

Transition to Year 7

A brief guide for parents to ensure a successful start at Fitzharrys



Welcome to our School

We are delighted that you and your child are now part of our school community, and we want you to feel happy and confident about your child's future at Fitzharrys School. We are proud of our students' success and development, and know that a strong transition from primary to secondary school is key for your child. Our ethos is **Aspiration, Opportunity, Integrity** and you will see these values embedded through all aspects of your child's education here at Fitzharrys, from our curriculum through to our reward systems. A blend of wider opportunities alongside our lesson-based curriculum will help your child develop the skills, character, resilience, and knowledge they need to thrive and succeed in their future endeavours. We hope this brief guide will address some frequently asked questions and help you to plan for a straightforward and successful start with us in September.

Mr W Speke

Headteacher

Hello from the Year 7 Team

If your child needs any help with anything at all, they can ask another student, their tutor, a teacher – in fact, anyone! Fitzharrys is a very supportive community; we want everyone to feel happy and settled at our school, and we will always do our best to help. As the Year 7 team, we are here to make sure that our students' academic and pastoral needs are met. We organise a variety of groups which allow our new Year 7 students to make friends and check how they are settling into Fitzharrys. We also arrange extra-curricular activities such as teambuilding, creative competitions, and STEM visits – as well as fun activities including a silent disco, and the three-day FitzActive Camp in the summer – to further build those relationships. If you or your child has any concerns about homework, lessons, friendships, health issues or anything else, please come and speak to us. We will be pleased to do all we can to help support your smooth transition into secondary school.

Mr J Poolman

Head of Year 7 and Transition

Mr T Clarke

Student Wellbeing Manager for Year 7

Key Information for New Starters

Travelling to School

We encourage safe and healthy ways of travelling to and from school, reminding students of the need to take care when walking or cycling to and from Fitzharrys, and to follow the Highway Code. Northcourt Road is a popular thoroughfare at the time when students start and finish school. Members of staff are on duty at the main gate to oversee students at the beginning and the end of the school day.

Cyclists are strongly advised to wear helmets, wear bright, reflective clothing, and use bicycle lights when riding in low light. There is a large cycle shed on site for bicycle parking. Anyone using the cycle shed must ensure their bikes are securely locked. Whilst Fitzharrys takes all reasonable precautions for on-site safety, including CCTV, the school accepts no liability for bicycles or their accessories.

School bus transport is managed by Oxfordshire County Council. For information on school transport policy, eligibility for free transport, current routes and timetables, or how to apply for a concessionary place, please consult the Oxfordshire County Council website:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/schools/travelling-school>

There is **on-site car parking** available for staff and visitors to Fitzharrys School. For safety reasons, with the exception of organised transport taxis, the school drive is closed to all vehicles at the beginning and the end of the school day to let all our students enter and exit the site safely; parents and carers wishing to drop off or collect children by car should please do so beyond the school gate. We politely remind all visitors that the bus stops outside school are designated as no-parking spaces and should be left clear at all times. We also ask that you park with due consideration to our neighbours, ensuring private driveways are not used or blocked, and that there is no parking on the green opposite the school. We have introduced a *Park and Stride* scheme to help ease congestion at the beginning and end of the school day; more details can be found in a leaflet in your Transition Pack, and also on the school website:

<https://fitzharrys.oxon.sch.uk/school-life/travelling-to-school/>

Thank you for your co-operation.

School Day Timings

The school day timings are set out below. Students should **arrive at school in time for the first bell at 8.37am**. Students in years 7-9 will line up in the playground before being taken to AM registration.

08:40 - 08:50		AM Registration
08:50 - 09:50		Period 1 Lesson
09:50 - 10:50		Period 2 Lesson
10:50 - 11:10		Breaktime
11:10 - 12:10		Period 3 Lesson
12:10 - 13:10		Period 4 Lesson
13:10 - 13:50		Lunchtime
13:50 - 14:15		PM Registration / Assembly / PSHE
14:15 - 15:15		Period 5 Lesson

On their first day with us, students will receive their two-week class timetable for the year ahead. Parents/carers can view their child's timetable online once they receive an **Epraise** log-in. Further details on this can be found in the Communication section below.

Lateness

Punctuality is an important life skill that we support our students to develop, as part of our focus on integrity. Students are expected to be on site and lining up with their class by 8:37am, ready for the first bell. There is a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on the gate to greet students in the morning. If students are running late, we encourage parents to contact us, otherwise students may receive a consequence for lateness.

Late students that arrive after AM registration has ended (at 8:50am) must go straight to the Student Services office to register, give the reason for their lateness, and collect a late card to take to their first class to give their teacher, which will confirm they have been correctly signed in. If students are frequently arriving late to school, the pastoral team will follow this up.

We encourage parents to familiarise themselves with our Attendance Guide, available on our website:

<https://www.fitzharrys.oxon.sch.uk/school-life/expectations/>

Lunchtimes

Students can either bring a packed lunch or buy food from our canteen, which is open 10:50 – 11:10 for break time and 13:10 – 13:45 for lunch. There is always a vegetarian option available daily, but students with specific dietary requirements may prefer to bring in their own packed lunch or items to supplement those available at school. The canteen menu is published on our website:

<https://www.fitzharrys.oxon.sch.uk/school-life/lunchtime/>

Our canteen operates a **cashless system**. Parents can view the balance of their child's canteen account online and are able to top it up remotely, via their ParentMail login. This online system also allows parents to have oversight of what items are being purchased. At present, students pay for canteen items using a payment card, but we are currently exploring other options and will update you on the chosen cashless system for September as soon as possible. **Please supply your child with packed lunches for the early days of September** as setting up the new canteen accounts takes a little time.

Free School Meals may be available to children with a parent/carer who receives certain benefits. Find out if your child may be eligible for Free School Meals by visiting the government website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

Application forms are available from student services. Please contact our admin team for more details.

Communication

For communicating general updates on your child's daily learning and school activities, Fitzharrys uses a group of online systems to provide parents with live information about their children at school.

Epraise, My Child at School (MCAS), and ParentMail

Fitzharrys School uses several software applications for different purposes. We know that some parents can initially find this confusing; with this in mind, we are working to streamline systems where possible.

We will provide parent/carer logins and user guides for all our online systems in due course – usually in the early weeks of September – and recommend checking in with these services daily to ensure you are fully informed about your child's progress.

The main school online systems parents will use are:

- **Epraise** – This application is the one parents will use most often, delivering live information on your child's attendance, timetable, housepoints, achievements, any behaviour sanctions, homework tasks, and more. Parents have an overview of precisely what homework has been set and when it is due in, which subjects have awarded housepoints, and details of any interventions. For more information, visit: <https://www.fitzharrys.oxon.sch.uk/school-life/expectations/>
- **My Child at School (MCAS)** – This application also has some of the aforementioned information and features, but parents will specifically need to access MCAS for digital copies of their child's school reports, and exam timetables. You can also update your contact details on this app.
- **ParentMail** – This application is solely used for payments, including topping up lunch cards for the canteen, locker hire, paying for trips, buying ties, school show tickets, revision guides etc.

Please note we do not use ParentMail to send **school emails**; these are always sent directly from Fitzharrys School to the parent/carer email accounts listed on your child's enrolment form.

Urgent matters...

Regarding an urgent issue such as a student becoming ill during the school day, parents will be contacted by the school as soon as possible – by phone, and by email where necessary.

Reporting Absence

Report absence as soon as possible and before 10am by calling the school's **Student Absence Line** with a brief outline of the reason for absence.

Student Absence Line: (01235) 538243

Illness

Fitzharrys School considers its duty of care to students of utmost importance. Whilst attendance is always very strongly encouraged to support your child's progress, children should not attend school if they are clearly too unwell, have a temperature, or have experienced vomiting or diarrhoea in the last 48 hours.

Children attending school are expected to take part in all activities. If your child has an injury which affects their participation in PE or other activities, please send them in with a note to show their teachers.

If a child is taken ill at school, they should alert a member of staff, who will alert a First Aider. If they remain unwell, the pastoral team may give permission for them to go home once parents have been contacted. In the case of accidental injury, parents and carers will also be notified as soon as possible.

To support the school's robust safeguarding system, students should not circumvent communication procedures by contacting parents directly or trying to leave the school premises without consent.

The NHS has a useful guide entitled: *Is My Child Too Ill For School?* – accessible via the link below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Please contact the main school office if you're unsure about return dates following infectious illness.

Other Absences

Please keep us informed of anything that requires your child to miss school or may affect their behaviour, such as an urgent medical appointment, accident, or family bereavement, so we can ensure they receive all the additional support they may need. The details can remain confidential but we will alert staff so they are made aware of any special considerations or can make alternative arrangements for schoolwork.

Find full information on our policies around absence and illness on our website:

<https://www.fitzharrys.oxon.sch.uk/parents/absence-and-illness/>

Further Information

Please note that the following key information has been provided separately in your Transition Pack:

- **Uniform and Equipment List**, including information on **locker hire** and our **mobile phone policy**
- **Term Dates**

There is also a wealth of information on our school website, including:

- A central **Transition from Year 6** webpage that contains the key information needed by new starters, including downloadable PDFs of all the Transition Pack forms:
<https://www.fitzharrys.oxon.sch.uk/joining-us/transition-from-year-6/>
- A full library of **Policies**:
<https://www.fitzharrys.oxon.sch.uk/our-school/policies/>

Frequently Asked Questions

How will my child be supported at school?

Your child will be in a **form group**, which is like a school family group who will support each other from Year 7 through to Year 11.

Each form group has a **Tutor**, a teacher who sees your child every day at AM and PM registration, and takes a special interest in your child's welfare, happiness, and progress.

Each year group has a dedicated **Student Wellbeing Manager (SWM)** who will help deal with any worries or issues your child may have during the school day. The SWM for Year 7 is Mr Clarke.

The **Head of Year (HoY)** is responsible for guiding your child to happiness and success at Fitzharrys by looking after their welfare, attitude, and behaviour. Mr Poolman is the Head of Year 7 & Transition and, along with Mr Clarke, works closely with the Year 7 Tutors to provide the best support possible for all the students under their care.

Students with SEND needs will receive support from our **SEND team** led by our **SENCo**, Ms Whitmore.

In the case of any general issues, **your first point of contact is your child's Tutor**. You can send them an email or telephone the school. More serious issues should be directed to the Head of Year.

Is there additional support available to help my child with the move up to secondary school?

We understand that the move to secondary school can be a worrying time. To further support our new students as they make this transition, we work closely with the primary schools to identify their needs, and ensure all necessary support is put in place. There will be additional transition days planned for those who need some extra time to settle in at Fitzharrys; these will be held before the main Induction Day in June, which is attended by the whole year group. Further details will follow closer to the time.

How can I best support my child during the first few weeks?

Students will spend time during their Induction Day in the summer, and after they start in September, getting to know the school environment, routine, and rules. To help your child prepare for this, you could:

- Help them to establish a regular routine. The energy and enthusiasm involved in a switch to a new school can be tiring as well as exciting.
- Ensure they get a good night's sleep and a good breakfast to start the day.
- Supply your child with a water bottle, a snack for break time, and a packed lunch. Lunchtime at Fitzharrys is at 1:10pm, so they may need to refuel at break time.
- Encourage your child to pack their school bag the night before with all the right books and equipment (including any homework).
- Suggest that they colour-code their timetable if that makes it easier for them to understand. The school operates a two-week timetable (weeks A and B) which means students need to be even more organised.
- Support the development of good routines around the successful completion of homework by:
 - checking their Epraise profile regularly so that you are aware of tasks and deadlines;
 - encouraging your child to get into a routine of doing homework on the night it is set and not at the last minute;
 - providing a quiet and comfortable place to do the homework;
 - checking any completed homework to ensure it reflects the best that they can do;
 - reminding them that mobile phones have an off switch, and that social networks and school homework don't necessarily mix!
 - encouraging your child to talk to their tutor or teacher if they have any concerns.

Is there any support at school for students with homework and independent study?

Fitzharrys School runs a Homework Club in West Block after school every day from 3:15-4:15pm, to support students from all year groups. Homework Club provides students with a quiet place to study, access to resources and IT, and staff support.

In addition, one of our computer rooms is available for students to use between 8-8:30am every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and the school library is usually open to all students during break and lunchtime every day. The library computers are also available to use for school and homework.

Find full details on our homework policy here: <https://www.fitzharrys.oxon.sch.uk/learning/homework/>

How will my child be encouraged to mix with other students?

As well as ensuring there will be lots of early opportunities to get to know fellow Year 7 students and establish new friendships, Fitzharrys School operates a **Buddy system**. Over the first few days and weeks in September, Year 8 Buddies will help our new Year 7 students to find their way to lessons and offer friendly advice. Year 8 Buddies will also be on hand to help at break and lunchtime.

We can provide bus Buddies for students who are unsure about using school buses for the first time. If this is something you would like to explore, please contact Mr Poolman (Head of Year 7 & Transition).

What extra-curricular opportunities can my child get involved in at Fitzharrys?

The move from primary school to secondary offers a different type of learning experience, with a varied timetable, and a wide range of different teachers, subjects, and learning spaces. Alongside the core curriculum, your child will have opportunities to be involved in a variety of Wider Learning days, exploring specific ideas, themes, and events. There is also a wide variety of exciting and inspiring extra-curricular clubs and activities to choose from throughout the year, which are publicised on the school website:

<https://www.fitzharrys.oxon.sch.uk/students/clubs-and-activities/>

How can parents get more involved with the school community?

Fitzharrys School is proud to have a fantastic and flourishing Parent Teacher Association (PTA) called the **Fitzharrys School Association (FSA)**. They are a very friendly and welcoming team of parents and school staff who meet once a term to plan events and activities to raise money for the school. They hold a *Quiz Night* in October which is always popular and huge fun; it is very well attended by both staff and parents. The next Quiz Night is scheduled for Friday 16th October – you are warmly encouraged to attend!

The FSA Welcome Newsletter in your Transition Pack has more information about the Association.

You can also view further details on the FSA webpage, including the dates of upcoming FSA meetings:

<https://www.fitzharrys.oxon.sch.uk/parents/fsa/>

How can my child make the most of all Fitzharrys School has to offer?

We are committed to working in partnership with parents to get the best from and for your child.

Please encourage your child to:

- come in each day with a positive approach, willing and keen to take part in lessons;
- take responsibility for their behaviour in class and around the school;
- reflect on the things they do well and set themselves goals to improve in other areas;
- be ready to challenge themselves and try new things.

In short, be ready to embrace the Fitzharrys School ethos: **Aspiration, Opportunity, Integrity**.



Northcourt Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 1NP

Main office telephone: **(01235) 520698** | Student absence line: **(01235) 538243**

Main office email: **office.4127@fitzharrys.school** | Website: **www.fitzharrys.oxon.sch.uk**

Key Contacts

Mr J Poolman | *Head of Year 7 & Transition*

Email: jpoolman@fitzharrys.school

Mr T Clarke | *Year 7 Student Wellbeing Manager*

Email: tclarke@fitzharrys.school

SEND Team

Email: send@fitzharrys.school



Fitzharrys School is proud to belong to the Abingdon Learning Trust.

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