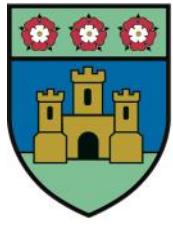


YEAR 7 WELCOME HANDBOOK 2020-21



# Pitsford School



## **Here is looking at you kid**

Welcome to Pitsford Senior School! We are delighted to have you here and this booklet will explain what makes us different to your school up until now, whether you were at Pitsford Junior School or any other school instead. However if there is anything you do not know or do not understand in this booklet then ask us! Your first person to ask is your form tutor, but you can ask any teacher or Mrs Kirk (the Deputy Head) or me.

You'll have a great time at Pitsford School: it is a wonderful, funny and fun place to study and the next few years will be fantastic—we promise!

*Dr Walker, Headmaster*

### **The School Day**

Registration starts at 8.40am, when you will go to your form room to be registered by your tutor. Be on time! The school is open before that, and many students show up from 8am.

Our lessons are all 40 minutes long.

Lessons start at 8.50am and run through until Tutor Time at 10.10am. At 10.35am there is a twenty five minute break where you have access to our tuck shop in the Dining Hall. Lessons then start again at 11am and run until 1pm when it is lunch.

Lunch has a broad range of choices and every year group gets priority on a different day, this will be explained to you by your tutor. When it is your time to go and eat you queue up in the corridor by the Dining Hall until the staff and Prefects in charge let you in.

Afternoon lessons start at 2pm and run through to 4pm.

You then have a break between 4 and 4.20pm before Activities begin and run through until 5.20. There is an incredible range of activities (not many schools have as many as we do, and while most schools have fitness in gyms and supervised prep, few have Marvel Super Hero films, or knitting).

You are expected to take part in at least three activities every week and there will be a compulsory after school sports practice on one of the evenings.

If you have to miss school, or part of any school day, it is vital that your parent(s) let us know: they should call or email the office and tell us what you are doing, when you are leaving and when you will be back.

We have three school assemblies a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) and two tutor periods (Tuesday and Thursday). They all take place during period three (from 10.10 until 10.40).

### **The School Office...**

... is in Pitsford Hall and you can always go there if you need something. They will have access to any information, can call your parents, administer first aid, or come and get members of staff if necessary. If in doubt, go to the School Office!

If your parents need to contact us or you they can do so through the School Office and its phone number is 01604 880306.

## **The Website**

We try to keep information on the website so that you know what is going on. The school calendar is on there and there is information on subjects and clubs and activities, school trips, letters from the school, news pages and the fortnightly Pitsford Post. It is also pretty slick and has some great pictures. [www.pitsfordschool.com](http://www.pitsfordschool.com). Ask your parents to follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram—the links are on the website so you can see what is going on even if you don't have the app. We update it almost daily with the things that you are doing in school and on visits out of school.

For your parents, there is a parent portal which lets them see your attendance, reports, timetables and lots of other things. Your parents will get a login when you arrive at the school as a fully fledged member. And if there is ever a problem logging in, the school office can help.

## **Buses**

We offer a number of school bus routes. At the moment they are from:

Kettering/Walgrave

Market Harborough/Brixworth

Northampton Town Centre/Kingsthorpe

Towcester/Mereway/Marina Park

Moulton/Weston Favell

They do change and are added to. If you or your parents have any questions about this, contact the Bus Tsarina who is Mrs Robson and she is in the school office (or [jrobson@pitsfordschool.com](mailto:jrobson@pitsfordschool.com))

## What is this thing, 'the tutor'?

Up until now, most of your lessons will have been taught by one person and will have been in one classroom but now you are older and freer and you will have loads of teachers who all teach separate subjects in separate rooms and you go to them!

Because they are all subject-teachers, they won't necessarily know the whole you, which is what your tutor is for. Although you may be taught by your tutor too, they have a vital responsibility to look at your overall progress in the school. They are also there to make sure that you are OK, that you are happy and that you know what you need to do, where and when. They are lovely people and their main job is to be there to help you so do not be shy or nervous about asking your tutor for anything—they are there to be asked!

In particular, you will see your tutor every morning for registration, and you will also see them twice a week for Tutor Time (which is 10.10-10.40am), on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Your tutors all belong to one of the three Houses in the School and you will be in the same House as your tutor. These houses are Hesketh (7H); Robinson (7R); and Wake (7W).

If you are moving up from the Junior School or have a sibling in the school you will be in the same house.

The tutors are all experienced and there is nothing you can say or do that will shock or surprise them—if you need any help, or need to talk to them, ask. No, really—ask!

For the benefit of your parents, we will get you to write your tutor's email addresses in your planner, and your tutors will also contact you by email before the term begins (belts and braces!). Email is a good way for your parents to contact your tutor, and usually the most efficient for day to day things, but with teachers all teaching all day (every day) it might take 24 hours for a reply.

## The School Planner

You will all get a School Planner at the start of the academic year. It is a really useful book which will make your days run much more smoothly. The planner has space for your timetable, your prep timetable, and what prep is set when and for when. It has the School Rules and what will happen to all of the other students who misbehave (because you won't. Obviously). The planner also has space for your parents to leave notes for the benefit of tutors and is another way to communicate between home and school.

## **What do you need to bring every day to school?**

You should only bring the books which you need for that day's classes (so you need to plan and make sure your bag is packed the night before the next day). Even more important, make sure that you bring your games kit when you have games—that is essential and not having kit does not mean you miss games!

As well as your books, and relevant kit, every day bring the following:

Your Prep Diary

A set of colouring pencils

A sharp HB pencil

A pencil sharpener

An eraser

An ink pen

A glue stick

A compass (for drawing a circle, not for sailing around the world)

A calculator

A protractor

A clear plastic 30cm ruler

A set square

An apple for all of your teachers

## **Storing your things in School**

On a morning when you have a sporting activity, you can drop your sports bag in to the changing rooms in the Sports Hall. We encourage you to take your bag home in the evening, to reduce the chance of getting confused about the location of items and to get it washed... you would be surprised how smelly an unwashed school bag gets (no, I don't know why either). If you would like a secure place to store things, or just the convenience of a named locker, lockers are available to hire. A letter will be given to your parents separately. You do not have to have one as we have bag racks and some people put a combination lock on their sports bag to zip the zips together. We are a safe place but valuables are always worth protecting. We do encourage you not to bring anything fragile or valuable into school unless absolutely necessary.

To book a locker please go to [ilsschools.co.uk](http://ilsschools.co.uk) and select Pitsford School. A bank of lockers has been reserved for Year 7 pupils so that they can be together.

## **Prep? PREP??**

Now you are in Senior School prep becomes very important. Prep is the best way you can make sure that you have fully learned what was done in lessons (consolidated your knowledge is how it will be put in your school reports) and you are ready to learn new things in the next lessons. It is non-negotiable and vital. Welcome to the rest of your life!

In Year 7, you'll get two pieces of prep per night and they should take between twenty and thirty minutes to complete. Your teacher will tell you to record the prep set in your diary which you must do and they will tell you when it is due. Don't miss deadlines as the work does not go away and you can manage it much better by keeping up with the pace.

If you have problems with your prep or are worried about anything tell your teacher and/or your tutor. Everyone is here to help you and they just need to be asked!

All prep is set on Firefly, our virtual learning environment, and you will be sent log in details at the start of September.

### **Prep Advice from previous Year 7s**

Here is key bits of advice which previous senior school students have shared with us:

- a) "Get into a routine of doing your prep at the same time every night, and in the same place if possible!"
- b) "Do not have any screen time (devices or TV) until prep is done and then you can relax"
- c) "After doing prep, pack your bag for the next day"
- d) "If prep is tough do not just give up, but if you have given your very best, speak to your teacher because there may be something you did not understand"

### **School Rules**

The school rules are in your planner. However, none of them are very complicated and the basic rule of the school is that you should treat everyone with respect and kindness, as you would hope that they would treat you.

There are some punishments when you do something wrong, most of which will be a written task or a form of school time detention. For more serious breaches of rules, you can face a detention out of school or even suspension or expulsion. But these should not apply to you as you are a very nice young man/woman and you'll do what is expected of you every day...

The three key principles of the school, that you will hear a lot about in assemblies and form times are:

#### **1 . Be nice.**

That means lots of things. It means being kind to everyone, treating others the way that you would have them treat you. It means respecting all adults in the school, and that includes visitors to the school. It means doing what you are asked to do because the school will never expect you to behave in a way which is not in your interest. Just be nice!

#### **2. Work hard.**

Although the school is great fun, it is not a youth club and you are here to learn. Your teachers will work hard to give you best the chance of learning and growing into a confident and skilled young person. Your part of that deal is to work really hard and to take advantage of what is a fantastic opportunity to study in a lovely and supportive environment

### **3. Have fun.**

Happy boys and girls learn better. Happy people are more open to new experiences and embracing new challenges. Happy children are healthier. It is really important to us that Pitsford School is a place that you love and enjoy being in. If it is not then we want to do something about it, which is why having fun is one of our core rules.

Remember though, you need to do all three at the same time. Fun has to take place around working hard, and both of them have to happen while you are being nice and kind. Pitsford students are the nicest people because they live by those rules, and so will you.

### **Activities Programme and Co-Curricular**

You probably know this already, but it will reassure you to know that we do not think that school is only about the lessons and the marks you get.

We want you to be able to explore all of your talents, in the classroom and out and there is an activities programme that runs everyday after school from 4.20-5.20. Mrs Leeke runs the programme and it will be published on the school website when it is finalised for September.

You will choose your activities with the help of your parents and then your tutor in school, and everyday your tutor will ask you at registration to say what you are doing after 4pm so that we know where you are.

We encourage you to do at least three activities a week including Thursday afternoons—which is compulsory. This is when team sports' practice takes place, and when we say team YOU are part of that.

We cannot emphasise enough how important it is to participate in activities in the school: this is where you see the other side of your teachers and friends, and they you! This is where you strengthen relationships and learn more about yourselves.

One of our pupils recently tried the hurdles for the first time, and within a month had competed and made it to 4th place at the ISA National Championships—how cool is that. If she had not tried she would never have known! The same goes for musical instruments or even Mr Stoner's role play club—you don't know, you could easily be the next Superman or Wonder Woman. One of the big opportunities next term is the School Musical—this is spectacular—and if you want to be really involved and get to know lots of different children throughout the school, it is a great way to feel part of everything.

## Wellbeing and Being Well

It is difficult to learn if you are not happy and healthy.

There are many people and things that we can do to help you. The most important person in this is your tutor , who you will see every morning and at tutor times and assemblies. Your tutor will guide you through healthy living and wellness issues, through PSHE and as a mentor.

We have really lovely food, with a selection of hot meals, salads, pasta, jacket potatoes, wraps—so there really is something for everyone. You can have a choice of puddings and also take extra fruit if you want. Mrs Whitley (our lovely catering manager) will meet with your tutor group early in September to talk to you about making health choices. And if there are ever any problems or dietary needs your parents can talk directly with her or through the tutor to get it sorted.

Sport is really important here, with some healthy competition but it is mostly about fun. Many pupils do sport every day, but all will do sport at least three times a week. We run mindfulness sessions at lunch times and with acres of space for play at break time and lunch time, you will get plenty of fresh air when the weather is fine.

If you do need some quiet time, the library is available at break times and lunch times for catching up at work, mindfulness colouring, reading, and we regularly put out jigsaws and chess.

Mrs Sayers is in the library at break and lunch time and so are members of the Senior Leadership Team. Mrs Sayers is a trained 'School Listener' - you are welcome to talk to her if you have a problem, and special sessions can be arranged if you have an issue that needs a little support, such as a bereavement.

If you feel ill or hurt yourself in the school day, go to the office. They will help you. We have trained first aiders, and we keep any medication and protocols there for any conditions that your parents have shared with us.

Mrs Tilley, in the School Office, additionally liaises with the School Nursing Team, who come in to school regularly to update vaccinations and to offer advice on different health issues. We also have drop in lunchtime sessions with them every term.

For some problems, we can help you access support outside of school. For this Mrs Kirk will talk with you and your parents and we can decide the best way.

Remember that nobody is happy all the time. It is OK to feel down sometimes and school days are the best opportunity to develop the resilience and coping skills that will last you into your adult life.

## **Exams, Reporting and Parents' Evenings**

At Pitsford Senior School every year group gets three formal pieces of reporting every year (one per term). These are: a full report (about 120 words per subject); an interim report (about 80 words per subject); a Parents' Evening. In addition, every half-term, grades will be issued which will grade how well you have been working in terms of effort and attainment.

School exams for all year groups below Year 11 are in the final week of the first half-term in the summer (round about the end of May). The school timetable will be suspended for that week and your exams will be timetabled across the week. They will be formal and will help to explain your final grade in the summer. In addition, for certain year groups, including Year 7, we have tutor-only Parents' Evenings at the start of the academic year so that parents get to meet and know the key person guiding their children through the year to come.

## **Uniform**

You must wear the correct uniform in school. Your prep diary will explain what the rules on it are but for now, the key information is that you should get it from the company School Blazer ([www.schoolblazer.com](http://www.schoolblazer.com)) which has a listing for Pitsford School and all of the uniform can be sourced from there.

My advice is to have your name written on all of your uniform; because it all looks the same it is ever so easy for someone to pick up part of your uniform by accident. If your name is stitched inside it then that won't happen (and your tutor won't have to spend days trying to track down your lost skirt or trousers!).

Most of all—we ask you to wear clean uniform with pride—that means clean shoes, shirts tucked in and hair tidy. Because we like you to be 'free range' at break times, if there is a mishap playing football or the like... the office will help you.

And as you grow, you will need to replace items: Girls skirts should be on the knee, and boys—if your trousers are flapping around your ankles its time for an upgrade!

Girls up until year 9 should wear their hair tied back and no one gets to wear any kind of make-up except for clear nail varnish and concealer if really, really necessary.

For the first half of the autumn term, however, pupils will be asked to wear clean smart casual clothing to school due to the current advice for schools to allow pupils to wear easily washable clothing.

## Some good advice for Senior School

**Get involved:** the more you put in the more you will get out! That is true in lessons, activities, games, House competition, friendship, life. Everything!

**Stay on top of work:** in Senior School we work hard, lessons move fast and prep never goes away, stay on top of it so you can be the best that you can be.

**Be on time:** strange as it sounds, being on time to school, lessons, lunch slots, games, DC Comics discussion group etc etc is some of the best advice you will ever get. Being punctual is a life skill which will make you more employable, happier, three inches taller and fast as a cheetah (some of that might not be true).

**Talk:** talking is vital and talking if you have a problem is vital : we have a lot of people here to hear you if you need help, want advice or just want to chat. Your tutor, Mrs. Sayers, Mrs. Kirk, Dr. Walker (me), the Office Staff, any teacher. Everyone is here just for you. Communication is the most important thing in the school, speak and you will be listened to!

**Be smart:** I meant that about uniform, because that shows you have pride in yourself and the school, but I think be smart in everything: how you work, how you deal with others, how you use your time, how you approach your life.

**Be positive:** you are coming to a lovely, small school which is in a beautiful park, with a magnificent Sports Hall and grounds that members of the public wish they could pay to walk around. These next years will be amazing and if you face them in a positive manner they will be amazing squared.

**Follow your passions:** I do not want to get too new-agey (man), but school is where you will find the real you as your interests deepen and you start to get the skills and language to follow them. The whole school is set up to be the bridge that you will cross into adulthood—follow your dreams!

**Be ambitious:** We are an academic school and our students do very well. You have got in, so you should be confident in your ability and you should try to outdo yourself all the time. The only limit you face at Pitsford School is your imagination: dream big!

**Be polite:** in life, we can only really control ourselves. That means we can have high standards every day. That means that you can influence how others will see you, and if you are always polite (saying 'please', 'thank you', 'excuse me', holding doors open, saying hello, smiling at people etc etc etc) people will see you as a winner, a cool cat and someone to know and like. Be polite!

**Be kind:** you are getting older and as you grow up the best lesson you can ever learn is to look out for others, to be considerate of their opinions and to look out for them. If you do that, you will touch countless lives and enrich them, and they will enrich yours too. A golden rule and a vital piece of advice.

**Try new things:** it took me years to realise that getting away from things with which I was comfortable and to try new things was vital to me growing as a student and a person. Every year you should try something new, open yourself to new experiences, get involved in a way that you have not done before. Nothing will make a more positive impact on you

**Don't worry:** everything will be great—this is a great school full of really nice people (students and teachers) and me! These will be your good old days.

## **Key Events in the Senior School Year**

The school year is packed as tight as a can of tuna, there is so much to do and so much to look forward to. Here are some of the key landmarks of every year:

### **Start of the Year Church Service in the Pitsford Parish Church**

This is on the first day of the school year and is a forty minute assembly and service

### **Open Morning**

All students (and staff) need to attend. There are two Open Mornings, one in September/October, one in March / April.

### **Movember**

We raise money for loads of charities and one of the biggest is Movember—it has a special lunch, special assemblies, music, dancing and everyone wears a moustache on that day (every single word there is true!)

### **Bonfire**

This is the final Sunday of the October half-term and takes place in front of Pitsford Hall. There is a Barbecue and marshmallow toasting...!

### **Remembrance Day Concert**

Huge musical concert in the Chapel to raise money for the Poppy Appeal and to pay respects to those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

### **Pitsford Run**

This is the last week before the Christmas holiday and is a tradition that goes back to the foundation of the school. A key part of the House competition, the Pitsford Run is what makes you a real Pitsfordian!

### **Christmas Concert**

A massive musical night in the Parish Church. There are groups, soloists, singing, music and as yet no nasal flutes....

### **Christmas Lunch**

Full Christmas lunch in the Dining Hall, served by staff. There will be crackers of every sort.

### **Christmas Service**

The first term ends with a very nice Christmas Service in the Parish Church.

### **House Music Festival**

Performed in front of the whole school, mass participation, mass fun.

### **House Debating**

Whole school watches key issues discussed and every year group takes part

### **House Fringe**

Stand-up comedy delivered by each house for house points and eternal fame

### **Founders' Service in the Parish Church**

To mark the foundation of the school. There is a special lunch that day too!

### **Easter Service for the Whole School in the Parish Church**

An assembly and service. Music, worship, nice event

### **Whole School Musical**

Changes every year. Most people get involved. Epic production values

### **Cylcathon**

A massive, 24-hour charity fund raiser that involves our students permanently cycling in our fitness suite for twenty-four hours. That is 1,440 minutes! (86,400 seconds—wow!)

### **Sports Day**

A key event in the House Championship, now back in Pitsford School itself.

### **Speech Day**

The great and good celebrated, but really everyone is celebrated in a moment for the school to pause and reflect on what will have been a good year.

**End of School Year in the Parish Church:** more a celebration of the year than a church service, there is music, there are presentations, there is fun

## A Page for Parents

Sending children to Senior School can be stressful but not at Pitsford School. If there is anything that you do not understand, or if you have any questions, please contact the Office. We are here to help and are eager to say hello!

As well as that, here are some tips we have picked up through our own experience as parents in the school, or teachers here. Next year we will ask you to add to this list!

Year 7 Games is on **Wednesday** and sports training is on **Thursday** (so you need kit then)

Is anything more stressful than **uniform**? Here is some advice from a parent who has just been through the whole kit and kaboodle:

*You do not need to buy all items from school blazer—only the ones that are in school colours and logos. So shirts (white) and trousers (black) Socks (white or grey) can come from anywhere, though I would recommend the quality of these items from school blazer they are more expensive than supermarkets. Your sports bag is a Pitsford School Bag but you do not need a special bag, for your books and you can have any colour. However coats must be black or dark blue and free from logos. You can wear a warm hat in winter and a simple peaked cap in summer. But only when outside!*

**Parents' Association:** joining the school is all about your son or daughter, obvs, but there is a chance for you to meet new people too. We have a growing Parents' Association which is always looking for new members, and is also staging termly events which give a chance to come in and meet other people in the same position as you. They have a Facebook page, and their own page on the school website (<https://www.pitsfordschool.com/parents/pitsford-parents-association>)

'I just don't know' - the school office are always happy to field calls requesting information, tutors welcome it. We will relish the chance to explain anything to make your experience at the school smoother and happier so nothing gets in between your child and their best education - you will never be bothering us!

In addition to children having a Firefly login, all parents will receive a login to Firefly where you can review your child's progress and receive all kinds of information regarding school functions and events as the year progresses.

That's all for now, we look forward to seeing you on your first day!



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