

# ST BERNARD'S HIGH SCHOOL



## Frequently Asked Questions by New Year 7 Students



# New Beginnings..

The change from Primary to Secondary school is an exciting process, but it is also normal to feel uncertain and nervous about the changes ahead. This is very normal and I would expect all of our Year 6 students coming to St Bernard's in September to feel a bit nervous especially under the unusual circumstances of lockdown. If you are feeling very worried or anxious about moving to Secondary School then talk to someone about it. If you have any questions or worries about transition then you can e-mail us your questions at:

[newyear7@stbernards.southend.sch.uk](mailto:newyear7@stbernards.southend.sch.uk) Here are a list of questions that we are frequently asked at induction. You may find it useful to go through them. If there are any other questions that you might have then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Love one another  
as I have  
loved you

## **What is the ethos of the school?**

Our school is a community where we strive to live by our mission statement "Love one another as I have loved you" both within our school and the parish communities to which we belong. The school has a very special ethos that is a combination of faith, purpose and enjoyment as staff and students share in the learning at St Bernard's.

## **How will the school support my religious faith?**

St Bernard's is a Catholic school and this aspect runs right through every part of our school. You will take part in collective worship every day during form time and you will study Religious Education from Year 7 to Year 13. The school has it's own chapel which you will attend for Form Mass and Reconciliation services. You will take part in assemblies with your year group and we also have whole school services for important religious festivals.

## **Do we have assemblies?**

We have regular assemblies. Assembly for Year 7 is on a Friday. You will also have smaller assemblies within your form group.



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### **Does the school have its own chapel?**

St Bernard's has its own Chapel located in the original part of the school building. You will spend time as a form group in the Chapel and will attend a mass and a reconciliation service in the chapel each year.

### **What is a form group?**

Every student at St Bernard's has a form group. You will spend the first part of each day with your form group. There will be around 30 students in your form and you will have a form tutor. Their role is to help you with your work and they are the first person you should go to if you are worried about anything. You will also do PSHE (Personal Social and Health Education) in your form group every fortnight.

### **Is there a house system?**

All students are linked to a school house via their form group and there are various inter-house sporting competitions. The six houses are known as Annay, Clairvaux, Fountains, Hying, Melrose and Rievaulx.

### **Will I be in the same form group as my friends?**

We try to put people in a form group with some of their friends but likely not all of them. We do not want you to feel isolated so we ask your Year 6 teachers who you get on with. We use that information to help us put together the form groups. When you are at secondary school you have lots of different lessons in different teaching groups so you will meet lots of new people and make lots of new friends too.

### **What if I am the only person from my Primary School that is going to St Bernard's?**

This often happens. What we try to do is to put children who come to us as the only person from their Primary School together, so there will be people in your form group in the same situation that you can make friends with. We find that children quickly make new friends at school and your form tutor will look after you and check that everything is going well for you.



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### **Is the work really difficult?**

The work at secondary school is a continuation of what you have been learning at Primary. Some of the learning will be a recap of work you have already done at Primary. The teachers have planned the curriculum to build upon your learning at Primary so that it is both accessible but also gives you the right level of challenge.

### **How do I know how to get to school?**

Students at St Bernard's get to school through lots of different methods; car, train, bus, walking and bike to name a few! We recommend you do a practice journey with your family over the school holidays so you know how to get here. There are members of the staff on the gate at home time who can help if you have any issues with your journey home.

### **What happens if you are late to school or are late to a lesson?**

If you are walking to school you will need to be organised so that you are not late to school. You could try timing how long it takes from your house to school. Many students arrange to meet friends on route. St Bernard's keeps a record of your attendance and punctuality in school. Students should aim to have an attendance of 97% or above. Being late to lessons may happen sometimes in your first couple of weeks as you get used to finding your way around the school buildings. If you get lost then other staff or older students will only be too happy to help you find your way. After a couple of weeks, we will expect you to be used to the school and you will need to be on time for your lessons.

### **What happens if you get lost when you first arrive at St Bernard's?**

St Bernard's is a fairly small secondary school so you will soon find your way around. There is a main school building with different wings; North, South, East and West. Then there are also blocks outside the main building; St Helens Centre, Performing Arts and the Bernadine Hall. If you are ever lost on the way to a lesson then just ask an older student or a member of staff who will tell you the best way to get there. In the first week, you will have Peer Mentors showing you to the next classroom.



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## **Is it true that secondary school teachers are really strict?**

We have high standards at St Bernard's and expect students to behave really well and wear their uniform correctly. However, we want you to do well and we won't be any more strict than your primary teachers were. The main difference at secondary school is that you will have a lot more teachers because you have specialist teachers for each subject. You will find that we have the same high expectations for behaviour, attitude and work.

## **How much homework will you get?**

This really depends on the teacher and the subject. Your teachers know the appropriate amount to set you in Year 7. They will always tell you how long to spend on the homework and what date it is due in.

## **Will we be in sets?**

Most subjects you will be taught in mixed ability groups. For maths, you will be in mixed ability groups for the first few weeks and then moved into sets. Where students are taught in sets, we take account of lots of different things including teachers assessments from your Primary school. The sets can and do change throughout the year so you are not stuck in the set you are in from the start of the year.

## **What are the timings of the school day?**

You will have 3 lessons a day that are each 100 minutes long. You will have registration with your tutor first in the morning. You will then go onto your first lesson, then have break, then your second lesson. After this, it is lunch time and then your afternoon lesson. After this you can either go home or take part in an after school club.

Our school day starts at 8:50am so you should be walking through the gates no later than 8:45am to have time to get to your form room.

## **What are detentions given for?**

Detentions are given for people that do not follow the rules within school. They take place at break time, lunchtime or for more serious incidents they take place after school. The vast majority of our students do not get detentions and visitors to St Bernard's often comment on how well behaved students are within school.



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## **Are there bullying issues at St Bernard's?**

Every school has to deal with bullying of some form or another and we would be wrong to say it never happens. However, bullying is very rare at St Bernard's and is mostly to do with fallings out and friendship groups. Nevertheless, St Bernard's takes bullying very seriously and always deals and resolves issues that take place. We have a regular focus in school to prevent bullying including a focus on it in form time, PSHE and making sure that children are encouraged to speak out if it happens within school. We encourage other students who see it to speak out and inform a member of the Pastoral Team. The staff are used to resolving these issues and we instil in our students the importance of speaking out if they both experience or see bullying.

## **Who do I go to if I have a problem at St Bernard's?**

Your form tutor is the first person you should speak to if you have any issues at school. You also have a Head of Year, Miss James, who is solely responsible for your year group. You can also speak to your Learning Mentors or LSA's if you have one. We also have members of staff responsible for safeguarding in school who are able to help you with your worries, concerns or moments of crisis.

## **Are the older students scary?**

Not at all. Our older students are very welcoming to our younger students. We also have a mentoring scheme where Year 10 students are paired up with Year 7 students to help them to settle into school. It can get quite crowded in the corridors and you will meet lots of different students. The older students will seem quite big as you were used to being the oldest children at primary school. However, you will soon get used to them and some of you will already have older brothers and sisters in school. What's important is that you treat everyone politely and respectfully and if you do that you should find you get the same treatment yourself.

## **Are there lots of extra-curricular clubs?**

We have a long lunchtime at St Bernard's compared to other secondary schools. You can chose to take part in lots of sports clubs, arts club, drama club, dance club and many more! We think it's really important that children have lots of extra-curricular opportunities. This makes lunchtime a really fun and interesting part of the day.



## What is the school uniform?

Students of St Bernard's are expected to wear the correct uniform at all times and to take pride in what their uniform signifies. They should care for their uniform and wear it confidently knowing that they can be satisfied with their appearance.

The following is a list of permitted items of school clothing to be worn by students attending the school. School uniform may only be purchased from Paul's Discount Clothing Store, tel 01702 466431, [www.paulsdiscount.co.uk](http://www.paulsdiscount.co.uk)

### Other Requirements

All the garments should be clearly marked with the owner's name. In the case of the PE shirt and hoodies the opposite side to the school badge. The markings should be in gold in three centimetre high letters. For shorts/tracksuit trousers the marking should be on the back under the waistband.

Students may wear a watch, ear studs (one in each lobe) no other piercings are allowed and a simple cross and chain. No other jewellery is permitted.

Nail varnish, false nails and make-up are not allowed.

Hair accessories should be navy blue, black or brown. Hair should be natural colour. Hair can not be of two contrasting colours e.g. black and blonde, black and red, blonde and blue etc.

Jumper: Navy blue school jumper with school logo

Blouse: Blue/white check

Skirt: Trutex or David Luke navy blue pleated knee length

Trousers: Navy blue - David Luke

Socks: Navy blue, black or white (no trainer socks)

Tights: Navy blue, black or flesh coloured (no patterns)

Shoes: Sensible black (2.5cm heel max). No platform, sling back, stilettos, sandals, boots are allowed. This includes ankle height boots. (Black/navy Kicker boots are permitted).

Coats: A plain coat in a single dark colour in a style suitable for school. No denim, leather, fur fabric, sweatshirts or fluorescent coloured coats may be worn.

Headscarf: Plain navy blue without decoration.

### PE UNIFORM

Shirt: Navy blue polo shirt with logo

Socks: Plain white ankle sport socks—no brand name

Trainers: White or black sports trainers

Hooded Sweatshirt: Navy blue with logo

Sports Leggings: Navy blue in lycra

Shorts: Either polyester with logo or lycra navy school regulation

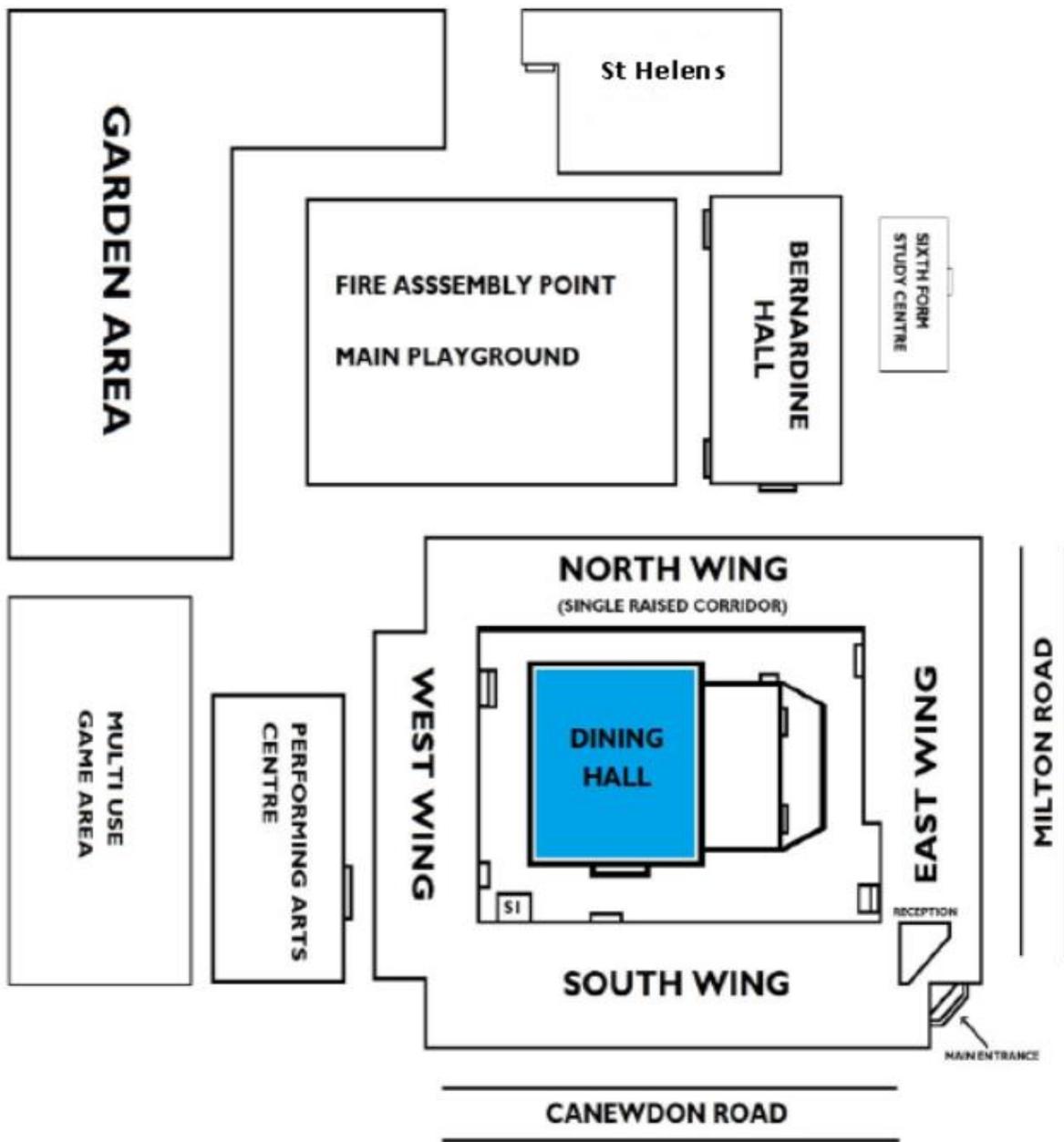


## Do you have bells?

In this school we do not use bells or buzzers at the end of lessons. The only alarm you will hear is the fire alarm. At the beginning of the year we have a fire drill when you will learn what to do.

## Do you have a map?

Here is a map of the school, don't worry, we will take you on a tour on your first day!



Love one another as I have loved you



### **How can I stay organised to keep on top of all my work?**

When you go to secondary school you have to be quite organised to remember to pack the right books, remember your PE kit and bring the correct equipment. Your form tutor will help you with organising this. You will have a planner to help you record homework deadlines and make notes about things you need to remember! Make sure you get into good habits early on such as packing your bag the night before and making sure you have looked at your timetable. You will also get access to a locker where you can store your books, coat, equipment and PE kit.

### **Do you need to bring in lunch money every day?**

Students all have an account and parents will pre-load this account with credit so you don't need money to buy your school lunch. You can bring cash into school and then upload it using the machine by the student entrance so it is on your account. You pay for your school lunch through this account through your fingerprint. You will be shown how all of this works as part of your induction into the school.

### **How can we show we are doing well?**

We have achievement points at St Bernard's that you are awarded for a variety of reasons, from good effort in class to taking on a role of responsibility. Once you reach a certain number of points you get prizes such as certificates, jump the queue passes and even prize winners events

If you have any other questions then please e-mail [newyear7@stbernards.southend.sch.uk](mailto:newyear7@stbernards.southend.sch.uk)

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