

YEAR 7 ADMISSIONS Frequently Asked Questions

Admissions

Q: How can I see if we are in the catchment area for the school?

A: This link below shows the map for our catchment area;

<https://bcc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=1fe0937af5534246876efa6d64e78722>

Q: Does it matter where I put the school on my 3 school choices?

A: Advice would state that you should prioritize your choices from most favorable.

Q: Will I get a place at Fairfield High School if I am outside of the catchment area?

A: The distance from the catchment area is considered when allocations are made by the council. If you receive a decision you are unhappy with, you have the right to appeal an admissions allocation by an independent panel.

Q: Will we be offered a place from more than one school?

A: You will be offered a school allocation from a school within your catchment area. This is not always one of your three choices. The council will attempt to give families one of their three choices but that is not always possible.

Q: Does SAT exam results affect the chances of getting a place at FHS?

A: No, SATs do not have an impact on places. Parents/guardians apply to FHS directly through Bristol City Council. Places at Fairfield are not allocated or reserved based on any prior attainment or any other attribute except for those legally reserved (Looked After, Previously Looked After and those with an EHCP, for example).

Transition

Q: What is the provision for transition?

A: We run a fantastic Summer School which gives opportunities for students to meet one another, some of their teachers/tutors, and to become more familiar with the school. Students who have identified additional needs also generally have an additional transition meeting to enable student and families to tour the building. Click [here](#) for more information.

Q: Do tutor groups stay with the same tutor throughout their time at Fairfield?

A: Once placed in a tutor group, pupils will remain in that tutor group for their time at FHS.

Curriculum

Q: Do you operate 'Settings?' If so which subjects, how many levels, how are they set and how often are they reviewed?

A: All subjects studied at KS3 are taught as mixed ability sets within tutor groups. In KS4, Science and Math are set based on students' GCSE target and their progress in KS3. This is reviewed frequently however, we rarely move learners down sets as we prefer to address under-performance

with extra support. We do often move learners up sets.

Q: What is a typical class size?

A: Approximately 25-30 students. Although this can be less for certain GCSE option classes.

Q: How many classes are there per year?

A: There are 8 tutor groups per year. There are also 4 different house groups which are split across the year groups.

Q: When do students choose their GCSE options?

A: Initial options are chosen in Term 1 of Year 9. Final options are then chosen in Term 2. Students then start studying their chosen options in Year 10.

Q: Can students study more than one language? Do they get to choose which language they study? Can the choice of which language be made beforehand?

A: During Years 7, 8 and 9, students will study two languages of the following three - French, German or Spanish. We discourage students already fluent in any of these languages from learning these during this time, as they may find them less challenging. This does not, however, prevent them from being able to choose that language as a GCSE option. Please can you therefore communicate with me if this is the case, or if you have a preference for any particular language.

Q: Is Art taught in Year 7?

A: Year 7 Students undertake 4 lessons of Art per fortnights, on rotation with Design Technology and Computer Science.

Q: Is photography on the curriculum or is it integrated into Art?

A: At GCSE level Photography is a separate option to Art, but at KS3 it is part of Art lessons.

Q: Can students opt for a Music GCSE? Are lessons available?

A: Yes, we offer GCSE Music. We also offer additional music lessons at a cost with a specialist tutor.

Q: What is the drama department like in your school?

A: We are proud to have a thriving drama department where a high number of our students from all backgrounds and experiences enjoy being involved in our school production and galas, whether it be acting, singing, dancing, directing, stage management, lighting operation and sound.

Q: Do you teach Computer Science?

A: Yes, at KS3 is taught in rotation with Art, and Design Technology. In KS4 it can be chosen as an Option.

Q: What sports do you offer? Does my child get to choose what sport they participate in?

A: Rugby, Football, Basketball, Cricket, Athletics, Netball, Hockey, Rounders, Badminton, Gymnastics, In years 7-9 pupils will follow a set curriculum, in years 10-11 pupils can choose the activity they participate in on a termly basis.

Pastoral Support

Q: What type of pastoral care do you provide?

A: Each year group has an Achievement Coordinator and Achievement Manager who oversees the year group. They are on hand for Pupils/Parents to speak to if an issue arises and support year groups if there is a need. Referrals can be made for extra support if required to other agencies. Support is given to pupils in all areas from behaviour concerns to pupils who have a high level of anxiety.

SEND and Interventions

Q: What provision and support do you offer students with dyslexia?

A: We aim to complete a 'dyslexia check in' with every dyslexic pupil which is provided for by support staff and shared with teachers. The checklist includes asking each student which resources work best for them and is entirely student led. We will introduce various strategies and resources to each student before we ask them what supports their learning most effectively.

Q: What is the SEN provision like in your school?

A: We seek to provide an inclusive, supportive and aspirational approach to teaching pupils with SEND. We believe that we must have the highest of expectations for ALL pupils, including those with SEND. Where a pupil has additional barriers to their education, we seek to reduce these barriers through adaptive teaching and through targeted interventions of support. Pupils with SEND are able to access all the wide-ranging activities that are provided by the school, in addition to curriculum-based activities. We endeavor to ensure all activities provided by the school are fully accessible and inclusive, including residential and overseas trips

Q: Can separate meetings be set up with the schools SENCO to go through questions we have re support for children with EHCP.

A: Support for pupils entering the school in Year 7 often begins during the pupil's time in KS2, with contact made with both primary school and, where necessary, the parents/carers of a child with special educational needs

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Deputy SENCO; Mrs Hayley Kelly – hkelly@fairfield.excalibur.org.uk. To view our SEND webpage - Please [Click here](#)

Extra-curricular

Q: Do you have a school football team across all years?

A: Yes, we have a Football team for each year group that plays competitive games against other schools in Bristol. Each year group will have a Football, Netball, Rugby, Basketball, Athletics, Hockey, Cricket and Rounders team.

Q: How does FHS support someone who is talented in sports?

A: They will receive two hours of high quality P.E teaching a week as well as extra curricular support and access to competitive fixtures. We can also help to signpost pupils and parents to local sports clubs pupils will be able attend to further their progression as well as submit pupils for District trials.

Q: What extra-curricular activities are there?

A: We offer wide variety of clubs ranging from chess and drama to art, creative writing and book clubs. For Sports we run a club each night after School for each year group.

Q: Will there be any trips if so, what kind of trips do you normally offer?

A: A selection of the trips we have offered in recent years include: Ski trip to Austria, The Old Vic to watch plays, and the Bristol Zoo Project. Each year pupils also have an opportunity to watch the Bristol Flyers, Bristol Bears, Bristol City and England Football team.

General

Q: Could you please tell us about the Library?

A: The Library is open for students Mon-Thurs 8:30am to 4:30pm and on Friday 8:30am-4:00pm. Our collection which includes over 9,000 fiction and non-fiction titles is carefully curated to represent authors from diverse backgrounds. We also stock a large collection of Dyslexia-friendly titles, striving to offer interesting and enticing books for every reader. In February 2021 we launched our 24-hour eLibrary (ePlatform) featuring nearly 2,000 eBooks and over 900 audiobooks for students to enjoy stories at any time, wherever they are.

We invite authors for workshops and hold our own book events, like Harry Potter Night, World Book Day and the Scholastic Book Fair. We also visit local schools for collaborative events. We run regular reading promotions, engaging readers in new genres and formats, such as our graphic novel competition and Dungeons and Dragons Club.

Fairfield High School works collaboratively with local schools to hold the Bristol Teen Book Award, an annual event to promote diverse fiction. The initiative encourages students to read and vote for their favourite shortlisted title, culminating in an exciting awards ceremony with activities and workshops with shortlisted authors.

Q: Could you please tell us a bit about the school facilities – particularly sports/music/drama?

A: Sports – We have grass pitches, a flood lit astro turf, a full-size football pitch, 3x5 a side pitches, cricket nets, tennis courts, and 4 badminton court sized sports hall.

Drama- We have purpose-built dance and drama studios with sprung floors and excellent sound equipment. The drama studio boasts brand new theatrical lighting (bought in 2019) together with a modern and comprehensive lighting desk and new LED lamps to inspire our students and create visually stunning effects in our productions. It allows students to understand and develop skills in other aspects of theatre including design and direction and not just performance. We have recently purchased brand new head microphones and sound equipment to enhance the quality and professionalism of our performances and allow us to perform outside during our Summer Gala.

Music – The Music Department has recently expanded and now has 2 full-time specialist teachers covering a wide range of Musical styles and traditions including specialism in orchestral / classical composition / rock / pop / jazz and music technology / production. We have 5 Mac based recording

studios and 2 fully equipped classrooms with keyboards / PA / mics etc. / drumkits (electronic and acoustic) guitars / ukuleles / PCs with MIDI keyboard controllers and 16 Ableton Push controllers. We also have a professional mobile PA and professional Sennheiser wireless microphone rig (10 mics) which were recently purchased along with studio lighting and facilities linking Music with Drama and Dance for a cohesive and well-resourced Performing Arts Faculty.

Q: How do students pay for lunch and trips?

A: Parents can top up lunch accounts and pay for trips using a system called Parentmail. Students can then purchase lunch or a break time snack with any funds on their account. Children who are entitled to FSM (free school meals) can get their lunch either hot or cold, at lunch time however they will need funds added for snacks available at break time should they wish to purchase them. To view our Free School Meals page on our website - [click here](#)

Q: How much does the FHS uniform cost?

A: The compulsory uniform is £23 - £27 for our school jumper and tie depending on size. All other items can be purchased from other retailers if necessary. The PE tops are compulsory and cost between £11 and £22 depending on size and style. Tracksuit bottoms, shin pads, trainers and socks will also be needed. We will always try to support families in need where we can.

Q: Do students generally wear their PE kit to school?

A: Students are not permitted to change into their PE kits on site, so if they have PE during the day, they are asked to wear their uniform into school.

Q: What opportunities are there for parents to get involved in school life?

A: As a school we actively encourage parental and guardian participation both in an academic and social sense. In terms of discussing academic progress: discussing students work, attending parents' evenings, attending progress review days, and engaging with the curriculum. Also, attending our winter and summer galas, our in-school production but to name a few events. There is also a Fairfield Parents Network that have an active role in supporting students and engaging with school-based events. In the past they have raised over £6000 to buy IT equipment such as laptops to conquer the digital divide that some of our community may have experienced. Those donations are making a real difference right now and every day to students and families in our community. Please [click here](#) to view our parent network page on our website.

Leadership and Policies

Q: How long has the leadership team been at the school?

A: The leadership team are an experienced and diverse group of colleagues, with time spent at FHS ranging from 5 to 18 years at the school.

Q: How much interaction do you have with other Excalibur Academy Trust (EAT) secondary schools? If yes on what type of things?

A: EAT encourages cross school-working in terms of professional development, training, and curriculum planning and implementation. Every academic year colleagues from EAT schools join for a day of training, support, well-being, curriculum building and sharing of key information including school progress.

Q: How do you deal with poor behaviour?

A: FHS have a detailed behaviour policy to ensure fairness and transparency. The ethos is a restorative approach, students and staff can report incidences, they are investigated by pastoral staff and based on the evidence provided a decision is made by a member of SLT.

Please [click here](#) to review our behavior policy in full.

Q: What is the school's policy on mobile phone use in school?

A: Phones are not permitted on school grounds. If students are seen using a phone, it will be confiscated until the end of the day to ensure a focused and distraction-free learning environment. This policy helps students stay engaged in their studies, promotes face-to-face social interactions, and prevents potential disruptions in class. Additionally, it helps protect the privacy and security of all individuals on site.

School Day and Social Times

Q: How long are break and lunches?

A: Morning break is 30 minutes long and lunch time is 45 minutes.

Year 7s have their lunchtime earlier than the rest of the year groups for Terms 1 and 2, so that they can access lunch and familiarise themselves with the canteen before other year groups arrive.

Q: Are students allowed to leave the school site at break and lunch?

A: No, students must stay on site for the duration of the school day.

Q: What equipment is there for students to play with at lunchtime?

A: At Lunch time pupils can play Football outside on our courts, or they can play basketball or Badminton when it is their day in the Sports hall.

Year 7s have access to table tennis in their area – bats and balls are provided.

Q: How much are the breaktime snacks?

A: They range from 50p to £1.50, and include bacon baguettes and mini pizzas alongside Greek yoghurts and fruit salad.

Q: How much is a school lunch?

A: Currently we offer a selection of sandwiches at the Sandwich Pod. Street food is available at the Kiosk and a daily menu of hot food inside the Canteen.

A meal deal is priced at £2.50.