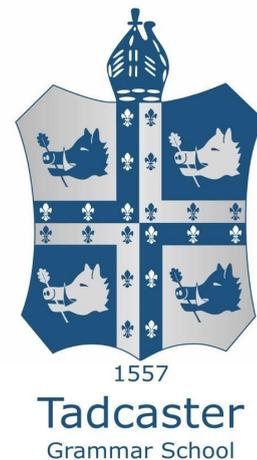


# Be Your Best Self

July 2020



Dear Parents and Carers,

I write to update you on a number of issues around transition and your child starting at school in September. As you will be aware Government advice on students returning to school full time is being updated frequently and we will write to you again in the summer should there be any need to make adjustments to these arrangements.

## Transition

### *Website videos*

We have added some new videos to the transition website – there are now welcome videos from each form tutor to their forms and a series of videos aimed at parents to try and replicate some of the information that we would have shared with you on the parents information evening in July. There is also information on who to contact if you have any additional questions before September ([HERE](#)).

### *School email addresses*

Your child will have received a school email address as part of the letter which told them their teaching group. Email passwords are being sent home electronically to the parental email address you shared with school as part of the application process. We have emailed your child some basic “dos and don’ts” when using their school email. Please look through this with them.

### *Google Classrooms*

Each student has been invited via their email account to a Google classroom with the rest of their form group. Tutors have set students 4 optional activities to undertake over the summer - each is designed to help smooth student transition to TGS and be ready for September. Students can also communicate with their tutor through the Google classroom if they have any questions.

## Starting in September

### *1st day*

New Year 7 will start TGS on Tuesday 8th September 2020. As in previous years they will be the only year group in school and will undertake a number of activities to help familiarise themselves with Tadcaster - the site, our structures and routines etc. - as well as undertaking some of the necessary ‘admin’ associated with being in a secondary school - getting timetables, sorting the cashless catering, getting library logins etc.

School buses will run as normal on these days. If you are intending to drop your child off at school by car please be aware that you will need to drop them off between 8.30am and 8.40am and restrictions in place currently prevent parents getting out of their cars on the school site to 'walk students into school'.

There will be lots of staff around school - at the bus park, the carpark and the pedestrian entrance - to direct students to the appropriate location.

School lunches will be served or students may bring a packed lunch.

There will be no 'normal lessons' this first day. As usual the day will be set aside to activities designed to help Year 7 settle into their new surroundings.

### ***'Nut aware' school***

Please be aware that we have a number of students who have serious nut allergies in school. As a result we do not allow students to bring nuts or nut based products into school - for example as part of their packed lunches; as snacks or as part of any charity 'bake sales'.

We ask for your support in ensuring that TGS remains a safe place for all students within our community by talking about this issue with your child and ensuring that nuts or nut based products are not brought into school.

### ***Rest of 1st week***

Over the course of the 1st week students in the other year groups will return to school on a phased basis. This means that, for the remainder of the 1st week, the first lesson each day for Year 7 will be replaced with an extended form time whilst the newly returning groups receive their timetables etc. These lesson slots will be used to support the new Year 7 students on their return to school and their transition to high school.

Please be aware that students will not need their PE kit for any lessons this first week.

### ***Parent Pay (our online payment system for lunches, trips etc.)***

Usually students would pay for their lunches etc. over the first couple of weeks whilst ParentPay systems are set up. Regulations prevent us doing so this year. Working with ParentPay we have managed to bring forward the distribution of logins and passwords. This can happen as soon as the current school year closes and you will shortly receive communication from us with more details. For those with Parentpay accounts at your primary school please be aware that balances are carried across.

### ***Chromebooks***

Please see the linked [letter](#) from Mr Dunphy regarding Chromebooks. We have been able to secure, notwithstanding supply chain issues, a batch of Chromebooks to expand the 'Chromebooks for Learning' scheme to the incoming Year 7 cohort.

### ***Lockers***

You will have noted from Mr Parkinson's letter (Friday 10th July 2020 - [HERE](#)) that, as per Government instructions, we are planning that students will be taught in 'Year group bubbles' in September with each Year group having all their lessons in, as far as possible, the same building. This is to prevent students from different Year groups mixing.

An implication of this is that students will not be able to access lockers in buildings that are being used by other year groups. We are working with the locker supplier to ensure that families are not charged for lockers that their child is unable to access.

### ***Residential***

Contained within the Government guidelines for schools returning is the instruction that no trips requiring overnight stays are allowed until at least January. As a result we will be unable to proceed with the Year 7 residential as planned. We intend to reschedule this once restrictions are lifted so that this cohort can attend a residential activity.

### ***Mathematics groupings***

We have had a number of queries regarding how we intend to arrange Maths 'sets' given that KS2 tests did not happen this year. Whilst we have collected information from the Primary schools on the strengths and areas for development of our incoming Year 7 we have decided to, initially, arrange the students into broadly mixed ability teaching groups with all students studying the same scheme of work. We will then move to 'sets' later in the 1st term following a review, as we get to know them, of the most appropriate scheme for each student.

### ***Equipment***

Unlike most primary schools students will move between classrooms for their lessons. It is therefore important that students have their own equipment with them.

Every day, students are required to bring pens, pencils, coloured pencils, 30cm ruler, a pencil sharpener, an eraser, a highlighter, a glue stick, a pair of scissors, a protractor, a pair of compasses and a scientific calculator with them to school.

### ***Calendar dates 2020-21***

These dates are clearly highly provisional as we review their suitability in light of current Government guidelines. Where events are unable to take place we are looking at rescheduling to later in the year or replicating using virtual means.

Tuesday 8th September: Individual student photos taken

Tuesday 15th September: Welcome evening for Year 7 parents

Thursday 24th September: Open Evening (school closes at lunchtime)

Tuesday 6th October: Year 7 Inter-house cross country (am)

Monday 14th December: Year 7 Attitudinal report 1 available to parents

Monday 29th March: Year 7 Attitudinal report 2 available to parents

Thursday 6th May: Year 7 Parents' Evening

### ***And finally, ....***

This is not how any of us - students, families or staff - envisaged transition to High School looking for this group of young people. It has been a pleasure to receive so much positive feedback from parents about our efforts to reassure students and families over the past few months. There are certainly things that we have done this year that we will do again in the future alongside the more 'normal' transition activities but there are other things that we really have missed which could not be replaced remotely. It is our intention to reproduce as many of those as possible for the new Year 7 cohort in September.

I know from talking to the primary school teachers we have a fantastic group of young people joining TGS in September. Sadly I'll not have the privilege of meeting them as a full year group as, after 10 years here at

Tadcaster Grammar School, I move on to pastures new this summer. I know, however, that with Miss Hodgson as Head of Year 7, the students will flourish and achieve great things in the years to come.

With my very warmest wishes,

**Steve Wren**  
**Assistant Headteacher**