

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where can I find information about the school and Year 6-7 transition?

All our Year 6 information can be found on our website in the ‘primary zone’ section of the ‘parents’ info’ page. Link below:

<https://www.whitehavenacademy.org.uk/parents-info/primary-zone/year-6-open-evenings/>

We also update our Whitehaven Academy Facebook Pages regularly.

2. Will there be a new uniform?

Yes, there will be a new uniform to tie in with our new grey v-neck jumper, which has been released this academic year. The new uniform is currently in the consultation phase – the final design is yet to be confirmed.

3. When does the new build open?

The groundwork for the new building is well underway and will be open to students in the Spring of 2022.

4. How do you support students’ mental health and well-being in school?

There is a variety of support for students within our learning provision structure across the whole school. Every student has the support of their form tutor, who will be the students’ first contact each morning. Each year group also has designated Student Provision Officers (SPO) who help students in their transition to school from primary and between the year groups as well as being specifically trained in safeguarding procedures. There are also Upper and Lower School Directors of Learning, who support students academically and ensure that their learning is a positive experience. In addition to the pastoral support offered, we incorporate mental health and wellbeing into our Personal Development curriculum which all year groups access. We also have a member of staff who leads on mental health and wellbeing, providing training and programmes to staff and students alike, and he, along with others, are mental health first aiders.

5. What is the school’s behaviour policy?

We have high expectations of students and we have changed our behaviour system this year to focus on the positive to a higher degree and use our core 9 positive behaviours (which are displayed in every classroom) to reward students who show these and to work with students who might get things wrong. We use restorative approaches when dealing with behaviour, focusing particularly on what needs to happen to put things right. We have a large selection of rewards such as trips, praise badges to wear on jumpers, ‘zero hero’ half-termly awards and many others. These things have helped create a calm, focused learning environment where good behaviour is the norm. We believe it is important to celebrate achievements and to value qualities such as kindness, respect and cooperation. Students’ successes are celebrated weekly through assemblies, book rewards, social media and positive calls and messages home.

6. What extra-curricular activities are available?

There are a wide range of opportunities available throughout school in which all students can participate. In recent months we have developed a successful 'Challenge' series that provides a range of activities for students to explore. These challenges focus on broadening the skills and experiences of our students, ranging from key life skills to subject specific activities. Departments across school also offer lots of extra-curricular opportunities such as Debating, Bake-Off, Lego League, Crest Awards, Science Clubs and STEM activities. We also have a very successful Expressive Arts Team known as 'EAT', which draws together performance and backstage interests. Students can also benefit from a wide variety of sporting activities from football and rugby to netball and fell running amongst others.

7. How do you support Literacy and reading?

Literacy is a key focus across the whole school in every subject. We focus on key subject specific vocabulary and encourage students to improve their literacy through talk - we are following the Voice 21 programme to help students to better articulate themselves, which is then translated into their reading and writing. All students are also required to have a reading book and will do independent reading during form time and certain lessons or as a 'do now' task.

All year 7 and targeted year 8 students also complete the Accelerated Reader programme. In addition, we run targeted interventions based on need for students requiring additional support including Toe by Toe, IDL, SRA, spelling groups and comprehension groups. Books are valued highly at The Whitehaven Academy. Each half term students who win prizes get to choose a book. Two copies are bought: one for the student and one for the library. Our goal is to fill the library with books for students chosen by students.

8. How do you challenge students academically?

We live in challenging times and a competitive market both in terms of employment and university. Our students go on to achieve the highest grades. Being a school of our size means that we can focus on the needs of the individual, see where the gaps and barriers in their learning are, and challenge them. Our subject specialist curriculum leaders have developed curriculum plans that challenge and extend students academically and creatively. Our engagement with leading national agencies ranging from the Science Museum to Voice 21, as well as universities and employers means that we help to raise aspirations and show students what they can achieve. It is also about challenging students in different ways. Working as part of the West Coast Sixth Form, with a tradition of sending students on to prestigious apprenticeships and leading universities, we run challenging workshops for our able students in different areas. Ultimately it is about strong teaching and our staff are all engaged in a range of professional development programmes to ensure they can ensure students can be the best that they can be.

9. How do you support students with SEND?

Our ALC department is an integral part of our school learning provision. We work closely with primary schools so that we have a clear picture of our new students' needs before they arrive. All students with specific SEND needs will have a detailed passport created, which is shared with teachers from the outset so they can tailor their teaching strategies to make the curriculum accessible to all students in the classroom. We also offer dyslexia specific interventions such as IDL (Independent Dyslexia

Learning) and many of our students will receive targeted support from a TA in lessons. Our teaching staff are well supported by our ALC department who provide regular training in how to make lessons inclusive and keep up to date with new strategies and methods.

10. Will there be a summer school for year 6 this academic year?

We hope so, but this will very much depend on the Covid 19 situation and whether restrictions are lifted. If we are unable to, we will be doing as much as we can remotely/online to support year 6 students in their transition to The Whitehaven Academy.

11. What kind of lunches can my child expect and how are lunches paid for?

The academy use 'ParentPay', a flexible and secure web application allowing parents to make online payments for meals.

We promote a healthy, balanced diet which includes a variety of sandwiches, hot and cold baguettes, pasta and rice dishes, roast dinner, jacket potatoes, fresh fruit, jellies, yogurts, flavoured water and so on.

12. How is homework set?

The Academy uses the award-winning 'Satchel One' online platform to assign, monitor and organise homework. Students, parents and carers will each receive their 'user' details in September. You will be able to check when homework has been set, the homework details and a due date. Students may be asked to return the work in person or submit it online.

13. Will I be with my friends?

Yes! Year 6 students will complete a 'Getting to know you' questionnaire. You will be able to tell us about your hobbies, skills and abilities, worries, what you are looking forward to and which friends you would like to be in the same Form Group as.

14. How will the academy support my child to prepare for secondary school life?

During the spring and summer terms of Year 6, as well as academy staff working with your child's primary teacher to ensure we have any identified support in place for September, we also visit the students to talk about academy life, what they can expect, what they will need and to answer any questions they may have. Current Year 7 students visit with us to share their experience and expert advice.

Year 6 students identified by primary staff as possibly needing more support due to anxiety or an educational need will be offered extra visits before the end of the summer term.

All Year 6 students will be invited to our 'Induction Days' in the first week of July, when they will meet staff, their form groups, Year 8 buddies, experience taster lessons, look around the academy, have lunch together and just have a super time!

15. I am a very anxious parent, how can I help my child?

The move from primary to secondary school is a significant event in a child and parent's life. That's why we value our positive and supportive relationships with parents. Below are links to some helpful

websites with hints and tips for parents in supporting their children to have a good start to secondary school.

We will send you lots of information in the spring term about uniform, what your child will need and what to expect. We will ask you to complete our admissions and permissions forms so we have all your contact details and information about your child's health needs. We are also always available if you have any questions or would like to talk to us about any concerns regarding your child moving up.

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/6-of-the-best-ways-to-get-off-to-a-great-start-at-secondary-school>

<https://www.hachetteschools.co.uk/landing-page/hachette-schools/be-awesome-go-big-transition-resources-for-teachers-2/>