

HYDESVILLE TOWER SCHOOL

25 Broadway North • Walsall • West Midlands WS1 2QG

01922 624374 • www.hydesville.com • info@hydesville.com • [@HydesvilleTower](https://twitter.com/HydesvilleTower)



7th September 2020

Dear Parents and Pupils,

Welcome to the start of the new academic year at Hydesville Tower School!

We have obviously been in communication with you over the last few weeks regarding the positive return to school, and the high-level focus on health of all. This letter is more about the traditional information at the beginning of a new year, and our drive to make this year even better for all within our Hydesville family. I am really looking forward to seeing the pupils in the days ahead, and feeling the school regaining that happy buzz that suggests a sense of normality is returning to our lives.

As well as welcoming new pupils and parents to Hydesville, it is my pleasure to introduce two new staff members:

Mr Thorne will be our new PE Coach, working across both the Prep and Senior schools to deliver PE, Games and support our ambitions for developing our school sports teams.

Mr Harper is joining us from Aston University for his Teacher Trainee placement. Mr Harper will spend time in both the Prep and Senior schools as part of his development. It is lovely to welcome him as a former pupil of the school and a previous Head Boy.

The school site has been quieter than normal during the summer, with the inevitable focus on making the site COVID-secure. Nevertheless, there has been some work on roof repairs. Thankfully, the disruptive work on Broadway North was completed ahead of schedule and we have started this week without the additional challenge of a one-way traffic system. The parking permit restrictions on neighbouring roads continued at Easter, so we ask parents to take increasing care over safety around the start and end of each day. Prior to lockdown, we had been looking to engage in discussions with the local council for realistic options for parents, and we will resume these communications as quickly as possible.

Our focus this year is on excellence in every section of the school. It was evident during lockdown that our online teaching provision was head and shoulders above what was being provided locally and nationally. Whilst many schools are worrying about a four month hiatus in the learning of their children, we are confident that our pupils' progress remains on track and our expectations for the children are high. We gained a great deal from the forced exposure to the technological aspects of education, and are pushing ahead with a blended model that will incorporate the best elements of this now we have returned to school. As ever, the staff are keen to give their children the best chance of improving their life opportunities and are delighted to have them back in the classroom.

Last year, we joined with the global Cognita community to celebrate the Be Well Day – an opportunity to really focus on the mental health needs of families and staff. It is evident that this area remains every bit as important, especially on the basis of research and studies conducted during lockdown. Although the scope

for what we can do this year differs to last, we will have another Be Well Day on Friday 25th September. In a similar vein to last year, we will share aspects of the day and useful videos and podcasts in the months ahead.

The government's actions prevented most of the usual assessments from occurring at the end of last year. This was a shame in many ways, since children and staff had been working hard to build towards these. Certainly, we felt very proud of the quality of our "graduating" Reception year, whose learning throughout lockdown had kept them fully on track to be school-ready for this September. Our Year 6 pupils were a wonderful cohort as demonstrated by the 11+ success but additionally by the gains made by every child over the preceding two years. Whether they have remained for the Senior School or parted for new schools, we can see how they will shine amongst their peers with their character and resilience. The DfE and Ofqual soap opera did not instil confidence, but our GCSE results demonstrated the benefits of our consistent approach in setting high standards and supporting the children to succeed. Over half of all grades were awarded at 7 and above, and the value added achieved by the pupils was exceptional.

The attainments of all our pupils from 2019/20 illustrate that the quality of teaching throughout Hydesville is very strong indeed. Combining this with the excellent relationships that exist to support children, it is clear that the model within our school is working to provide huge gains for every child.

I am committed to us delivering an excellent experience for parents, and outstanding communication is a valuable element of how we can work together for the benefit of your child. We launched the Hydesville Communication Charter previously, and this can be accessed via the website [here](#). Traditional methods such as homework diaries, letters and telephone remain, but I am aware that for many people, emails are increasingly convenient. If you are unsure of the email address for a particular member of staff, please address your email to info@hydesville.com and include the name of the relevant staff member in the subject bar. This will be passed on to the correct individual rapidly. Alternatively, you can find a staff list of emails [here](#). Under most circumstances, the first staff member to address questions to will be your child's tutor.

In previous years, our pocket school calendar was distributed for each new term. Whilst useful, the problem with any printed calendar is that it risks being out of date within a day! We have also faced the challenge that in these days of needing COVID-secure options, nothing was easily planned at the end of last term. This is probably an ideal time for us to move towards the electronic option presented by our new parent app, Cognita Connect. You will have received enrolment invites to access Cognita Connect but please let Ms Archer know if you have experienced any problems or need us to re-send an enrolment code. Cognita Connect will enable you to stay up-to-date with all school calendar dates, letters and news relevant to your child. Ms Archer will also keep followers of the Hydesville Tower School Facebook and Twitter pages informed with up-to-the-minute details about forthcoming events. We also now have an Instagram account (please follow us at [hydesville_tower](#)) to access our news in a different format.

All letters we send home are able to be accessed via the Parents' Area of the school website: <https://www.hydesville.com/parents/letters-home/> There is also a link to the letters section of the website via the Hub in Cognita Connect.

Forthcoming settling in events – which would traditionally be a chance for a face-to-face meeting with relevant teachers – will be virtual for the immediate future. We saw with the Prep Parents' Evening last term that this can work well, and some parents even preferred the format for giving them additional flexibility. We will have our Meet the Teacher event for the Prep School on **Wednesday 9th September, 4.00pm - 5.00 p.m.** We will shortly be sending a link to parents to access the meeting.

Our Year 7 & New Joiners Welcome Evening will be on **Wednesday 23rd September** from **4.30 – 6.00 p.m.** More details will be sent over in due course.

It is customary to include a reminder of the School Aims and Ethos in start of year letters such as these. These are available on the school website and are included below:

Our aims....

To provide a first-rate independent education for boys and girls aged three to 16.

Giving every child the chance to develop their full potential in all areas; supporting them to become confident and caring individuals, who are proactive and independent; providing enriching opportunities, so they gain greater awareness of themselves, their community and the wider world.

Our ethos...

Our school is a place where the sense of a community is key, and a family-feel characterises daily life.

Providing an environment where children feel safe and cared for is of paramount importance, since this gives the child the best opportunity to be a happy learner. We appreciate everyone's individuality, and cater to support their needs so they can thrive and be successful. Offering a broad curricular and co-curricular experience allows breadth and depth to develop in the pupils. Lifelong memories are formed through the time at the school, and a love of learning is instilled that will be key throughout a person's life.

Governance for Hydesville Tower School is carried out through Cognita. Our new Director of Education (Chair of Governors) is Mrs Nikki Lambros, who comes with experience of Headships in two overseas schools. She will be keen to lend her critical eye and support as she gets to know the school. Any correspondence for her attention or Cognita generally can be addressed to

5 & 7 Diamond Court, Opal Drive, Eastlake Park, Fox Milne, Milton Keynes MK15 0DU

The start of a new school year is always an exciting time: a chance to make a great impression, to develop one's skills and to learn in an environment with friendly, positive people. This does not happen by chance or accident, but through the dedication and diligence of the adults and children within the Hydesville community. I am sure that this will be another excellent year for the school, and look forward to working with you to make that happen.

Yours sincerely



Warren Honey

Headmaster