

Year 7 Parents' Information Evening

19th September 2023

Questions & Answers from the meeting



Curriculum, teaching & learning

Are the topics taught in the school are enough or do the children need to dig deeper at home?

The curriculum coverage in school should be suitably stretching for most able children. Homework and classwork should be sufficient to enable students to make good progress in their knowledge and understanding. However, we would always encourage students to research, read around or dig a bit deeper into a subject if it particularly interests them – and to tell their teachers about what they have found out.

Is it possible to have a recommended reading book list for year?

Our librarian will be able to make recommendations to the students.

Do we need to purchase any study books or will they be provided by the school?

The school will provide all the study materials that students need. We do not necessarily use specific textbooks for each subject, as these do not always provide the right coverage for our students. Sometimes teachers may make recommendations for websites which students might find helpful for further information about a subject or topic. In Year 8 and above we make a lot of resources online available through the iPads.

Can the school support students if they feel that they might need additional help in understanding some topics? Are there small study groups they can join? Rr additional one-on-one 'extra' lessons with teachers?

The focus for now is for Year 7 students to settle into the school, make friends and develop good routines. We have students coming from 60 different primary school backgrounds so there will be lots of different experiences in different subjects. We recognise this in the curriculum and use Year 7 to get everyone up to the same level.

Where students simply feel there are some things from a lesson they don't understand, they should try and ask the teacher in the lessons, or the next time they see them. When there are assessments, teachers will look for misunderstandings and will explain to students what they need to do to improve. Where there are concerns that students may not be meeting our expectations, appropriate support will be provided.

What if a child couldn't understand their homework? When and how will they be able to ask the particular teacher for help because they don't get time in between the lessons?

There is usually time in lessons to speak to the teachers as they circulate the room. Outside lessons, students can speak to teachers at break or lunchtime if the questions are urgent. Teachers generally are based in department workrooms and students can always ask their form tutor where these are.

All students, including Year 7, have Langley Grammar School email addresses. They can use email at home to contact their teachers and ask for some help, or ask when they could come and see the teacher. However, they need to word their email carefully and politely, and not expect an instant response – email is not the same as texting!

CATs, reporting progress

Will we receive CAT scores?

CATS scores will be shared with you when we have received them.

How will the CAT scores be assessed?

The CAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) assessment provides scores in different areas, including thinking with words, numbers, shapes and space. These can help us - and you as parents - understand a little more about the underlying abilities of individual children. They also help us to understand any particular strengths or relative weakness of the classes and the year group as a whole – although we tend to find that there is a general consistency from year to year. The data can also be used to give staff an idea about student's potential in particular subject areas.

More information will be given about the CATs and what the scores mean at the next meeting in October.

How do we know how our child is progressing? Are there weekly or monthly tests? How do we as parents know the feedback that students get?

We have three formal reporting points each year, at which you get information about whether your child is approaching, meeting or exceeding our expectations. Teachers will be gathering information from tests, assessments and routine class and homework to inform those judgements. We also place a lot of emphasis on the Attitude to Learning grades, which are also given three times each year. These tell you a lot about your child's approach to their learning, which will be a very good indicator of the progress they are making.

We do not normally tell parents about tests in subjects, as each subject will have its own approach to assessment. However, talk to your child so that you know when they have a test or assessment coming up, and help them to prepare. After the test, ask how they got on, and ask them about the feedback they get. Sometimes this will be individual, sometimes it will be feedback given to the whole class about what has been done well, and what could be done better.

Clubs and activities

How do students join clubs during lunch time and after school? Do they need to turn up on the day of club or is there a process to join?

Details about extracurricular clubs will be emailed to students directly using their school email address. They can join a club by just turning up at the right time and place - very few require signing up in advance.

Are there charges for after school clubs?

After school clubs are free of charge.

I've heard that the lunch time choir club is not open to year 7 because an iPad is used for the words of the songs being sung?

Of course Year 7 are welcome at Choir- the music department will love to have them. Students who do not have iPads are simply provided with printed sheets.

When are music lessons (piano, etc) are likely to start?

They are usually underway two to three full weeks into the term. There is a period of around two weeks to enable parents to sign up for lessons and then a timetable is created.

Are pupils permitted to use the library after school? What time is the school library open please?

Students can use the library before and after school. The library is normally open 8.00am until 4.15pm

Technology, apps, logins, general communication

Have ClassCharts log-in details and codes been sent out yet?

Set-up instructions for ClassCharts will be sent to you in the next few days. If you do not receive the email, please contact us to check your email contact details are correct, and we can re-send.

Who do we contact if we have problems accessing apps?

If you have difficulty in accessing any of the apps, such as Classcharts or the SIMS Parent App, please contact the school's IT technical team. To do this, email the school on school@lgs.slough.sch.uk and mark the email for the attention of the IT technician.

Do we get direct contact details for teachers?

We do not publish staff email addresses. You can email the school on school@lgs.slough.sch.uk and mark the email for the attention of the member of staff you are wanting to contact. The school email address is continuously monitored by the Headteacher's PA, Mrs Cheyne, who will forward the messages on to the right person.

Staff will reply to you using their own school email address, and you may often then develop an email exchange with them. However, we find it helpful for the main school email to be the 'gatekeeper' for initial queries so the questions get directed to the right person.

Who do I contact should I wish to speak to someone regarding pastoral care?

Please contact Mrs Close, Phase Leader, through her email helenclose@lgs.slough.sch.uk in the first instance.

When the students need iPads, do they have to be a specific model? What is the minimum spec?

You will be given all the information you need at the iPad information evening later in the year. It is not necessary to have a particularly high-specification device.

Food, uniform, general routines

Where we can find the school lunch menu with a price list? Where can we find out about ingredients in the lunch menu?

There is a link to the catering section on the school website – look under the **Parents** menu.

Where can students eat if they bring packed lunches? Can they use the Dining Room? What happens if the weather is cold or it is raining? Is there anywhere else the children can go to eat for shelter?

Our Dining Room holds about 200 students. Students who have packed lunches can use the Dining Room, or can eat at the various outdoor tables or benches round the site. If the weather is wet, we allow all students to use their form room at lunchtimes as a base. On these 'wet lunchtimes' students who bring packed lunches can eat them in their form room if they take care not to make a mess; students who buy hot food or drinks from the Dining Room must stay there to eat. If there is no available seating in the Dining Room then a tutor room will be opened by the lunchtime supervisors for students with packed lunches.

Do students have access to their lockers all day? If they have PE, can they leave their kit in the lockers and access it when required?

We provide lockers for Year 7 in their form rooms; these are accessible during registration, break, lunch and at the end of the day. If students have PE during period 2, for example, they will need to take their PE kit to period 1 and then to their PE lesson, but can return it to their locker at break.

Are the lockers limited in availability? Can a student have more than one locker?

The lockers in Year 7 form rooms should be big enough, and there should be enough for every student to have one. If any lockers are damaged, or the catches are broken, students should speak to their form tutor who will be able to ask the site team to repair it.

Is there a process for renting lockers, please?

We only provide lockers in form rooms for Year 7 students. Older students can rent one of the outdoor lockers which are provided by an independent contractor.

For PE and games, is it OK for girls not to have a skort because they have shorts and the black LGS jogging bottoms?

Students will need to have do need a skort too. This is for hygiene so they can have different kit for different activities, and also to allow them to have a uniform that reflects the kit they would have to wear if they were playing for teams outside school.

Is there a Lost and Found area that students can enquire about their lost items?

Lost property will be taken to student support if it is named, and staff try and return it to the owner. Items which are unnamed are placed in lost property boxes in the Sports Centre and next to the 1996 teaching block - students can look in these. At the end of every term we put all unnamed and unclaimed items out on display for students to look through and take anything which belongs to them. To make things easier for us, please make sure that all items which could possible get lost in school are named.

Can the school review its policy on no photos or videos being taken by parents at drama or music productions?

We have no plans to change our current stance. Unfortunately we have no control over where such images may end up. There are significant issues to consider, including respecting the wishes of children and their families not to be photographed or filmed, and all the potential problems associated with posting images on social media without the permission of everyone concerned.

Schools are not public places, and parents have no legal right to photograph or film as they please. School staff may take photographs or videos, and such images can be used in ways which are in accordance with the permissions given by parents at the start of Year 7. However, those permissions only apply to the use of images by the school, and not by other parents.

And finally....

What do I do if I have a concern?

We welcome suggestions and comments from parents which may help us improve the educational experience for all our students, and we take seriously any concerns or complaints which may arise. We try our best but accept that we will not always get everything right - mistakes can be made and misunderstandings can occur. We aim to listen and to ensure that issues are resolved as quickly as possible.

If you have a concern that you want to talk to us about, the best thing to do is to raise it informally and directly with us in the first instance, by emailing school@lgs.slough.sch.uk with details of your concern and the person you would like to speak to. However, please note that we will not tolerate communication from parents, either in writing or verbally, which is unreasonable, rude, confrontational or aggressive.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to support your child to excel both academically and personally at Langley Grammar School.