

## **Parents/Carers - Questions you may want to ask...**

### **1. Are students in sets?**

In Year 7 most subjects are taught in form groups. However, Design and PE are taught in blocks and Maths is taught in loose sets. This simply means that approximately 4 groups are on at any one time. These are mixed ability.

From Year 8 students begin to move more classes across to loose sets, adding English, Science and Languages.

### **2. What Languages are studied?**

Students in Year 7 study either French or Spanish. Most students will take this language through to GCSE.

### **3. Are students allowed to have mobile phones in school?**

Students are not allowed to use mobile phones in school hours. Students may well have phones turned off (not on silent) in their bags, but these should not be visible during the school day. We encourage students to be social beings in a non-virtual world!

### **4. Do all students get lockers?**

Information on Lockers for Year 7 will be sent out to you approximately a month before your child starts school. We will send you information nearer the time. Year 7 always has priority in booking a locker. All information will be made available through the website. There are enough lockers for all year 7 students and they will be available to Year 7 students only until September 2020, then any remaining unbooked lockers will be offered to other year groups.

### **5. Will students have the same form-tutor throughout their school years?**

It is always the intention that students stay with the same form tutor for Years 7 to 11. Occasionally staff leave or go on maternity leave and so changes are made.

### **6. Will students use the All Weather Pitches (AWPs)?**

Students will have the opportunity to use the AWPs both in PE lesson time, after school clubs and at lunchtime. Students can use the AWPs every day of the week at lunch times, apart from their assembly day, for year 7s this will be Fridays.

### **7. What after school activities are there?**

Loads! A leaflet detailing all the activities that take place will be emailed in late September. An example of this from 2019/20 can be found at <https://www.blatchingtonmill.org.uk/assets/Uploads/Extra-Curricular-Activities-2019-2020.pdf>

### **8. How do I find out about my child's progress?**

Students are assessed regularly in each subject. Twice each year staff identify the Work Ethic and Achievement of each student and this is available for you to see as a report in SIMS Parent. There is also the opportunity for more detailed feedback once a year at the Consultation Evening.

### **9. What is Passport?**

Passport is a reward system; students earn points through work ethic, effort in home learning, attendance, punctuality and achievements in school. These points transfer into Passport Points which students can use to purchase prizes. These consist of sports equipment, music equipment, books, stationery and much more.

## 10. What is SIMS Parent?

This is a website and app that allows parents and carers to view homework tasks as well as view their child's timetable, homework, progress, attendance and calendar events. Invitations to register for SIMS Parent will be emailed by September.

## 11. How can I get involved in school life?

Secondary school is very different to Primary and sadly this means that many parents and carers think they cannot help out in the same way as at Primary. We would urge you to join our FAB (PTA) group and help out in any way you can. This group is responsible for the purchase of new mini-buses, arts decoration of some buildings and equipment for different subjects. We can always find more to spend money on to help your children learn! (Please see separate FAB flyer).

## 12. What do students do at break and lunchtime?

Students are free to play or sit and chat where they wish outdoors, in the Quad or canteen. The Quad (next to the theatre) is reserved as a Year 7 only space at break and lunchtime. Badminton and Basketball are on offer in the Gym and Sports Hall, and football on the All-Weather Pitches. There are staff lunchtime supervisors on duty throughout the site inside and out to help out if necessary. The RIC (Research and Information Centre) is open for students. Students also have access to canteen food at both of these times. In the first week we allow Year 7 the chance to go into lunch early; to get the hang of the canteen arrangements. We also have a 'Snack Shack' which has less variety than the canteen but is useful for students wanting to avoid the queues. There are also some extracurricular activities and clubs that go on during lunchtimes.

## 13. It's a big school, how do I find out what is going on at school?

Despite there being 1600 students we can manage communication quite effectively. If an important message needs to be given to your child, please let Student Services know and they will arrange for it to be delivered.

There will be emailed letters home detailing any up and coming trips and there are details on the school website of roughly which big trips run in which year groups.

We correspond with you by text, email, paper and in person!

## 14. What do they do in PE?

There are 3 double lessons per fortnight (so these last for 100 minutes including changing time) – girls and boys follow the same activities.

Some groups are mixed and some are single sex groups.

Each lesson will be a different activity which students will do for a block of time (see below).

Start of term – Initial few lessons - baseline assessment and introduction to the subject and facilities.

**Winter activities** - Orienteering, Games, Gymnastics, Trampolining, Health Related Exercise, Dance, Hockey.

**Summer activities** - Athletics, Tennis, Striking games.

If you have anything else that you would like to seek clarification about, please do not hesitate to call in or email.

- The best first port of call this term is the Admin Hub on [BMSAdminHub@blatchingtonmill.org.uk](mailto:BMSAdminHub@blatchingtonmill.org.uk)
- Beyond this term Mrs A Wilmot Assistant Year Team Leader for Year 7 on [awilmot@blatchingtonmill.org.uk](mailto:awilmot@blatchingtonmill.org.uk)