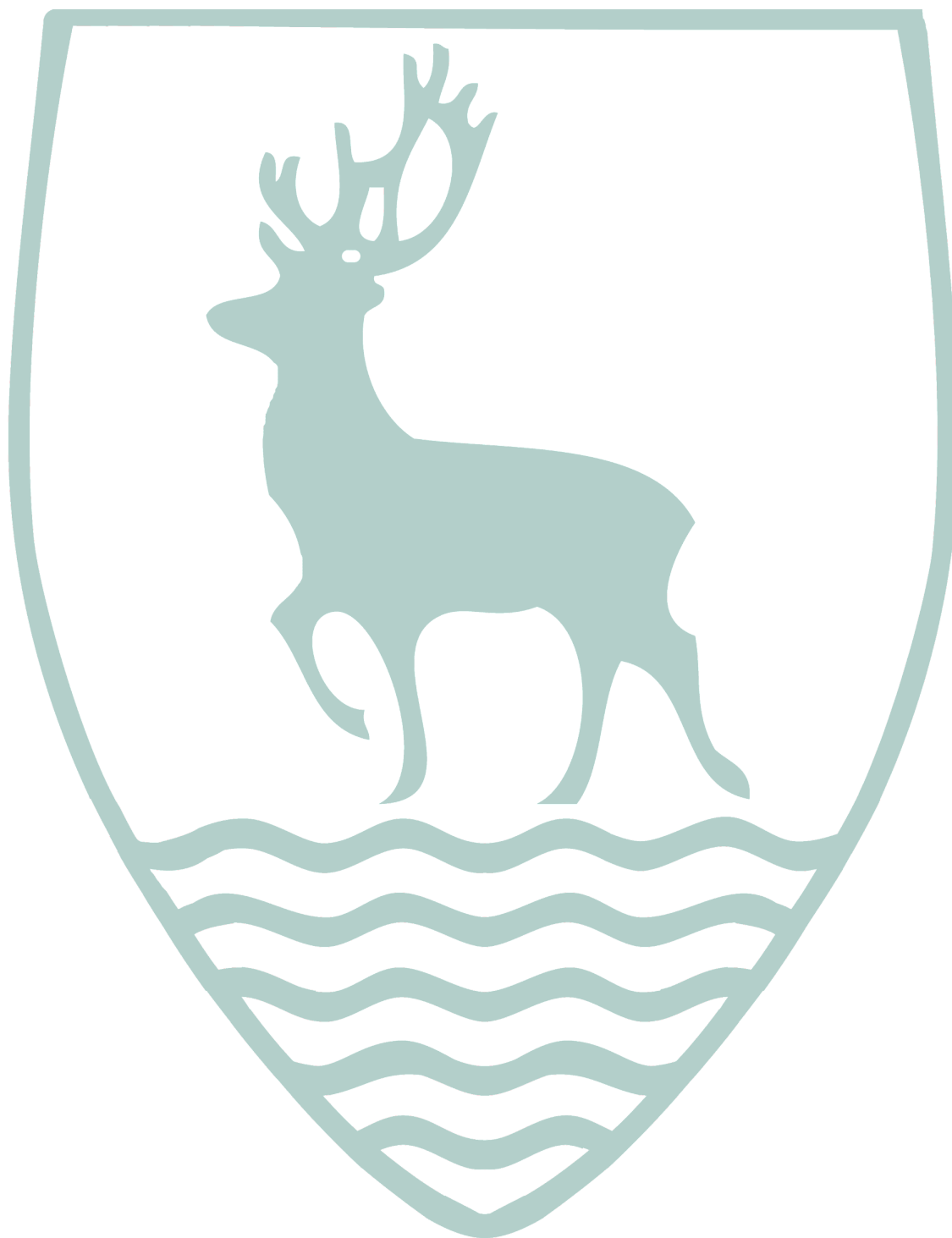


# Simon Balle All-through School

## Year 7 Information Pack

May 2022



# Welcome from the Transition Team

The Year 7 Transition Team warmly welcomes you to the Simon Balle secondary community. This is an exciting time for all Year 6 students yet it is often, quite naturally, one that can indeed include questions and doubts for students as well as parents/carers. Yet those who already know our 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. 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 primary school experiences, 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 use two systems for keeping parents updated: Arbor for attendance, homework and behaviour, and Go4Schools for progress data and reports, 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 secondary life at 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), **Ellie Newman** (Year 7 Leader) and the Transition team

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## Important Dates for Your Diary

Date	Focus	Information	Action
Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup> June	Welcome to Year 7 Presentation	Key staff will deliver information that will include details of what it means to be a SBAS student., both pastrolly and academically.	To be attended by parents/carers
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> 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
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> September	School starts for Year 7 students	Year 7 students will be welcomed to Simon Balle.	
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> 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 [Stevensons](#), the company which most Hertfordshire Secondary Schools use.

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. (no canvas shoes, no boots, or no shoes with sports logos are permitted)

- Plain coloured coat or jacket (no logos larger than a credit card and no large fur hood). 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 Shorts/skorts (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. 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

**Optional extras for PE - all from Pro Sports:**

- Leggings or skinny tracksuit bottoms (plain or with SB logo)
- Midlayer (this to be purchased instead of the fleece above if preferred)

**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, no denim, no leather, no large fur hoods or no logos larger than a credit card
- School bags must be backpacks (handbags are not permitted)

**The following are not permitted**

- Jewellery except for a watch and one small single stud earrings
- Make-up, false nails or nail polish
- Any 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
- Body art, transfers, tattoos etc

**Please ensure all items of uniform are named.**

# 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](http://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 £985 per pupil.

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 six years
- Have a parent in the armed services
- Have been looked after continuously for at least six months (CLA)
- Were adopted from care, or who left care under a Special Guardianship Order
- Left care under a Residence Order on or after 14<sup>th</sup> 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 spring term we ask all Year 7 students to join us on our annual four-day trip to [PGL Bawdsey Manor](#). This is a 4 day residential trip with a focus upon team building, culture and personal growth. This year we will be attending from Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April to Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April. The total cost this year will be £325 and this is the payment plan available:

Deposit £65.00 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022

£65.00 – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022

£65.00 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022

£65.00 – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023

£65.00 – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023

## 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 8.15am and 9.15am and 2.45pm to 3.45pm, Monday to Friday.

Drivers cannot come on site between 8.25am and 8.50am and 3.00pm 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 cooperation 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 school bag which must be a backpack
- An 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
- 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](mailto:popes@simonballe.herts.sch.uk))
  - A maths compass
  - An apron and container for Food Technology
  - An A4 document wallet

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.

## Chromebooks

Since becoming a 'One Person, One Device' school, we have been at 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 and learning; utilising digital technology as a resource to enhance teacher delivery and student progress.

Due to our ability to procure at scale, our access to education pricing from suppliers and the ability to sell to parents excluding VAT, we are able to offer a Chromebook package to all students in Years 6 to 11 at highly discounted rates and pass 100% of these savings on to parents.

The Chromebook package includes:

- A Lenovo 300e Gen3 Chromebook (full specifications are attached)
- A Google Chrome operating licence
- A GumDrop DropTech clip on case
- A three year accidental damage insurance policy (£25 excess, full terms and conditions are attached)\*
- An extended three year manufacturer's warranty
- The option to pay upfront or spread the cost via monthly Direct Debit, over one to three years

***\*Please ensure you carefully read the exclusions and limitations of the insurance policy. Claims are most commonly rejected for the following reasons:***

- ***The insurer was not notified within 30 days of the damage occurring***
- ***The device was not in a case when the damage occurred***
- ***The device was left on the floor and/or unattended when the damage occurred***
- ***The cause of the damage could not be explained***

A Chromebook is the best selling device in education. As the curriculum has evolved, so has our way of working with technology. The benefits of Chromebooks are:

- Fully compatible with the Google Software we are constantly using within our Google Workspace platform
- Ready to use within eight seconds so no learning lost
- Lightweight and robust
- Low maintenance. Chromebooks download and can install security and software updates automatically
- Secure. 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 even when used constantly
- Students use technology tools on our Google Workspace to communicate, collaborate, create and publish their work
- Real time feedback and marking is possible
- Subject specific apps or online textbooks are easier to access
- They prepare students for 21st century integration of digital tools

- They work seamlessly with Google Apps for Education and other cloud based applications which all of our students and teachers already use extensively.

The Chromebook package can be purchased through our [edde portal](#). The portal is open now and will close on July the 3rd 2022. Please ensure that you register through the portal before the closing date to guarantee that your child's device will be ready for September. The registration code to access the portal is: SBS25-25. Students eligible for Pupil Premium receive a 50% discount on the cost of the Chromebook package. The registration code to access the Pupil Premium portal is: SBS26-26.

## 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 3.20pm to 4.20pm for Year 6, 7 and 8 which may focus on areas such as Humanities, Creativity, or Science. Parents and students will be given information on the particular projects and topics that 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 Tuesday and Thursday morning from 8.00am to 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:

- MFL Culture Club
- ReadingPlus Programme
- LexiaUK Programme
- Maths Mastery
- Creative Writing

## Transition Arrangements

### 6:00pm Thursday 30th June – Parent Transition Evening

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 evening will allow us to 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 be outlining 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. This is because that 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.

We would expect all parents to attend this meeting to ensure we make as strong a start as possible to our home-school partnership.

### Thursday 14th 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.

### Summer School - August 22nd - 24th, 9 - 2pm each day

After the great success of last year's Summer School, where the benefit was felt in every way to support the students to make a positive start at Simon Balle, we will again be offering this provision this summer on the above dates. Further details will be released within the transition process but please reserve the dates so we can have as many students join us as possible.

## Financial Information

We aim to operate a cashless environment wherever possible at the school and we use the [ParentPay\\*](#) website 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 [Biometric Consent Form](#) to let us know if you consent for your child to use their fingerprint for school meals.

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 1<sup>st</sup> September.

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

- Art supplies - £5 for A3 sketch books
- 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 (at [finance@simonballe.herts.sch.uk](mailto:finance@simonballe.herts.sch.uk) or on 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*

## Go4Schools and Arbor

At Simon Balle we use two online web-based systems to collect and store details about your child's attendance, academic progress, homework and behaviour.

[Arbor](#) is our Management Information System (MIS) and contains attendance information, homework assignments, and personal information (contact details, medical information etc). [Go4Schools](#) is used for academic monitoring and progress reports.

Both systems can be accessed via both internet browser or an app. From September 2022, 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 follow [this link](#) 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.

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 contact us at [music@simonballe.herts.sch.uk](mailto:music@simonballe.herts.sch.uk)

Mark Taylor  
Director of Music

