



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

FRIDAY 9TH MAY 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

What a truly wonderful week it has been here at Higham Lane School!

The behaviour and attitude to learning across the school has been exemplary. Earlier this week, I had the pleasure of showing a Headteacher from another highly successful school, similar to HLS, around our facilities. She was incredibly impressed by the high standard of learning and teaching she observed, the positive behaviour and attitude of our students, and the excellent calibre of the work being produced. This external validation is a real testament to the hard work of our amazing students and staff.

Fun in the sun

It has also been fabulous to see our students enjoying the dry weather during lunchtimes, making the most of the field and our new sports equipment and table tennis tables. Today, I had the privilege of supervising students on the tennis court at break time and thoroughly enjoyed watching a fantastic game of volleyball and an energetic football match in the glorious sunshine. The students were clearly having a great time with their friends.

VE Day

As you will be aware, Thursday 8th May marked the 80th anniversary of VE Day. To ensure all our students understood the significance of this important historical event, our fantastic History Department created a dedicated lesson which was delivered during Wednesday's Personal Development session. Furthermore, our students brilliantly observed the national two-minute silence on Thursday to remember those who gave their today for our tomorrow. We are also incredibly proud of the amazing murals our students have created, honouring the real people who sacrificed their lives for our freedom.



Exams

This week also saw our first large cohort examinations for GCSE, with the Drama exam on Thursday and the Sociology and Business exams today. I have spoken to many of the students who sat these exams, and it sounds like they have got off to a flying start, all of their hard work and revision is clearly paying off! We wish all our Year 11 students the very best of luck for their GCSE examinations next week, which include GCSE Biology and GCSE Maths which are of course subjects taken by every Year 11 student. We are also thinking of our A-level students who have their first big examinations next week and extend our very best wishes to them too. You've got this Year 11 and Year 13!!

Feeling Safe

The safety and well-being of every child at Higham Lane School is paramount. I was recently very concerned to read a Fisher Family Trust report highlighting that only 40% of girls in the UK felt safe at school before the pandemic, and this number has sadly fallen to just 26% nationwide post-pandemic. This statistic is simply shocking and underscores the importance of our ongoing work in this area.

At HLS, we utilise a range of strategies to foster a safe environment for all our students. This includes theatre productions and sessions on anti-bullying and online safety, dedicated assemblies, our tutor time programme, weekly Personal Development lessons and bespoke interventions where needed, to proactively reduce incidents that may make our female students feel unsafe. Encouragingly, a recent HLS student survey indicated that the vast majority of our female students do feel safe at Higham Lane School. However, if you have any concerns that your child does not feel safe in school, please do not hesitate to contact us so we can offer appropriate signposting and support. We are committed to ensuring every child feels secure and supported within our school community.

You can find more information on the national context here:

<https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2025/04/the-rise-of-teenage-girls-feeling-unsafe-at-school/>

Virtual Reality (VR) Headsets

We are excited to be offering our students the opportunity to use VR headsets on a rolling basis as part of violence and knife crime workshops run by the police. These immersive experiences provide realistic scenarios where students can pause, reflect and discuss how they might handle different situations to ensure their safety. This innovative approach allows for valuable learning and discussion in a safe and engaging environment. I was speaking to the police officers today who are leading the sessions and the feedback from our students has been incredible in relation to the VR sessions.

Year 10 Calling it Out Theatre Production

All Year 10 students will be participating in a powerful theatre production and workshops led by the Loudmouth Theatre Company on Tuesday 13th May. This important initiative focuses on crucial topics such as harmful sexual behaviours, sexual harassment, sexual assault, pornography, consent and misogyny. We believe this will provide our students with valuable insights and promote respectful relationships.

Safeguarding and Online Safety

Our staff received expert training this week on harmful online content, with a particular focus on ideologies such as 'incels'. This training equips our staff to be more aware of potentially concerning remarks from students or worrying content in their work, enabling us to take appropriate steps to help protect students who may be at risk. We have also further trained staff on the procedures to follow to support students who may be vulnerable.

The UK Safer Internet Centre offers valuable advice for parents and carers regarding online safety. They recommend talking to your child about responsible phone use, discussing what to do if something upsetting or worrying happens online, and exploring parental controls and monitoring phone usage to ensure your child's safety. You can find further information on their website:

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers/phones>

Roadworks and punctuality to school

Please be aware that there are a significant number of roadworks starting next week on Higham Lane and in the town centre which will increase the amount of traffic in the local area. If you are driving your child to school, please ensure you give extra time to avoid the additional traffic and consider dropping your child off at a safe point away from the school site and allow them to walk the rest of the journey to school.

Due to the roadworks and the Year 11 Examinations, we will have both Brookdale Road and Higham Lane entrances open on Monday morning to support students with getting to school on time. Our school site is open from 8:15 am and we expect all students to be on site for 8:35 am so they are ready for line up with their form tutor on the playground at 8:40 am.

Thank you for your support with this matter.

Finally, I wish you all a wonderful weekend. I hope you are able to enjoy the amazing weather that is forecast for the weekend and I look forward to seeing more volleyball, football, tables tennis and swingball at break and lunch next week in the glorious sunshine!

Yours sincerely,



Michael Gannon
Headteacher
Higham Lane School

Year 11 and 12 Students

For students taking their A Level and GCSE Exams, the Exams Department has posted an infographic, "JCQ Information for Candidates" onto the students Google Classroom. This sheet has information around using Social media and examinations/assessments. It discusses the importance that students know not to buy exam papers online. Whether they're real or fake, they will not help them and could result in strict penalties. Please can your child look at this ahead of the exams.



Wishing all students best wishes for these exams.

**Year 12 Student Progress Evening is on Thursday 15th May
therefore school will finish at 2.15pm on this day.**

Dates for your diary

Monday 5th May 2025 - Bank Holiday - School Closed
Wednesday 14th May 2025 - Year 9 Meningitis Vaccinations
Thursday 15th May 2025 - Year 12 Student Progress Evening
Monday 26th - Friday 30th May 2025 - Half Term Holiday



115,530



109,638



109,197