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Bohunt Horsham Headteacher: Ms G Ayling BA (Hons)

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Dear families

I can hardly believe I am writing to you at the start of our fourth year; it is so exciting to be starting a full school year in our permanent home and to be welcoming our biggest intakes of both students and staff yet. There will be more information to pass to you as the new term gets underway but I wanted you to have these updates before next week.

Staff:

We are delighted to welcome twenty three new members of staff this term and they came in for a new staff day on Wednesday of this week to orient themselves and find answers to any questions they had.

All staff were in on Thursday and today to spend precious time planning for delivery of our curriculum and pastoral systems. On Monday we will welcome 240 new students into year 7, our fourth cohort. Then, on Tuesday, we welcome back almost 480 students in years 8, 9 and 10. Lessons begin on Wednesday so no specific kit beyond full school uniform and equipment is needed on those days. Please see below for some specific updates:

Catering:

Students in **Year 7** will be given time to register their biometrics (thumb print) to access the canteen and **all families** may now top up school catering accounts at <https://login.schoolgateway.com>. Our catering offer has expanded to accommodate the increased student numbers with an additional service point installed over the summer. The separate cold 'grab and go' till point is located in the dining hall and has been installed to ensure queuing time is kept to a minimum. We have also purchased a 'balance checker'. It is not yet compatible with our system so we will let you know as soon as it's up and running. Students in **Year 7** will be released slightly earlier than their peers to lunch this first half term to give them time to get used to the process of choosing their food and where to sit.

Uniform:

We are very excited to see students in our founding year group, starting **Year 10** this September, in their new uniform of a plain white shirt and Bohunt Horsham tie. Payment for school ties is now live on school gateway and all ties will be distributed on Tuesday morning if they have not already been collected. We are also building up an excellent stock of nearly new uniform so do get in touch with us if you have any items to donate.

CCTV:

Last academic year we were successful in the bid we submitted to Bohunt Education Trust for additional funding needed to install a broader and more comprehensive CCTV system in school. Alongside the majority of secondary schools in the UK, we use CCTV as an additional level of security to protect our students and staff. CCTV has always been in place in our exits and entrances in both the temporary and permanent schools but we now have additional cameras in stairwells, corridors and communal spaces both in and outside the building. Please be aware that access to these cameras is secure, password protected and only available to senior leaders in school. Any member of the senior leadership team that wishes to access the CCTV will be required to complete a request form that details the reason for that access. Students, wider staff and families will not be able to access the footage at any time. This is part of our commitment to data protection.

Access to the school site:

Those of you that have traveled on the A264 recently will have noticed updates to the access to school via the Rusper roundabout. Although work on the roundabout is still not yet complete, the roundabout itself is now fully accessible by car. This means that families who are dropping off their children to school no longer

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need to divert all the way to Great Daux or Moorhead roundabouts to access the school. I hope this will reduce the number of families dropping off/picking up in the Leamington Way area before and after school as this increased traffic has caused concern amongst local residents and families in terms of the risk it poses to those students and staff walking and cycling to and from school. At the start of term there is often a higher number of families picking up and dropping off by car so if you are planning to travel to school by car, please allow additional time for queuing.

Importance of attendance:

This year, more than any other, as we hope very much to see the back of the disruption to learning caused by the COVID 19 virus, I would like to stress the importance of school attendance. I know that our families understand how incredibly important school attendance is and we have seen far higher levels of attendance over the last year than has been reported nationally. I am very grateful to you all for this and I know the effort it takes to ensure such excellent levels of attendance. This year, when assessing your child's wellness for school, being mindful of how many in-person lessons they have all missed over the last two years will be key in supporting us to continue the COVID recovery journey we are on.

Cost of living crisis:

I am conscious that the coming year holds some potentially huge and worrying challenges for us all. Our school is facing consequences of the increased energy costs and will need to find ways to reduce our outgoings to manage to afford to fund those increases and I know so many of our families will also be worried or already feeling the effects of these changes. I am committed to doing all I can to support you and as I have said many times, we never want finances to be the obstacle that stops your child from having experiences, successes and making the memories that are so meaningful to them during their years with us. I will write to you again soon with further information about the ways in which we can help one another through this next crisis. We are a community and together we have faced many seemingly insurmountable challenges and I know we will need to lean on one another once again this winter.

Finally, I would like to leave you with a message I shared with all staff at the start of our INSET day on Thursday. What unites us as a staff is our shared values; we are all here because we believe in the power of education to transform young people's lives, to open doors for them and to help you in shaping them into the best possible people that they can be. I can say this with complete conviction because that is what made each and every one of my team stand out at interview and is the reason they were chosen. Every day, in a school of 720 students, my staff will make hundreds and thousands of decisions. When we get those decisions right, we do so on purpose. We make those decisions from a place of compassion and moral integrity. Sometimes, however, of course, we get it wrong. When this happens I know that it is by accident. Going into this year, with the struggles of COVID snapping at our heels and financial struggles threatening, I want us all to remember this. We want what you want for your child, so when we get it right it will be on purpose. When we get it wrong, it really will be by accident.

With best wishes

Ms Ayling
Headteacher