



All Saints' Year 6 Transition

The most common worries and questions faced by students and their families

I am sure we can all remember the feeling of the first day at Secondary School; unfamiliar names and faces, the 'room to grow' uniform, bags of shiny new stationary, timetables, bells and the endless maze of corridors and classrooms. The move from Primary School to Secondary School is a significant milestone in the life of a child and not one that we forget easily. It is a time for change, opportunity and independence, as well as a time for great excitement, anticipation and stomach gnawing nerves!

Whilst some children settle in the first couple of weeks of term, for others it will be a longer process. It is important to remember that we are all different and we cope with change in different ways. Those timid nervous children who we may expect to struggle can sail through the transition, whilst their seemingly more confident counterparts can be more resistant to change.

Moving up to Secondary School is not always easy or straightforward for children, or their parents, but there are things you can do to help smooth the transition from Primary to Secondary School.

Broadly speaking, transition is found to be smoother if a student becomes thoroughly involved in the school and if they are made to feel like they belong. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions I face when I work with children and their parents and carers. I hope you find the information useful.

Mrs S Harris
Year 7 Progress Leader and Transition co-ordinator



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CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



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Getting used to All Saints'

1/. The first day

It is expected that your child will feel nervous on the first day, but, rest assured, all staff are prepared for this. We have a well-established programme of events specially designed to support your child to begin to feel at home in their new school, with new friends and new teachers.

As you arrive at the front school gates you will be met by a very welcoming party of adults and students who will take care of your child throughout the day. Youngsters and their families from previous years always speak very positively about their experience on the first day and look forward to day two.

More information about further transition and the start of term will be given at a later date in this time of uncertainty. You will be told in advance what your child needs to bring with them and what time they need to arrive.

2/. How do I arrange travel to school?

As children travel to All Saints' from a huge catchment area, there are a variety of different ways that our youngsters get to school each day. Some use public transport, others school buses and more information will be made available to you about the school buses at a later date.

Other children walk, cycle or travel by scooter to school. Whichever mode of transport you select I would strongly recommend several dummy runs during the summer holiday so that your child is familiar with the route and how much time they need to allocate to arrive on time (8.55 at the latest).

You may also wish to make contact with other families joining us from your area to plan travel with a friend if this is appropriate.

3/. I am worried about making new friends and keeping old friends

National surveys indicate that the fear of losing existing friends closely followed by anxieties about struggling to make new ones are the greatest fears of children and their parents during transition.

At All Saints' we work closely with primary schools to ensure that students are placed in tutor groups with suitable peers. We also work with students in tutor time, assemblies and through PSHE activities at the start of year seven and onwards to support them in making new friends as well as giving advice and opportunities for them to maintain existing friendships. This often takes place travelling to and from school as well as at breaks and dinner times. We strongly urge all children to join clubs and activities as soon as possible to make new friends and to put down roots in the school which creates a sense of belonging.

4/. What if I get lost?

Students may be able to come in to school for Transition sessions before a September start, however, this remains unknown. Students will have an induction period at some point and will go on several guided tours of the school. We try to make this as fun as possible with treasure hunt activities and interactive sessions. All students have a map in their planner. Teachers are accustomed to new students not knowing their way around and support movement from one lesson to the next, making use of buddies, older students and ensuring students are not moving around alone. Amazingly students are incredibly resilient and resourceful and always find their way around the school site surprisingly quickly.



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5/. What if I need the toilet?

Toilets are highlighted as a priority for students to get to know where they are. At break and dinner time year 7 students use their own toilets, which are in the Technology block and centrally located in the school. The entrance to these toilets is staffed at break and lunch time to ensure our youngest children feel safe and confident to use them out of lesson time. In addition this area is covered by CCTV cameras to ensure students feel safe. Students are strongly urged not to use the toilet during lesson time (those with medical conditions will be issued with a pass to use the toilet whenever it is required), however, in emergencies, they are given a key from reception to open the toilets.

6/. What do I do at break and dinner time?

Our, “settling-in” surveys indicate that by October it is very rare for children to not enjoy breaks and dinner times. At first these may seem daunting, but, students are supported to be in a relatively confined space so that they feel safe, have good adult supervision and are able to meet up with their friends.

Breaks and dinner times are a time to meet friends, have a chat or game of football, nip to the toilet, have something to eat, get involved in a club, use the library or computers or carry out homework. In addition, the chapel is open sometimes as a safe haven for year seven students as well as other designated areas. Older students are used as buddies at dinner times to look out for students who may be feeling lonely. There is a good adult presence during these times of day, particularly around toilets, dining rooms and in the quad and playground areas.

7/. How do I buy my lunch?

All Saints' Academy operates a cashless system. On the first day of term students have their photograph taken (if we have parental consent) and this photo is placed on a laminated card and used as a credit card to buy food in the canteen. Parents and carers can top up the account via their PC/ mobile phones using the Arbor Parent app.

Food is available to buy in the dining room from 8.30 in the morning, at break time and at lunch time.

Alternatively, your child may prefer to bring a packed lunch. More information about the food we serve, the cashless system and free school meals will be made available to you at a later date.





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Getting used to lessons and work

8/. What equipment do I need?

Looking after their own equipment can be one of the most challenging changes for some year seven students, particularly if they have not had to provide their own resources and pencil cases during primary school. We always encourage year six children to use their own pencil cases to get used to looking after their own belongings.

All students must have pens (black/blue pen, spare pen, green pen), pencil, ruler, rubber and sharpener as basic equipment. They will also need a decent sized bag, big enough to carry an A4 folder. A ruck sack is a sensible option. You may decide to provide your child with additional pieces of equipment such as pencil crayons, post it notes, highlighters, calculator etc.

School will provide students with a mini whiteboard, whiteboard pen and a glue stick.

9/. What will homework be like?

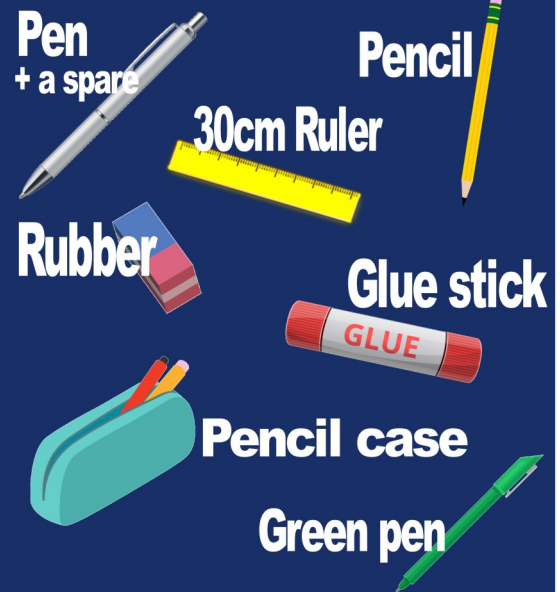
With a wider variety of subjects and teachers, comes a more complex homework load. Deadlines can vary and teachers having different preferences may initially be confusing. All students are given an organiser and will be asked to record homework which is set during the lesson (Some students will be supported to do this).

We encourage parents and carers to look at a child's organiser every evening at first to ensure it is being used effectively and to support in adapting to a new routine. The organiser will need to be signed every weekend. Most importantly if your child is having difficulty or is worried about homework, encourage them to talk to someone at school. Their form tutor or their individual subject teachers should be the first point of contact for you and them.

10/. What if I am struggling with school work?

Your child will be taught for some lessons in a group which is set according to academic ability. The work and pace of work will vary from one group to another. Data is gained from primary schools to support us in deciding which set is most suitable for your child. There is always opportunity for us to make changes to these groups during the course of the school year. Other subjects will be taught in mixed ability groups. If you or your child is concerned about the work being set you should make contact by telephone, e-mail or a note in the organiser to the teacher concerned who will be happy to arrange a time to discuss your worries. Teachers are always available to help students at break and lunch time.

Are you prepared? (Essential items)





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11/. What about all my new teachers?

When we visit year six students in their final term and ask them how they feel about new teachers, the classes are almost split in half. Some relishing the idea of new teachers and feeling very excited about the opportunities and others seeing this completely the opposite. What children do sometimes find tricky is moving to a day with up to six different teachers rather than the same one all day. Of course, it takes time to get to know all of these new people and to adapt to their differences. Teachers are human beings and thus are all different, there will be some teachers that your child likes and others they are not so keen on and this is all part of the tapestry of life. However, secondary school teachers are not as scary as they might imagine!

Getting used to the other students

12/. I am worried about the older children

It is natural for new students to feel apprehensive about the older students, after all they join us having been the oldest in their primaries and are conscious of possibly feeling, once again like a little fish in a large pond.

The first days in school are usually just for year 7 and sixth form students, which allows the new starters to find their feet before the others arrive.

Our older students are used as buddies for the new year 7s at the start of term, which creates a supportive bond, the work of these buddies is annually praised by parents and primary school teachers who acknowledge how seriously they take their responsibilities.

The results of our, "settling-in" surveys carried out by year 7 students in October, indicate that they generally find older students friendly and helpful when they come into contact with them.

13/. I am worried about getting bullied

Sadly, one person being unkind to another is a fact of life, not just amongst children and not just in schools. All schools come across this sort of unpleasant behaviour at some point: the most important things are what schools do to educate children about bullying and what they do as a response.

At All Saints' Academy, "bullying" whether it be face to face or cyber, is not tolerated. You will probably find that our policies are very similar to those employed in your primary school. We work tirelessly with internal and external agencies to ensure all students are aware of what constitutes bullying: bullying and the law: cyber bullying and most importantly what to do if they think they are being bullied. All of the adults in school are trained to know how to respond should a child confide in them that they are being bullied and children are reminded through PSHE and tutor time activities as well as in assemblies what to do and how to report bullying. We also have a team of Anti Bullying Officers to support students.





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Getting used to our expectations

14/. How strict are the school rules?

I am asked so many different questions about school rules when I visit primary schools that it is impossible to pre-empt them all in this forum. I would urge you to take a look at them on our website and talk about them with your child. In general, our rules come as no surprise and are based upon common sense, Christian values and safety. I feel sure that they will not differ too much from those of your current primary schools.

15/. Are we allowed mobile phones?

Students are allowed to bring their phones to school for their personal safety whilst travelling, however, when they arrive they are expected to hand them in at reception for the school day. Phones are collected at the end of the day from the dining room. Mobile phones are not allowed during the school day and there are sanctions if students are seen using their phones around school. Please refer to the school policy regarding mobile phones and other electronic devices on the school website, this includes smart watches and other electronic appliances.



16/. What are the rules with jewellery, hair styles and make-up?



Year six students always, quite rightly, want to know what jewellery is allowed. The only jewellery permitted is an inexpensive analogue watch and one small stud per ear. No facial piercings are allowed, no rings, no bracelets or necklaces (except a cross or a crucifix). Smart watches or fit bit style watches are not permitted.

Please also check the policies on our website for rules regarding hair styles and make up. These are very clear, particularly in relation to make-up for year 7 and 8 students who are not permitted to wear any make-up. More information will be sent to you later this academic year.

It is worth refreshing your minds of our policies during the summer holiday, particularly if a student would have been considering piercings or new hair styles during the summer.





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17/. Do students have to sit detentions?

When I visit primary schools and give children the opportunity to ask questions, it is with morbid curiosity that they ask about detentions and usually students with the most impeccable behaviour records ask the most questions. There are plenty of students at All Saints' who never have a detention during their seven years with us and I always tell students in year 6, if they do not want to serve a detention there are really simple ways of avoiding doing so.

All Saints' rules are very similar to those in most primary schools and we are transparent in sharing the rules with our students. These can be seen in all classrooms on the behaviour ladder, in their organisers as well as on the school website. Rules are referred to frequently in tutor time, lessons and through assemblies. Detentions are only given as a last resort when students deliberately or repeatedly break school rules: students are usually given reminders in the first instance to avoid this. Detentions escalate from break time though to after school on Monday evenings until 4.50pm. After school detentions are issued with advance notice so that parents/carers can arrange transport home.

At All Saints' we are very clear with students and their families that detentions are the other side of the coin with rewards and praise. We never enjoy giving detentions to students but sadly it is sometimes necessary, and it is an absolute expectation that a detention is served if issued.

Extras

18/. How do I communicate with school?

Parents and carers may find systems for communicating with secondary school very different compared with primary school and this can be frustrating at first. There is much greater direct contact with teachers in primary schools as a result of them being smaller and parents often dropping their children at the gate. In secondary school we urge parents to communicate with us by telephone to the main reception or email to the general office. Alternatively, a note can be written to a member of staff in your child's organiser.

We have a policy to return your call or message within 48 hours.

When contacting school please make use of the form tutor as the first point of contact for general matters, or to contact subject teachers directly if the matter is related to the curriculum. For example, if your child has struggled with a maths homework you will need to contact your child's maths teacher in the first instance. If the matter is more general worry about homework in general or issues surrounding settling in it would be more appropriate to contact the form tutor. I suggest you keep a copy of your child's timetable in a central place at home so that you can see the names of their teachers.

19/. What is it like coming to a Catholic school?

Please refer to the article provided by Luke Potter, our school chaplain if you have any questions about what it means to be coming to a Catholic school.



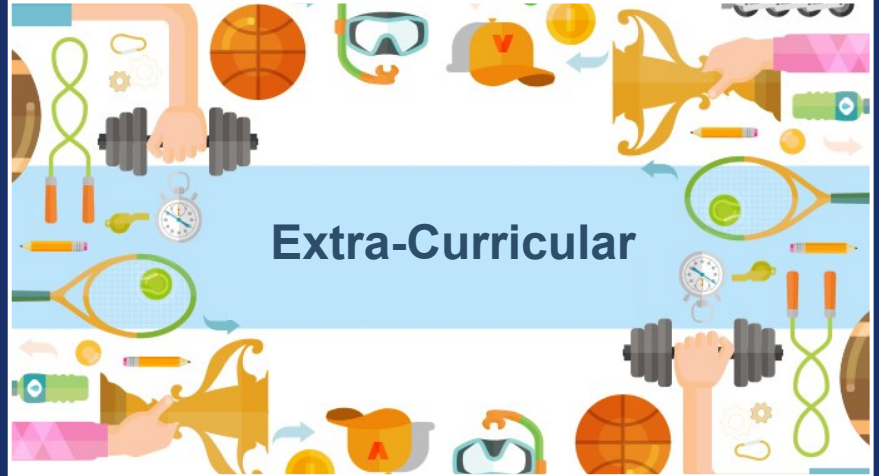


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20/. Are there clubs and enrichment activities?

Again, this is a huge topic and there are so many opportunities to get involved with a range of exciting activities at All Saints'. In fact, it is an expectation that all students join at least one club or take on one responsibility as soon as possible.

Later in the term we shall provide you with a little more information about some of our clubs. In the mean time you may wish to refer to our school website as we have a wide range of activities during dinner time, tutor time and after school, these often change from term to term.



Further reading for parents and carers:

[Supporting school transitions | Resources | YoungMinds](#)

[Transition to secondary school - Compass](#)

[How to Help Your Child Transition from Primary School to Secondary School - Munchies and Munchkins](#)

