PARENTS’ BOOKLET

Starting Secondary School

A brief guide for parents and carers
Key Information

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- **Mr Jankowski**  Year 7 Year Leader

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In September, please provide us with your email address
INTRODUCTION

We hope that this booklet will be helpful to parents and carers as their sons or daughters begin secondary school. At Helsby High School we are fortunate in having the positive support of parents and we know that we can rely on parental co-operation to ensure that all Year 7 pupils settle down quickly. Our aim is to give some general support to parents at a time when children may feel a little unsure about some aspects of secondary school life.

A New Beginning

Most pupils are excited, and some may feel a little apprehensive about starting a new school with its challenges of new subjects, friends and teachers. They want to do their best and take advantage of the opportunities offered to them. Members of staff are anxious to help pupils with the new routines. Secondary education obviously makes new demands which can seem a little confusing at first. Each pupil will be given an individual timetable and books, equipment and sports wear have to be brought to school on specific days. Bells will ring to signify the end of each 1 hour period. There is a lot to remember.

It is important to remind parents that although the school may seem very big, pupils soon become familiar with their own Form Tutors and their Year Leader, Mr Jankowski. For those who find break or lunch time a little overwhelming the Library Quad is reserved for pupils in Years 7 and 8.

Any queries, no matter how minor, can be dealt with by letter, telephone or email.
Organisation

It is important for pupils to arrive on time at the right room with the correct books or equipment.

It is a good idea to have a copy of the school timetable displayed at home in a prominent place so that a quick check can be made the night before to ensure that all books and equipment are packed for the following day. It is important to remember the difference between Week 1 and Week 2 of the timetable cycle.

Some pupils find it helpful to label the outside of each exercise book to indicate the days of the week on which a subject is taught.

Specialist Equipment – on certain days, for example, pupils will need to bring sports-wear. It is a good idea again to check that all is ready the night before.

Writing Equipment – pupils will not be able to take full advantage of lessons unless they have the correct equipment, such as pen, pencil, pencil sharpener, eraser, and a 30 cm ruler. Some coloured pencils are also useful. An inexpensive fountain pen or roller ball pen will help to encourage clear, legible handwriting. It is important to remember that, although all pupils will become proficient in word processing, the ability to write is still important.
Uniform
Pupils are expected to wear their uniform correctly so that they look tidy at all times. If, for some valid reason, an item of uniform is missing, then an explanatory note would be helpful.

Naming Items
Very few items do go missing in school; it is so much easier to recover them if they are clearly marked with the owner’s name.

Smart Cards
Pupils will be issued with ‘Smart Cards’ as the Canteen operates a cashless system. A separate sheet explains how the system operates.

Inclusion
Helsby High School ensures that diversity is valued and respected. All pupils’ needs are effectively supported under the Every Child Matters Government guidelines. The Learning Zone provides a safe-haven for vulnerable individuals, support and subject staff ensure that all pupils are fully integrated.
Pupils with physical disabilities, learning difficulties or behavioural problems all receive appropriate support. Pastoral and Special Needs staff meet regularly with parents and pupils in order to ensure that progress is made in all aspects of school life.

**Mobile Phones**
In general we would prefer mobile phones to be left at home. Phones are available for use in emergencies and our administrative staff will always ensure messages are delivered to children if there are any problems. Some parents feel that phones should be carried for safety reasons; if this is the case the phone must be kept switched off at the bottom of the school bag. We would strongly suggest a cheap phone, if possible without a camera function. Children are not allowed to use phones in lessons, on the corridors or on the field.

If a phone goes missing it causes a great deal of distress and time is wasted trying to find it. The school has no insurance to cover the cost of lost phones and an expensive phone is not necessary.

We should be most grateful for your co-operation over this matter.
READING

It is very important to encourage a wide variety of individual reading. Regular reading for enjoyment or for information can bring success and pleasure. All pupils will receive a bookmark on recommended reading. Pupils will be encouraged to use a variety of methods of acquiring information but good reading skills remain essential and parents can play an important part in encouraging an enthusiasm for books.

What should children be reading?

Parents often ask this question and the simplest answer is anything! Some children do not enjoy fiction very much and for them factual books, many of them lavishly illustrated with pictures and diagrams, can prove invaluable. Many children enjoy a good story and sometimes a television serial will spark their interest. Often children will want to discuss a book with parents.
HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?

Encourage a child to join the local library and seek advice from the librarian.

The School Library is a lively, colourful place and is open each lunch-time. Staff are available to help. All pupils in Year 7 are taught library skills and parents can help by encouraging pupils to use the library and to discuss what they are reading.

Parents can check how many of the books in the accompanying leaflet are familiar at the beginning of Year 7 and then look again to see how many have been read by the end of Year 7.

Pupils can be encouraged to look at newspapers. Some will start with the sports pages and then move on!
PRACTICAL WAYS OF HELPING

If a pupil does not read very fluently, listening to him/her reading aloud for 5-10 minutes a day can be helpful.

Most pupils have a few problems with spelling from time to time and the use of a dictionary should be encouraged. However, dictionaries can be confusing and some pupils may need help.

If a pupil is preparing for a spelling test, the familiar, look, cover, write and check method is much more effective than simply staring at the list for a few moments and declaring the words “learnt”.

Pupils are encouraged to keep “Word Lists” on which they write down specialist vocabulary for each subject as well as frequently used general words.

Remember some knowledge of spelling is essential before a spell-check can be used effectively.
ATTENDANCE

As a school we regard good attendance as an important element in academic success. Good attendance is recognised through certificates awarded to those who achieve 100% attendance in a term. Parental support is vital in keeping absence to a minimum; we appreciate that pupils may suffer periods of genuine sickness and that some medical appointments can only be made in school hours. Please note that medical / dental appointments are considered to be authorised absences if a pupil is not at registration. The major difficulty of the family holiday remains.

HOLIDAYS

All children get approximately twelve weeks holiday a year. Family holidays should be arranged to coincide with breaks from school. Holidays taken in term time adversely affect pupils’ progress.
We would also ask you to check the school calendar for examination dates to avoid clashes. It is particularly important that pupils who have embarked upon their examination courses should miss as little school as possible. Your co-operation in this matter would be appreciated. **10 days out of school means 50 lessons missed.** It also means a pupil’s attendance record automatically falls to 94%. We must also point out that holidays in term-time have to be recorded as **unauthorised** absence. In certain exceptional circumstances, which are set out in the DCSF guidelines, it may be possible to count holiday absences as authorised.

**PUNCTUALITY**

Pupils should be in school by **8.40am.** Registration takes place at **8.45am.**

Pupils are expected to arrive on time for registration and all lessons. Year 7 assemblies take place on Mondays and all pupils are expected to attend on time.
HOME STUDY

Homework is changing!

Why do we want children to work at home?

- It encourages independent learning.
- It reinforces skills taught in the classroom.
- It helps to deepen knowledge and understanding.
- It develops the good habits learnt in Primary School.

Over the past two years we have been looking at the organisation and purpose of home study in the light of government guidelines and recent research. Changes brought about in the KS3 curriculum results in a need to encourage children from an early age to take an interest in their own learning. We want them to become inquisitive, self-motivated and independent learners who can work with others, carry out individual investigations and communicate ideas with skill and confidence.
Recording Home Study Tasks

- All pupils will be given a planner in which to record details of the task they have to complete; most will find this relatively easy but if there are problems please let us know.
- Please sign the planner each week.
- The planner can be a useful means of communicating with school, but please be aware that unless your child shows the Form Tutor the note, it could be some time before the planner is checked; if you need to communicate something urgent, please telephone or write.

Time management

As some project tasks will last more than one week, encouraging your child not to leave everything to the last minute can be very helpful. Time management is a life skill we all use every day as adults and good habits can be established early!

In Year 7 we would not expect pupils to be working for more than hour.

Working environment

You know your child best. Some prefer to work in their rooms, others like to work where they can seek support if and when they need it. It is a good idea to switch off phones as they can prove very distracting!
WHAT TO DO IF .......

Some children often worry about things which seem to adults to be trivial matters. They are often too timid to ask for help. It will be very helpful if you can make sure that your child knows what to do if he/she faces any of the following problems. You will feel more able to help him/her if you know what to do.

We will be telling your child what to do if any of the following happens. It would be helpful if you could talk them through to make sure that you all know the procedure .......

What to do if...

1) The fire bell rings.  

[Image: Fire bell ringing]

**Answer:** You should stop work immediately, leave your classroom as instructed by the teacher and assemble on the school field as instructed. **DO NOT RUN.** Your Form Tutor will take a register check to make sure that everybody is present. You will only be allowed back in school when all is safe.

2) You feel unwell or have an accident.  

[Image: Unwell emoji]

**Answer:** Tell the member of Staff teaching you who will decide how to help you. If you need help at break or lunch time go to Pupil Services. One of the trained First Aiders will help you. Remember they cannot treat you for an accident that happened at home the night before! If you are very unwell your parents will be telephoned and asked to collect you. It is very important, therefore, that we have an emergency telephone number where someone can be contacted at any time.
3) You have to bring medicine to school.  

Answer: You should notify your Year Leader, Mr Jankowski, of any on-going medication you need to take whilst in school. Medication should be handed to Pupil Services with an accompanying note from home for safe keeping. You must make sure that you get your medicine at the right time and that other teachers know you have to take medicine.

4) You lose your bus fare.  

Answer: You should see your Year Leader who will arrange to lend you some money. Remember to say ‘thank you’ and to pay the money back as soon as possible.

5) You lose something like sports wear or school bag.  

Answer:  

a) Report your loss to your teacher, your Form Tutor and your Year Leader.

b) Go to Pupil Services and the Staff Room and ask if the item has been handed in.

c) You may be allowed to go round school looking for what is lost.

d) Check to see if the caretaker has found it.

Name Your Property!
6) You have a dental or hospital appointment.  

**Answer:** Bring a note from home and hand it in to your Form Tutor. Your note should state what time your appointment is and when your parent/carer will collect you. You will be allowed to leave at the right time but it is helpful if you can arrange your appointments after school hours or during the school holidays.  

**Please note that medical/dental appointments are considered to be authorised absences if a pupil is not at registration.**

7) You arrive late for school.  

**Answer:** You should go to Pupil Services where your name will be recorded with your reason for being late. You should then go straight to your lesson.

8) You have to bring a large sum of money to school.  

**Answer:** We do not encourage you to bring a lot of money to school but if it is unavoidable then hand the money to your Form Tutor or your Head of Year for safe keeping. Remember to collect the money at the end of school.

9) If you lose your Smart Card.  

**Answer:** See Mr Capstick or Mrs McAllister in the canteen at 1.40 pm.
10) You miss your bus home.

**Answer:** If you miss your bus go straight to Pupil Services where you can telephone home to make alternative arrangements to be collected.

There is also a regular public service bus which stops outside school.

**You will not be left in school on your own.**

11) If you lose your planner.

**Answer:** You should inform your Year Leader, Mr Jankowski, and buy a new one for £3.00 from Pupil Services.

12) If you are unsure of something.

**Answer:** Ask a teacher! Simple but very true.
In preparing your child for secondary school, these are useful things to discuss with them.

**What is My Child Like Now?**
You may find the checklist useful.

**Things to Think About:**

1. What has your child liked most about his/her present school? What in the present school has made the time there enjoyable and profitable?

2. How easy is it for him/her to make friends? Has s/he many friends, or just one or two special ones?

3. What are your child’s interests?

4. What do you see your child as being good at?

5. Where do you see your child having difficulties, whether at school or elsewhere?

6. Does your child have particular concerns about changing school?
If There is a Problem Does Your Child Know:

How to contact you if you are not at home?

What to do if they miss the school bus?

What to do if they lost their house key?

What to do if they are going to be late?

What to do if someone offers them a lift home or to school?

What to do if they leave something on the bus?

What to do if they get on the wrong bus?

What to do if they are bullied?

What to do if they are offered drugs?

Do You Know:
Who to contact at school if there is a problem?

What to do if your child is away from school?

Who to contact if your child is late home?

What to do if your child is bullied?

What to say if your child is offered drugs?
Emergency Checklist

Does Your Child Know:

Your home address and telephone number?  Y/N
Your mobile telephone number?  Y/N
How to contact the emergency services?  Y/N
Who to contact in an emergency?  Y/N
What to do if they lose their keys or money?  Y/N

Do You Know:

How your child plans to travel to school?  Y/N
If the new school informs parents if they plan to keep pupils late, or if a child has not arrived at school?  Y/N
The names and contact numbers of your child’s friends?  Y/N
Checklist of Things to do/to have

- A copy of the school brochure.
- Start and finish times of the school day.
- Holiday and other non-school dates.
- A contact number for the school.
- The name of your child’s contact teacher.
- A bus pass for your child and where to catch the bus (if applicable).
- A school uniform and equipment list.
- A copy of the school Behaviour/Bullying Policy.
- A copy of the Special Needs Policy.
- Information on Consultation Evenings.
- Information on homework requirements.
- Information on ‘out of school’ activities.
Ways of Helping Your Child

Children need to become more independent and need to learn to manage their own lives, but they need your help and support.

You Could:

- Listen to your child’s fears.
- Be positive about the move to secondary school.
- Think of ways through any problems that might arise.
- Visit the school and find out what it is like.
- Work out the journey to school together.
- Help your child to buy the equipment s/he needs.

Find out how to talk with the teachers about the way your child is getting on.

Find out who to talk to if there is a problem.
Try Not To:

Pass on myths and stories that may worry your child.

Be negative about the school.

Expect your child to manage the transfer by themselves.

Do everything for them.

Ask other siblings to be responsible for them.

Expect the secondary school to work in the same way as the primary school.
BEHAVIOUR LEVELS

On Target

**Attitude to learning**
- Usually takes responsibility for own learning
- Makes some positive contributions and completes work to a good standard
- Usually motivated and engaged in the lesson

**Organisation for learning**
- Usually well prepared with equipment and resources
- Homework usually completed on time and to a good standard

**Behaviour for learning**
- Usually responsible and considerate of others
- Concentration is normally good and usually remains on task
- Does not shout out and shows consideration and respect to others

+1

**Attitude to learning**
- Demonstrates a consistent and active engagement in lessons
- Takes responsibility for own learning
- Shows some signs of independent learning
- Usually well motivated and committed
- Regularly makes valuable contributions to lessons
- Always completes work to a good quality

**Organisation for learning**
- Consistently well prepared with the correct equipment
- Homework always handed in on time and done to a good quality

**Behaviour for learning**
- Considerate of others
- Polite and respectful to teachers and other students

+2

**Attitude to learning**
- Always actively engaged in lessons
- Always takes responsibility for own learning
- Is able to work in an independent manner
- Consistently well motivated and committed
- Consistently makes positive contributions to lessons
- Always completes work to an excellent quality
- Can take the lead and is a positive role model for the class

**Organisation for learning**
- Consistently well prepared with the correct equipment
- Homework always handed in on time and done to the best quality possible

**Behaviour for learning**
- Excellent concentration and always remains on task
- Always considerate of others and helps to create a positive learning environment
- Polite and respectful to teachers and other students
Attitude to learning
Not always engaged in the lesson
Becomes engaged when prompted

Organisation for learning
Occasionally forgets the correct equipment
Homework usually completed but not always to the best of their ability

Behaviour for learning
Some lack of consideration shown to others
Some lack of respect shown to teachers and other students
Can behave in an inappropriate manner

Attitude to learning
Lacks any consistent engagement lessons
Rarely takes responsibility for own learning
Frequently fails to finish tasks in the lesson
Shows little or no motivation

Organisation for learning
Consistently forgets the correct equipment
Homework often not completed or handed in

Behaviour for learning
Frequently disrupts the learning of others
Concentration is poor and frequently requires intervention
Consistent lack of consideration for others
Can be rude and abusive to teachers and other students
A Final Word

Members of staff are here to help your child grow and learn. Sometimes what seems trivial to us can become a problem for a child. Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you feel that something is amiss. We will be only too happy to investigate your concern and put your mind at rest. In a big school pupils can often feel rather lost, hence the importance of the Year Head who is somebody they can turn to for help and understanding and someone whom parents should contact in the first instance.

Your child’s success at Helsby High School depends upon us all working closely together. The key to this co-operation is communication. We will certainly contact you if we have concerns. We hope that you will contact us about issues that concern you or your child.
UNIFORM SHOP

Remember that the Uniform Shop is open
Every Monday at 1.20pm

We now have tights and t-shirts in stock.