



Name:

Tutor Group:

Year Leader:

College:

Belfairs Academy



Starting Secondary School Advice for Parents

Vision Statement

To **inspire everyone** to be the best they can be

To provide **innovative** learning opportunities in a **forward thinking** environment

To prepare and **empower everyone** to embark on **future challenges** with excitement and confidence

To foster **respect** and **responsibility** and reach out into the wider world



Children's top concerns about starting secondary education

- Getting lost
- Not making friends
- Being bullied
- Homework
- Not being able to do the work
- Getting to the Academy and home (especially if it involves a busy journey)
- Not having the right books and equipment
- Not knowing what to do if there is a problem
- Getting into trouble
- Lunch routine

How can I help as a parent?

- Talk to your child about being organised and how to achieve this—your support here is absolutely vital.
- The second worry that a Year 6 child expresses is social concerns. Although common, most children report that they are no longer worried about these after just one or two weeks at school!
- The aim of this booklet is to provide the information you need to help your child to achieve independence, while supporting them in getting there.

'Never do anything regularly for your child that they are capable of doing for themselves.'

- Time spent early on in establishing habits of work and independence is an investment that will save endless time, battles and heartache in the long run. If you can help your child do this, you will really be making a difference.

So what is different about secondary school?



- Students often have to travel further (some making their way to and from school independently for the first time - some travelling by bus).
- They may have to wear full school uniform for the first time, and have a whole list of new rules and regulations to remember.
- Instead of one teacher, who has often known them since their early years, they will be taught by nine or ten teachers and have to get to know a whole range of adults in different roles within the Academy.
- The site is much bigger and children will have to find their way around, moving from classroom to classroom between lessons, carrying their belongings with them.
- For the first time children must be fully responsible for ensuring that they have the correct books and equipment for five different lessons, their ID cards, bus fare, PE equipment etc.
- Your child will be given full responsibility for recording homework, completing it by the correct day and giving it in on time.

- There will be new lessons (e.g. French) and new variations on familiar ones (Science in a laboratory for example).
- Teaching and Learning styles may be very different. Students may be expected to write more frequently and for longer, and also to select appropriate reference books from the Library, as well as using the Internet.
- Break-time and lunch-time will be organised differently with less adult supervision in terms of getting back to lessons on time, buying their own snacks and lunches etc.

In general students are expected to be more independent, self-reliant and self-organised: a welcome development for some students and a challenge for most.

Getting to and from the Academy



Key tasks for students

- Getting up on time.
- Getting washed, dressed and ready to walk out of the door with everything needed for the day.
- Leaving the house to get to the bus-stop or to school on time.
- Being in the right place at the right time at the end of school.
- Going straight home.
- Knowing what to do if they are delayed for any reason.

Before your child starts

- Time the journey to the Academy or bus stop.
- Be sure your child is clear about what time they are expected to be home and what to do if they are held up for any reason.
- Make sure they know / have your contact numbers.
- Buy an alarm clock and make sure your child knows how it works. Test run before the first day at the Academy.
- Work out with your child a time plan to get them to school on time. Work backwards from the time they need to be at the Academy. Include all the things they will need to do.
- Use sample plan on the page 8.
- Agree a routine for the mornings and after school:
Will they shower / bath in the morning or the evening?
Who will make the packed lunch?
When?
- Get their school bag ready the night before.
- Agree a time for bed for school days with your child which will ensure they get enough sleep.

- Have a couple of practice runs... set your child the challenge of getting up at the correct time and getting ready.
- Does anything need changing?

When your child starts

- If possible, be around for your child for the first few days / weeks and 'supervise'. Praise and encourage independence but be ready to offer a helping hand.
- Keep to your side of the bargain - if you have arranged to leave dinner money on top of the fridge make sure it is there!
- Go through the routine regularly with your child, if necessary provide a tick-list to help them (see sample on page 8).
- Insist on a strict routine - it will save you hours in the long run!

Sample Day Planner

TASK	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI
Before School					
Breakfast					
Bathroom					
Dressing					
Lunch					
Check timetable					
Leave House					
Catch bus					
After School					
Change. Hang up Academy uniform					
Snack / drink (15 minutes)					
Empty schoolbag and pack for next day					
Check ShowMyHomework for homework / notes					
Give parents notes / messages					
Do homework 1. 2. 3.					
Show your parents					



Uniform matters

Key Tasks for students

- Knowing the academy rules regarding uniform (including jewellery and make-up).
- Making sure everything is ready the evening before (including shoes and underwear)
- Making sure that relevant P.E. kit is taken to school on the day it is needed.



UNIFORM LIST

School Uniform Suppliers:

Southend School Shop, 144, The Broadway, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 1AA, 01702 480140

National Schoolwear Centre, 96, Hamlet Court Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 7LP, 01702 330300

Pauls Discount Clothing, 38-40, Southchurch Road, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 2ND, 01702 466431

GIRLS – Year 7-11	BOYS Year 7-11
<p>Compulsory items Maroon blazer with Academy logo White long or short sleeved shirt with top button fastened Academy tie Knee length black box pleat or A line school skirt or tailored black trousers Plain black, low heeled, closed in shoes which are safe and suitable for inclement weather. All laces and stitching must be black. No gold or silver straps or buckles. NO PLIMSOLES OR TRAINERS Shoes only with skirts, no boots. Ankle boots only allowed when worn under trousers. Black opaque tights or plain black socks Optional items Maroon V-neck jumper with Academy logo Maroon outer fleece with Academy logo Physical Education AKOA Maroon/Black Rain Jacket AKOA Maroon/Black Polo Shirt with Academy logo AKOA Black Action Shorts with Academy logo AKOA Black Pro Football socks Black Swimming Costume Red Pool cap Black jogging/tracksuit bottoms (optional) White ankle socks (summer only)</p>	<p>Compulsory items Maroon blazer with Academy logo White long or short sleeved shirt with top button fastened. Academy tie Black school trousers. If a belt is worn it must be plain black with a plain buckle Plain black shoes. All laces and stitching must be black. NO PLIMSOLES OR TRAINERS Black socks Optional items Maroon V-neck jumper with Academy logo Maroon outer fleece with Academy logo Physical Education AKOA Maroon/Black Rain Jacket AKOA Maroon/Black Polo Shirt with Academy logo AKOA Black Action Shorts with Academy logo AKOA Black Pro Football socks AKOA Maroon/Black Reversible Rugby Shirt with Academy logo Black swimming shorts (no logo) Red pool cap Football boots Shin pads Gum shield for Rugby Black jogging/tracksuit bottoms (optional) White sports socks (summer)</p>
There should be no brand logos or stripes, etc on any of the PE uniform	

Cycle Helmet: Students who cycle to the Academy **must** wear a cycle helmet.

Equipment Expectations: pencil case, black pen, pencil, eraser, sharpener and ruler.

OTHER UNIFORM INFORMATION	
<p>Outdoor coats NO DENIM Jewellery Trainers Make-up / Hair Tops SUPPLIERS</p>	<p>Plain in colour and design, in keeping with the uniform. Reflective items for safety purposes are encouraged. NO HOODIES ARE ALLOWED TO BE WORN WITH THE ACADEMY UNIFORM AT ANY TIME.</p> <p>No jewellery of any kind should be worn except for a watch, 1 pair of plain gold or silver studs in the lobe of the ear. No facial or other piercing.</p> <p>For wearing in Physical Education only, and must not be worn as part of normal school wear.</p> <p>Absolutely no make-up is allowed in Years 7, 8 and 9; discreet make-up is permitted in Years 10 and 11.</p> <p>All hair must be natural in colour; there must be no extreme styles and no patterns or tram lines cut into the hair. Hair bands/scrunchies should be plain dark colour only. Fake tans are not allowed. False nails/extensions are not allowed. Chewing gum is not permitted anywhere in the academy. Mobile phones are not permitted anywhere in the academy.</p> <p>Non-regulation sweatshirts, hoodies, sports tops and all denim items are forbidden.</p> <p><i>Academy uniform with logo can only be obtained from the designated suppliers as the Belfairs Academy logo is subject to copyright.</i></p>

Necessary equipment for each day

- Pencil Case (pen, pencil, ruler, rubber, sharpener, colouring pencils)
These can be purchased from Reprographics
- Appropriate sized bag
- Reading book
- ID card and lanyard

£3

Belfairs Logo Pencil Case

(contains black pen, pencil, 15cm ruler, pencil eraser and pencil sharpener)



£2

Pencil Case

(contains 2 x black pen, 2 x pencil, green pen, 15cm ruler, pencil eraser, pencil sharpener and highlighter)



When they start

- Encourage your child to hang up their uniform straight away when returning home.
- Decide on responsibilities - encourage your child to put everything out (including shoes, socks or tights, and underwear) the night before (there is much more time in the evening for finding odd socks...).
- Have a system for making sure that clothes are clean and ready - the earlier children start to take responsibility the better, but whoever does it, both parties need to know 'the system'.
- If you have a timetable displayed for your child (a good idea) colour the days when your child has PE so they can see each day they need to take in their PE bag.

The new timetable



*Being in the right place at
the right time*

Times of the academy day

Warning Bell	8.35
Period One	8.40-9.40
Period Two	9.40-10.40
BREAK	10.40-10.55
Period Three	10.55-11.55
Period Four	11.55-12.55
LUNCH	12.55-13.25 (Including warning bell 13.20)
Period 5	13.25-14.25
TUTOR	14.25-14.45

Sample of Year 7 Timetable

	AMon	ATue	AWed	AThu	AFri
1	Computing CAS 3G05	Science BOJ 3F02	Science LED 3F10	English MOH 3F01	Values FAC 2G6E
2	Science BOJ 3F02	Physical Edu OLS	Mathematics REH 3G13	Geography CAB 3G09	French WIC 2F12
3	Music HAK 1G07	Geography CAB 2G08	English MOH 3F01	English MOH 3F01	Mathematics REH 3G13
4	Technology BUA 3G01	Technology BUA 3G01	Drama DIX 1G09	History MAE 2F13	English MOH 3F01
5	English MAA 3F05	Mathematics REH 3G13	Geography CAB 2G07	Mathematics REH 3G13	Art & Design FOV 1F05
tpd	Tutorial GRK 2F08	Tutorial GRK 2F08	Tutorial GRK 2F08	Tutorial GRK 2F08	Tutorial GRK 2F08
6					

Key Tasks for students

- Knowing what lessons take place on each day.
- Knowing where the classroom is located for each lesson.
- Knowing whom the teacher is.
- Understanding the timetable.
- Getting to lessons on time - especially after breaks.



Before your child starts in September

- On visits to the academy - talk about how it is laid out / organised. (See map on page 18).
- Reassure your child that they will quickly get to know their way around (most have it mastered within a couple of weeks), and that they move around as a group to start with. Teachers are very understanding about children getting lost to begin with and usually help is at hand if it is needed.
- Break the timetable down and talk about 'how it works' if necessary (the room numbers / teachers initials etc.) Talk about the timing of the lessons and free-time.

When your child starts

- Get a copy of your child's timetable (it will usually be written in their planner in the first week). Keep this on display so that you and your child can refer to it.
- Encourage your child to learn what lessons they have on which days so that they can become independent.
- Make sure your child knows what to do if they are late or get lost.
- Provide your child with a watch if possible.



Organising books and equipment

Key Tasks for students

- Having a good system for keeping books and equipment.
- Knowing what lessons there are on each particular day.
- Knowing what equipment you need for each lesson (e.g. ruler, a compass, calculator for Mathematics).
- Using the Journal (to write down important notes and messages and to refer to as a reminder).
- Having a bag packed with everything needed for that day.

Belfairs Merchandise

Available to buy via Parent pay.



Pencil Case - £3



Highlighter - £2



Hat - £3



Sports Bag - £1



Backpack - £7



Scarf - 10

Before your child starts

- Help your child organise their living space so that they have a place for everything to do with the Academy. Try to make sure that they have access to a desk, good light and storage space for their school books.
- Equip them with the tools they will need at home (it is best to keep two sets of everything – one for school and one for home, so that losing a pen at school does not stop them doing their homework). A useful home tool kit consists of:
pencils, pens, rubber, sharpener, crayons, felt-pens, ruler, maths equipment (protractor, a compass, set-square and calculator), sellotape, glue-stick, paper (lined and plain) and plastic wallets.
- A box-file or stacking system is useful for students with organisational problems - each file can be labelled with the subject and all books, worksheets etc. can be kept ready to pull out and put in the school bag when required.
- A labelled A4 plastic or card folder to transport paperwork to the Academy for each subject is useful—students are given lots of worksheets which they are not used to organising.
- An office two tier 'in tray' is useful for 'homework to be done' and 'homework completed'.

When your child starts

- Teach a routine for 'emptying the bag'. The subject folders or books are replaced in the system. Any subjects for which homework is required are placed in the 'homework to be done' in-tray. Try this with your child to begin with if necessary, then gradually let them take over. Even when your child understands the system, do 'spot checks' every so often.
- When homework is completed (see section on homework page 24) supervise the 'packing of the bag'. This is best done the night before.
- The displayed timetable can be used as a checklist for subject folders and equipment. Write the equipment needed at the top of each day (see sample display timetable page 15).
- Encourage your child to check their journal for any reminders / notes each night. It is usually worth double checking.
- If you know your child has Food Technology on a certain day, check at the beginning of the week if they need ingredients - searching through cupboards on the morning ten minutes before the bus leaves is not recommended!

Lockers

Priority is given to Year 7 students to have the opportunity to take ownership of a locker. A deposit of £5.00 will be required in September and reimbursed in July if the locker has been maintained to expected standards.



Homework

Commitment • Respect • Excellence • Self-belief • Strength

Key Tasks for students

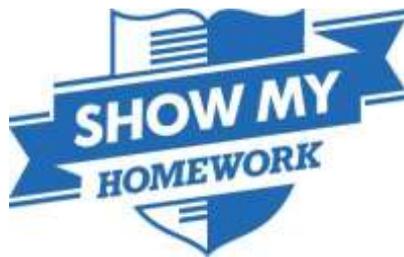
- Writing down your homework in lessons (write exactly what you have to do). If none is set write this down with the reason why, e.g. supply teacher (use the acronym 'NHS' No Homework Set).
- Recording when it has to be completed.
- Asking what the task means and checking with the teacher if you are not sure what books you will need etc.
- Making sure you take home everything you need to do the homework.
- When you get home, use your journal to remind you of what you have to do.
- Working by yourself to complete tasks, spending the correct amount of time. Doing your best without someone standing over you!
- Asking for help if it is difficult, or you do not understand something.
- Taking your completed homework to the Academy on the correct day.
- Remembering to give it in!

Try to do homework on the night it is set - not the night before it is due in (you may get three other pieces of homework on that night!).

Tips for Parents

Before your child starts

- Agree a routine for homework with your child. Life can become a constant 'nag' if you do not start this from the beginning. Homework becomes an increasingly important part of the curriculum as your child progresses through the Academy.
- A good time for homework is after a short break when your child returns from the Academy; get it out of the way early, leaving the rest of the evening free - who wants to start work at 7.00 p.m?
- Agree with your child that TV, other activities, phone-calls etc. will only be possible after homework is completed.
- Many children will say that listening to music helps them concentrate on their work. Agree whether this is allowed.
- Be prepared to invest time at first - for example be available for a set time each day to help with homework until the routine is established - it will be time well spent....
- Using the ideas in 'Organising books and equipment' will help enormously (page 19).
- Check in the Academy prospectus or speak to your child's College Office regarding how long children are expected to spend on homework each night. Please phone your child's College Office if your child is having difficulties.
- Check Show my homework website for up to date homework



When your child starts

- Stick to your agreed routine whenever possible.
- Try to ensure that homework is completed on the night it is set to prevent 'build up'.
- Spend time with your child in the first few weeks, establishing the routine.
- Encourage your child to unpack their bag in an organised way, placing homework to be done in their tray. Check ShowMyHomework with your child for the subjects that need to be done, and their completion date. Check they have everything they need to complete the tasks (ask them to tell you what they will need, to encourage independence).
- Recognise how hard it is to work unsupervised. Help your child structure their time and use it usefully – provide a clock or timer and agree the tasks that should be completed in each half-hour period. Try to be available to do 'progress checks' – have they completed the task in the set time? (But otherwise leave them to it – do not establish a pattern of always doing homework with them – it is unsustainable and they will not learn to work independently).
- Make sure your child always writes the date and title, and clearly labels their work as homework (either in their book or on a worksheet or computer print out).
- Point out the rewards of working in this way – homework does not drag on all night; it feels good to have completed tasks etc.
- Do not let your child struggle on for longer than the recommended time - if they have done half an hour and only answered half the questions, let them stop. (If they are worried about the consequences, write a note on the homework, confirming the correct amount of time was spent on the task).
- If your child is stuck- either because they do not understand the task they have written down, or because they 'cannot do it', offer support but do not 'do it for them'.
- Encourage your child to check in the lesson if they have not understood what the task means – it is too late by the time they get home.

- Encourage them to write down exactly what the teacher says (not 'finish stuff in book'- they will have forgotten what 'stuff' by the time they get home). If you and your child really cannot work out what has to be done, try ringing a friend in the same group or, as a last resort, write a note to the teacher asking for clarification and explaining that the homework will be done as soon as possible.
- If there is a problem with the level of work, it is important that the teacher knows this. If work is consistently too difficult or too easy, it is important to let the teacher know (see 'Contacting the Academy').
- Check that your child has given homework in and, if they have not, check why (they may have had a supply teacher) and encourage them to write in their planner when they will give it in.
- Take an interest in the marks and comments on the homework your child gets back - celebrate success and give the clear message that homework is valuable and important.
- Homework may not be automatically valued by the children in school. Some will never do it and appear to 'get away with it'. Be very wary of excuses your child will use (see list – they will accumulate many from their peers over the first few weeks and only some will be genuine!) and try to ensure that, if an excuse is given, you check it out and that your child still does the homework as soon as the problem is sorted out. If you do this the first few times, the 'excuses' will lessen but if they are successful in getting out of homework in this way to start with, they will carry on and it becomes very hard to re-establish good patterns later on when homework becomes crucial to examination grades.

Excuses for not being able to do homework...

- We didn't get any
- I don't need to do that, we did it in class
- We had a supply teacher
- It doesn't have to be in for ages
- I left it at the Academy
- My teacher's got my book or the teacher took them in
- My friend's borrowing my book
- I did it on the computer and the computer wouldn't print it out / I forgot to save it / can't remember what file I saved it in...
- I'm going to do it with my friend on the bus / at break
- Need to do it in the Library – I'll do it at lunchtime tomorrow

Contacting the Academy - when and who?

Just as it is hard to know how to achieve the balance between offering your child too much support (and being accused of fussing) and leaving them to flounder and perhaps fail, it is also hard to achieve the balance between becoming the 'over-anxious parent' (on the phone to the Academy every time your child falls out with a friend or grazes their knee) and letting things go on too long because you do not want to interfere.

The job is made much easier if you keep talking to your child about how things are at the Academy. If you are following some of the suggestions in this book you will have a good idea about how the work is progressing and your child's general feelings about their Academy life. This will give you a sound basis for deciding whether your intervention is required or not.

You know your child best, and if any aspect of school life is persistently distressing them it is best to act early. If you have talked to your child, offered reassurance, helped them come up with ways of solving the problem themselves and things still have not changed after a couple of weeks, then it is time to speak to the academy through their Year Leader.

Problems children may experience - what to do about them

Falling out with friends

- Very common.
- Give advice but do not overreact.
- Most friendship problems sort themselves out without adults getting involved.
- Contact the academy if your child becomes depressed or severely withdrawn.
- The hallmarks of bullying are intentional (a deliberate attempt to make someone unhappy), persistence (an on-going 'campaign', not isolated incidents or arguments about specific issues) and an imbalance of power.

Worrying about particular lessons or feeling 'picked on' or disliked by certain teachers

- Try to find out what it is exactly that your child is worried about or why they dislike a certain teacher.
- Contact the Academy if your child continues to find the work too easy or too hard after each half term or raise it at Parents' Evening.
- It is a life-skill to learn that you will not get on with everyone and a pragmatic approach is to be recommended.
- Contact your child's tutor if the problem continues.
- Ask to meet with the teacher concerned if necessary and talk to them about the problem.

Losing Belongings

This is very common for children with organisational difficulties (and very expensive for their parents). Follow the suggestions in the chapter on 'Organising Books and Equipment' (page 19). If, after half-term, this is not making a difference, contact your child's tutor and ask for their support – they can often provide 'checks' at key times and be very creative in supporting your child towards independence in the Academy.

Getting into trouble for not completing homework

- In many ways, homework makes the most demands on both Year 7 students and their parents. Following the suggestions in the 'Homework' chapter may help.
- If your child is consistently not getting homework, not able to do the homework set, or writing down tasks that are so general that neither you nor they can work out what has to be done, do contact your child's tutor and explain the problem. If nothing changes, ask for a meeting with the subject teacher concerned.

A guide to Progress' Evenings...

- You will be given the date of the Year 7 Progress' Evening within the first few weeks of term, we will also be holding Year 7 Coffee and Cake drop ins with the Senior Leadership Team.
- This will be with your child's tutor to review their transition into secondary school and how your child is settling in.
- The second Progress' Evening is an opportunity to speak with individual teachers, a sheet is provided for your child to make individual five minute appointments.
- Try to see as many teachers as possible, especially if there are issues you need to raise with them.
- Jot down any questions or comments before the evening.
- You will be asked to pick up your child's report before you speak to the staff.





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Commitment • Respect • Excellence • Self-belief • Strength