

Welcome to this virtual transfer event - thank you so much for joining us this evening.

My name is Eleanor Grylls and I am Head of School here at Biddenham

Starting a new school, starting secondary school is tricky even in more 'usual' circumstances. There is a mixture of excitement, nervousness and apprehension - and that's just the parents!

As a parent something I can relate to - all 3 of my children chose Biddenham as their secondary school and 2 of them are still here in years 9 & 10. Each child, every child's experience of the process is different and the small matter of a global pandemic and multiple lock downs has added a whole new layer of strangeness to the transition process for all year 6s, both here in Bedford and in the rest of the country. However, at Biddenham we've been working really hard to overcome the issues thrown up by the pandemic. It is our aim to make sure that every child's needs are met.

As you will have seen already we have really tried to embrace and maximise the use of technology (and the postal system) to try and alleviate any stress and anxiety that comes from the move to secondary school - virtual transition programme, The Biddenham Diploma, and we do love a video.

It strikes me though that with any transition process there are probably 4 key areas to think about;

1 Courage

Being brave. Starting a new secondary school means stepping outside your comfort zone - for students and for parents. Having the courage to reach out and make new friends. Having the courage to try new things. Being brave when meeting lots of new teachers when you are used to only having a few teachers. Having the courage to put your hand up and answer a question and it not mattering if you get it right! You have all already shown how brave, resilient and resourceful you are throughout lockdowns and this courage will only grow and increase here at Biddenham.

2 Change

Adapting to change. Lots of things will change at secondary school - lessons, teachers, students, times of the day, the school environment, classrooms, the food!! It's our job to give you the information and tools to help make you as comfortable as possible and therefore able to cope with all of this change.

3 Aspirations

Hopes and dreams. We believe that school should be a place that sets you on a path to achieve your goals. We hope to be a place where you can dream big and get there. We do this through the curriculum - the wide range of subjects that are taught which include academic, creative and practical aspects - all of which are important if every student is to find the thing that they love. We also build aspirations through our wider, extra-curricular opportunities, our many clubs, projects, societies, trips and visits.

4 Support

It's important that students and parents know where to go and who to go to for any type of support; academic, pastoral, health and wellbeing. This support is vital from staff, but also, really importantly from each other - we all need to show friendship and compassion through kindness. This support is not just there at the beginning of your Biddenham journey, but all the way along the path.....and beyond.

Courage, Change, Aspirations, Support

We hope that these key areas are addressed in some way through all of the transition activities that have already taken place, through this evening and the transition work that is still to come and that you will feel fully prepared for life as part of the Biddenham family.

Thank you for taking the time to be with us this evening.

I'm now going to hand over to David Bailey, who will say a few words.

Thank you, Eleanor,

Good evening everyone, I'm David Bailey, Principal here at Biddenham and just coming to the end of my 20th year at the school...I'd like to think you might say that I look too young to have been here that long, but I think the grey hair lets me down on that one.

Anyway, I would like to echo all that Eleanor has said and add that I feel you are joining Biddenham at a good time in its History - we have a strong and well established team of teachers - that get stronger and better year on year - and some of the new entrants into the profession are exceptional and we are very much in awe of...You are also fortunate this year as we are heavily oversubscribed so a lot of parents who wanted their son/daughter to come to Biddenham have been disappointed - so we are lucky to have so many of you choosing us and I'd like to thank you for putting your faith in us and pledge that we will do all within our power to make the next 5 to 7 years a great learning experience for your kids.

Our students leave here with good results and look back on their time at Biddenham with fondness and have lots of great memories having enjoyed their time with us - that's important.

Finally, I'd like to plug our Summer school that's taking place for two weeks from 26th July. You've got until Thursday to sign up and you could do any or all of the days on offer...We've got some interesting sessions from learning Russian to doing some baking to playing some sports and whilst this isn't strictly a transition activity it will help those students who do attend to become better orientated and ease the passage into Biddenham in September.

So, thanks for listening and I very much look forward to a time we can meet in person.

Now over to Emily Simpson (see Slides for Emily Simpson's and Abi Speights section of the evening)