



FAQs Sheet

Do students get to write down some friends that we would like to be with?

No, we go on the recommendation made by primary schools and always seek to place students with at least one friend where possible. However, when trying to manage the placement of 180 students it is not always possible.

When will students find out their forms?

Your child will find out their form approximately early July.

Is there a buddy system in place in the school?

No, we do not operate buddy systems as such. We just use a range of methods to develop friendships and links within forms and across the year group. Later in the year we also introduce 6th Form mentoring, for some students, to develop 'vertical' connections in our school community.

What if my child doesn't make friends?

There will be ample opportunities for your child to make friends at Simon Balle. There will be the chance to meet new people in their form group and as well as through clubs and extracurricular provisions. As staff we monitor this also to ensure everyone settles well.

Will students meet the Form tutor before they actually start at Simon Balle?

Due to logistical issues and the current pandemic we can not guarantee that your child will get to meet their form tutor in person before starting school in September. However each tutor will prepare a welcome video so students will 'see' them before they start and this will be uploaded on to our school website. There will also be further time for building those relationships on the induction day in September.

Will there be a transition day prior to starting in September?

You will see we have an extensive transition programme, including virtual maps and numerous activities, to make sure students are best prepared, both academically and pastorally, for starting in September. As well as this we are planning to go ahead with the traditional transition day on July 8th but it will be an amended programme in order to adhere to government and county guidelines. More information will be shared shortly.

On the first day of school do they bring everything including PE kit, football boots, etc?

Full details will be emailed out nearer the time about specific details, however your child will need the basics i.e pencil case.

My child will be using a bus service, how will that run in September?

You would need to contact the bus/train companies directly as this is not something that is attached to the school in any way. Each one will have slightly different procedures especially with guidance around Covid.

How will my child find out where they need to go on their first day?

The Year 7s should go to their Form rooms in the English block. An email will be sent out nearer to the start date in September with further details of the first day and subsequent days when joining Simon Balle.

On the first day do the parents come on to the school campus with the children or will someone be meeting them at reception or school gate?

On the first day in September the Year 7s should go into the school campus alone to their Form rooms in the English block. There will be numerous teachers at the school gate to greet the new year 7 students. We will guide them to where they need to go.

Will the sporting clubs run in the 2021/2022 school year and will year 7 be able to join?

There are a range of sport clubs available for all year 7 students to try and get involved in.

Are there any after school clubs ?

There are a vast amount of clubs available after school on a Wednesday, such as STEM club, drama and art. Further details will be shared shortly so that students can sign up in advance. As well as this we have our Gradu8 Club, which is all based around academic enrichment, on a Monday and Thursday which starts at 8am and it is expected all students attend. More details on both of these programmes can be found on the Curriculum and Challenge presentation which will be uploaded to the school website on July 7th.

What arrangements are made for transport to school sporting events?

For all sporting fixtures transport is organised by the school via minibus or coach. The school will provide transport to and from the fixture location and will return the students back to school. It is encouraged that parents come to watch and support school fixtures. Parents are then able to take their child home directly from the fixture site.

What if my child gets lost?

We understand that this is a worry for most students when starting in year 7 as secondary schools are considerably bigger than primary schools. When they are settling in they will be moving from class to class with their form group so firstly they can work together to find their classroom. If they do get lost the students can ask any teacher or older students who will guide them in the right direction. If there is no one around then they can knock on the nearest classroom and ask for directions. I can guarantee that after a week or so the students will know their way around.

My child has specific dietary needs/ allergies. Does the canteen cater for this?

We are a 'nut-aware' school and do our very best to limit risk and raise awareness through education. With regards to other allergens, it is the responsibility of the child and the parents to ascertain what is suitable from the menu by reviewing it via our website in advance. Or the student may bring in their own packed lunch.

Do the people in the classes change for different subjects or is it just one Form going to different classes?

In Year 7 most subjects are taught in Forms, except for maths and PE.

What is the structure of the average school day?

The school day runs from 8:40-3:10 and we expect students on site by 8.30am. Each lesson is an hour long and there are 6 lessons in a day. The day structure is as follows: lesson 1, lesson 2, break, lesson 3, lesson 4, lunch, lesson 5 (form time), lesson 6.

Are you allowed to cycle to school and leave your bike in a secure place?

We highly recommend you cycle into school. There are bike sheds at school for you to lock your bike up during the day.

Are they able to choose if they would like to do French or Spanish?

Both French and Spanish are taught in Year 7 and Year 8. Depending on which side of the year your child is in will determine the number of lessons they have in each language. For example, one half of the year group will do two hours of French and one hour of Spanish whilst the other half will do the reverse. This ratio of lesson: language then switches in Year 8 so by the start of year 9 students will have had equal exposure to both languages.

How much homework do you get on average a week?

Typically your child will receive one piece of homework a week from each subject. On average they will have five days to complete the homework task. We have study clubs in school to support students with their work.

How will not having SATs results affect your preliminary assessments?

We are still communicating with primaries to secure this information and this will form part of our overall academic picture. There is also a county-wide approach this year to provide three consistent pieces of information for us to use in building an academic progul of each student: their reading age, a set piece of maths work, and a 'best example' of their written work. However we will do our own work to gather data, as well as look for gaps in knowledge, when the students join us as well as external assessment tools.