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**25/8/2014**

**To: Parents/Guardians of Year 7 Students**

**Dear Parents/Guardians,**

It was a great pleasure to finally meet Year 7 on the first day of school and I’d now like to extend the welcome to all of you too. The Year 7s appeared to hit the ground running last week and have told me they are keen to meet their first full week at Secondary School with enthusiasm, zest and good humour. This is my 8th year at BPS and I am sincerely looking forward to working with both the students and parents as the new Head of Year 7.

It would be wonderful to meet as many of you as possible at the Informal Coffee Morning for Year 7 and New Secondary Parents this Friday, the 29th August, from 8am in the Theatre. There will also be a Year 7 Coffee Morning on Friday 5th September. You are welcome to attend both coffee mornings.

The year ahead is an extremely important one in terms of developing productive behaviour and settling down socially; the Year 7 tutor team and I are dedicated to ensuring your children have the opportunity to achieve their potential, socially and academically, throughout the year.

***Staff and Communication***

 The Year 7 Tutor Team this year (with staff codes) is as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tutor Group/House | Tutor Base | Tutor | Staff Code |
| 7C (Samui) | C201 | Marie O’Connell | MAOC |
| 7F (Lanta) | A222 | Christopher Ferne | CHFE |
| 7H (Lanta) | A202 | Alison Holmes | ALHO |
| 7J (Samui) | H104 | Polly Sinnett-Jones | POSI |
| 7K (Phuket) | S210 | Kathy Kelly | KAKE |
| 7M (Chang) | C202 | Karen McGuire | KAMG |
| 7S (Phuket) | H107 | Sam Mooring | SAMI |
| 7W (Chang) | S209 | Martin Walsh  | MAWA |

Your child’s tutor will be the teacher that your children will have the most frequent contact with and should be your first point of contact with the school should any pastoral issues arise. In the case of academic concerns, however, the first point of contact should be your child’s subject teacher.  You are more than welcome to copy me into any such communications.

Occasionally, you may feel it is necessary to meet with your child's tutor or subject teacher.  We welcome the chance for face-to-face contact, but please do make an appointment first and give some indication of the nature of your concerns.

It is essential that we are able to maintain an accurate record of all students on campus. Please let your child’s tutor know the nature and likely duration of any absence (either by email or by phone to the Secondary office) before 7.40am. If you are aware in advance of your child’s absence, for example due to an appointment or trip that needs to be taken during school time, please email the tutor with the dates so that this can be noted on the register and subject teachers can be informed.

Please do check and update your own personal contact details and the medical details of your child as necessary. This is **vital** as it is our primary source of information and ensures that we can contact you in case of an emergency.

Another valuable point of contact is through the PTG representatives for Year 7. We have Line Echivard and Anne Morganthaler Vandilik working with us this year. There is an opportunity to meet them at our coffee mornings and you may also contact them on the email addresses below.

Line Echivard famille.echivard@yahoo.fr

Anne Morganthaler Vandlik anne.vandlik@gmail.com

***New IT Systems***

All Secondary students need to have a laptop at school each day.  All student laptops must be registered at the ISIT Office so that they will operate as needed at school.  If there are any issues with this, please contact your child’s tutor or email me directly.

This year brings a transition period to new IT systems: Firefly and iSAMS. You have probably seen Firefly by now; this replaces a great deal of BPSnet and will become familiar to students throughout the year. Please be on the lookout for information coming soon regarding access for parents.

***Home Learning***

Continuing the learning process outside of the school environment is an essential component in your child's learning at Bangkok Patana School. Home Learning can be quite a challenge at the beginning of the year.  For this reason, the Year 7 students will be gently eased into the Home Learning programme.  Subject teachers will set Home Learning on a regular basis and in a variety of forms.

For Term 1, Year 7 students should have no more than approximately one hour of Home Learning each night. All tasks should be completed carefully and on time. The Home Learning timetable has already been emailed to both students and parents. If students do not understand an assignment we encourage them to ask for help from their teacher rather than to submit incomplete work.

Thank you in advance for your support in encouraging your child to plan his or her time to effectively complete home learning.

***Systems for monitoring student behaviour***

*Home Learning* – Failure to complete home learning tasks will initially be dealt with by the subject teacher. Parents will be copied into an e-mail about the home learning to the student; the aim here is to encourage a three-way communication process, culminating in the home learning being completed and associated problems being remedied.

*Conduct Detention* - Student behaviour is generally excellent at BPS, but occasionally problems arise. Conduct detentions help students to understand the effect of inappropriate behaviour. If the case arises for a student to be detained after school (which is rare), then parents will be notified in advance.

*Uniform* - The guidelines are detailed online in the Student Handbook for KS3, and your support in ensuring that your child leaves for school dressed appropriately is greatly appreciated, especially with reference to skirt length, footwear, jewellery and make-up. We would also ask for your help in monitoring what students are wearing for non-uniform days.

***Transport***

Bus Rules and information regarding transport are sent out to parents along with the bus routing. Please read through these documents carefully to ensure that you are aware of the established rules and procedures.

If arrangements do need to be urgently altered on any given day, students may not do this themselves; parents must call the Transport Office **before 11am**. After this time it will be too late. The phone number for the Transport Department is 02 785 2470. The office is staffed from 6.00am - 6.00pm Monday to Friday.

Transport can also be contacted by emailing transport@patana.ac.th

***Extra-Curricular Activities***

The Extra-Curricular Activities programme, which can be accessed online, is extensive and offers many exciting opportunities. We encourage students to participate as an excellent way to explore interests, learn new skills, have some fun and expand their social circles. If you have any queries regarding Extra-Curricular Activities, please contact Mrs Cindy Adair-Bolakoso (ciad@patana.ac.th).

***Tutorial Programme:***

At Bangkok Patana School we have a very supportive Year 7 Tutorial Programme. This year we begin by reinforcing appropriate social expectations and value systems and ensuring that the Year 7s settle in to Secondary School.  The over-arching theme of Tutorial during Term 1 is ‘Overcoming Challenges’. Highlights this term will include Internet safety awareness, caring for and including people in friendship groups and guarding against bullying, as well as preparing for our Residential Visit.

***Support Tutors and Tutor Mentoring – new in 2014/15***

An innovation to our Secondary School structure this year is the addition of one Support Tutor per tutor group. They have already been working with the students and will take registration one morning per week to allow the tutor to have dedicated 1:1 mentoring time with students in the tutor group. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure our students are able to fulfil their potential. This is going to be an invaluable source of support for your child this year.

To guide the mentoring process, students in Years 7-10 will carry out a questionnaire that can provide details on various aspects of their sense of well-being in school. More details about the questionnaire can be found here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8YBO7rjQLkTLXp6WHplb3p0VDg/edit?usp=sharing>

***Important Dates for This Term***

As always, there is a lot happening at Patana this term. Here are some of the key dates:

Thursday 21st August – Season 1 Sport try outs commence

Monday 25th August – ECA sign up goes live

Friday 29th August – Secondary New Parents’ Coffee Morning in the Conference Centre

Monday 1st September – Season 1 Sports begins

Friday 5th September – Y7 Parents’ Coffee Morning

Friday 19th September – School Holiday

Sunday 28th September - Patana Fun Run @ Ancient City

Wednesday 1st October – Freedom from Chemical Dependency Meeting for Parents (6 – 7pm)

Monday 6th October – Year 7 Student and Parents’ Conference

Friday 10th October – Key Stage 3 Strings Festival @ BPS

Friday 10th October – Key Stage 3 Secondary Dance

Thursday 16th and Friday 17th October – School closed for students (Teacher Training)

Monday 20th October – Half-Term Holiday

Friday 14th November – Patana Plugged @ 6pm.

Monday 17th November – Secondary Residential Visits

Friday 5th December – HM King’s Birthday

Wednesday 10th December – Constitution Day

Friday 19th December - Christmas Assembly and the end of Term

I hope to see many of you over the coming term and I am looking forward to sharing a successful year ahead.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Owen McDevitt

Head of Year 7

owmc@patana.ac.th