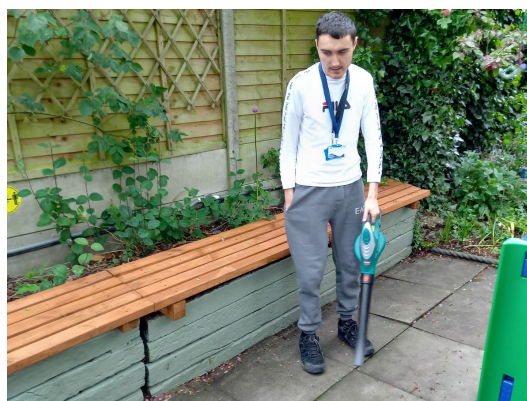
It was lovely to see the students out in a different environment where they were communicating with each other and the staff.

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A special mention to Sean this week.

He has been helping Mr Kirwan around the site by using a blower to remove leaves from our grounds. Mr Kirwan greatly appreciated Sean's assistance and hopes to call on him again in the future.

Great job, Sean!



Lastly, we have been developing our team working skills by using our peers to support us when we need them.

Using limited materials, and working in pairs, the students needed to get from one side of the classroom to the other side. It proved to be tricky, until they were reminded of their idiom of the week: 'Thinking outside of the box!'

Well done to all of the students for communicating with each other in a calm and respectful manner and managing to get from one side of the classroom to the other.





On behalf of myself and the Metropolitan team, we would like to thank you for being amazing and for all your support. We would also like to take this opportunity to wish you all a wonderful half term break. Rest up, enjoy some sunshine and we will see you back on Tuesday 8th June 2021.

Best Wishes,

**Ms Perera**

Metropolitan Class Teacher

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## Therapy News

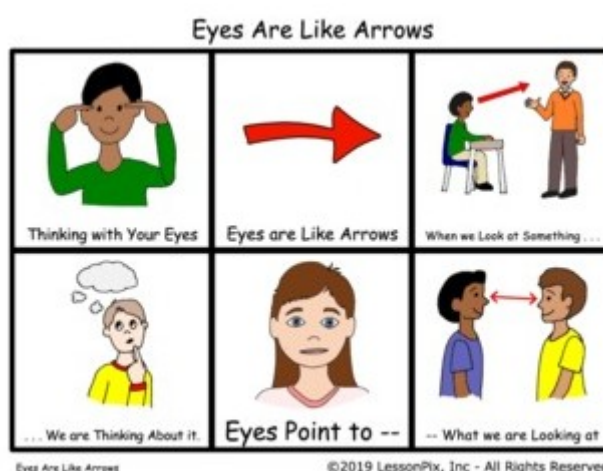
to support our students. There were interesting questions from parents about how to support their children to self-regulate (stay calm enough) whilst also pushing them enough to challenge themselves in the social world.

The topic of vulnerability and ensuring that their children are 'safe' in the social world was a key concern amongst parents. Thank you to all of those who joined us. Slides of the presentation have been sent out.



In our newsletter contribution on 14th May we discussed the first (out of 10) of the core concepts within the Social Thinking methodology; Thoughts and Feelings. We aim to share with you the remaining core concepts over the next few weeks.

### Thinking with your eyes (concept 2)



Our eyes help us to figure out what's going on around us. Thinking with your eyes means using your observational skills to understand what's going on around us, and helps you interpret social information. Most brains have a filtering system which means we can focus on relevant information. This means that even though you may hear a lot of noise, for instance an aeroplane overhead, your brain helps you to filter out sounds that may not be relevant to the present situation. In a lesson, you can look at and listen to the teacher without being too distracted by the aeroplane.

Many of our students struggle with staying focused and filtering out external stimuli. They have difficulty effectively 'scanning the social situation' and they might focus on the small details, for example a buzzing sound from the light, a picture on a wall or on a person's clothing; or they might get lost in their own thoughts and not notice any environmental clues.

Neurotypical babies typically look at their caregivers' eyes and develop joint attention (the understanding that you are both looking at and thinking about the same thing) by the age of one. This means that they start predicting other people's intentions from a very early



Thinking with your eyes encourages students to scan the social landscape, make a mental note of what they see so they can better understand and respond. They are supported to observe situations and take time to notice what's happening, for example: Why is the room so quiet? Why are the students working in pairs? What clues can I detect from people's facial expressions, body language, gesture etc?

**Key take-away strategy:** Help your child to work out how to focus on the relevant social information, for example, other people's faces, body positions and language rather than the objects in the room. This does not mean forcing eye contact but does mean that eyes need to be used to look at other people's eyes and faces, however brief the glance may be.

**Ms Nash**

Specialist Speech & Language Therapist

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## The Holmewood Gallery















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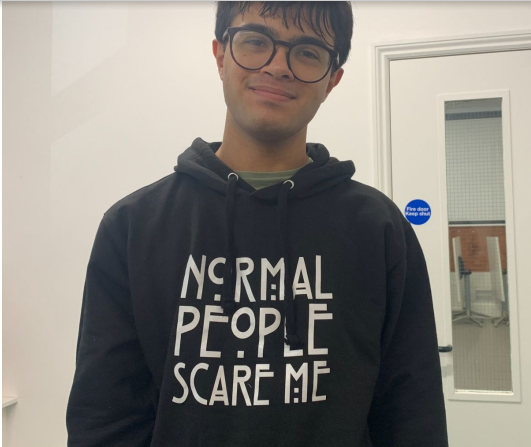




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## Designated Team For Child Protection And Safeguarding

If you are a student and have been harmed, or are at risk of harm, these are the people who can help. You can also talk to us if you are worried that another student is at risk of harm.

Lower School			
			
Ms D'Silva (Assistant Head and Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer for Lower School, Level 3)	Ms Lemposzek (Head of Welfare & Behaviour, Deputy DSO for Lower School, Level 3)	Mr Gibbs (Humanities & PSHE Teacher, Deputy DSO for Lower School, Level 3)	Ms Camilleri (Executive Head, CEOP Ambassador and Deputy DSO, Level 3)
Upper School			
			
Mr Lamb (Deputy Head and Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer for Upper School, Level 3)	Ms Young (Head of School and Deputy DSO, Level 3)	Ms Young (Assistant Head and Deputy DSO, Level 3)	Ms Camilleri (Executive Head, CEOP Ambassador and Deputy DSO, Level 3)

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