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Bohunt Horsham Headteacher: Ms G Ayling BA (Hons)

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Dear family,

The Bohunt Horsham Family: our students, staff and families, have overcome all the problems a complicated build throws up, all the while maintaining an outstanding education and building our community. Here is a reminder of what we have experienced and how we have thrived, alongside an update of some issues we have yet to overcome.

The Bohunt Horsham story:

Upon request we opened in temporary accommodation in order to meet an urgent demand for places in the local area. To ensure a high quality of education we found ways around the many limitations: food technology, sports provision, outdoor classroom, hall/drama space. Our founding families placed their trust in us and we were full with a waiting list by October half term.

Disappointing delays to the new school site were announced in year one due to COVID and, of all things, newts. We were transparent and honest with our families, we knew there was a risk we would lose some - put off by waiting for the new building to be delivered but we remained full, in fact oversubscribed, with a waiting list. Furthermore, we worked with our developers to keep the delay to only three months through an innovative, 'phased completion' solution.

Despite having two lockdown closures in our first two years, as an iPad one to one school we adapted quickly to the demands of remote learning, our families were appreciative and the 'lost learning' that we heard so much of in the press was not an issue here; we kept up a full timetable with 95% of our students consistently engaging in their lessons all day, every day.

Not deterred by the delay to our move in date, we added eight new classrooms to our temporary accommodation, offering a full PAN (published admission number) of 240 places for the first time to our new Year 7 students. Our founding students in Year 9 started their GCSE courses and, with over twenty GCSE courses being taught, we are confident that our curriculum is broad.

How have we managed this? Through the support of our community. We have been supported by the most loyal and committed families. The loyalty and support comes from our brilliant Parent Reference Group and Local Governing Body but also at the school gates, on our social media pages and at our events. From volunteering to support mass on-site COVID testing to turning up and sitting on a judging panel, our families are always here when we need them. We have also had a huge amount of support from our local community, our MP Jeremy Quin, the Horsham Youth Centre, Pavilions in the Park, Crawley College and Collyers to name but a few of our staunchest supporters. And of course the Bohunt Education Trust and Department for Education who stand by our side at every step. It really does seem that through adversity we are forging an incredibly strong community, both within the school and beyond the school gates, who are truly committed to the future of our young people, of the school and of the community of Horsham, new and old.

A very constrained temporary school, a delayed delivery of our new school site, a global pandemic and yet the question we are most frequently asked? How do I ensure my child gets a place at Bohunt Horsham? The answer by the way is that our best advice is to put us as your first preference, last year all those that did were allocated a place!

We have all worked together to overcome these obstacles. Unfortunately, we need to call again upon the support of our community. **This term we face another hurdle to overcome.** The much anticipated and needed bridge across the A264, granting access for 90% of our current families who tell us that they plan to support Horsham's environment by walking, cycling or using public transport to get to school once we move in December 2021, is delayed. Legal and General, who hold the responsibility for providing the bridge as access to our school and to their own community, currently under development, are unable to source the steel required in time for our move.

Neither we, nor our families, nor our local community want the delay that Legal and General have incurred in delivering the bridge to cause delays to our move in date. It would be such a waste for our wonderful new school to sit dormant whilst we are stuck two miles away in our temporary school and so we have been working incredibly hard, alongside our local highways and transportation services and the Department for Education, to find and deliver a solution.

We have been through several iterations of planning, investigating the viability and suitability of various ideas and we have settled on a solution that we are currently seeking final approval for from Horsham planning and the Department for Education. The solution we hope to present to our families, once agreed, will be a safe, accessible and sensible solution to get families who should have been able to walk, cycle or get public transport routes to the new school site across the A264 without undue inconvenience. The bridge is now expected to be delivered by April 2022, so as the mornings and evenings become lighter and warmer our students will be able to access school the way that we, and they, intended.

I need to ask once more for your patience and your trust that I and the team around me are doing everything in our power to ensure that the solution to this problem is safe, effective and works for our community. I have to ask for your patience and your belief that as soon as I am able to share the details of this solution with you, I will.

I would like our current families to have a first look at the virtual tour of the new school site that we have put together for prospective families. Click [this link](#) to take a look.

Thank you, once again for your ongoing support.



Ms Ayling