


School Leadership Messages:	Contents							
<p>Industrial Action: Update</p> <p>Strikes next week: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday</p> <p>The Co-Headteachers spent two days this week negotiating with the NEU, supported by ACAS. Regrettably, the talks were only partially successful. While we believe we have found a way to settle the dispute with the support staff who are members of the NEU, we have not yet managed to persuade the NEU to postpone the industrial action while talks continue. We have given more detail in the Co-Heads' message below.</p> <p>We understand that this situation will cause concern, and we appreciate your patience and understanding. We want to assure you that the schools involved are acting in response to the funding challenges we are facing. We are striving to balance the need to address these financial constraints with our priority to provide the best possible education for our students while also being mindful of staff workload. For those parents who did not see it, the Schools Week article of 28th February here presents a balanced view of the situation.</p> <p>In the meantime, we will continue to do everything we can to try to resolve this issue including attending further meetings, chaired by ACAS.</p> <p>We are very open to representations and discussion with our staff and therefore remain hopeful that a resolution can be reached.</p> <p>We will continue to keep you updated on any developments and will provide further information as soon as it becomes available. Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding.</p> <p>We will be informing parents of the more detailed arrangements for the strike days on Monday.</p>	CoHeads' Weekly Roundup							
	School Notices							
	Departmental News & Notices							
	Safeguarding Information							
	Calendar							
	<table> <tr> <td>11.03</td><td>Friends of Fortismere PTA Launch event 7pm SW Hall</td></tr> <tr> <td>16.03</td><td>Fortismere Community Symphony Orchestra Concert 7pm St Andrew's N10 2DD</td></tr> <tr> <td>19.03</td><td>Y12 Parents' Evening 3.45pm-6pm</td></tr> <tr> <td>19.03</td><td>School photographer visiting for photos of students Y7-Y11</td></tr> </table>	11.03	Friends of Fortismere PTA Launch event 7pm SW Hall	16.03	Fortismere Community Symphony Orchestra Concert 7pm St Andrew's N10 2DD	19.03	Y12 Parents' Evening 3.45pm-6pm	19.03
11.03	Friends of Fortismere PTA Launch event 7pm SW Hall							
16.03	Fortismere Community Symphony Orchestra Concert 7pm St Andrew's N10 2DD							
19.03	Y12 Parents' Evening 3.45pm-6pm							
19.03	School photographer visiting for photos of students Y7-Y11							
	 <p>FCSO FORTISMERE COMMUNITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA</p> <p>WAGNER Prelude and Liebestod from Tristan und Isolde</p> <p>ELGAR Sea Pictures</p> <p>BRAHMS Symphony No.1</p> <p>MEZZO SOPRANO ANNABELLA-VESELA ELLIS CONDUCTOR THOMAS GREGORY</p> <p>SUNDAY 16TH MARCH 2025 AT 7 PM</p> <p>ST ANDREW'S CHURCH N10 2DD STANDARD £16 EARLY BIRD £13 STUDENTS/YOUTH £8 BOOK ONLINE: www.fortismerecommunitycentre.co.uk</p>							
	See the Music Centre Notice inside for a special offer on this concert							

Co-Headteachers

Weekly Roundup

Our week has been dominated by the rounds of talks with the NEU and ACAS. We began on Monday with all of the five schools involved in the dispute in one of the Haringey Council offices. We had already made offers to mitigate the increased workload before the first strike last Thursday so the aim of this meeting was to add detail to these offers. As this is a process of negotiation, we were anticipating that our offers would be matched by the counter offer of postponing this week's strikes. That was indeed the case at Hornsey School for Girls but sadly, the Fortismere staff were less willing to agree to this.

The crux of the dispute is the increase of class sizes at KS3 to 30, while retaining smaller groups in the other two key stages (as outlined in last week's Newsletter). This would mean that three out of seven year groups would have the extra numbers. As we have explained before, the DfE rebuild will be based on 30 per class and the DfE do not deviate from this so we have no option but to agree, even if our financial position were stronger. In addition, we need to increase our contact ratio for teachers to 84%, entailing an extra lesson per week. This does equate to extra work so we are in favour of finding ways to offset this. We were very surprised when the Haringey NEU suggested that an alternative to the increased teaching would be to remain at 80% but reduce the expense by reducing our curriculum offer (i.e. the range of subjects that we deliver at Fortismere) and make the teachers of either less popular or more niche subjects redundant. This would also involve the loss of some support staff. We value both our curriculum and our staff and would be loath to make any individual redundant. We had suggested the extra teaching to avoid redundancy and would be very surprised if our staff voted to lose any of their colleagues.

The other two issues revolve around teachers covering for absent colleagues and the workload for teachers and support staff. All schools agree to 'rarely' cover which means that we should only call on our teachers in extreme circumstances. We reconfirmed our commitment to this (we already have a robust and NEU-agreed protocol covering this) and added that we would offer time off in lieu for any teachers who undertake a cover above their curriculum allocation.

To reduce teachers' workload and to respond to the DfE request to look at more flexible ways of working we have devised a number of solutions to complement what we already offer. We have said we will recommend to governors and consult with parents on extending the Autumn half term to two weeks, in line with a number of schools in North London. We will also consider either an early finish or late start for our KS3 parents' evenings (we have 5) in addition to the late starts we already do at the start of each half term. We would offer a 'wellbeing' day to all of our staff and where the timetable allows, teachers would be able to plan lessons off-site.

All of these mitigations have been on the table since before the first strike and we know that NEU members are interested in the offer, but unfortunately not to the extent that they will postpone the strikes while we consult with governors and parents. From the perspective of the school leadership this is a shame: the nature of negotiations is that our offer cannot remain open while NEU members continue to strike; the offer is contingent on strikes being postponed.

At the moment the NEU has asked us to explore with Governors the possibility of retaining the 80% ratio with redundancies and changing the Fortismere curriculum. We will discuss this with governors at an Extraordinary Governors Meeting next week. We hope to follow this with more talks.

Thank you all for your continued support and we will keep you updated.

International Women's Day

FemSoc 9th International Women's Day Event

On Thursday evening, the A Level Feminist Society (FemSoc) once again hosted its annual International Women's Day event - now in its ninth consecutive year! Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, this tradition persevered, moving online to continue the important discussions around women's rights and experiences. The event also served to raise money for [Mind in Haringey's Generation Girls service](#).

This year's event featured an incredible line up of speakers, both internal and external, each bringing a unique perspective on gender equality, activism, and historical narratives. The speakers included: **Natasha Forde** (Mind in Haringey); **Dawn Barnes** (Haringey Liberal Democrat Councillor); **Jess Kelly** (Documentary Director); **Lara Kennedy** (Marketing Associate at ivee, former Fortismere student); **Catherine West** (Labour MP for Hornsey and Friern Barnet); **Lydia, Claudia and Nadia** (Year 13 Students); **Ms De Freitas** (Fortismere History Teacher); **Ms Common** (Fortismere Director of Sixth Form)

Throughout the evening, attendees were treated to thought-provoking talks covering a diverse range of topics, from Anne Hathaway (Shakespeare's wife) to documentary film making in Iraq. The successful event was a testament to the power of student leadership, showcasing the dedication and organisational skills of the student team behind it. A massive congratulations to the student organisers for their contributions to making the evening such a success: Annabelle, Faustine, Claudia, Nadia, Harry, Olivia, Beatrice, Mia.

One of the many highlights of the evening was a poem written and presented by Lara Kennedy, which she has agreed to let us share below. Jess Kelly also screened a few minutes of her BBC documentary *Under Poison Skies*, which can be watched in full on YouTube [via this link](#)

A huge thank you to everyone who participated, attended, and supported this incredible event. If you weren't able to attend this year, make sure to mark your calendars early for next year's International Women's Day!

*Sorry, what was that? Do I know the gender pay gap?
Yeah man, me and him we go way way way back.*

*It's funny that you should ask, I think I saw him week before last.
In a comment section, he discredited feminism for attention.
But hey, where else would he be? That's Classic gendy p.*

*Now when did we first meet - was it year 5?
The boy next to me, he asked for more golden time.
He got it of course, having asked in full force.
While we sat figuring out 10 times 9.*

*No no, can't have been... must've been 1918
200 years after England's first democracy
It's not been that long, since they first let us make sound
But gender pay gap, he always found a way to get round.*

*Might it have been in 10 years time? I just had my first child, all mine.
Begging my husband to take his full enhanced leave
"But babe John at work only took 2 weeks, so did Steve"*

*Or is it in 40 years, after divorce of course,
He has quadruple my pension, having worked the full course.
Me? I'll have to work past retirement.
Provided someone finds me suitable for hirement.*

*Or maybe we met during COVID19.
By then, he was going by the Gendy P.
The TikTok comments said he didn't exist
Have we an imagined experience? Is there something we've missed?*

*A percent in a headline is hardly conducive
To a person a subject a phrase so elusive
Oh gender pay gap, a definition you'll ever lack
Your mystery keeping us just one step back.*

Friends of Fortismere PTA

Reminder: Friends of Fortismere PTA Launch Event – Tuesday 11th March 7pm SW Hall

Don't miss our launch event next week where you can hear what a small group of parents has been doing to set up a new PTA - Friends of Fortismere! We want to bring parents and carers together, run fantastic fundraising events, and help strengthen the school community for the benefit of all students.

Please come along on Tuesday to listen, meet other parents, and find out more - there is no pressure to sign up or commit to anything. We're running a small start-up fundraiser with a cashless bar so you can have a drink and support the new PTA. If you'd like to attend or to simply register your interest in the PTA, **please [fill in this form](#)** Looking forward to seeing you on the 11th March

Friends of Fortismere PTA

Governing Board

Admissions Policy - Consultation on Sixth Form A Level Entry Requirements

Following a period of consultation earlier this year, we are writing to let you know of our final decision on whether to change the above policy as proposed, for entry into Fortismere Sixth Form from September 2026. In December, we issued a draft Admissions policy, in which we proposed to alter the base threshold for entry to the Sixth Form A level pathway, from 5 x GCSE Grade 5s or above, to an average point score of 5.5 across the best 8 GCSE grades.

Some responses to the consultation were very supportive, particularly citing Fortismere's long record of high academic standards and outcomes. Some responses however, were concerned that a 'raising of the bar' clashes with our aspiration to be the most inclusive school possible, as some students might no longer be qualified to enter the A Level pathway. Parents of students with additional needs were particularly concerned about the proposed change.

Governors have thought hard about this, working with our CoHeads and school leaders in coming to our

decision. As a result, Governors have decided to defer any change to our current Admissions policy. We will return to this in the Autumn of this year, when we will have the benefit of another year of student achievement to learn from, and perhaps some more clarity around Government policy concerning non A-level pathways and qualifications. The Admissions policy for 2026 will remain unchanged.

Thank you to the parents and carers that responded to the consultation and provided feedback.
Fortismere Governors

Music Centre Notices

A Proper Symphony Orchestra Concert - 16th March 7pm at St Andrew's N10

Yes, our orchestra IS a proper, full size, so-good-it's-practically-professional orchestra! Don't be fooled into thinking that Fortismere's Symphony Orchestra isn't the real deal - come along to the concert on Sunday 16th and find out for yourself and if you're not amazed, you can ask for your money back!!

Advance tickets £13 from www.fortismeremusiccentre.co.uk, £16 on the door and FREE for Fortismere students with code FORTSTUDENT25.

Student Health

Year 9 DTP/MEN Vaccinations - 10th March 2025

A reminder that the second session of Y9 DTP/MEN vaccinations will take place next week on Monday 10 March. Please remind your child to attend their allocated time slot to ensure they receive their vaccination. If consent has not been provided, your child will remain in their lesson as usual. The schedule is in alphabetical order of surname as follows:

09.15-09.40am	Surnames M
09.50am-10.40am	Surnames N - O - P
11.10am-12.00pm	Surnames Q- R - S
12.00pm-1.00pm	Surnames T - U - V
2.00pm-3.00pm	Surnames W - X - Y - Z

Maths Department News

History Architecture and Geometry

Year 8 students had a fantastic trip to St. Paul's Cathedral last week, where they explored its architecture, history, and enjoyed breath-taking views of London. The visit began with an engaging workshop on architectural engineering, where students explored the challenges of building a stable dome. They experimented with different techniques to understand how Sir Christopher Wren's masterpiece has stood the test of time. They also explored the sacred geometry behind the cathedral's design and saw how geometry and symmetry contribute to both the beauty and strength of the building. A highlight was climbing to the

Whispering Gallery and then up to the Golden Gallery, where they enjoyed stunning panoramic views of the city. It was an inspiring day of learning and discovery—well done to all our students for their enthusiasm!



PE & Sports Notices

Year 7 Girls Reach the Cup Final!

Our Y7 girls team travelled to JCoss in Barnet this week for the semi final of the Chris Ampofo Shield. Both teams got off to a strong start and were evenly matched but Fortismere were very determined and Eta scored a great goal to put the team ahead. Our advantage didn't last long and JCoss came back quickly and scored just a few minutes later. Eta and Hannah worked well together and managed to put Fortismere ahead again but by half-time it was level at 2-2 after their Arsenal player weaved through our defence and scored a great goal. We shored up the defence in the second half and Jessie, Ariel and Eilidh were all strong and made some fine tackles to gain possession. Fortismere were getting chances but couldn't convert them. With only 10 minutes to go, JCoss scored to take the lead and it started to get stressful but our captain Eta was brilliant and kept everyone calm, focussed and motivated. This paid off as Sharon managed to weave through the JCoss defence and put the ball into the left corner of the net! The game finished 3-3 and went straight to a penalty shoot out. Now it was stressful as both teams were level after all the penalties taking us to sudden death! Izzy was super cool and scored, their player missed and Ariel took on the pressure to blast the ball home. Fantastic team effort and we meet Channing in the final at the end of March.



Fortismere Win in Haringey Schools Basketball Week

Monday saw our Y10 boys playing against Greig City Academy, APS, Gladesmore, Highgate Wood, Woodside and St Tommy Moore. Our boys played well, Leon was brilliant as our captain and leader. They finished second in their group and unfortunately lost to GCA in the 3rd place playoff. Well done to all the squad.



On Tuesday it was the turn of the Y7 boys, who put in a great performance in the group stages and finished second. This meant a further match against the winners of the other group - APS. Our boys beat APS which put them into the final against Greig City - they played cohesively and with great determination and came away as winners and gold medalists! Well done all of you.



Local Handball Club Recruiting

Thank you to parent Sara Hall for sending us details of the Islington Handball Club. Handball is one of the sports that we offer at GCSE and if you are thinking of doing PE GCSE then this club is for you! It will be a great way to improve your skills, knowledge, game play and to compete for a local team. Training is in N7 near the Arsenal ground. More details on the website [here](https://www.islingtonhandball.com) or email management@islingtonhandball.com



Upcoming Fixtures & Extra Curricular

Next week's fixtures below and a reminder that you can find the details of all our extra curricular sports clubs and activities on the school website [here](https://www.islingtonhandball.com)

Mon 10/03	Y10 Girls Football v Channing @ Away
Tues 11/03	Y7/8 Girls Basketball @ APS 1.30-3.30 pm
Weds 12/03	Under 15 Hockey Tournament
Thurs 13/03	Y9/10 Girls Basketball @ APS. Y8 Boys v PVA @ Away meet at 1.30 pm Y7 Boys v Greig City @ Home

Library Notices

Library Visitors

For the fortnight around World Book Day we invite guests from around the school to come in to the library to talk about their reading journeys, books they've loved, books they're reading – to show our Year 7 and 8 students that it's not just librarians who read! Head of Science, Mr Hann, fascinated the students with his reading from Seventeen Equations that Changed the World (Ian Stewart) and we had a marvellous discussion about superheroes and radioactivity – all very pertinent as it's British Science Week next week. The books that our Director of Sixth Form, Ms Common, showed the students had a Canadian flavour and included her much loved and well-worn copy of The Blue Castle (LM Montgomery) and The Marrow Thieves (Cherie Dimaline) together with a plug for her sister's book (Lives of Desperate Girls by MacKenzie Common

– copy in the library!) Mr Ward read from *The Legend of Drizzt* (RA Salvatore) a fantasy series of 39 books which now encompasses Dungeons and Dragons board games.



As soon as ex-student librarian, Carnegie shadower and Head of Y12 Mr Lewis had finished reading the delightful opening pages of *The Little Prince* (Antoine de St Exupery, in translation) the book was borrowed; we loved hearing about his passion for historical fiction too. Mr Fari, head of our LInc department, spoke about the problems he had until his dyslexia diagnosis at the age of 16 – he shared some great strategies, including the use of audio books (see later) and reminded the students that reading is the single most important skill for life. Ms Judge, one of the Co-Heads, read *His Dark Materials* trilogy (Philip Pullman) when it was first published and shared the opening of *Northern Lights* with the students. She was another guest who extolled the virtues of audio books, perfect for busy lives.



Audio books

The latest research from the National Literacy Trust suggests that listening to audio could provide a gateway into reading and reading enjoyment for many children and young people. Not only that, but listening to audio

can help to support learning, creativity and wellbeing and provides opportunities for shared listening with families. [Read about the research here](#) We have a big range of audio CDs in the school library, but don't forget that if you're a member of your local library you can borrow from thousands audiobooks on Libby – free!

Recommended Reads of the Week

Counting down to British Science Week (7th-16th March), so our display of science themed books, fiction and non-fiction, is already out.



Fortismere Holiday Camps

Easter Holiday Camps - Now Booking

Bookings are now open for our Easter Holiday Camps. Bookings are for Week 1 (7th April) or Week 2 (14th April). There are lots of different activities on offer but book now as places fill up fast. See [this page](#) on our website for booking links.

Safeguarding at Fortismere

Safeguarding Contacts

If you wish to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead about any safeguarding matters or concerns please contact Ms Sullivan on safeguarding@fortismere.org.uk

Alternatively you can make a safeguarding referral using the My Voice [use this link](#) or the QR code

You can also contact your child's Head of Year or Pastoral Support Manager.

