

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you have all had a lovely summer and that your child/children are ready to begin their new educational journey at The Priory School. I am the Assistant Head Teacher for Pastoral Care at The Priory and along with Miss Gresser (Head of Year 7) and Mr Freeland (Head of Key Stage 3), we are excited to welcome you to a new school year. I am writing to give you some key dates and information about the coming days and weeks.

### **First Day – Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September**

Firstly, please note that our incoming Year 7s, along with Year 13 students, are due in school on Tuesday next week, the 5<sup>th</sup> of September. All other Year groups begin on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September. This allows the new students time to settle into a few routines in school whilst having the site largely to themselves. Students should be in school by 8.50am in full school uniform and arrive at the front reception. Your child will meet their form tutor and be given the programme for the day. Please feel free to use the car park to facilitate your drop off. Please note that after this, we will ask that if you bring your child to school by car, that you drop them off outside the school gates or in the bottom section of the car park only. The school day will end at 3.30pm.

Your child will not need to bring a PE kit on the first day of school but may need to on subsequent days. This will be dependent on their timetable which they will receive on day 1. They should bring with them their school bag and a pencil case as they would have done in primary school.

Should your child wish to bring a mobile phone to school, they will need to hand this in on arrival. We will provide a plastic bag for them to label with their name and form group. Please encourage your child to keep and look after these bags – it is an expectation that phones are handed in in a plastic bag. Phones will be returned at the end of the day in the café.

Finally, during the first day, all Year 7 students will have their photograph taken. This is just for internal use but will also become their SMART card photograph for use in the café. Please encourage them to smile!

### **SMART cards & the Café**

During the whole of the first week (up to and including Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September), all Year 7 students will receive a free lunch. You may, of course, send your child to school with a packed lunch should you wish. We will show your children how to 'top-up' their smart cards in the first few days. Equally, you can top-up your child's SMART card at home via Parent-Pay. Your child will bring home details of how to log into this system. In the early weeks of term, we employ an early and staggered lunch for Year 7s to help them avoid any nerves about a busy café. Your child is very welcome to bring a snack to eat at break time and once their SMART cards are in use, they can buy snacks in the café at break too. Please note, we do not allow fizzy drinks, energy drinks or sweets in school.

### **Homework**

Please note that in the early weeks of term, Year 7 students will primarily only receive homework from their Maths, English and Science classes. This is to help break them into new routines gently. From October 1st, they will receive homework according to their homework timetable which will be given on day one. Your child will also be receiving their login details for Show My Homework – an online homework portal which you will also be able to access to view details of upcoming homework deadlines.

## **Subsequent Dates for Your Diary**

### **Year 7 Welcome Evening – Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September – 7pm – 8.30pm**

This is an opportunity for you to again meet your child's tutor and some key staff in the school. You will have an opportunity to give us some feedback regarding your child's early days at school to help us further improve the experience next year. Tutor groups KA, RF and RS will be welcome from 7pm and MH, RP, SF and JW from 7.30pm. There will be a glass of wine and some nibbles to have whilst meeting some other new parents. Please use our online booking system to book up to two places per family. To do this, please click onto the school website and then 'Online Services'. Select the 'Parents Evenings and Event Bookings' tab, fill in the required fields and then follow the link to the Information Evening. You will be able to reserve your places from 5pm on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September.

### **Year 7 Prefects Picnic – Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September 1-3pm**

The Sixth Form Prefects will host a picnic for the New Year 7s and their families on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September within the school grounds. The picnic will take place within the café, quad area and Sixth Form Study Centre with various indoor and outdoor activities being organised by the Prefect Team. This will be an opportunity for students and families to meet with each other and to take part in a range of team-building and fun activities. Some light refreshments will be available, but please bring a picnic to enjoy with your whole family.

### **Raising Aspirations Week – w/c 18<sup>th</sup> September**

Each year we hold a variety of events with the aim of exposing students of all ages to different opportunities open in and out of school and also thinking forward to career ideas. Mrs Emler coordinates these activities and throughout this week students will reflect on their primary school achievements and learn more about things they can get involved with throughout Year 7 and beyond at The Priory.

### **Year 7 Initial Appraisals**

You will be keen to know how your child is progressing in their classes in the first few weeks of term. To facilitate this, all Year 7s receive an Initial Appraisal on October 4th. This will give you some brief feedback from Maths, English and Science teachers as to your child's early progress and effort in class. You will receive more comprehensive feedback in subsequent progress checks and consultation evenings through the year.

### **CAT Tests**

From September 25th, all Year 7 students will take two CAT tests. These assessments are widely used across secondary schools to give an accurate current attainment level for your child as well as enabling us to produce accurate projections of expected future attainment throughout their school career. No preparation is needed for these assessments and your child should not be apprehensive as they approach.

Should you have any queries or concerns as your child starts secondary school, please do not hesitate to contact us. Your first port of call for academic issues should be the subject teacher and for pastoral issues, your child's tutor.

We very much look forward to welcoming you and your children to The Priory as they begin their secondary school adventure.

Yours sincerely,

Lawrence Foster