*As we prepare for the long-awaited school return next week, this is an appropriate time to congratulate the children and their parents on managing lessons at home so well over the last seven weeks. But let us also express our gratitude to the teachers and support staff who have gone far and beyond the call of duty to support all the children and guide them through this difficult period.* *As ever at Hall Grove, cheerfulness and positivity have been in abundance, together with large doses of TLC.*

*Among our ‘unsung heroes’ are those who have worked their way through endless policies and procedures, and have set up and run a very efficient Hall Grove testing centre, successfully administering over 500 Covid tests. As one parent put it, ‘I am in awe of what they have done’.*

*The pandemic has been a really challenging time for so many people. We can only hope that the worst is behind us now and that the country can get back to work once more. Monday will be a great first day back to normality for Hall Grove. Good luck everyone!*

**Restarting Childhood**

Not for the first time, Michael Deacon writing in the Daily Telegraph expresses what every parent must feel.

“Above all else,” he says about his six-year-old son, “home schooling is so lonely. He hasn’t been to school since mid-December. Which means he hasn’t seen, played with or spoken to another child in almost three months.”

What children have missed most, he says, is not the academic time but the social, so it’s not the lessons but play time that they need to catch up on.

“They need to relearn how to make friends, how to chat, how to have fun;” says Deacon. “Let them run free in the playground. Let them be children again.”

He has a point.

**Scholarship News**

Congratulations to Millie Barlow, who has been awarded an academic scholarship to both King Edward’s, Witley and Lord Wandsworth College.

**Testing for Household Members of School Staff and Pupils**

The government has recently announced that it will offer household members of school staff or school pupils the opportunity to undertake regular lateral flow device (LFD) testing. This does not change the testing arrangements we have already put in place. Hall Grove has been offering testing to staff since January and, in accordance with the guidance for the return of all pupils on 8 March, has now extended this to pupils in years 7 and 8, and all staff including the caterers and cleaners. These tests will continue to be arranged by school.

However, household members, and members of a support or childcare bubble, of school staff or pupils can now obtain twice-weekly LFD testing. We would urge all members of the school community to take part as it is the best way to reduce the risk of transmission at Hall Grove and in the wider community. If you wish to do so, please follow the instructions in the guidance which can be found at<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff?priority-taxon=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae>

**Timings of School Day**

The school day will operate in the same way as last term, with some minor alterations to collection times as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year Group** | **Drop Off** | **Collection** |
| Pre-School | 0815-0845 | 1500 (Netball Courts) |
| Reception | 0815-0845 | 1510 (Netball Courts) |
| 1 | 0830-0845 | 1510 (Lighthouse) |
| 2 | 0830-0845 | 1520 (Lighthouse) |
| 3 | 0815-0830 | 1540 (Lighthouse) |
| 4 | 0815-0830 | 1550 (Netball Courts) |
| 5 | 0730-0745 | 1610 (Lighthouse) |
| 6 | 0730-0745 | 1620 (Netball Courts) |
| 7 | 0800-0815 | 1640 (Lighthouse) |
| 8 | 0800-0815 | 1650 (Lighthouse) |

Please stick rigidly to these collection times and do not leave your car.

We ask that siblings are collected at the earlier time, other than when parents consider that they have sufficient time to make a separate return journey. Should you wish to collect your older child with your younger one, please let both teachers know. We appreciate that for older pupils this may lead to the loss of a small amount of curriculum time.

**Music**

**Concerts**

Lower Juniors’ delighted us with their concert this week with over 19 performances! Each musician is highly commended for their performance – you certainly did yourselves proud. If you would like to watch the concert, please [click here.](https://vimeo.com/user5714765/review/519008170/3fc2fe2ae2)

Year 6 have been sending in their performances this week, and Miss Post will be able to share this with you all next week.

Year 1 & 2 Concert

A date for this concert which will take place in school will be sent out shortly.

**Exams**

A timetable for the ABRSM exams on the 20th March has now been sent out. If there are any problems with this please contact music@hallgrove.co.uk as soon as possible.

**Choirs**

From Monday 8th we will revert back to individual year group choirs at the following times.

*Mondays*

* 0730 - 0800: Year 5 Choir
* 1230 - 1300: Year 4 Choir

*Thursdays*

* 0800 - 0830: Seniors’ Choir
* 1230 - 1300: Year 3 Choir

*Fridays*

* 0730 - 0800: Year 6 Choir

**IAPS Art Competition**

Mrs Foley is seeking entries for the Prep Schools annual Art Competition from any child from Year 1 to Year 8. It can be of any subject and in any media and will need to be submitted by 18th March. It must be their own unaided work and can be submitted digitally to c.foley@hallgrove.co.uk

**Sport**

**Skipping workshop**

Well done to all the children for the effort and enjoyment they showed whilst taking part in the skipping workshop, and thank you for the lovely feedback. It was certainly a successful day. Skipping is a great activity for developing fitness for all sports, but on its own it is just fun to do and learn new tricks. We will be including skipping in games and PE sessions to help develop fitness, co-ordination and spatial awareness.

**Games lessons Years 3 - 8**

When we return to school on the 8th March, the girls will be playing netball as their main sport in games. The boys will be playing both rugby and hockey. They will require mouthguards and shin pads for hockey (Years 3 –8), mouthguards are also required for rugby in Years 4 - 8. There is no need to buy new hockey sticks, the school has an ample supply. Should your child wish to bring in a stick, it must be clearly named and will be stored in the classroom (Years 3 – 6) and the boot area of the changing rooms (Years 7 and 8).

**Children should come to school in sports kit on their Games days, but not on PE days.**

Years 3 and 4 Winter sports kit - Tuesday and Friday

Years 5 and 6 Winter sports kit - Wednesday and Thursday

Years 7 and 8 Winter sports kit - Monday and Friday

All pupils will need a pair of trainers kept at school for outdoor use and the boys will require a pair of football/rugby boots for their games sessions.

**Saturday Sport**

The dates and timings are below. Boys will need mouthguards, shin pads and hockey sticks for these sessions.

**London to New York**

Congratulations to all the pupils in Years 3-8 and the staff who contributed to a hugely successful virtual race from London to New York. The staff put in a particularly impressive shift, cycling, running and walking their way to the longest distance covered. The race was very tight between all four houses, with Kestrels eventually emerging victorious following a tight battle throughout at the top of the leaderboard, but even they could not close the gap to the staff. We hope it has helped to keep everyone active during lockdown!

Final results as follows:

London to New York (5567 km)

Staff – 6105 km

Kestrels – 5680 km

Falcons – 4768 km

Hawks – 4656 km

Eagles – 4127 km

**Update from the Garden**

Well, Spring is definitely in the air and some recent warm weather has been a welcome respite from the frost and snow of previous weeks. I’ve had to evict two large bumble bees from the conservatory today who were getting very agitated. These are queens who are out on sunny (and even not so sunny) days foraging for food. They are particularly fond of the winter honeysuckle which has been out for some time and if you’re lucky enough to have apricots, peaches, and plum trees then they too will soon be in blossom along with the cherries.

If the weather becomes dull and cold and you do not see any bees on your blossom, then find an old paintbrush or even make-up brush and simply ‘paint’ each flower in turn. This brushes the pollen from the male anthers onto the sticky female stigma and will pollinate the flowers, which is essentially what our bees are doing for us. That way, you should improve your chances of some delicious fruit later in the year.

The school driveway is about to erupt into a sea of yellow daffodils which will greet you on Monday when school re-opens. If you venture outside the cabins, you will see the most beautiful carpet of crocus under one of our mature oak trees. Be quick though as they only open on sunny days in spring. Truly a feast for the eyes.

Mrs Buckler.

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The following documents can be found on the school website, under the parent information tab:

* Senior Schools Open Mornings Information