

4th September 2024

Headteacher - Patrick Earnshaw

Deputy Headteacher - Mathew Downs

Dear Parents/Carers and Students,

Welcome to the 2024-25 school year

Welcome to the start of another Highcliffe School year, which no doubt will be both a busy one but also productive and positive as they always are. As I write, around 285 Year 7s and 140 Year 12s are having their Induction Day acclimatising to the environment and routines of life at Highcliffe. It is a pleasure to have these lovely young people become part of our community, as they start the next stage of their education journey. There is always a special feeling to the first few days of term, as acquaintances are renewed, or friendships started, summer holiday experiences shared, and staff and students are both excited and a bit nervous about the year to come - a community coming back to life. This is the 30th year I have experienced this feeling as a teacher and the magic of it never fades.

Policy Changes

We made some changes to our Behaviour Policy and Dress Code during the summer term, ready for September, in response to student feedback. They relate to make-up and hair style in the Dress Code, and the response we make to *any* use of derogatory language or behaviour by students related to the 9 legally protected characteristics. They are straightforward changes and briefings will be given to students over the next two days and made available to parents. The changes are already included in the Dress Code and Behaviour Policy on our website which you can find here:

<https://highcliffe.school/l/E8bwQ> - Behaviour Policy

<https://highcliffe.school/l/GQ5Hu> - Dressed to Learn

Whiteboard Pens

Teachers will be making more extensive use of mini whiteboards as a teaching tool this year. Students returning into Year 8 to 11 were informed of this last year and asked to acquire themselves whiteboard pens. This is a reminder to students and parents that whiteboard marker pens are now part of the standard equipment, students are responsible for bringing into school, *so please ensure your child has a couple of whiteboard pens in their pencil case by Monday 16th September.*

Access to the School Site

Entry-controlled gates were installed during the summer on the Year 7/Sixth Form entry/exit (by the Da Vinci end) and Year 8/9 entrance/exit (the middle gate). These gates will unlock at 8:15am and lock again at 8:35am, and open again at 3pm. Students are welcome on site *after* 8am but will only have one entrance open to them – the Year 10/11 entrance/exit (the nearest to the bus park which leads to Reception). This is a trial period for a few weeks, and we will review how well it works.

The law states clearly that any visitor to a school requires the explicit or implied consent of the Headteacher. In other words, no-one has the legal right to come onto school grounds just because they want to, when they want to. At Highcliffe permission is given either by inviting a visitor to the school e.g. for a workshop, a school event, or an arranged appointment. *Visitors including parents*

are required to make appointments to see members of staff. This is because staff are very busy and have no unallocated time to hold unexpected meetings or discussions without neglecting their responsibilities elsewhere. Thankfully 99% of parents understand this and cooperate. Turning up at Reception without an appointment will not lead to any visitor, including parents, gaining access to a staff member. Behaviour of the 'I am not leaving until I see someone' type will not gain a visitor access to a staff member and places the visitor at risk of a 999 call to the police. If you wish to see a member of staff, please contact Reception first to arrange an appointment, by phone or email. Staff are as accommodating as they can be in relation to how quickly a parent can be seen, and for urgent matters *will always try to see the parent that same day if possible, or even within a few hours*. Thank you for everyone's cooperation on this matter.

New Staff

Please join me in welcoming new staff to our school community. It is a pleasure to have them join us and I look forward to working with them all.

TEACHING STAFF	ROLE
BUSINESS STUDIES	
J Hillier	Teacher – Business Studies
ADT	
H Williams	Teacher - Graphics
L Scott	Teacher – Product Design
ENGLISH	
H Tuck	Teacher – English
M Priddey	Teacher – English
MATHS	
K Bevan	Head of Maths
S Deacon-Tillard	Teacher – Maths
SUPPORT STAFF	
S Benham	Librarian
E Wright	Teaching Assistant (starting on 23 rd September)
T Preston	ICT Support Technician

My temporary part-time secondment to the additional role of Executive Headteacher at Thornden School elsewhere in the Trust ended as planned this August and I am back at Highcliffe as Headteacher full-time. Thornden is a very good school and I thoroughly enjoyed working with staff and students there, but it is wonderful to be back home at the precious Highcliffe School I love, and to be looking to the future.

Wishing everyone associated with Highcliffe School a productive, positive and happy 2024-25 school year.

Yours sincerely,



Patrick Earnshaw
Headteacher