Transition Times

12 July 2024 (4th Edition)

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that you and your families are all looking forward to the summer holiday and the excitement of starting at The Highcrest Academy in the new academic year. Naturally, for some students the change from a Primary setting to Secondary is daunting, especially if the young person may have some underlying learning needs.

Some of the students joining us in September have specific learning needs and may require additional support from the Learning Support Department. I am the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo) at The Highcrest Academy, and I look forward to welcoming your child to the school. I work closely with subject teachers, Heads of Learning and the Inclusion Team to assist your child in overcoming their particular barriers to learning and participating fully with the curriculum on offer.

The Learning Support Department is a small, friendly and dedicated team. With the SENDCo as Head of the Department, a full time Administrative Assistant, two Higher Level Teaching Assistant and some Learning Support Assistants. Together, we will help your child to settle into the routine of school, learn their way around and assist with learning; this may be in the classroom or as part of an intervention.

Within the Learning Support Department, we support learning in a variety of ways;

- in lessons, usually as shared support with other students,
- small group support for literacy and numeracy,
- with Extended Learning Tasks by attending afterschool Extended Learning Club,
- at break and lunch if your child requires a quieter environment with a little more structure,
- for some students there is more specialist support as outlined within EHCP documents.

The Team are available before school, after school and throughout the school day to help students solve problems and access their learning.

Some of your children joining us in September may need a little extra help. We run several interventions. They all take place within the Learning Support Department and are offered by invitation. Your child may, temporarily, be removed from class in order to receive this additional support. Interventions are offered in the following areas:

- Speech, Language and Communication
- Social Skills
- Forest School
- Literacy and Numeracy

The Learning Support Department has a range of equipment that can be used in the classroom to support students' learning; reader pens, laptops, handwriting pens and coloured overlays. We will work together with you, your child and their teachers to identify needs and plan the appropriate support to assist your child.

I look forward to welcoming your children to The Highcrest Academy in the new academic year.

Mrs Charlesworth, SENDCo
scharlesworth@highcrestacademy.org.uk

Tips on Preparing your Child for Transition

We understand that moving to secondary school may give you as parents/carers mixed feelings; excitement as your child has reached this milestone, but some anxiety for the change they will experience too. Here are a few examples of ways you can help to prepare your child for this new start.

- **Practice the walk to school?**

We are encouraged to go out for walks and exercise, perhaps you could add the walk to Highcrest to your daily exercise and time how long the walk takes? You can use the opportunity to discuss road safety skills; there is likely to be more traffic about once school commences. Find a map and research/plan the route to school.

- **Will your child need to catch a bus at some point?**

With your child, look up bus timetables. Find your nearest appropriate bus stop. Familiarise yourselves with the route the bus will take. Make contingency plans for scenarios such as; missing the bus, cancelled bus. Has your child got emergency contact numbers in their phone? Is there an alternative bus route for emergencies?

- **Has your child got the right equipment?**

School has an equipment list, it will be sent out to everyone. Purchase items in plenty of time. Does the pencil case fit the school bag? Are all items named?

- **Does it take your child a long time to get ready?**

Set practise days for getting ready for school. Encourage your child to set an alarm and practice getting up at the required time to arrive at school on time. Ask them to time themselves to see how long it takes. Don't forget to include eating breakfast and packing the school bag into the practice.

- **Does your child know anyone else at The Highcrest Academy?**

Perhaps you could arrange for the children to call each other? They can discuss any concerns they may have together. Perhaps you could arrange for them to travel together on the first day or meet near school and walk in together.

Meet the SEN Team

Mrs Charlesworth, SENDCo

I have worked at The Highcrest Academy since December 2019 as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. I hold the National Award for Special Educational Needs having qualified through Oxford Brookes University. I have worked within special educational needs for over 12 years and so have much experience. I am also a History teacher at the Academy. I work with a range of external agencies to help co-ordinate the provision in place for students within the Academy. I look forward to welcoming your child in September.

Name:	**Mrs Aldus**
Job Title:	SEN PA

The best part of my job is: Being able to support the SENCo and at the same time watch the students grow.

I like working at The Highcrest Academy because: ALL staff work as a team to support the students and each other.

My favourite subject is: Art and History.

Interests I have outside of school are: Cooking, making handmade cards and my cats.

Some fun facts about me: I taught Art in a Primary school for 11 years, and I was Matron here, at The Highcrest Academy.

My aspirations: To travel Europe and watch all the cycling tours from a motorhome.

Forest School

For some of our more vulnerable learners we offer the opportunity to experience Forest School.

Forest School at The Highcrest Academy has a holistic, inclusive, proactive and learner led approach to education in natural environments. We build confidence, resilience and friendships together through small achievable tasks. We work with the Chiltern Rangers, in small groups in the school and with the wider community . We are eco champions for our setting and our natural surroundings. Our Forest School participants will develop skills they already have and learn how to adapt to situations.

In a safe and secure environment, we will learn how to assess and take risks. Through working together with new materials, tools, peers, habitats and ways of thinking, Forest School participants and practitioners will achieve and support each other. Through a planned programme on a 6 week cycle with identified students, we will have weekly sessions where we will assess and monitor our achievements through work-based activities. Once a term we will have a whole day excursion to support volunteers in our local community to protect our woodlands, streams and wildlife. Forest School is a safe environment, but most of all Forest School is fun!

Miss A Watson, Forest School Practitioner

The Highcrest Academy Your House

It's about everyone being involved..

Showcasing your talents

We're serious about having fun

Everyone at The Highcrest Academy joins a House and everyone in your tutor group belong to the same House.

Last Year's Winning House

The House system gives you the opportunity to succeed and be involved in the life of school throughout your time at our school, competing against other Houses and challenging yourself as well as opportunities to lead and encourage others.

There are seven Houses, named after our House Heroes, each with its own colour. Your tie shows the colour of your House. The Houses are:

Pelé | Edhi | Turing | Parks | Armstrong | Kahlo | Ali

The EAL Department

At The Highcrest Academy, we embrace students from a large variety of cultures and backgrounds. There is a vast amount of support available to students within school and the EAL department takes pride in assisting with this care and guidance.

Who we are – Feel free to come and find us. We're always here to help.

Mr Tahir - Head of EAL / Teacher of English.
Loves football, boxing, reading, hiking and box sets.

Mrs Moss - EAL Learning Support Assistant

So, what is EAL?

EAL stands for '*English as an Additional Language*'. We work with and support students who speak more than one language.

This doesn't just mean those who are new to the English Language. Whether you are a beginner or fluent, we are here to support you with any school work issues you may have.
If you think that you know or speak more than one language, chances are I will be introducing myself to you very soon.

Mr Tahir

What we offer:

- In-class support
- Additional support with reading and writing
- Communication skills with peer groups
- A fun, safe environment at break and lunch
- Drop-in support for all subjects
- After school homework support.

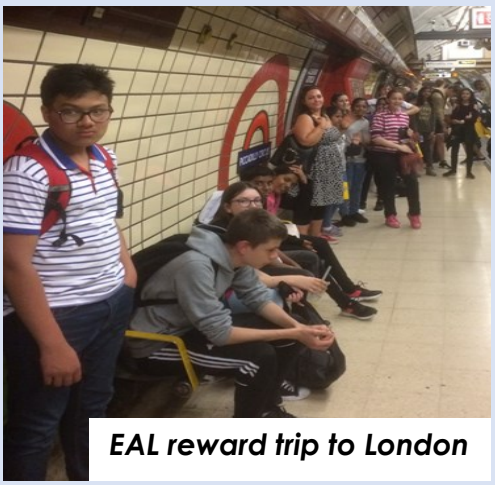
The EAL Department is open Monday to Friday before school, breaktime, lunchtime and after school. Before school and at lunch you can play table football and pool with friends. Breaktimes are for talking with friends and after school is for homework or revision support. This isn't just for EAL students. Anyone can come along and be with their friends.

We provide a range of support including:

- Story reading groups
- Reading support and comprehension practice
- Vocabulary building
- Literacy and Grammar sessions
- Verbal communication groups

We offer extracurricular opportunities for you as well. Whether you want help with House Competitions, an educational trip, fancy some practice at creative writing or perhaps a workshop in your home language, we offer you a range of opportunities to push yourself and excel in school.

Polish Workshop



EAL reward trip to London

We look forward to seeing you all and helping you on your journey at The Highcrest Academy.

Come in and say hello!

Our Motto

'Aspire & Achieve'

Our Vision

We work together, in a happy, caring and inclusive community, providing for students of all abilities, backgrounds and cultures, supporting their well-being and developing their characters, giving them every opportunity to aspire and achieve their unique academic and personal ambitions.

Our Virtues

We embody, role-model and teach our A-S-P-I-R-E virtues at every suitable opportunity, helping us to promote happiness and instill a culture of excellence that runs throughout every strand of our academy

Ambition	**S**ensitivity	**P**urpose	**I**ntegrity	**R**esilience	**E**loquence
To have a strong desire to achieve success	To have an appreciation of others' feelings	To work with determination and resolve	To be honest and have strong moral principles	To show strength of character with an ability to recover quickly	To be fluent and persuasive when speaking or writing

Our Core Aims

To help our students 'Aspire' to and 'Achieve' their ultimate ambitions, our aim is to provide ….

Quality of Education	Behaviour and Attitudes	Personal Development	Culture, Leadership & Management
An acutely personalised inclusive curriculum for students of all abilities that creates independent and autonomous learners who are physically, digitally and academically literate.	An environment in which students work in harmony, respecting each other's rights and supporting one another in times of need, forging positive relationships and celebrating successes together.	Cohesive systems that support self-discovery and the development of character that ensures our students become healthy, confident and responsible citizens that make a valuable contribution to society.	A diverse, safe and happy community, where staff love to work, students love to learn and all are given the opportunity to develop.

If you do these things … if you Aspire …

then you can, and you will, Achieve