

YEAR 7 TRANSITION

Frequently Asked Questions

Admissions

1. 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 Bristol City Council. If you receive a decision you are unhappy with you have the right to appeal, see Bristol City Council website for further information.

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

A: Your child will be allocated a place at a school whose catchment area you live within, 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.

3. Q: Do 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 where Fairfield is named on the provision).

Transition

4. Q: Will we be able to come see the school in person?

A: We do not offer individual school tours. We have Open Evening/Mornings in Term 1 (September/October) each year which gives you the opportunity to tour the school before submitting your application. Once you have been offered a place you will be invited to an Induction Evening which gives you the chance to see some parts of the school and meet key staff.

5. Q: What transition events do you host?

A: Bristol City Council have a city-wide **Induction Day** where students can spend time at their allocated secondary school, this usually takes place within the first week of July.

We also host an **Induction Evening** that parents/guardians can attend, with or without their children, to gather information, get to know staff and visit the school

Children coming from primary schools with 0-4 other children will be invited to attend a **Singles and Doubles** event where they come to FHS for a morning to meet other children in a similar position, that way all children will start school knowing with a few friends/familiar faces.

During the first full week of the Summer Holiday we host **FHS Moving Up**. A week of fun activities to help children make new friends, meet some of our wonderful staff and get to know their way around the school.

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

A: Once placed in a tutor group, students will remain in that tutor group for their time at FHS with the same Tutor.

7. Q: Is there opportunity for children to be grouped with children they already know?

A: Once you have been allocated a space at FHS you will receive a Welcome Letter, you will be asked to state your child's modern foreign language preference (all students study French but have the choice of Spanish or German), this will help determine which tutor group they will be in. We do our best to put your child with at least one other person from their primary school. We also take into account information provided to us by primary schools which may lead us to group or separate certain individuals. We encourage our new students to embrace the chance to make new friends within their new school setting.

8. Q: Will you keep twins together?

A: We collect information from the primary school and family to see what would work best for the students as individuals.

Curriculum

9. Q: Do you teach certain subjects in sets rather than mixed ability?' 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 Maths are set based on students GCSE target and their progress in KS3. This is reviewed frequently/continuously, however, we rarely move learners down sets as we prefer to address under-performance with extra support. We do often move learners up sets.

10. Q: What is a typical class size?

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

11. Q: How many classes are there per year?

A: There are 8 tutor groups per year.

12. Q: When do students choose their GCSE options?

A: Options are chosen in Year 9, students then start studying their chosen options in Year 10. Please note our option choices are subject to change.

13. 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: All Year 7 students will study French, alongside either German or Spanish. You can state a preference of either German or Spanish before Tutor Groups are finalised (deadline in Welcome Letter) - we will do our best to accommodate them. In Year 9 students can choose to continue studying one of the languages

they have been learning, they may be allowed to choose two languages if they are already fluent in one. We also offer Arabic as a GCSE option which can be studied in Years 10 and 11.

Q: Is Art taught in Year 7?

A: Year 7 students do 4 lessons of Art per fortnight, on rotation with Design Technology and Computer Science.

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

A: Photography is part of Art at KS3, in Year 9 students have several Art options to choose from for GCSE: Art- Fine, Art - Photography and Art – 3D Design.

15. Q: Can students do a Music GCSE? Are lessons available?

A: Yes, we offer GCSE Music. We also offer music lessons with a specialist tutor for an additional charge.

16. 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 productions and galas, whether it be acting, singing, dancing, directing, stage management, lighting operation and sound. Our most recent production, Beyond Broadway, was a huge success and allowed students to showcase their talent.

We pride ourselves on giving our students a high-quality education in performance and theatre whilst giving them life-long fun and happy memories of being involved in school productions. We also give our students as much insight as we can to the professional world of theatre with numerous trips to watch local and global companies, and by having professional drama practitioners and dance artists delivering exciting workshops right here at Fairfield.

17. Q: Do you teach Computer Science?

A: Yes, at KS3 it is taught in rotation with Art, and Design Technology. In Year 9 it can be chosen as a GCSE option.

18. 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, and gymnastics. In Years 7-9 students will follow a set curriculum, in Years 10-11 students can choose the activity they participate in on a termly basis.

19. Q: Does the school run food tech?

A: No, we do not offer this.

Pastoral Support

20. Q: What type of pastoral care do you provide?

A: Each year group has an Achievement Coordinator (Head of Year) and Achievement Manager (pastoral support) who oversee the year group. They are available for Students/Parents/Guardians to speak to if an issue arises. Referrals to other agencies can be made if extra support is required. Additional information is available on our website:

- [Family Support/Wellbeing Interventions - Fairfield High School](#)
- [Wellbeing - Fairfield High School](#)

SEND and Interventions

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

A: Dyslexia is a broad spectrum of need, and our response would be tailored to the needs of that student. Typical support for a student with dyslexia might include having a bespoke 'pupil passport' for teachers, that details needs and suggested approaches to support learning; attending study skills sessions to support executive function and memory; and attending Literacy support interventions.

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

A: We seek to provide an inclusive, supportive and challenging approach to teaching students with SEND. We believe that we must have the highest of expectations for ALL students, including those with SEND. Where a student has additional barriers to their education, we seek to reduce these barriers through differentiation and targeted interventions of support.

Students with SEND are able to access all the wide-ranging activities that are provided by the school, in addition to curriculum-based activities. We endeavour to ensure all activities provided by the school are fully accessible and inclusive, including residential and overseas trips.

23. Q: Can separate meetings be set up with the school's SENCO to go through questions we have re - support for children with EHCP?

All students/families will be invited to the standard suite of induction events, SEND and EHCP students will also come in with primary school staff for a SEND Tour.

Our SENDCo and Deputy SENDCo also offer 20-minute phone calls throughout each term if you want to talk to them, the booking link is available on our [website](#).

If you have any further questions, take a look on our [website](#) or contact our SENDCo sendco@fairfield.excalibur.org.uk

Extra-curricular

24. 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.

25. 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 students and parents to local sport clubs to further their progression as well as submit students for District trials. We also share other external opportunities via our Weekly Briefings, last year we advertised GB Cycling try outs for example.

26. Q: What extra-curricular activities are there?

A: We offer a wide variety of clubs, for example multi-faith prayer club, EAL club, Queer Space, chess, eco-team, gardening, gaming and feminist society to name a few.

Sports clubs include basketball, badminton, football, rugby, and dance. For further information visit our [website](#).

27. Q: What kind of trips do you organise?

It can be difficult to organise trips with the cost of transport and staffing etc., but we try to offer trips to support learning and for recreation.

28. Do you do Duke of Edinburgh Awards?

A: Yes, students will have the opportunity to complete their Bronze Award in either Year 9 or 10. There may also be the opportunity to complete the Silver Award too.

General

29. Q: Could you tell us about the Library?

A: The Library is open for students at break, lunch and after school until 4pm every day.

Our library is a vibrant space for both focused work and relaxation, where students are invited to study, read, or use our computer facilities. For those looking to recharge, we have a collection of board and card games available.

Our book collection includes over 7,000 fiction and non-fiction titles. Our library is dedicated to providing a wide and diverse collection that serves as a mirror for every student, ensuring that each member of our community can find stories that reflect their unique identity and lived experiences. By prioritising inclusive representation, we offer a welcoming space where all students can see their own backgrounds valued, fostering a deep sense of belonging and a lifelong connection to the joy of reading.

We have recently extended our investment in graphic novels and stock a large collection of dyslexia-friendly titles, striving to offer interesting and enticing books for every reader.

Our digital library, [ePlatform](#) provides students with 24/7 access to thousands of eBooks and audiobooks that can be enjoyed anywhere via a web browser or the ePlatform mobile app. To ensure an inclusive experience, the platform features customisable displays with dyslexia-friendly fonts and an Immersive Reader that offers text-to-speech and instant translation into over 150 languages. Students can also download titles for offline reading and use integrated study tools to sync notes and highlights across all their personal devices.

We run regular reading promotions, engaging readers in new genres and formats, we are currently encouraging students to read titles from our [empathy range](#).

Fairfield High School works collaboratively with local schools to hold the Bristol Teen Book Award, an annual event to promote diverse authors and fiction.

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

A: Sports – We have a flood lit astro turf, a full-size football pitch, 3x 5-a-side pitches, cricket nets, tennis courts, and a sports hall that fits 4 badminton courts.

Drama- We have purpose-built dance and drama studios with sprung floors and excellent sound equipment. The drama studio boasts theatrical lighting, installed in 2019, together with a modern and comprehensive lighting desk and 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, not just performance. We have head microphones and sound equipment to enhance the quality and professionalism of our performances and allow us to perform outside during our Summer Gala/Fiesta.

Music – The Music Department 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.

Our updated KS3 curriculum continues to be well received, offering a broad musical experience where students from all backgrounds and cultures are represented and can therefore 'see themselves' in the curriculum. Our schemes of work have strong links to Post-16 study in the Creative Industries, Global Learning and provide a strong foundation for those wishing to study GCSE Music. Our GCSE class sizes have grown steadily over the past few years, and we continue to have outstanding KS4 results.

We have 3 Mac-based recording studios and 2 fully-equipped classrooms with keyboards, PA, mics, 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) along with studio lighting and facilities linking Music with Drama and Dance for a cohesive and well-resourced Performing Arts Faculty.

30. Q: My child is eligible for Free School Meals, how does this work?

A: £2.60 will be put onto your child's account every morning and can be spent at break or lunchtime. The most cost-effective option is to purchase a meal deal at lunchtime.

31. Q: How do students pay for lunch?

A: Parents/Guardians can top up lunch accounts via ParentMail. Students can then purchase food and drink at break and lunchtime, they use their thumbprint or a PIN to authorise the transaction. Please keep an eye on their balance as lends are not allowed.

32. Q: How do we pay for trips?

A: Trips, lockers, equipment bundles and Duke of Edinburgh etc will appear on ParentMail for you to purchase.

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

A: Student will come to school wearing their PE kit if they have PE/Games lessons that day.

34. How do I report absence?

A: You can leave a message on the absence phonenumber or use ParentMail. You will need to send evidence of medical appointments to Attendance@Fairfield.excalibur.org.uk for a medical absence to be authorised.

35. How do I see my child's attendance record and Achievement/Behaviour Points?

A: You will get a login code for ClassCharts, on here you'll be able to keep track of attendance, achievement/behaviour points, detentions etc.

Leadership and Policies

36. 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 20 years at the school.

37. Q: How much interaction do you have with other Excalibur Academy Trust (EAT) secondary schools?

A: EAT encourage cross-school working in terms of professional development, training, curriculum planning and implementation. EAT has implemented an EAT INSET day so all colleagues across the Trust will receive the same training/information on that day.

38. Q: How do you deal with poor behaviour?

A: FHS has a detailed behaviour policy to ensure fairness and transparency. The ethos is a restorative approach, students and staff can report incidents, they are investigated by trained staff and based on the evidence provided a decision is made by a member of SLT. All our policies can be found on our [website](#).

39. 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 with a phone on school property, 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. Exemptions are available if the device is needed for medical purposes.

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

A: As a school we actively encourage parent/guardian participation, both in an academic and social sense. You will be invited to a Parent Guardian Evening and Progress Review Meeting each academic year, you will also be sent reports. You are welcome to attend school events, such as our winter and summer galas, and our annual school production.

There is also a [Fairfield Parents Network](#) that have an active role in supporting students and engaging with school-based events.

School Day and Social Times

41. Q: How long are break and lunches?

A: Morning break is 30 minutes (11:00-11:30am) and lunch time is 40 minutes (1:30-2:10pm).

42. 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.

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

A: The Y7 area has table tennis equipment. The KS4 area includes outdoor fitness equipment and access to the outdoor courts that can be used for basketball and netball. If students wish to kick a ball, they need to bring a football to school, they can store it in a locker during the day. There is a vast array of [clubs/activities](#) available at lunchtimes and after school.

44. Q: How much is a school lunch?

A: A meal deal is £2.60 this includes a hot main meal and dessert or the day. Other options include sandwiches, open wraps, pasta pots, and pizza slices etc. More information is available on our [website](#).