

Dear Parents/Carers and soon-to-be Year 7 students,

Welcome to the Simon Balle All-through family!

It is with huge anticipation and excitement that I look forward to leading Year 7 in September. As a highly experienced pastoral leader, I have a deep understanding of the importance of Year 7 in creating the foundations, both academically and socially, to help build a platform for them to not only flourish in their time with us but also for the rest of their lives. At all times, but especially in the light of the current climate, as a school we know how vital it is to ensure that all students settle quickly and not only to feel a sense of belonging to our community but also establish those vital routines and high expectations.

Work has already begun in earnest to this end, as we want to build connections before students join us. This is why, along with discussions with parents and Year 6 teachers, we have a range of events planned for the coming weeks, and for our return to school in September, to help begin our journey together on a strong basis. A journey where students will work with us to develop their *confidence and self-worth* as they become 'tomorrow's citizens'.

This will be true academically too. We will seek to provide opportunities so they discover what they find interesting and ignite a passion for their learning. This will be rooted in the very best teaching and learning as well as the quality of relationships between learner and teacher; this approach that has seen most of our children make truly remarkable progress in recent years. We attribute much of this not only to our staff development programme but also our increased use of digital resources.

Existing families know and understand this journey we have been on. Five years ago we were technology pioneers in using creative and innovative tools and resources. We have embedded digital technology into the teaching and learning at Simon Balle, with students having an electronic tablet or laptop for use in all aspects of school life, and has meant that we could maintain high standards seamlessly throughout remote learning in these last two months. Proof that our passion and proactive approach to all aspects of education results in the best outcomes for our students.

All of this leaves me enthused and excited at what we can achieve together in the coming months and years and I cannot wait to begin our journey together.

Very best wishes,

Lucy Owen

Year 7 Leader

Assistant Head

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