



ST ALBANS
SCHOOL

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Absence

We ask parents to make every effort to keep pupils' absences to a minimum. In cases of illness please send an email direct to reception (reception@st-albans.herts.sch.uk), copying in your son/daughter's Tutor, or alternatively ring the Reception Office (01727 855521) on the morning of the first day and subsequent days of absence, preferably before 8.30am. On returning to School your son/daughter must produce a note to his/her Tutor, confirming his/her dates of absence and the reason for it. This can be sent by email.

In cases where Leave of Absence (LOA) is desired for some good or urgent cause, permission must be sought well in advance by letter or email (hm@st-albans-school.org.uk) to the Headmaster (email is preferable). Please do not seek such permission except on very special occasions, and try to arrange any non-urgent medical or dental appointments out of School hours. You are also urged not to ask for an extension of School holidays in either direction; the dates of these are advertised well in advance and strict adherence to them is required.

LoA requests should be submitted as far in advance as possible and our agreement should be sought before any commitments are made – for example, the date of a family wedding is likely to be known several months beforehand, so we would expect a LoA request to be received well in advance.

Please remember that all pupils are expected to be available to fulfil School commitments as required on Saturdays during term time and to give these priority over other commitments: a LoA request for a Saturday should be made at the earliest opportunity and, except in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances, by the Friday of the preceding week, i.e. 8 days in advance, at the very latest.

If your son/daughter is staying with friends or relations owing to parents being away during term time, it is very important that the School is informed and a contact name and telephone number is given.

E-mail Communications with School

If you need to get in touch with the School about your child, their Tutor should be your first point of contact. It is the School's policy that emails will, in usual term-time circumstances, be responded to within 24 hours of receipt. In some situations the initial response will be to acknowledge receipt of the communication with a more detailed reply to follow once necessary conferring has taken place.

Parents are asked to remember that the majority of the school day for teaching staff is taken up by teaching and pastoral duties and, except in emergencies, communication with parents is a lower priority than teaching and support of pupils. We do not expect colleagues to read or respond to emails outside of normal working hours, although some colleagues may choose to do so. We ask parents to be considerate in their expectations so that teachers are not distracted from their core tasks during timetabled lessons.

Enquiries made during the weekend or school holidays may take longer as staff will not necessarily be checking their emails on a daily basis. If you need to contact the School about an urgent matter where an immediate response is needed, then it would be best to telephone Reception (01727 855521).



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Exemption from Abbey Attendance

All pupils are required to attend an assembly on Monday and Friday mornings. An alternative assembly is held at these times for pupils whose faith background would make their attendance in Abbey on a twice-weekly basis uncomfortable. It normally takes the form of a talk and does not include an act of worship. It is known as 'BLR Assembly' after the BLR (Big Lecture Room) in which it is held.

If you wish your son/daughter to attend BLR Assemblies you should write a letter to the Headmaster requesting permission to do so and stating the reason for your request. This letter should reach us before the end of the first half term at the School. Please also state whether or not you wish him/her to attend the BLR Assembly held at the time of the Carol Service. Attendance at one or other is compulsory.

There are two annual services in the Abbey at which it is expected that all pupils will be present, irrespective of whether they normally attend the BLR Assemblies, as we consider it important that these occasions bring together, without exception, the whole School community in a common purpose. These are the Remembrance Service in November and **the Commemoration of Benefactors on Founders' Day, which celebrates the School and those who have contributed to its long history.**

Timetable

Pupils are required to be at School for registration at 8.35am. School finishes at 4.00pm but on Games afternoons, pupils may be collected from the Woollam playing fields at the end of Games if the Games staff are notified in writing. Those who are not collected are returned to School in time for the buses or for you to collect them. Please note that the Library is supervised each evening until 6.00pm at which point the late bus service operates.

Off Games

A request in writing, or by email, that a pupil be excused games on medical grounds must be given to the Form Tutor, as early as possible and at the latest, at morning registration on the day concerned. If a student is off games then arrangements are made for them in School, they may not go home. Pupils are expected to bring sports kit with them to off games and will undertake managed exercise within their injury limitations, if appropriate.



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Homework

Some homework may be done at School in the Form room during breaks. Usually, there will be a minimum of two days (including weekend days) between work being set and the deadline for its completion. The amount set should occupy the average pupils as follows:

First Form 20 minutes per subject per school night (1 hour in total)

Third Form 30 minutes per subject per school night (1 ½ hours in total)

Sixth Form The nature of A Level study requires an ability and willingness to work independently and much of the work students will be required to undertake will be done during study periods and in their own time after school. Typically, Sixth Form students are expected to do around three hours per subject, per week, beyond the normal School day. In view of the complexity of option combinations and the nature of the work set, there will no longer be a weekly homework timetable and students must take careful note of work set and plan ahead to ensure that they meet their deadlines.

Please note that ALL pupils at all levels of the School are always required to acknowledge sources they have used in their work. Failure to do this will be regarded as plagiarism and punished appropriately.

Homework Planning

All pupils are issued with a School Diary, to help them organise their homework and other weekly commitments. Homework for all year groups is set electronically on Firefly. A detailed communication is sent out at the start of the school year.

First to Fifth Forms:

The assistance of parents is sought in these years, as pupils make the transition from junior to middle school and head towards the more independent learning we foster in preparation for GCSE and beyond. If parents are concerned about any aspect of homework they should, in the first instance, contact their son's tutor in the normal way.

School Policies

St Albans School welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, and takes seriously complaints and concerns they may raise. A Complaints Procedure for parents is available on request. The School Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy is available on the school website under 'Policies'. The other policies listed in this area of the school website, including the Anti-Bullying Strategy, are available on request. These documents are reviewed and updated regularly. St Albans School gives the utmost priority to investigating allegations of bullying and has a zero tolerance approach. If a parent has concerns then it is best to raise such concerns with their child's tutor or Head of Year as quickly as possible.



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School Fees and Withdrawal

Fees are payable on the first day of each term and no refund can be made in cases of illness or absence. However, a fees refund scheme is available to cover this situation; please see the separate letter from the Bursar. A reduction of 5% is made for entrants who already have a brother or sister in the School. Tuition fees are subject to annual review, but in exceptional circumstances more frequent consideration may be necessary.

The Headmaster may require a pupil to leave if, in the opinion of the Headmaster, his or her progress no longer justifies attendance at the School or his or her influence is damaging to the School's standards or reputation.

A term's notice of withdrawal must reach the Headmaster in writing on or before the first day of term of the term after which the pupil will be leaving. In reasonable cases of uncertainty the Headmaster will accept provisional notice. In default of such notice, parents are liable for the payment of a term's fees in lieu. The full terms and conditions document, which forms the contract between parents and the School, can be found on the School's website.

Insurance

While the School takes as much care as it can of a pupil's personal possessions, it is impossible for it to accept final responsibility for them. Cloakrooms and Form Rooms have to be left unlocked and insurance companies will not insure goods in these circumstances. Parents are therefore urged to include any items of value on their own insurance policies, and so far as possible to avoid the bringing of such items to School by their child. All possessions should be, and all items of clothing, must be named.

Damage to School Property

The accepted principle in the School is that pupils pay for any damage which goes beyond the limits of fair wear and tear. Where this cannot be attributed to individuals, the group is responsible.

Additional Expenditure

The cost of all normal educational equipment, including text books, lab coats and exercise books, is included in the School fee. However, there will additional expenses throughout the year that are either mandatory or optional. School lunches are compulsory for all pupils in First to Fourth Form and they are currently charged at £4.10 per day. This is paid on a termly basis and will be added to the fee invoice. There will also be a number of school trips, both residential and day trips, that will be chargeable however you will be informed of this in advance. In the case of lost/unreturned items including lockers keys and library books, a charge will also be made to your bill to cover the replacement of the item.



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Examinations

EXTRA TIME AND OTHER ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

Access Arrangements allow pupils with medical, physical or specific learning difficulties to access public examinations. They enable them to show what they can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The School makes applications for Access Arrangements to the exam authorities. No application is made without the prior consent of a pupil and the receipt of a signed data protection declaration.

If your son or daughter has a long-term medical condition (for example: hearing or visual impairment, colour blindness, long-term use of medication) or physical disability which would represent a substantial disadvantage if reasonable adjustments were not made, you should send the School **current medical evidence (for example, a doctor's letter)** as soon as possible. The letter must indicate the nature of the condition or disability, state that it is ongoing (more than 12 months) and must give details of difficulties which may be experienced when a candidate is sitting examinations. In accordance with the regulations, applications can only be made if, in addition, the School is able to collect substantial evidence of need. Following receipt of this letter we will make every effort to collect evidence and to make the strongest possible case to the examination authorities when the time comes. Early notification of any condition will assist us in this process.

If your son or daughter has been diagnosed with a specific learning difficulty, please contact the Learning Support Department (email: retaylor@st-albans.herts.sch.uk) so that they can consider appropriate arrangements. The **regulations governing Access Arrangements for a specific learning difficulty require a Specialist Assessor's Report** and evidence of a substantial history of need. The Department will advise whether or not further assessments are required before an application for Access Arrangements can be made and will oversee the collection of evidence.

In accordance with the regulations, irrespective of documented medical, physical or learning difficulties, in all cases the Head of Centre must be satisfied that there is an extensive history of need.