



**Bexley Grammar School**  
Danson Lane, Welling, Kent, DA16 2BL  
A Specialist Language College  
and IB World School  
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### **Headteacher's Welcome - New Year 7 Virtual Transition - June 2020**

Dear Parents/Carers and Pupils,

Welcome to Bexley Grammar School, in spirit if not in person! Who could have predicted that we would be 'meeting' through a Virtual Transition programme this summer?

I am frustrated that I cannot speak to you face to face, to see the excitement and perhaps nervousness in your faces. But I am very grateful to Mr Martin and Miss Fuwa for putting together, along with some of our students, this two-part programme.

My name is Mr Elphick, Headteacher, but the really important people that you will be working most closely with are:

- Mr Martin, Director of Studies (DoS) - Year 7;
- Miss Fuwa, Senior Academic Mentor (SAM) - Year 7;
- Your tutors - you will meet your tutor first thing in the morning each day and again just before break time each day;
- Mr Gilmore, Deputy Head with overall responsibility for Years 7 and 8 and also the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

You are very fortunate to have such an experienced team of staff working with you. I could say a great deal about each of them but in a nutshell, Mr Martin and Miss Fuwa recently finished working with the Year 11 students who are receiving their GCSE results this summer. Mr Gilmore was a tutor and then a Director of Studies before he became a Deputy Head, so you are in very safe hands. We know how to look after you and we also know how to keep you on the right path!

So, welcome and also congratulations for securing a place at BGS! 351 children put us as their first choice for our 224 places and 1421 children listed us as one of their choices, so you should feel both proud and privileged to be joining us. Well done indeed.

Some of you already have a brother or sister at the school. Many of you will know each other from Primary School while some may be the only one from your school. However, there are over 30 of you who are the only one from a school - so you are not alone and we will look after you.

The information for parents we have provided is fairly extensive but you can return to it and read it at your leisure. The induction materials for students will be released later in the

month for you to peruse at your leisure. Please don't be overwhelmed by the volume. You have time to keep returning to it and exploring different areas. Rest assured, we won't be examining you on it in September or whenever we are able to start, but it will help to make you feel that you are a part of our community before we meet in person.

Before you explore the wealth of induction materials, may I just remind you why I think this school is special:

1. **Respect:** Every visitor to this school (in normal times!) comments on the warmth they observe in the relationships between students and staff – there is a rare atmosphere of mutual trust and respect here which doesn't happen by accident. We foster tolerance and consideration of others. This is what we refer to as Empathy in our ethos. If children break this expectation for respect, we come down on them hard and we expect parents to support us in this.

2. **Opportunities:** The curriculum we offer as an IB World School, a Language College and a specialist Science and Maths school, is one of the most challenging on offer in a state school in this country: Our range of GCSE offer is exceptional and leads to the IB Diploma Programme, which we do because it is the best curriculum on offer in the UK. This breadth and depth of our academic challenge is what we refer to as Intellect in our ethos.

We also push all students to take advantage of a huge range of extra-curricular activities in sport, music, drama, dance, theatre trips, language trips, the list is endless. The very competitive House system, which runs vertically across all the year groups, is at the heart of many such activities – there are, I believe, over 25 separate House activities that are available to Year 7 students. The independence and responsibility that this engenders has elements of the empathy I mentioned but also the Courage we refer to in our ethos.

3. **Thirdly,** we are a community, in partnership with so many different people. At the centre of this community is the partnership between you, us and your child. This is the relationship that we nurture every day by treating your son or daughter as an individual and by communicating with you: through the Student Planner, through weekly emailed newsletters, through the school website and through 'Parent Pay', the website that is the hub of many of these communications as well as everything financial.

Many of our induction materials, in one way or another, refer to this central partnership between home and school in which you leave us in charge of your children, 'in loco parentis'. As a Head, my first responsibility is the safety of your child in school. Please trust us to keep your child safe on your behalf and trust us to do so much more as we combine the experience of all our staff to nurture and teach your child.

4. Which brings me to my last point. We are in the business not just of teaching students but of preparing young people for fulfilling lives. We are proud to be developing the leaders of the future, but leaders with the empathy I mentioned earlier, leaders with consideration of others, which we summarise in our slogan: 'developing compassionate leaders'.

There is a simple but profound sentence in the United Nations declaration on the rights of the child: "*Mankind owes to the child the best it has to give.*" At the risk of being corny, I declare that: BGS owes to the child the best it has to give.

And the child should give her or his best. Every time you start something new, you have a chance to be the better person that you always strive to be. We all want to be better. A change of school is your chance to make a new start. This is your chance to make new friends, to pay more attention, to be a bit more confident, to try something new, to push yourself harder - perhaps push yourself out of your comfort zone a bit. I'll talk about this again when we meet in the autumn.

Until then, please enjoy getting to know us.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Elphick', written in a cursive style.

Mr Elphick, Headteacher.