



6<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Cohort 7 Family

As we draw the first few days of term to a close, I would like to take the opportunity to tell you how well your children have done over the last two days. I am sure that, like me, you approached the start of term with some trepidation. As is often the case, we adults tend to underestimate how well children adapt and embrace challenges. I am pleased to say that they have done brilliantly. Over these two days, it has been an absolute joy to welcome them to the school. I would like to thank you all for choosing Honywood and entrusting us with your precious children. They certainly walked in with more confidence this morning.

The confidence of learners has been a stark contrast to the nervousness they were feeling prior to summer when many of the children were feeling apprehensive. Our community is quite unique in that many of our learners (over 40% of them) are the only one, or one of two, that came from their primary school. I see this as a positive as it helps us to create a sense of belonging for everyone much more effectively. Already I have seen children showing confidence in getting to know new people.

I hope that your children have spoken to you about their first two days and that it has helped to alleviate any worries for you as a parent, but also to begin to create a sense of belonging to our community for your child as well as your family. I hope that the information we have provided so far has helped with the transition process for you and your child. Please contact us if you have any concerns or questions – we do not always get everything right. A polite reminder that our 'meet the Learning Group Leader' evening will be taking place on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September. There will be an opportunity to meet your child's Learning Group Leader, Cohort Leader and members of the Leadership Team. Learners would have completed their full two-week timetable by this time.

One of the things that I love the most about working at Honywood is standing outside in the morning and greeting our learners as they arrive in school and speaking with them as they walk around at breaktime/lunchtime. It is the first step in getting to know the children individually and it certainly helps to brighten up my day. I can honestly say that I have had a great two days with this year's Cohort 7. The politeness, maturity and enthusiasm that I have seen has reinforced my love of working in a school. Education is about so much more than going to lessons and sitting exams. It is as much about developing character and growing the citizens of the future – now more than ever, we need them. From what I have seen, we are in safe hands.

Our Cohort 7 learners are very special and their transition into secondary school is a top priority. Research indicates that parents/carers consider the following to be of most importance during the primary to secondary school transition period: ensuring that their child feels a sense of belonging and the homework set for their child. In response to parental feedback, this year, we have created printed Independent Study (IS) booklets for each school term. Your child will be bringing home there IS booklets during their first week of school. Your child's IS booklets should be kept at home and your child will be instructed by their teachers to complete sections of it for their homework. The IS booklets are a knowledge organiser of key topics that learners have been covering during their lesson time. Once your child has completed their homework, they should take a picture of it and upload it to Google Classroom - their teachers will support them with this. This will allow teachers to monitor your child's understanding of a topic. Once your child's IS booklet is complete, it should then be brought back into school to support preparation for end of topic assessments. Following your child's end of topic assessment, they will be issued with a new IS booklet for the next study period.

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I have really enjoyed getting back into school and returning to learning. Please keep an eye out for our weekly Headlines which will be sent to you by email and are also available on our school website. This will be our main way of communicating with you what has been going on in school. You can also keep tabs on us through via our social media such as our Facebook page. We try to use this platform to give you an authentic eye into day to day life here at Honeywood so you feel as connected to the learning community as you did in primary school.

I am looking forward to seeing your children blossom over the weeks and months ahead. I am sure they would love to keep the school to themselves but we must bring the rest of the learners back on Monday.

During the summer transition I shared a quote from Chef Gusteau from my favourite Disney movie, Ratatouille:

*"You must be imaginative, strong-hearted. You must try things that may not work, and you must not let anyone define your limits because of where you come from. Your only limit is your soul."*

I wish you all a lovely weekend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'James Saunders', written in a cursive style.

James Saunders  
Headteacher