Welcome to QEHS

A Parent's Guide

Message from Mr Eastham (Headteacher)

Many congratulations indeed to both you and your child upon securing a place here at QEHS. Over the next few pages, this booklet will hopefully share some key information with you and help to answer some of the early questions you may have about joining Year 7.

QEHS prides itself on the fantastic academic **achievements** of our students and the learning journey towards these positive outcomes starts right here in Year 7. You may be assured that your child will be stretched academically to fulfil their potential, whilst at the same time enjoy extensive **opportunities** to immerse themselves in the broad range of extra-curricular activities on offer here at QEHS.

In the very best **traditions** of a grammar school education, my colleagues and I shall constantly seek to aid the ongoing development of your child through both an expectation of academic challenge and the provision of high quality pastoral care.

I really look forward to working in partnership with you as your child embarks upon this most exciting chapter of their life.

A very warm welcome to the QEHS community!

A Message from Mrs Watson (Assistant Headteacher/Transition Co-ordinator)

I am sure that you are as excited as your child that they will be joining us next September, but also a little apprehensive. Hopefully the information and advice in this booklet will answer many of your questions, but if you have any other queries or concerns, please do contact the school. If the office staff cannot answer your query, they will pass it on and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Your child will be faced with a whole host of things to cope with and adapt to, but many of these can be prepared for or practised in advance. The aim of this booklet is to suggest some ways that parents can help their child cope confidently with this exciting new phase in their life.

The key to successful transition, and life at QEHS, is the co-operation between families, students and the school, so we are always pleased to hear from you. We will let you know how things are going and would encourage you to do the same.

We look forward to getting to know you and your child and watching them develop into a well-balanced young adult, inspired to continue their learning and able to contribute positively to society.

Over the next few months, we will be sending several communications containing information:

April – Codes of Conduct
School ICT information
Free School Meal information

June - Taster Day information (including lunch choices)
New Year 7 Parents' Evening
PE Evening and Music Market Information
Information on our school communication and payment systems (including Satchel One and SCOpay)
Information on how to purchase a locker and hoodie
Visits are made to primary schools

School Transport

Parents need to arrange the necessary transport for their child, by contacting the relevant bus operators. The school will provide information on buses, but the contract is between the individual family and the bus operator. QEHS will work with students in order to ensure good standards of behaviour on the buses but has no power to alter routes, timings, etc.

For many children, using school buses in September will be their first experience of travelling on their own and you can help to prepare them for this:

- Practise using buses. First travel with your child but get them to purchase the tickets and identify the route. Then perhaps they could make a journey alone, meeting a family member or friend at their destination.

- If your child will be travelling on a service bus, try making a couple of journeys at the time they will be doing it in September.

- Make sure you all know where the bus will pick up and drop off, and at what times. Remember that timings are approximate; organise the morning routine so that your child is at the bus stop in good time.

- Make sure your child knows which bus route they are travelling on, and the operator's name they will see on the side of the vehicle; the route number will be on their bus pass. Some destinations are served by several routes and it is important that your child travels on the route for which their pass is valid. Also, we call students forward for their buses by announcing the bus number.

- Make sure your child knows where to get off the bus when coming home as the stops are not announced. Travel the route and look for landmarks/previous stops, etc. "When the bus turns left at the church in …., get your things together ready for the next stop".

- Talk through with your child what they need to do if there is a problem. What will you need them to do if they have missed the bus in the morning or if they have waited and waited with other students at the stop but the bus hasn't come? What should they do if they realise they have missed their stop in the evening? What should they do if they realise they have left something on the bus? If they have a problem on the way home from the bus stop in the evening, whom should they approach for help? If you try to have plans which cover every eventuality, my experience is that you rarely need them.

- If your child misses their bus home from school, they should go to Reception and ring home to arrange a lift. They will then wait in school until they can be collected.

- Make sure your child knows that they need to look after their bus pass as they have to show it before they can travel. Most students keep their pass in their blazer, but will need to transfer it on a non-uniform day.

Please do not let the beginning of term in September be your child's first experience of travelling by bus.

Mobile Phones

Many parents encourage their children to carry a mobile phone in case there is a problem and this is certainly a good idea if your child has a long journey home. Please impress on your child basic safety rules for using the phone and looking after it, encourage them to tell you immediately if they ever receive unpleasant calls or messages. They must not use the camera on the phone to take photos of other students without their permission. However, students are not allowed to use a mobile phone during the school day; they can place their phones in their locker, switched off, if they need to bring one to school.

If a student needs to contact home urgently, they should explain the problem to the Receptionist and arrangements will be made to phone home. In the case of cancelled sports fixtures etc., students are allowed to use their phone to

inform parents. Likewise, if you need to get a message to your child, please ring the school and they will be told as soon as possible.

Please be aware that if a student is caught using a mobile phone, or it goes off during the school day, the automatic sanction is a Friday night detention.

Social Media

If your child has a smartphone when they move to secondary school, it is extremely important that you understand its possibilities and risks. There are many resources available for you to do this; the one below by the NSPCC is very comprehensive and you should find it useful.

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

Sites such as WhatsApp, TikTok and Instagram have a minimum age of 13 for their users for safety reasons so please keep to this. Children should also avoid joining large online groups as these have caused issues in the past.

As an example of the potential drawbacks of social media, we sometimes find that friendship issues are exacerbated through messaging services, and we may not be able to trace the owners of negative comments. We cannot police social media as such, but we will take disciplinary action where the school is brought into disrepute by students making hostile or negative comments under the name of QEHS. They must not post any negative messages at any point.

Keep your child's screen time short, whether this be gaming, social media or anything else, and make sure they are talking to you about what they are using it for.

Year Group and House System

Your child will be a member of Year 7 with a Head of Year who will 'move up' with them as they go through the school. Similarly, they will have a Form Tutor who will stay with the tutor group over the next five years.

Within the tutor group, your child will be with other Year 7 students who will have joined from a range of feeder primary schools. We try to place every student with a friend, as far as possible, so please do complete the online form to give us this information. The Form Tutor will see your child twice a day and is always the first point of call for students and parents alike. You will have the opportunity to meet your child's Form Tutor and Head of Year at the New Parents' Evening in July.

Your child will also be a member of a House (Austen, Brunel, Churchill, Darwin, Elgar or Scott) and their respective House Leader will encourage them to participate in House activities and competitions throughout the year.

Reading

When children move to secondary school it can be hard to maintain good reading habits, therefore, please make sure that your child sets aside at least 20 minutes of time every day for reading, from now until the end of Year 13 during their time at Queen Elizabeth's High School. Reading for pleasure is widely considered to be the biggest indicator of a child's future success, not just in the more obviously literary based subjects but across the wider curriculum and, indeed, life in general. Reading improves focus, memory, empathy and communication skills and is one of the best ways in which students can develop as independent learners. In addition, in order to confidently access GCSE exam papers, it has been indicated that students need a reading age of 15 years and 7 months.

When your child joins us for their QEHS Taster Days in July we will provide them with a copy of *Echo Mountain* to read during the summer holidays in preparation for some literature analysis in September during their English lessons when they join us as a member of our new Year 7 cohort. Your child will also be able to choose some books of their own to borrow from the library to help keep them reading over the summer.

For further information on the benefits of reading please visit this website: www.booktrust.org.uk

Home Learning

QEHS is convinced of the benefits that homework brings and students in Year 7 can expect to be asked to complete some homework every night. It will be announced on Satchel One, with instructions and completion date for you and your child to see. There are some things that parents can do in order to help their child cope easily with homework.

- Discuss with your child – well in advance of the September start – where and when they will do their homework, taking other commitments such as Scouts, music lessons etc. into account. Personally, I favour getting homework done as soon as possible after a child gets home once they have had time to have a snack and get changed.
- Ideally, your child will need a place where they can work undisturbed and keep their books etc.
- In Year 7, short homework task should take approximately 20 minutes, whilst more creative activities such as projects will take longer.
- It is a good idea to train the whole family in good homework habits. For example, from July, your child could go to their agreed workstation for about **an hour every evening** and not be disturbed. They can read, draw, make models, etc., but no TV, computers, phones, etc. This way family routine is already established for when that time is needed for real work. Maintaining this one hour each evening throughout school will really support academic success.
- All teachers will help students establish good habits at the beginning of Year 7.
- Encourage and support your child with homework tasks but please do not do it for them. Subject teachers need to know what each student can do unaided.
- Please do ask to see completed work, but do not "mark" it. If you are unhappy with what your child has produced (it's very brief, scruffy etc.) simply ask them, "Is this your very best effort?" If they answer "no", you could discuss with them how it could be improved and they may want to have another attempt. If the answer is "yes", let it go and ask later what mark they got for the task and then discuss future improvements. However, if your child is a perfectionist, you may need to ask a different question, as they will rarely be happy with an outcome!
- Few Year 7 students struggle to complete homework, but many do the work and then forget to hand it in on time. The good news is that teachers are lenient in the first couple of weeks!

Learning Support

Throughout their career at QEHS, students may need a period of additional, targeted support at times and we have an experienced team dedicated to delivering this. Around the beginning of Year 7, all new students take short spelling and reading comprehension tests, in order to establish the baseline levels. This allows us to identify very early on those students who will benefit from targeted support in the first few weeks.

If your child is offered additional support, please do not worry that there is a problem that the primary school has not picked up on, rather it is just that we want to ensure they have the best start possible at QEHS.

Support is available to your child, should they need it, all the way through their time at QEHS.

Getting Organised

Perhaps the biggest challenge that every Year 7 student faces is having to be responsible for every aspect of daily school life. They learn very quickly, but being able to organise themselves is a vital skill. At home and at primary school there is more support from adults and as students move from primary to secondary school they need to be prepared for more demands on their organisational skills.

- If your child is not naturally tidy, encourage them to always put things in the same place, so they can find them quickly.

- Establish good habits - putting uniform away, emptying their schoolbag, checking homework has been completed and handed in.

- Subject teachers and Form Tutors will help students become better organised and there are various strategies, such as colour coding, which we use to help them. If you think your child is finding it difficult to get themselves organised, please let their Form Tutor know sooner rather than later so that we can offer more support.

- Once they have started at QEHS, do ask your child to check they have packed everything they need for the next day and again, accept their answer. A packed bag is best kept in the hall. If you know/suspect they have forgotten something vital, like PE kit, check their bag once they are in bed. If the item is missing, ask about it the next morning, "Isn't it PE today?", and give your child the chance to sort the problem before you intervene.

Discuss with your child what they need to do if they lose something, either at school or on the journey to/from school. Make sure they understand what happens to lost property at school. And finally, **please name all your child's belongings with their full name.**

Lockers

Providing lockers is one way in which QEHS helps students to organise themselves, and these are well worth the fee charged for a key. Without a locker, a student has to carry all their belongings around every day and this is not advisable.

However, lockers do need to be looked after and are not bottomless pits! If you have ever had to remove the results of a cookery lesson several weeks after it took place, you will understand what I mean. Students are responsible for ensuring their locker does not become a health hazard!

Students are given a key and keeping this on an extendable chain, clipped inside the blazer, is the best idea. They must remember to take their key into school on a non-uniform day. You will be invited to hire a locker through our payment system SCOpay in June.

Uniform

Full details of uniform and suppliers are included in this welcome pack and are also on our website. It is a good idea to buy two ties, with one being kept in your child's locker. If they do not have a tie they are not allowed into lessons. All items of uniform need to be named. If your child can remove it, put it down, and lose it – **name it!** Please note that you will not be able to purchase a tie until after the Taster Days in July.

As your child moves up through the school, they may try to persuade you that the uniform rules have changed, especially in respect to styles of shoe, hair, etc. Please check with your child's Form Tutor before being persuaded into making expensive fashionable purchases which may well not be acceptable in school.

Uniform can be purchased from Uniform Direct and we also have a Pre-Loved Uniform Store that has a range of items including shirts, skirts, trousers, blazers, PE kit and trainers/football boots. The Pre-Loved store is available on Fridays after school from 15.45 until 16.45 by booking only. To make a booking, please email Miss Radcliffe – stafflxr@qehs.lincs.sch.uk.

Equipment

Some lessons in some subjects require particular equipment. Your child will need:

- Pen and pencil
- Ruler
- School bag
- Packed lunch or lunch money on your child's account
- Bus pass (if appropriate) or bus fare
- Glue stick
- Mathematical equipment - Geometry set (to include at least compasses, protractor, ruler, pencil)
- English and Spanish dictionary
- Scientific calculator

Lunches and Snacks

QEHS offers a wide variety of food at lunchtimes, both hot and cold selections. We operate a cafeteria system, where students pay via the cashless biometric system, for what they have selected. They may choose either individual items or take advantage of the day's "meal deal", offering a main course and dessert for a fixed price.

Where students have particular dietary requirements, they should ask the serving staff if they are unsure about the ingredients of a particular dish. With over 1200 potential customers, we cannot expect the caterers to remember which students cannot tolerate certain foods!

Students may, of course, choose to bring a packed lunch from home. Students in Years 7-11 are not allowed off-site during the lunch-break.

Students may choose what type of lunch they want on a day-by-day basis and they do not need to commit to anything in advance.

The catering team also run a cafeteria service at break offering hot and cold snacks and drinks. Students may eat in the Queue, Upper School Hall, Studio Café, Library Courtyard Garden or outside, but food and drink are not allowed in classrooms or corridors.

Students who are entitled to free school meals can choose items up to the value of £2.65. The 'Meal Deal' represents the best value for money and is recommended.

Making Friends

This is something which most, if not all, new students and parents worry about but QEHS is consistently described as a friendly school by all the various groups of people who cross the threshold.

About 15% of the new Year 7 intake will be the only child from their primary school to join us whilst the rest will know at least one other person. From Taster Day onwards, Form Tutors arrange activities which help children get to know each other better and the Year 8 Buddies are trained to help the less confident students join in whatever is going on.

Some children do find the change of school daunting and there is a support network to help them settle. Older students are trained as Peer Listeners and are easily available for a chat and there are pastoral staff who will deal with more serious issues. If your child does not settle immediately, please try not to worry too much as very rarely, if ever, does a problem persist beyond Christmas. If you are worried, please do get in touch with the Form Tutor and we will be in touch with you if we have any concerns. The biggest friendship problem is not the making, but the changing or breaking of friendships. Quite often, children who have been best friends for years begin to drift apart. If this is a mutual process, no problem, but sometimes one person moves on faster than the other and this can be difficult for all concerned. This is one reason why we encourage Year 7 students to build a group of friends rather than go looking for that one special best friend.

The allocation of students to forms is a complex procedure and, once completed, it is virtually impossible to move a student. Consequently, it is very important that parents give us as much information as possible, as requested on the online form in your welcome pack. If your child's primary school is sending us a number of students they will not all be placed together in one form. However, students can always meet up for lunch or join a club when they wish to be together.

Do please talk through some of the possible friendship issues with your child in advance. It is a good idea to stress that transition is a big upheaval for everyone but the ideal opportunity to try out new things. If a long-standing friendship cools, it is no reflection on either party, but a natural part of the moving on process. Practising introducing yourself to others, inviting others to join you in an activity, asking to sit next to someone or inviting someone to sit next to you, starting up a conversation etc. are all very useful life skills.

Your Own Child

All our students are individuals, with their own quirks and personalities. It may be that your child is easily made anxious by certain situations or may react in a particular way when distressed or worried. Whatever the issue, please do let the school know by contacting your child's Form Tutor or the School Office.

Most often, the issue does not require the school to intervene, but it really does help us to be aware of what may lie behind a child's behaviour on occasion. Throughout their time at QEHS, please do let the Form Tutor know of any changes in circumstances which may affect your child's learning.

If you child has a medical condition or concern that may have an impact at school, please contact Miss Radcliffe in the first instance through the School Office.

Financial Support

If your child is entitled to free school meals we will arrange for them to receive a lunch voucher on the Taster Days. Free school meals will be available from September. We can also support you with the purchase of uniform and educational equipment for September and beyond, so please be alert for communications to this effect in April. Music lessons and educational trips will also be supported, where appropriate. Financial support is also available for students who no longer qualify for free school meals but have done in the last six years, those who are in care or have previously been in care, and also students whose parents are in the armed forces. Please contact school if you would like further information.

Parents Worry Too!

If this is the first time you have a child moving from primary to secondary education, you yourself may well be apprehensive about what could happen. As we tell our students, if you are worried, please talk to someone. Do not hesitate to get in touch with those teachers who have particular responsibility for your child.

We will be inviting all parents to pop into school for a very brief chat with the Form Tutors regarding how well the settling in process is going. The Parents' Evening and Pastoral Workshop will be in October.

There will also be set occasions during the year when you will be given information on your child's academic progress. More information about this will be available in the Autumn term.

Parents are encouraged to look at the QEHS website to find up-to-date information on school matters and events. Increasingly, we are using technology to improve our contact with parents, so please let us know of changes to mobile numbers and email addresses.

The school uses SIMS, SCOpay and Satchel One to contact parents. You will be able to register with these systems in June.

The Last Word

I hope that you have found this booklet helpful and informative.

Receiving this Welcome Pack marks the beginning in earnest of transition for your child from primary school to QEHS. It is the start of what we all hope will be a very positive and successful relationship and one which will allow us to be proud of the young people we will together send out into the world in 2031.

We look forward to meeting your child on our visits to the primary schools in June, and to working with them in the future.

Mrs Watson
Assistant Headteacher/Transition Co-ordinator