

21 September 2021
HHS Year 7



**THE
HESSE
ACADEMY**

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Dear parent/carers

After two weeks in school, I thought it appropriate to write to all parents of Year 7 students with an update on how they are settling into school and to provide you with information on how we are supporting their transition.

Firstly, we think they are wonderful! Each and every one of the teachers who has had the pleasure of teaching Year 7 classes has commented on their exemplary behaviour, hard work and the positive attitudes that they are demonstrating. We have had very few concerns with regard to their uniform and their attendance is the highest in the school. This doesn't happen by accident and so I would like to thank you for your support which has evidently fostered such positive endeavour.

Year 7 students have arrived at our school during a period of rapid growth. There are 250 students in the year group and, together with the increase in our Sixth Form numbers, this means that there are over 100 extra students on our site compared to a year ago. We are delighted with that and I can assure you that we have sufficient classrooms and teaching staff to handle the increase in numbers. It does take some time, however, to train our 1300 students on how they should move around the building, the canteen and the site in general and we have also learned some lessons on what works and what doesn't. Your child may well have come home and reported busy corridors and queues in the canteen and I apologise if this has caused them any concern. I can assure you that all of these spaces are fully supervised and monitored in order to keep the students safe and also to find more efficient ways of managing the flow of students.

Last week, we extended lunchtime for our Year 7s so that they will have 55 minutes. We anticipate that this will only be a temporary measure until such time as they grow accustomed to the canteen system and the choice of food available. Significant time can be saved if students know what choices are on offer each day so I would recommend that they take a look at the [canteen menu](#) in advance to save them from hopping between queues. We are also working with our canteen staff to monitor the demand for certain products so that they can better match their menu to student tastes, whilst also making sure that it is compliant with the food standards expected in school. In other words, if we offered chips everyday it would see the queues move along swiftly but it would not be legal!

At the start of each day, your child spends twenty minutes with their tutor group. This mixed ability setting enables them to get prepared for the day, sort out any missing equipment or uniform and to discuss the issues of the day or a personal development theme. This week they met the School Nurse and learned how she can support them if they encounter any health or emotional problems.



Once a week they have a year group assembly and it has been a pleasure to see them all in these assemblies and to address them as a whole group.

You will have your own chance to 'Meet the Tutor' on Thursday 7 October. This meeting will be held virtually using our School Cloud platform (more information to follow) and will give you and the tutor an opportunity to get to know one another and discuss how your child has settled in.

Your child is currently being taught in a teaching group based upon their ability profile as presented to us by their primary school. This is a starting point and it is common for students in Year 7 to move groups in order that we can place them in the group which is correct for them. To that end, all Year 7 students will undertake a Cognitive Ability Test (CAT) during the week commencing 27 September. Once these tests have been carried out and analysed any subsequent set changes will take place after half term.

In order that we can work together in full partnership for the benefit of your child, it is imperative that we have up to date contact details for you and so, if you have not returned your Data Collection Form to the school, please do so by return. We also encourage you to use our SIMS Parent software (an App can be downloaded); this will allow you to access up to date information about the school and will be the means by which we communicate with you with general Year 7 information. If you have not accessed this yet, please give us a call and we can assist with setting it up.

We are aware of the issues that parents are having with ParentPay. This is a nationwide problem and is proving to be very inconvenient for parents, students and schools alike. We are liaising with the company that provides this service and hope that it will be resolved as soon as possible. In the meantime, no child should be going without food because of a system problem so please encourage your child to speak to a member of staff if they have a problem caused by your funds not being transferred accurately.

Finally, all students will be using Google Classroom to access homework. Students have been shown how to use it during their ICT lessons and we have also put together a guide for parents which was emailed last week and can be found [here](#). If you continue to have any difficulty with accessing Google Classroom or other technologies, please contact the school.

I hope that this letter has proved to be useful and that your child is settling well into their new environment. If you are having any issues or have any questions regarding your child's adjustment to their new school, please contact us. We are here to help.

Yours sincerely



Mr V Groak
Headteacher