

## Senior School FAQ - Information for Parents

The following information may be helpful to you, especially if your child is just starting in the senior school.

The senior school is located in two buildings. Years 7 and 8 (“Lower Seniors”) are based in Emmanuel Church on Forge Road, and Years 9-13 (“Upper Seniors”) are based in Ebenezer Church on Wyndham Street. The senior teacher in both parts of the senior school is Mr. Bilton.

### 1. What are the timings of the senior school day?

The senior school day begins at 8.30am and ends at 3pm for Years 7-8 and 3.10pm for Years 9-13. Break time is from 10.30-11am and lunchtime is from 12.30pm-1.15pm for Years 7-8 and 12.30-1.30pm for Years 9-13.

Students should arrive at their school buildings between 8.15am and 8.30am each day. Year 7 and 8 will therefore start the day at Emmanuel Church on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, but please note that on Monday and Friday mornings they start the day in the Ebenezer Church building.

### 2. What should I do if my child is late?

Please notify the school office as soon as possible by email. Registration ends at 9am, and so any student arriving after this point should use the sign in book.

### 3. What do I do if my child is absent?

For absence due to medical reasons (illness or a medical appointment), parents should inform us via the school office ([info@wyclifchristianschool.org](mailto:info@wyclifchristianschool.org)) and we will record it as a medical absence.

For all other absences, parents should request the absence via the school office, explaining the exceptional circumstances, and the request will then be passed on to senior staff. Whenever possible, we ask that this be done before the date of the absence, and that parents wait for a reply before making arrangements. The school will contact parents to ask for either a medical reason or a request for absence if we have not received one. If we have not received a reply within two days of the absence we will automatically record it as an unauthorised absence.

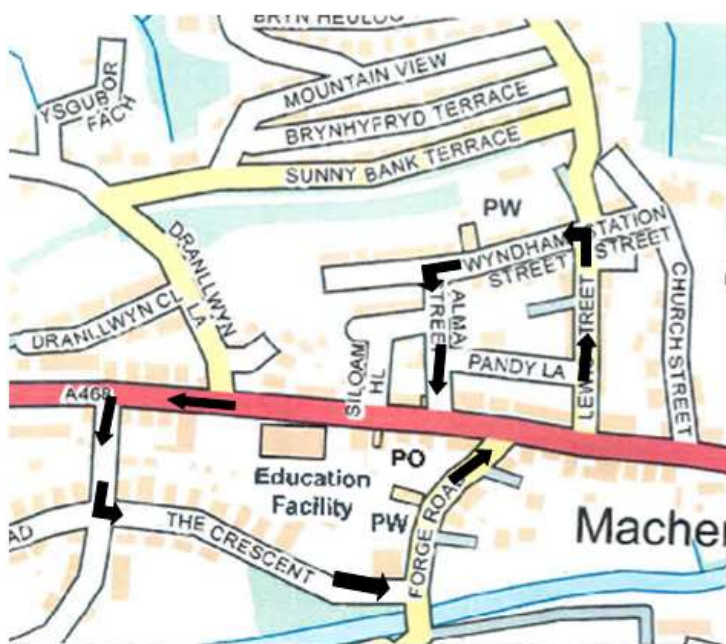
If a student is absent for no more than one full school day, they are expected to catch up with any work set. If a child is absent for more than one full school day, students should speak to individual subject teachers on their return to school and ask what they may be required to do.

### 4. What are the arrangements for dismissal?

**Students in Lower Seniors** (Year 7 and 8) are dismissed at **3pm** from the British Legion car park along with pupils from Year 4-6.

If any Year 7 and 8 students live locally and parents would like their children to walk directly home please contact the school office via email to give written permission. For parents who pick up from the village car park, please note that to ease congestion we are now asking parents to follow an unofficial “one way” system. This means that parents should come down Ffwrrwm Road, park in the car park, and then exit via Forge Road. **Students in Upper Seniors** (Year 9-13) are dismissed from the Ebenezer school building at **3.10pm**.

For parents picking up and dropping off directly from Wyndham Street, we ask that you follow the unofficial “one way” system of driving **up** Lewis Street and **down** Alma Street. **Please make sure you pull in to the non-residential side of the street and stop your car before dropping children off or**



collecting them at the end of the day. We ask students who are being collected from school to wait for their parents inside the railings until their lift has arrived.

**Students in upper seniors are not supervised once they have been dismissed from the site**, and so for students who walk home or who are collected from the car park in middle school, we always emphasise the need to walk carefully and use the pedestrian crossing on the main road.

When sports take place outdoors on Friday afternoons (usually April-September), all students will be dismissed from Machen Recreation Field at 3pm.

#### **5. What do students need to bring for lunch? Can students use the kitchen?**

All pupils require a packed lunch each day, and a small snack for morning break. Pupils may bring a water bottle (especially on days we have sports) and/or fruit juice, but please can we ask that students do not bring in fizzy drinks or energy drinks etc. Please note that students are not permitted to use the kitchen, and so students should not bring food that needs to be refrigerated, cooked or re-heated.

#### **6. Where do students keep their bags, coats etc?**

All students are given a pigeon hole in which they may store books, ring binders etc. These are emptied at the end of each school year. In Years 7-8 students keep their bags and coats with them, but in Years 9-13 students also have access to coat hooks and space to put their bags. However, we encourage students to limit themselves to one school bag if possible.

#### **7. Do I need to buy any textbooks?**

Unless otherwise stated, all textbooks for Years 7-13 are the property of school, and should be returned in good condition once the course is completed. Pupils are told to write their name in pencil on the inside of the book, and the number of the book will also be recorded by teachers. All textbooks not returned at the end of the year will incur a standard charge of £10 per textbook to cover the cost of replacement.

For most subjects in Years 9-13 teachers require students to purchase an A4 ring binder and lined paper, but exercise books and homework diaries are provided by the school.

#### **8. What equipment do students need to have?**

All students are required to have at least the following equipment: a pencil case (preferably clear), 2 black pens, 1 blue pen, 2 sharpened pencils, a 12 inch ruler, a scientific calculator, a rubber, 6 coloured pencils, a compass, a protractor and a 6 inch ruler.

#### **9. What does "Cleaning Duty" involve, and how often do students do it?**

All senior students belong to a house team as one of the ways we seek to cultivate character in our students and grow a servant community in our school. One of their responsibilities is to take it in turns to spend a week on "cleaning duty", and therefore your child will be on "cleaning team" once every 8 weeks. This involves spending 10-15 minutes at lunchtime completing a simple cleaning/tidying task (e.g. putting chairs away, hoovering the hall).

#### **10. Where can I find lost property?**

Unlabelled lost property is put into the lost property boxes on both sites, and at the end of each term if it remains unclaimed then it is usually donated to charity. We would therefore ask parents to label your children's clothes and possessions if you have not already! In particular, we would recommend labelling jumpers, coats, drinks bottles, asthma pumps, calculators, pencil cases and lunch boxes.

#### **11. Where is the procedure for homework diaries?**

Our homework procedure is explained in full in the inside of the homework diary, and the homework procedure should be signed by both you and your child at the start of each academic year.

We frequently remind students that it is their responsibility to ensure that they ask their parents to sign their homework diaries each day, as we believe this helps to train young people to take responsibility for their work.

#### **12. Do senior school year groups have form tutors?**

In contrast to the younger years, classes in senior school have several different subject teachers and are often held in different classrooms, and so all subject related queries should be directed to individual subject teachers.

However, each year group does have a year tutor who takes most of the class assemblies and is responsible for checking homework diaries, and so any pastoral inquiry should be directed to those staff members via the school office. Year 7's year tutor is Mrs. Dallimore, Year 8's year tutor is Mrs. Summerfield, Year 9's year tutor is Mr.

Corney, Year 10's year tutor is Mr. Tamplin, and Year 11's year tutor is Mr. Bilton. Mrs. Watson is the head of Sixth Form.

### **13. What are the key things I need to know that happen in each year group?**

Specific dates obviously vary from year to year, and so parents should always check the Google calendar on the school website. It may, however, be helpful for parents to know the following:

- **Year 7&8:** Years 7&8 continue to study the core Abeka program, but as students are now in senior school they now have several subject-specific teachers in preparation for transition to upper seniors.
- **Year 9:** Broadly speaking, Year 9 is a foundation year for GCSE, as many teachers either teach foundational skills or begins teaching GCSE content in Year 9. Year 9 students make their choices for GCSE at the end of the second (spring) term, and begin their full GCSE timetables in the summer term.
- **Year 10:** The only GCSE examinations that Year 10 sit are the RS O-Level (GCSE equivalent), which is sat at the end of Year 10. Year 10 also have the opportunity to arrange work experience, which should be arranged for the first week of the summer term.
- **Year 11:** Year 11 have a special "Choices" evening in the autumn term that outlines the key information they need to know for making their choices after the end of Year 11.
- **Sixth Form.** Most details about the sixth form are found in the "Sixth Form Handbook", which should be signed by both student and parent at the beginning of sixth form.

### **14. Is there anything on the school website for senior school parents?**

All key dates for senior school are found on the school website. An overview of all GCSE subjects is also found in the parent area of the school website.

### **15. Do teachers use email to contact students?**

All students in Years 9-13 should create a Google email account (available for free online). Several teachers use "Google Classroom", and each year group is also part of a mailing list that is occasionally used by staff to communicate with students and parents regarding school matters.

### **16. What IT resources are provided in senior school?**

All students are provided a password-protected student account for the school network, accessed on the school computers. This allows them restricted access to the internet, access to a range of relevant software, and a limited amount of storage of digital files such as Word documents. Students are also able to print from the school computers, but only with teacher permission.

We also use a Google Drive folder called the "WICS Cloud" which we use to upload key documents etc. for students in Years 9-13.

### **17. What is the senior school procedure on the use of electronic devices?**

Senior school students should not bring electronic devices, including mobile phones, smart watches, tablets etc. to school or to any other school activity. If they need to contact you as parents, or vice versa, we ask that this is done via the school phone. If students do bring their phones to school, we would ask that they are switched off and kept inside their school bags during the whole of the school day. The only exceptions to this are our Sixth Form students, who are allowed to have reasonable and responsible use of electronic devices. Moreover, please note we cannot accept responsibility for electronic devices brought on to the school premises. Any student found using an electronic device during the school day without permission will be required to hand it in to staff, and parents will need to come into school to collect it from senior staff.

### **18. What are the arrangements for exams?**

All GCSE and A-Level exams are usually in the summer term and take place in the Workingmen's Hall in Machen, although occasionally the senior school building is used, and on rare occasions exams may take place at other points in the school year.

**Please note that exam fees are charged separately to regular school fees.** More precise details about exams, such as the exam timetable, the costs of exams and exam leave, are sent home in a letter prior to exams.

### **19. Can my child bring medicine to school?**

If your child requires medicine during the school day, we ask that you write a note in their homework diary (e.g. "2 aspirin every 4 hours"), and that your child only carries sufficient medication for that day. Please note that senior school staff cannot dispense medication.

## **20. Why does the senior school use a detention system? What does it involve?**

In order to cultivate good habits in the students and to maximise the teaching time throughout the school day, we have a simple detention system of recording students who come unequipped for class, speak without permission or have incomplete homework. All detention periods are completed in the lunch break (**not** lunchtime) and all marks are crossed off at the end of each lunch period.

## **21. What are housepoints? How do students use them?**

As in other parts of the school, students are rewarded with housepoints both for academic achievements and good behaviour which can then be “spent” on various rewards.

In “upper seniors” (Year 9-11), one of the privileges that students can “purchase” is permission to walk down to the local shop at break times. However, if your child wishes to do this, we require parents to complete the “Off Site Consent Form” that we stick into homework diaries at the start of each academic year.

Students may also use their housepoints to “buy” non-uniform days, but these should always be **agreed beforehand** with class tutors. To encourage team work and grow community, house teams also have prizes at the end of term for the highest scoring house team and for the best cleaning team.

## **22. How should I contact senior school staff?**

As a school we firmly believe in working with parents, so if you ever have questions or concerns, or would like to make an appointment to speak to a member of staff, please don’t hesitate to contact us! However, as a matter of courtesy we would ask that parents endeavour to only contact us via the school office (phone: 01633 441582 or email: [info@wyclifchristianschool.org](mailto:info@wyclifchristianschool.org) ) or by putting a short note in your child’s homework diary.

## **23. What are the child protection arrangements in the school?**

The school has a written policy for Child Safeguarding which you can read in the student/parent area of the school website. (Contact the school office for username/password details).

We recognize that children are vulnerable and sadly may become the victims of neglect or suffer physical, sexual or emotional abuse. The school provides safeguarding training to all staff and volunteers and follows the statutory requirements for child protection. The school is committed to providing a safe place for all students and works with the local social services and agencies where significant concerns arise. If you have further questions you should contact Mr Andrew Tamplin who is the designated safeguarding lead in the school.

## **24. Parents and School: Six Ways You Can Help!**

One of the best questions we often get asked by parents as they join the school is very simply, “How can we help?”

Even though we’ve grown rapidly as a school over the past few years this remains our heart: to be a school where parents are central in the education and raising of their children. We want to briefly explain to you the ways you can join us in serving in school life.

### **1. Bless Machen by being considerate**

Machen is a small village with limited parking and narrow roads, and as a school we now have nearly 200 students spread across 4 sites. Therefore, we are especially keen to be “salt and light” and “love our neighbour” as a school community in any way we can.

As parents you can do this in at least two practical ways:

- **Drive and park considerately.** As a staff and parents we practice an unofficial “one way system” at drop off and pick up, and parents support us by only dropping off in the village car park or on Wyndham Street.
- **Encourage students to be polite and responsible** in walking around Machen. Many of our senior school students walk around Machen, either to walk home or to another part of the school. Please join us in reminding them to walk (not run!), to cross at the lights on the main road, and to be considerate of members of the public.

### **2. Look for ways to serve**

As a school community we expect everyone to serve in some way, and we’d encourage you as parents to consider where and how you could be involved. For example, you could do one of the following:

- Join Friends of WICS,
- Become a registered volunteer,
- Get involved in one off events,
- Increase your giving,
- Commit to praying for staff and students.

If you want more details on any of the above, please contact the school office.

### **3. Book family holidays, trips and routine appointments outside of school time**

As a school we intentionally keep the school day and the school term short so that family time can be prioritised. We have created 4 “off peak” holiday weeks throughout the year (one in autumn half term, one at Christmas and two in the summer holidays) so that families can take advantage of cheaper “off peak” holidays.

As you can therefore imagine, one of the most disruptive parts of school life is unnecessary student absences. It creates extra work for staff who have to “catch up” students with work they have missed and it disrupts lessons and events in school where students and staff are relying on one another to be in.

We therefore hugely appreciate the vast majority of families who regularly demonstrate their ongoing commitment to the school by avoiding booking holidays, routine appointments and family engagements in school time.

If it is absolutely essential to book a trip during school time (for instance, to attend a family wedding or funeral), then we ask that you continue to request absence from the headteacher via email [beforehand](#) explaining the exceptional circumstances.

### **4. Support school events**

As a school we regularly tell students that we want to be a school where “Everyone does everything!”. That means that rather than defining students as “sporty” or “musical” or “arty” and allowing them to “pick and choose” school events we instead encourage students to participate fully in all of our school plays, trips and sports etc., whatever their ability.

As a school it is therefore a huge encouragement to us as staff when parents turn up and support our events, and when they encourage their children to participate fully and enthusiastically. We are aware that financial costs can be a challenge for some parents, but we ask that this never be a barrier to participation; please get in touch with Mr. Corney via the school office if that’s ever the case.

### **5. Communicate with staff through the school office**

One of the amazing parts of our school is the close relationships between students, staff and parents, often because of church relationships outside of school.

However, as staff we would still ask parents to always contact staff via the school office ([info@wyclifchristianschool.org](mailto:info@wyclifchristianschool.org) or 01633 441582), and avoid contacting staff about school matters outside of school time or via personal numbers and emails.

Similarly, we always ask that if there is a problem or issue that parents contact school directly to arrange a meeting to speak about it face-to-face. As a Christian school we always want to deal with any issue according to Jesus’ principles laid out in Matthew 18, where Jesus told us to go directly to the person and ask them to listen before taking the issue any further. Therefore we would ask that parents join us in following these principles and come and ask to speak to us before discussing any issues with anyone else.

### **6. Help us to train students to be equipped and organised**

As a school we look to our students to take increasing levels of responsibility for their equipment, uniform and organization as they grow and mature. However, children often need help with this, which is why we provide a detailed equipment and uniform list for primary school and senior school, and parents can therefore help their children by training them to be properly equipped and presented for school.