



Year 7 Information Pack

Simon Balle All-through School

May 2021

Welcome from the Transition Team

The Year 7 Transition Team welcomes you to the Simon Balle community. This is an exciting time for all Year 6 students yet possibly a time with a twinge of anxiety for you as parents/carers, perhaps especially in these times. Yet parents who have children already in the school will know of our ethos and culture and that you can trust us to do all we can to support and guide students in their time with us, even more so during these unprecedented times. Those who are new to our community will soon hopefully see and understand our values and vision, along with what we do day-to-day to fulfil these, and why this makes our school an outstanding place for young people to thrive and flourish. This has been evident in our current Year 7 cohort who have settled seamlessly into life with us and have been a key part of our community since day one. We know that is in no small part due to our comprehensive transition programme which your child will benefit from in due course.

New beginnings for students

We are sure that most children are excited about coming to secondary school, for Year 7 is very different to their primary school experience, and the chance to flourish as mature young people. They enter a caring, compassionate community that presents new challenges and opportunities to help children reach their potential in every way. We set high expectations for all, regardless of starting ability, which all students are encouraged to meet. Day-to-day, students will move around the school to go to different subjects with different teachers. Students' experiences are enriched with extra-curricular activities, a purposeful curriculum and outstanding learning opportunities. These not only build on academic ability but also on the character development and the core values of the individual. This process begins in earnest now and we will do all we can to support you in making these changes now to accelerate their assimilation to life with us as well as build their confidence and enthusiasm about the start of their new journey.

New beginnings for parents

As you can see, we value our relationship with you as parents. We work with you closely and communicate regularly as we know the impact this close collaboration will have on students' progress as learners and young people. However, these methods will be a new way of working for most parents. We provide updates of progress using Go4Schools, an online programme, and developing an understanding of this system is vital in engaging with your child's school experience. We will also seek to equip and inform you so you can help to reinforce our work with your child in school. This is equally true of the pastoral side of life at Simon Balle as it is only by working side-by-side together, in a relationship based on trust and aspiration to produce tomorrow's citizens today, that we can do our best by our students. Therefore, we expect full parental engagement so we can work together to ensure your children thrive in every way whilst in our care.

So, we hope you, and especially your son/daughter, enjoy Simon Balle. It is a vibrant, happy school in which students want to excel. Year 7 students feel safe, supported and secure in the knowledge that if they work to their potential, they can become 'tomorrow's citizens today'.

We look forward to working with you

Lucy Owen (Assistant Head), **Bradley East** (Year 7 Leader) **and the Transition team**

'Simon Balle is such a wonderful tight-knit community where everyone knows each other and where you can find out things about yourself that you never knew before'. Year 7 student

Contents

Important Dates for Your Diary	4
School Uniform	5
Free School Meals	6
Pupil Premium Grant	6
Year 7 Residential Trip to Bawdsey Manor, Suffolk	7
Car Parking	7
Website	7
Student Supplies	8
Chromebooks	8
Lockers	9
Enrichment and 'Gradu8' Club	9
Transition Arrangements for September 2021	10
Financial Information	10
Go 4 Schools	11
Team Music	12

Important Dates for Your Diary

Date	Focus	Information	Action
Wednesday 16th June	Pre-recorded Virtual Presentation: Community and Connections	Key staff will deliver information via a virtual recording that will include details of what it means to be a SBAS student. This will be shared by email with all parents.	To be watched by parents/carers and children
Wednesday 7th July	Pre-recorded Virtual Presentation: Curriculum and Challenge	Key staff will deliver information via a virtual recording that will include details of our academic expectations. This will be shared by email with all parents.	To be watched by parents/carers and children
Thursday 8th July	Hertfordshire Student's Transition Day	Wear primary school uniform. Bring £3.50 for lunch Bring pencil case with equipment	All students must attend and bring exact money - no change will be available
Wednesday 1st September	School starts for Year 7 students	Year 7 students will be welcomed to Simon Balle, alongside Years 10 and 12, for a personalised induction day.	
Thursday 16th September	Year 7 Information Evening	Further details to follow in terms of format.	

School Uniform

We want students to be proud of their school and to understand that it is important to wear their uniform correctly. Our uniform is simple but smart. It helps us to identify as part of the Simon Balle Community.

Certain items can be bought locally and cheaply as they are easily obtainable. Specialist uniform (indicated with an 'S' in brackets below) needs to be purchased from [Stevenson's](http://www.stevensonsonline.co.uk), the company which most Hertfordshire Secondary Schools use. **Further details on how to do that in current conditions has been emailed out to parents.**

Website: www.stevensonsonline.co.uk

Address: 133-135 Victoria Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3XS, Tel: 01727 853262

All Year 7 students are expected to wear:

- Long-sleeved white shirt or short sleeved fitted white shirt
- Regulation black school full length trousers (not fashion trousers)
- OR Regulation tartan school kilt (S)
- A "V" necked green jumper or cardigan with school badge (S) (green for years 7-9, maroon for years 10-11)
- Black socks - NO white socks (boys). Black or white knee length or ankle socks or plain black tights (girls)
- Black polished leather flat shoes
- Plain coloured coat or jacket (no logos). NO leather or denim
- Maroon tie (optional for girls) (S) (Tie to be worn with short or long sleeved shirts; shirts must be tucked in)

Clothing for PE (specialist equipment)

- School white and black polo shirt with thin green piping (with school badge) (S)
- Reversible green/black rugby shirt (boys) (S)
- Black shorts (boys) OR Black Skort (girls) (S)
- Black fleece with school logo (girls) (S)
- Green rugby socks (S)
- Shin pads & gum shield (compulsory for some PE lessons)
- Students need trainers which are suitable for indoor PE. As an example they can be astro boots, tennis shoes, running trainers, etc. Before going into the gym the trainers must be cleaned if they have been on the Astroturf. Students also need a pair of football/rugby boots. They can have either studs, be moulded or have blades.

Points to note

- Skirts must be knee length or just above the knee. The waistbands must not be rolled over.
- Jumpers/cardigans must not be tucked into kilts/trousers.
- The full uniform should be worn correctly at all times; in school and on the way to and from school.
- For those students whose faith requires them to wear particular headwear, we ask that the items are black or school colours (hijabs, turbans, yarmulkas)
- **Outdoor Coats** – plain coloured fabric – no hoodies, denim, leather or large logos.

The following are NOT permitted

- No jewellery except for a watch and one small single stud earrings
- No make-up, false nails or nail polish
- No form of facial piercing, for example nose, eyebrow or tongue studs
- Hair styles should be moderate – the following are not permitted: hair extensions, braiding or shapes/lines shaved in the hair or eyebrows. Hair should be one natural colour and the minimum length acceptable is a 'number 3'. No colourful or oversized accessories are allowed e.g. large flowers, bows, shaved heads
- Black leggings or contrasting socks (girls)
- Trainers—except at breaks or lunchtimes - students must change out of them for lessons. If students wear incorrect footwear then these will be held by the front office and plimsolls given out instead
- No body art, transfers, tattoos etc

Free School Meals

If your child is eligible for free school meals it means they can enjoy delicious, healthy meals. Many children at our school are already eating free school meals, and your child may be able to have them too.

School meals will give your child a real appetite for learning and help them to achieve their full potential. There is nothing healthier for your child and your family's budget than free school meals. As professional cooks prepare the meals for your child, it saves you having to worry about the effort and expense of making packed lunches every day.

Your child may be eligible to receive free school meals if you are entitled to receive one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (as long as you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and you don't get more than £16,190 a year)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Applications can be made online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk and should take no more than five minutes; in most cases you will be told immediately if your child is eligible.

Savings for your family

If you were planning to pay for your child to have school meals or are already doing so, you could save around £350 per year if your child qualifies for free school meals.

Think of the time you will save

If your child is eligible and has free school meals instead of packed lunches, you could save up to 190 hours a year, which is the time needed to make packed lunches that meet the nutritional standards of school meals – that is just over a week!

Our school will receive extra funding

For every child registered for a free school meal, the school will receive funding to spend on extra resources for your child. It is called the Pupil Premium and is worth £935 per pupil in 2018-19.

Please note that we operate a cashless school meal system, so other students will not know who receives Free School Meals.

Pupil Premium Grant

The Pupil Premium Grant is a government initiative designed to target resources on those students deemed to be from a disadvantaged background. Specifically, the Pupil Premium money is provided for:

- those students who have received Free School Meals (FSM) at any point in the last 6 years
- those students who have a parent in the armed services,
- those students who have been looked after continuously for at least 6 months (CLA),
- those students who were adopted from care, or who left care under a Special Guardianship Order
- those students who left care under a Residence Order on or after 14th October 1991.

Neither the government nor any government agencies have dictated how the Pupil Premium money should be spent, but what is clear is that the money should be used to promote strategies which narrow the attainment gap between the highest and lowest achieving students.

In most cases, eligibility for Pupil Premium funding will be aligned with a student receiving Free School Meals so please do apply [online](#) if you think your child is eligible.

Year 7 Residential Trip to Bawdsey Manor, Suffolk

Each year we usually ask all Year 7 students to join us on our annual four-day trip to [PGL Bawdsey Manor](#). Due to the issues of the last twelve months, unfortunately our last two Year 7 cohorts have not been able to experience this rite of passage. We are hopeful that next year we may be able to begin our annual trip again, however, as we do not know what restrictions may or may not be in place in the coming months we shall be postponing any planning until the picture is clearer. As soon as we know more we will communicate with you as we know just how special this is for students in making memories as well as proving to be a fantastic character building experience.

Car Parking

Please be aware that parents will not be able to use the car park for dropping off or picking up. There are plenty of car parks in town that can be used for drop off and pick up. You can use any car park in town for free (for the first 30 minutes) on two separate occasions in any given day as long as there is a substantial amount of time in between i.e. – drop off and pick up times. Please note that Balls Park is not a suitable alternative as this is private property. These arrangements do not apply to parents who have a blue disability badge.

We have an agreement with East Herts Council regarding the London Road car park. If you are displaying a school permit visibly on the dashboard, you can park for an hour between 8.15 and 9.15am and 2.45-3.45pm, Monday-Friday.

Drivers cannot come on site between 8.25 and 8.50 am and 3.00 to 3.45 pm.

Parents may use the visitors' car park to collect or drop off students at non-peak times e.g. for medical/dental appointments.

We are grateful for everyone's full co-operation in this matter.

Website

Our website provides you with important information about our curriculum and life at the school. Transition information can be found on the Secondary Admission page under the admissions menu heading, information regarding the curriculum and assessment are located under the Curriculum menu, and policies such as Behaviour for Learning can be found under the Policies and Accounts menu.

Student Supplies

It is really important that students come to school fully equipped each day. It is an important indicator in their engagement with their studies as well as helping to ensure they are able to begin each lesson fully prepared.

We expect all students to have the following equipment when they start school in September:

- A pencil case containing:
 - Four black/blue Staedtler 309 Handwriting Pens
 - Two Green Pens
 - Pencils (coloured and normal)
 - Eraser
 - Pencil sharpener
 - Scissors
 - Highlighter pens
 - A full length ruler
 - A glue stick
 - A scientific calculator (if unclear please email the Head of Maths, Mrs Pope at popes@simonballe.herts.sch.uk)
 - A maths compass



All students must come with their own equipment, clearly labelled, as we will not be sharing or giving out equipment in school.

- At home we expect all students to have either a measuring cup or kitchen scales to weigh out ingredients for food lessons
- A school bag which must be a **rucksack**
- Art sketchbook – (see Financial Information section of this document). These can be purchased directly from the school
- Book covers – (see Financial Information section of this document). These can be purchased directly from the school

Chromebooks

Since becoming a 'One Person, One Device' school, we have been on the forefront of technology, adapting our everyday behaviours and transforming our pedagogical approach. Technology advances quickly and we are always adapting, showing the flexibility that is needed when working within this field. Chromebooks are embedded as a tool to provide outstanding Teaching & Learning; utilising digital technology as a resource to enhance teacher delivery and student progress.

All new students coming into the school are offered a VAT free Chromebook package which includes:

- An educational spec Chromebook complete with Google Licence
- A 3 year insurance policy
- An extended 3 year warranty
- The option to pay upfront or spread the cost via monthly Direct Debit, interest free, over 1 to 3 years (We aim to get the cost at approximately £10 month over 36 months)

A Chromebook is the best selling device in Education. As the curriculum has evolved, so has our way of working with technology:

- It is fully compatible with the Google Software we are constantly using within our G-Suite platform
- Our curriculum works with the G-Suite (Google) programmes
- They are ready to use within 8 seconds - no learning lost
- Lightweight and robust
- No maintenance, Chromebooks download and can install security and software updates automatically
- Built-in security means devices are safe from viruses and malware
- Chromebooks have a battery life of 8-11 hours and so only need charging overnight if used constantly
- Students use technology tools on our G-Suite to communicate, collaborate, create and publish their work

- Real time feedback and marking available
- Subject specific apps or online textbooks are easier to access
- Prepares students for 21st century integration of digital tools
- Works seamlessly with Google Apps for Education and other cloud based applications which all of our students and teachers already use extensively.

Students eligible for Pupil Premium receive a 50% discount on the cost of the Chromebooks. Detailed information on how to purchase a Chromebook will be sent to the email address we hold for you. More information can be found on the school website

In order to be able to begin to use the Chromebooks from the very beginning of the students' journey with us at Simon Balle, the Chromebook scheme is being **launched immediately with a deadline of June 29th** for purchases.

Lockers

Lockers are available around the school and are a useful way to support students as they transition to the organisational demands of a secondary school.. The cost to hire a locker for the entire period for Years 7-9, (with a refundable deposit of £10) is £25. Lockers are allocated once students start the school but need to be ordered in advance. You can order a locker for your child by paying the deposit and hire charge on Parent Pay, details of how to do this can be found in the Financial Information section of this document.

Enrichment and 'Gradu8' Club

At Simon Balle we believe that an inspiring enrichment programme is an intrinsic part of the school experience. This aspect of school life is key not only to developing character, aspiration and enthusiasm but also is essential in a student's overall growth. Therefore we have created two strands of enrichment for Year 7 students: the Wednesday Enrichment Club and the 'Gradu8' Club.

Wednesday Enrichment Club

Every Wednesday there will be clubs run from **3.20 - 4.20pm** for Year 6, 7 and 8 with a focus on either Humanities, Creativity, or Science. Parents and students will be given information on what particular projects and topics will be offered each half term and will then be asked to complete a Google Form in advance to request a space at their club of choice. With numbers limited then it is based on a first-come, first-served basis, but we will ensure all students have the opportunity to engage with clubs in at least two half terms across the school year.

As well as the Wednesday Enrichment Club, PE and Music will run their own extra-curricular programmes and information will be shared in due course.

'Gradu8' Club

As part of our desire to ignite that passion for learning in students, as well as to assist them to develop wider skills, flexibility and resourcefulness, we have created the **'Gradu8' Club**. This will run every Monday and Thursday morning from 8-8.30am. It is an expectation that all students will attend so we are creating that aspirational culture.

The 'Gradu8' Club is an academic enrichment provision that has been designed to develop character, resilience and motivation, and encourage students to pursue wider goals. The Head of Year and tutors will work with the students to plot their personalised programme so it suits their interests and learner profiles. There are a range of activities and programmes including, but not limited to, the following:

- Music Pathways Programme
- MFL Culture Club
- ReadingPlus Programme
- Journalism Club
- Lexia UK

Transition Arrangements

Most traditional transition/induction arrangements are unable to take place as we need to follow Government guidelines whilst keeping staff, students and parents safe. However, we know how vital it is to provide information for our parents and students so they fully understand our values, high expectations and routines. As such we have provided a detailed and interactive virtual transition programme for the coming weeks that we are sure will make the transition process smooth and productive.

Wednesday 16th June – Pre-recorded Virtual Presentation: Community and Connections

At Simon Balle we value the whole child for who they are and what they can bring to enrich the fabric of our school community as an individual in their own right. We work hard to support the students' personal development so they can become happy, successful people who will live well together as part of a community. This virtual meet will outline the range of ways we seek to do this, providing guidance on what can be done at home by parents and carers. As well as this, we will look to provide opportunities for you to develop links with other new Year 7s so we can start to build those bonds and community links before we all come together in September. We will also provide further details of our Chromebook scheme at this event. We expect both parents and students to attend this meeting virtually.

Wednesday 7th July – Pre-recorded Virtual Presentation: Relationship with the Curriculum

We know that for many parents the biggest concern about the transition from Primary to Secondary is linked to the social aspect. However, studies have shown that when an equal focus is given to the academic aspect of transition then students fare better not only in the short term but for the remainder of their school life too. That is why in this online session we will outline our academic expectations and give guidance on what we can do together, as parents and teachers, to support and challenge students to make a positive start to Year 7 and continue this through to Year 8 and beyond.

Thursday 8th July – Students only induction

This is Hertfordshire's Transition Day and we are excited to have had confirmation that this will go ahead this year. It is a wonderful opportunity for the students to get a taste of life at Simon Balle as well as begin to develop relationships with new peers and teachers. For us, this chance to welcome the new cohort and get a greater sense of each individual student is one of the highlights of the year.

Financial Information

We aim to operate a cashless environment wherever possible at the school and we use the ParentPay* website (www.parentpay.com) as our preferred source of all financial transactions. This means your child will not need to carry money at all, other than on the transition day for lunch.

On the first day of term, all students, for whom we have received biometric consent, will have their fingerprint scanned. This will then link to their dinner money account on ParentPay and can be used to pay for all food and drink at the till in the school's canteen. Students who have not provided biometric consent will be given a unique PIN to use at the canteen.

If you have not already done so, please complete the linked form below to let us know if you consent for your child to use their fingerprint for school meals.

Biometric Consent Form: <https://forms.gle/ChdizB2XrZC15Upy9>

Parents will be emailed login details for ParentPay in June. There are several items we ask for contributions towards before the start of term and these purchases can be made through ParentPay as soon as you receive your login details. Students will receive the items in their form time or relevant classes during the first week of term. Your child's school meals account will not be immediately available and can be topped up from Wednesday 1st September.

The items we request you purchase through ParentPay before the start of term are as follows:

- Art supplies - £5 for A3 sketch books - Charlotte Stuart
- Book covers - £6 for 15 A4 covers (mandatory items to ensure student books are kept in good condition)
- Technology materials - £8 (per year, items which are made in Design & Technology and Art Textiles can be taken home)
- Art materials - £3 per year
- Locker hire - £25 (hire of locker for 3 years, includes £10 refundable deposit)
- Dinner money – available from 1st September (payments made will be available to use in the canteen within 30 minutes)

If you do not have access to a computer on which to make payments, you can come to the school to make use of ours, or pay by cheque (made payable to “Simon Balle All-through School”). Any cash sent in to the school is at your own risk so please ensure that you get a receipt for any cash handed in.

If you anticipate any financial difficulties, please contact the Finance Office (finance@simonballe.herts.sch.uk or 01992 410400) as soon as possible to see what financial assistance is available.

**ParentPay is a certified PCI DSS Level 1 merchant, the highest level of compliance enforced by the PCI standard*

Go 4 Schools

At Simon Balle we use an online web-based portal called Go4Schools to collect and store details about your child's attendance, academic progress, homework and behaviour. This information is accessible to parents and carers of students at the school via the website www.Go4Schools.com. There is also an app available for parents to download.

From September 2021 parents can log on and view their child's attendance, progress and behaviour records as well as monitor their homework. All that is required is access to the internet and the primary email address you have given us. We will send you more information on the service later in the year.

The online reporting function will be used to report both progress and final reports to you. In addition, we aim to encourage you to log into Go4Schools during the academic year to access information and data as it becomes available, for example effort monitoring grades in the Autumn term. You will be contacted via email when any new important information goes live on the site.



Team Music at Simon Balle All-through School

Welcome to Music at Simon Balle.

Music is an intrinsic part of our school community and part of our ethos that brings our whole community together. As students in Year 6 become Year 7 at Simon Balle, we want to use music to bring together this new year group.

I hope that as every year, many students will want to have instrumental or singing lessons with our fabulous team at Simon Balle. Please use the link below and click on the 'apply for secondary music lessons' box. If you could apply as soon as possible, but by 25th June, that will help with our planning.

<http://www.simonballe.herts.sch.uk/music>

Our Junior Choir rehearses on a Wednesday after school from 3.30 - 4.15pm. All Year 7 are invited. Other ensembles for musicians already learning an instrument take place during the week and we will email you individually about these. Full details are on the website.

In preparation for students joining our school and music department, we will, after half term, be emailing you some projects in which we ask everyone to participate. They will help bring the year group together so that the work can be celebrated both in July and finally in September. We will contact you by email with this work.

Finally, please look at our website and get involved. The more students are involved the more they enjoy their music. We will provide opportunities to start learning instruments and singing in September so that our new Year 7 students are just as musical as all our other year groups!

If you have any questions, do get in contact. music@simonballe.herts.sch.uk

Kind regards

Mark Taylor
Director of Music