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Dear Parents/Carers

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all those parents who have identified Helsby High as the secondary school of choice for their son or daughter. Our planning for the new intake is already well advanced and staff from the High School have visited many of the local primary schools to collect information on Year 6 students. This will help us make their transition from primary to secondary as smooth as possible.

I am writing to all parents at this point to advise them of the way students are grouped in Year 7. It is the policy of Helsby High School to ensure that all students perform to the best of their ability. There is strong evidence to suggest that grouping, that is thoughtfully planned and rigorously monitored and evaluated to assess the impact on students' achievement, can have a significant effect on students' progress.

In Mathematics, Science and Modern Foreign Languages, we will use the results of the Key Stage 2 tests as a basis to group students in ability sets from the beginning of September. These subjects have different tiers of entry for GCSE which involves different levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. We want to group students in such a way as to ensure an appropriate level of challenge and aspiration in these subjects, so that all students can make good progress and reach their full potential. These sets will be monitored and evaluated at different stages throughout the students' academic journey to reflect their emerging needs.

In subjects such as English, Geography, History, Religious Education, Art, Music and Drama however, the students will be taught in their Form Tutor group. This will be a balanced mix of students with different strengths, interests, attitudes and abilities. In these subjects we have found that students thrive in this environment where they are challenged and supported by peer learning.

It is the aim of the High School to build on the work done in primary schools and provide the challenge students require to make good progress right from the word go. During the year, students will be assessed regularly to identify their strengths and areas for development, so we can provide appropriate support and encouragement depending on the needs of each individual. I hope this early communication will be helpful in explaining how we are preparing for the new Year 7. On the induction evening there will be an opportunity for parents to raise any questions that they have about grouping.

I look forward to meeting you in July.

Yours faithfully

A Pritchard-Roberts (Dr)
Assistant Headteacher