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Principal: Mr Nigel Jones

Tuesday 28 September 2021

Dear parents, carers and families,

Follow-up letter to CEO's communication regarding closure process of High Weald Academy (HWA)

By now I am sure you will have read about the "Listening Exercise Pack" sent yesterday regarding the closure process of HWA and the fact that all pupils (except for Year 11s) have places already made available for them at Leigh Academies Trust's (LAT's), Mascalls Academy - a resolutely good secondary school that is in Paddock Wood (11 miles from Cranbrook).

Whilst I as HWA Principal fully understand these developments will come as a shock to all families my role now is to provide further information which helps you make decisions based on well-informed facts.

I will also be a key person in helping answer questions that will undoubtedly arise as we all move forward during this academic year.

Confirmation of proposed next steps

LAT is beginning a listening period on the full closure plan for HWA by 31 August 2022. This follows a substantive decision by the Secretary of State for Education that HWA's funding agreement should be terminated and the school should close, subject to a final agreement of the closure plan.

How will this affect my son/daughter?

*I need to first stress that the Minister of State has decided that HWA **will close** for Year 10 at end of Term 2 2021 and for **all pupils** by end Term 6 2022. The subsequent 'listening process' that is being undertaken is about the DFE receiving feedback from all stakeholders with regards to the plan of how HWA will close. With all of this in mind, here is the intended plan as it stands right now for each year.*

Current Year 11s - all pupils will continue on as normal until the end of this academic year to prepare and then sit their GCSE exams at HWA. They will then leave at the end of the academic year and on to their next destination for further study.

Current Year 10s - Year 10 will close at the end of half-term 2 - in other words Year 10 provision will end at HWA at the end of December 2021. I am pleased to say that provision has been made for each one of our Year 10 pupils to move for a January start at the excellent Mascalls Academy in Paddock Wood and each pupil can complete their education there. Parents wishing to take up a place at an alternative school will receive further guidance later today from Kent or East Sussex Councils about how to do so.

Current Years 7, 8 and 9 - All pupils will continue at HWA until the end of this academic year and in the same way as for Year 10 pupils, LAT has ensured each pupil has a place available for them at the excellent Mascalls Academy from September 2022. As in the case of Year 10s, each Year 7, 8 and 9 pupil once they have joined Mascalls, will be able to stay there to complete their education. Like Year



10, parents wishing to seek a place at an alternative school to Mascalls should follow the advice which will be received in the letter from Kent or East Sussex Councils after 2pm today.

I can also confirm that I will lead an assembly for all pupil groups this morning. The assemblies will be organised on the basis of Years 7-9 meeting as a Key Stage and Years 10 and 11 having separate assemblies. This way I intend to both confirm the information now in the public domain, answer any immediate questions from pupils and **issue each pupil with a QR code** that will link to a questionnaire where they can table their own questions which Mr Monk or myself can then answer thus giving each pupil their own voice.

Year 10 assemblies and parents' meeting

The reason for closing Year 10 and moving pupils at the end of this December is so that pupils can have the longest possible preparation at Mascalls for their GCSE exams in 2023 and remain together as a year group. This will amount to five full terms at Mascalls to give them the best chance to settle into their new school and engage with their studies so they can maximise their grades. If they moved in September 2021, when it would be the start of their Year 11, then they would experience much more disruption and have much less time still available to settle in and prepare at Mascalls for their GCSE exams.

As time is of the essence for our Year 10s, I will be sending a separate Year 10 letter today with dates and times where:

- Myself and Mr Monk (Mascalls Principal) will meet our Year 10 pupils;
- Mr Monk and I will offer a Year 10 parents' information evening to give you the chance to ask questions; and
- You and your son/daughter will be able to book slots to visit Mascalls to familiarise yourself with the site, staff and expectations.

Years 7, 8 and 9

Once we have started the information process with our Year 10 pupils and parents we will repeat the process for Years 7, 8 and 9 and I will write to you by the end of this week about these events. This will include assemblies for pupils, open events for parents and opportunities to visit Mascalls. It is anticipated that the visits to Mascalls will take place later across Term 1 and Term 2.

School admissions process and transport.

I can assure all parents and families that LAT has liaised extremely closely with the local councils and the DfE regarding admissions processes and transport to pupils' new settings. Thus, I know your local authority will be in touch with you today to outline the information, support and guidance they will be providing in each of these areas. Following that, I will work closely with families to ensure transport arrangements are in place from January for Year 10 pupils and for Years 7, 8 and 9 Kent-based pupils in September. **The date you will need to accept or reject the offer of a place at Mascalls Academy is Friday 22nd October.**

Uniform

LAT has gone to great lengths to work with the DfE to make this move a cost neutral one for all parents. Thus I am pleased to say that should a pupil in **any year group 7-10** move to Mascalls, all uniforms will be provided free of charge using the following boy/girl list as below. Details of how to purchase these items and receive reimbursement will follow shortly.

Parents choosing to seek an alternative school place other than Mascalls will also be given support to purchase new uniforms. Arrangements for this should be made separately with your child's new alternative school.

Girls' uniform given free should a pupil transfer to Mascalls Academy.	Boys' uniform given free should a pupil transfer to Mascalls Academy.
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Blazer	Blazer
Jumper	Jumper
Blouse twin pack x 2	Tie
Skirt x 2	Trousers x 2
PE Polo	PE Polo
PE Skirt	Rugby Shirt
PE jumper	Shorts
PE leggings	PE jumper
	Socks

Getting in touch

Should parents, carers or families have questions related to the topics and content in the above, please write in the first instance to eng@highwealdacademy.kent.sch.uk

Relevant members of HWA's Senior Leadership team will then respond to your question/enquiry.

Yours faithfully



Nigel Jones
Principal