

## INTRODUCTION

Are you worried about any of the following?

- Being bullied
- Not making friends
- Getting lost
- Homework
- Not being able to do the work
- Getting to school and back (especially if it involves a bus journey)
- Not having the right books and equipment
- Not knowing what to do if there's a problem
- Not getting on with the teachers
- Getting into trouble

If so, you're not alone – these are the top ten concerns of children starting at secondary school. But there's always someone around to help, and this little handbook is a good place to start looking for the answers to your questions. And remember - if in doubt, just SHOUT!

## STRUCTURE AND ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

The Senior School is divided into three sections - the Lower School (S1 and S2), the Middle School (S3 to S5) and the Sixth Form (L6 and U6). The School as a whole is run by the Head Master (Mr Harris) and the Deputy Head Master (Mr King), while each of the three sections is headed up by a separate member of staff:

**Lower School:** Mr Parker and Mr Parsons

**Middle School:** Mr "Science" Morton and Mrs Magenty

**Sixth Form:** Mrs Parsons, Mrs Pickford and Mr Jones

In the Lower School, each year group (S1 and S2) is divided into three forms, each one headed by a form tutor. Usually, you will have the same form tutor in S2 as you had in S1, which means that you will have a really good opportunity to get to know each other. If you have any problems while you are in the Lower School, you should approach your form tutor in the first instance; if s/he is unable to help, you can always talk to Mr Parker as Head of the Lower School.

## BIRKDALE SCHOOL CORE VALUES

The Christian faith is central to the life in our School community. Stemming from this, our core values are:

- Care and respect for all
- Commitment to each other and the school
- The pursuit and celebration of excellence

These values form the basis of a series of guidelines to help us, as a community to live up to our core values. These guidelines are reproduced on the following pages, and are explained in a bit more detail further on in this handbook.

## **BIRKDALE SCHOOL GUIDELINES**

### **1. Respect and care for others**

- a) All relationships at Birkdale should be marked by respect and courtesy.
- b) Bullying, whether physical or verbal, is the single most serious offence against the community, and it will be dealt with firmly. Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. You will find the School's policy on bullying later on in this handbook.
- c) All of us need help from time to time. Part of our pursuit of excellence is the wish to be seen as helpful and considerate.
- d) Foul or abusive language should be avoided at all times no matter what the provocation.

Personal relationships. Ostentatious displays of affection between pupils, which draw attention to the individuals concerned and cause embarrassment to others, should be avoided.

### **2. Respect for Property and the Environment**

- a) Stealing property is a very serious offence and will be dealt with firmly.
- b) We are all responsible for maintaining the high standard of our physical environment. This means taking care not to cause damage, reporting any damage to the appropriate person (whether it has been caused accidentally or deliberately) and not dropping litter.\_\_\_\_\_
- b) Text books and library books must be looked after carefully and returned at the appropriate time.
- d) It is inadvisable to bring large amounts of money or expensive items to school. If it is unavoidable, ask a member of staff to look after the item. Musical instruments should be kept in the Music store.
- e) At the start of PE & Games, money and any other valuables *must* be handed in to a member of staff.
- f) For reasons of Health and Safety, pupils may not normally carry bags around the site during the School day.

- g) There must be no buying or selling between pupils.
- h) Personal Sound Systems, headphones, etc, should not be seen or used during the school day unless specific permission has been granted by a Senior Tutor.
- i) Mobile phones may be brought to school but must be switched off in all formal situations during the school day. This includes, amongst other situations, all lessons, registration, assembly and lunch. Pupils in S1 and S2 should seek the permission of the Head of Lower School if they wish to bring a mobile phone to school.

It is recommended that mobile phones should be kept securely within a locker during the school day. It is our very strong recommendation that you should not bring very expensive phones to school.

Misuse of a mobile will be treated as a very serious issue. Videos and pictures may not be taken during the school day without the express permission of a member of staff.

- j) Snowballing is forbidden on the school campus but may be allowed on the Crescent at the discretion of the member of staff on duty.

### **3. Health**

- a) All smoking kills. Smoking and the possession of tobacco in whatever form is forbidden. This includes any form of e-cigarette.
- b) The possession or use of illegal drugs threatens the well-being and quality of life of individuals and the community. Breach of this will be viewed very seriously.
- c) The possession or use of alcohol is prohibited.

### **4. Uniform**

- a) Birkdale has a very good reputation for the appearance of its pupils. Uniform should be neatly adjusted, worn both on arrival and departure from school, and for all school activities (unless directed otherwise).
- b) At the discretion of the Head of Lower School, a pupil may wear a tie which has been awarded as a representative honour in place of their school tie.
- c) In hot weather, permission may be granted by the Head Master to adopt summer uniform. Under these circumstances: jumpers must not be worn; jackets may be removed; ties must be worn; shirt sleeves may be rolled up neatly if jacket removed.
- d) Hair should be neatly cut avoiding extremes. Heads of Section will advise pupils

whether their hairstyle, or any proposed change, is acceptable. The Head of Section may choose to consult the Deputy Head, who shall ultimately be the judge of what is, and what is not, acceptable at Birkdale.

The spirit of the above also applies to other aspects of personal presentation.

#### **5. Arrival, Departure and Attendance at School**

- a) Pupils should arrive punctually in time for registration at 8.40am.
- b) Pupils should pay particular care to their own safety on the roads around school. Pupils waiting for buses should do so in an orderly and quiet fashion, and with consideration for other members of the public.
- c) It is very important that any pupil who arrives at school after the register has been called, or leaves before the end of the school day, should report and sign in/out at the School Office.
- d) Pupils in S1-S5 may not leave the school campus without permission during the school day.
- e) If a pupil is ill and unable to attend school on any day, please telephone the school by 10.00 am to let us know. He should bring on return to school a note from his/her parents, which should be handed to the Form Tutor. Written permission to miss school, for reasons other than illness, should be sought in advance from the Head Master using the formal leave of absence form.
- f) While in school, all pupils will follow the published timetable and attend classes or activities punctually.
- g) Any pupil who is ill should report to the School Matron.

#### **6. Bounds**

The following areas within the school are out of bounds:

- a) The path to School House.
- b) The main entrance to the School.
- c) All roofs.
- d) All lawns and gardens unless specific permission has been given.
- e) The laboratories and workshops are not to be entered unless a member of staff is present.
- f) The Grayson building, with the exception of the ground floor classroom corridor,

is out of bounds to all members of the Lower and Middle Schools outside lesson times, unless they have an appointment with a member of staff or need to visit one of the top floor rooms (Director of Studies, Assistant Director of Studies, Head of Learning Support, Head of Careers, Careers Library).

- g) The Johnson building and its grounds are out of bounds to all members of the Middle School outside lesson times, unless they have an appointment with a member of staff.

Pupils who see someone unfamiliar on the school campus, or are approached by an unfamiliar person in the vicinity of the school, should contact a member of staff immediately.

One way systems in force for safety reasons in Oakholme, Endcliffe and Johnson are to be respected.

## **7. Use of ICT**

For their own safety and the good name of the school, pupils may only use an email account and/or the internet if they agree to the Acceptable Use Policy which is based on the following basic principles:

- not to search for inappropriate material on the internet
- not to buy or sell anything over the internet
- to report to the Head of ICT Systems any occurrence which needs investigating (eg. abusive emails)
- not to download software from the internet without specific permission from the Head of ICT Systems
- not to give out personal information (eg. address) or agree to meet anyone on the basis of contact over the internet
- always to be polite and courteous in electronic communications

Pupils need to be particularly wary about using social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, etc, as they can get you into a lot of trouble and expose you to dangerous situations if used inappropriately.

You will find the full version of the School's ICT Acceptable Use Agreement later on in this handbook.

## **8. Forbidden Articles**

Pupils are not allowed to have in their possession any of the following:

- a) Any offensive weapon, including knives of any type, catapults etc
- b) Fireworks
- c) Matches or lighters
- d) Tobacco, alcohol or any illegal drugs
- e) Chewing gum

- f) Liquid correctors such as “Tippex”

## **POLICY ON BULLYING**

The school policy is part of a campaign to combat bullying. It aims to inform teachers, pupils and parents of the attitudes of the school towards bullying and of the strategies that will be used to prevent it. Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It can be physical and/or verbal in nature. It may involve teasing and taunting, intimidation, extortion and physical assault. The weapons of the bully are threat and fear. Birkdale views bullying extremely seriously.

### **Strategies for the victim**

1. First of all understand that “not telling” is playing by the bullies’ rules. Tell your parents and/or a member of staff.
2. Identify the person, places, times when bullying takes place. Until the situation is resolved, is it possible to avoid those circumstances?
3. Don’t buy the bully off with “presents”.
4. Don’t just “put up with it”.
5. Victims should not retaliate or rise to the bait. It gives the bully an excuse.

### **Strategies for other pupils**

1. When someone is being bullied or is in distress, take action. Watching and doing nothing is supporting the bully.
2. Pupils should inform an adult immediately if they do not wish to become involved themselves.
3. Do not tolerate bullies in the same social group. Only accept people who do not bully others. Bullies will soon stop if they are socially excluded.
4. All pupils have a role to play in preventing bullying. Prefects and Monitors have a particularly important part to play in noticing and reporting bullying.

## **USE OF ICT**

### **General guidelines:**

- School computers, internet access and e-mail are provided to support pupils and teachers in the pursuit of their **academic studies** and to allow efficient communication and access to information for **educational purposes**.
- The efficient working of the computer network depends on the good sense and co-operation of all users.

### **Guidelines for the use of the School Computer network:**

- I will only use ICT systems in school, including the internet, email, digital video, and mobile technologies for school purposes.
- I will not download or install software or apps on school equipment.
- I will only log on to the school network, other systems and resources with my own user name and password.
- I will follow the schools ICT security system and not reveal my passwords to anyone.
- I will only use my school email address within school and for sending school work.
- I will make sure that all ICT communications with pupils, teachers or others is responsible and sensible.
- I will be responsible for my behaviour when using the Internet. This includes resources I access and the language I use.
- I will not deliberately browse, download, upload or forward material that could be considered offensive or illegal, either inside or outside school. If I accidentally come across any such material I will report it immediately to my teacher.
- I understand that the school will report any illegal online material to the police, including racist, homophobic, religious hate or terrorist material, or anything promoting them.
- I will not give out any personal information such as name, phone number or address. I will not arrange to meet someone unless this is part of a school project approved by my teacher.
- Images of pupils and/or staff will only be taken, stored and used for school purposes with their permission and in line with school policy and must not be distributed outside the school network without the permission of the Head or Deputy Head.
- I will ensure that my online activity, both in school and outside school, will not cause the school, the staff, pupils or others distress or bring into disrepute.
- I will support the school approach to online safety and not deliberately upload or add any images, video, sounds or text that could upset any member of the school community.
- I will respect the privacy and ownership of others' work online at all times.
- I will not attempt to bypass the internet filtering system.
- I understand that all my use of the Internet, email and other related technologies is filtered, monitored and logged and can be made available to my teachers.
- I understand that these rules are designed to keep me safe and that if they are not followed, school sanctions will be applied and my parents will be contacted.

### **SANCTIONS AND REWARDS**

At Birkdale, we believe in celebrating and rewarding our pupils' achievements. Each part of the school has its own system of rewards. In the Lower and Middle School (S1 – S4), house points may be awarded for good work, effort or contributions to the School community, and Amazon vouchers are awarded termly at the discretion of the Deputy Head Master. In addition, prizes are given from time to time for outstanding academic and extra-curricular achievements.

We also aim to use punishment fairly and appropriately as a constructive means of helping you to improve, or to correct misbehaviour.

If you produce poor work you may be dealt with as follows:

Repetition of work on red lined paper, to be signed by a parent and the Form Tutor

Break or lunchtime detention  
Detention after school on a Tuesday evening (4-5pm)  
Saturday morning detention - for repeated poor work

If you misbehave you will be dealt with appropriately. Sanctions may include:

An essay or lines  
Break or lunchtime detention  
Lunchtime drill  
Deputy Head's detention on a Friday evening after school (4-5pm)  
Saturday morning detention

Where the Head Master judges your misconduct to be sufficiently serious, he reserves the right to suspend or expel you, or require that you leave the school.

## **PREFECTS AND MONITORS**

A team of school officials assists the Head Master, the Deputy Head Master and the Heads of Section in the day-to-day running of the School. At Sixth Form level, there is a Head Boy or Girl (known as the "Head of School"), supported by one or two Deputy Heads of School, and a team of School Prefects and House Captains/Prefects. At Middle School level there is a team of Monitors. The Lower School operates as a semi-independent body, with its own Head of Lower School and Deputy Head, and its own team of Prefects and Monitors.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Signing-in procedures**

As previously stated in the School guidelines, you should arrive punctually at School ready for registration at 8.40am. However, we recognise that sometimes things go wrong, and that pupils are unavoidably delayed. So, if you do arrive after the register has been called, please report to the School Office to sign in. Although this will delay you for another minute or two, it's vitally important that you sign in, so that if there's a fire on the premises later on in the day and you don't appear at the evacuation point, we know to rescue you!

### **What to do if you feel ill during the School day**

Obviously, if you are really unwell, you should not come into School in the first place, and your parents should follow the notification/follow-up procedure outlined in the guidelines. However, if you start feeling unwell during the course of a School day, or if you hurt yourself, you should report to Matron. You should not phone or text home to tell a parent that you are ill and need to be collected from School. The Matrons will contact your parents and arrange for collection by them if needed. Note that while the Matrons are qualified to administer emergency first aid, they are not permitted to dispense medication, so please do not go to see them expecting to be given Paracetamol, Ibuprofen, cough medicine, etc.

## **What to do if you're absent from School**

If you're not able to come into School, whether due to illness or some other reason, please ask a parent or a guardian to telephone the school by 10.00 am to let us know. This is for two main reasons. First of all, we need to have it confirmed that you're not on the premises so that if there's a fire later on in the day we know not to risk people's lives looking for you. Secondly, we are required by law to keep a record of which pupils are absent, when and why. When you return to School, please bring a note from your parent or guardian confirming why you were absent, and hand this to your Form Tutor.

If you want to know what's going on at School while you're away, don't forget to look on the School website and the student intranet.

## **Fire drill procedure**

If you discover a fire, sound the fire alarm, dial 9-999 to call the fire brigade if using a school phone (this is not a misprint – you need to dial the first 9 to make an external call!), and inform a member of staff. A diagram of the Birkdale School Fire Drill Procedure Assembly Points can be found at the back of this handbook. You must look at it carefully.

If you hear the alarm, assume there is actually a fire, and leave the building by the nearest route, closing all doors behind you to stop the fire spreading. Walk quietly to the assembly point next to Johnson, and line up silently in the place marked for your form, in two columns. Please STAY silent – it's impossible to take the register effectively and work out who's missing and might be trapped in a burning building if everyone starts talking.

## **Storage of property**

As stated in the School guidelines, it is not a good idea to bring large amounts of money or expensive items to school. If you have no choice, though, ask a member of staff to look after the money or the item for you. Other items may be stored in your locker. Musical instruments should be kept in the Music store situated on the first floor of the Oakholme building.

At the start of PE and Games, you must hand money and any other valuables in to a member of staff for safe-keeping, as it is particularly easy for things to get lost during these lessons.

## **Lost property**

If you do lose your belongings, try and remember the last time you saw them, and then re-trace your footsteps. Hopefully you'll find your stuff somewhere along the way! If you don't succeed, look in the blue boxes located by the main entrance to Johnson, the side entrance to Grayson and the boys' changing room next to the Heeley Hall. If you still can't find your belongings, go to Lost Property. This is situated in the basement of the Oakholme building, and is open from 1.00 – 1.30 pm every day apart from Friday.

Please try and remember to label all your belongings; this makes the whole lost property procedure so much easier for everyone involved, including you.

## **Travel to School**

We appreciate that, for some pupils, traveling to school by car is the only sensible option. However, in line with the School's Travel Plan, we would like to encourage as many pupils as possible to explore the use of "greener" options such as the parent-run school coaches, public transport (both buses and trains) and, of course, cycling and walking!

The parent-run school coaches currently come in from Tickhill, Maltby, Wickersley, Whiston, Moorgate, Chesterfield, Dronfield, Clowne, Thurgoland, High Green, Deepcar, Worksop, Hathersage and the Hope Valley, and make several stops en route. If you would like further details, please enquire at the School office.

For details of bus and train timetables, have a look at the following websites:

[www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/timetables](http://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/timetables)

[www.thetrainline.com](http://www.thetrainline.com)

To find out about the MegaTravel Pass, which entitles children under the age of 16 to concessionary travel on buses, trams and trains in South Yorkshire (50p for bus and tram journeys, half fare on trains) have a look at this section of the Travel South Yorkshire website:

<http://www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/megatravelpass/>

If you're interested in cycling to School, note that there are cycle storage facilities in the Johnson Yard, and also behind Grayson.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL DAY/WEEK**

The School day starts at 8.40 with registration. This is followed by assembly (whole School, Lower School or house) or a form period, according to a rota. There are then eight periods – five before lunch, and three after. The morning lessons are punctuated with a 20-minute break after period 2. The School day ends at 3.45 pm, although on some days you may find that you leave later due to after-School activities such as sport,

music or drama. (In this connection, note that if you are selected for a sports team, orchestra or play, you are expected to make that activity your priority. In other words, the activity is not optional, and you must attend all practices, rehearsals, etc.)

The School day follows a similar structure every day; however, in S1, Monday afternoons are dedicated to Games, so you will need to make sure that you get into the habit of getting your Games kit out at the weekend ready to bring into School on Monday mornings! In S2, Games continues to be on a Monday, but the time changes to mid-morning so that both year groups can benefit from more individual and specialised training.

At the end of this document, you'll find a sample planning sheet to help you get yourself organised on a daily basis. Try designing your own version of this.

## **SETTING**

At the beginning of S1, you're taught in mixed ability groups for Maths for the first half term. Following a special assessment around half term, you're then placed into ability sets. You're also taught in mixed ability groups for French for the whole of the first term, but will move into ability sets in January. Science isn't set at all in S1, but will be in S2.

In all these, subjects, don't worry if you're in a lower set – you'll get more individual attention and will benefit more.

## **GRADES AND REPORTS**

In S1 and S2 you are awarded grades at the end of each half term (except at the end of the very first half term in S1, in recognition of the fact that you need a bit of time to settle into the school). Grades are awarded for effort where class performance and homework are concerned, and for overall attainment.

The class performance effort grades will be as follows:

### **O Outstanding/Excellent**

Contributes well in class and is keen to know more about the subject. Prepared to ask questions and act on advice. Keen to participate in discussion. Very perceptive at listening and responding to others. Happy to evaluate own work and develop it in the light of further research and advice.

### **V Very Good**

Contributes well in class and shows enthusiasm and a willingness to learn. Will persevere with a problem until it is resolved, asking for help when necessary. Supportive of peers. Can need encouraging to review own work but responds well to guidance. Works effectively in a group and is keen to communicate.

### **G Good**

Is attentive and will contribute in lessons. Contributes sensibly to group work.

Prepared to ask for help to clarify understanding. Needs prompting to do extra work/review his/her own work, but develops this with help.

**S Sufficient**

Will contribute in lessons if prompted. Lacks confidence. Generally able to work on his/her own without supervision. Sometimes contributes in group situations. Does not often ask for necessary help to clarify understanding.

**U Unsatisfactory**

Classwork is rarely completed to an acceptable standard. Unable to work constructively either alone or in a group without frequent supervision. Displays an indifferent/negative attitude towards learning and is unresponsive to help and guidance.

The homework effort grades will be as follows:

**O Outstanding/Excellent**

Develops work independently in the light of research and advice. Demonstrates a wider interest in the subject. Pride taken in presentation of work. Personal best for the pupil.

**V Very Good**

Work is well presented and it is evident that much time and care have been devoted to it. Will persevere with a problem until it is resolved.

**G Good**

Shows evidence of time, care and effort appropriate to the task.

**S Sufficient**

The minimum effort required to avoid being asked to repeat the work. Improvement is expected in line with comments made by teacher.

**U Unsatisfactory**

Reasons for this include: insufficient work/incomplete work, care not taken in presentation. **Work should be repeated.**

The overall attainment grades will be on a scale from A-D, reflecting, amongst other things, the following marks that are given in respect of individual pieces of homework:

10	Outstanding work that is hard to improve upon
9/8	Very good standard
7/6	Good/quite good standard
5	Satisfactory standard
4	Below satisfactory
3/2/1	Unacceptable
0	Task totally misunderstood

In S1, your parents will receive a report on you at the end of the Easter term; in S2,

they'll receive them at the end of the Christmas and Summer terms.

## HOMEWORK

In the Lower School, you are expected to complete 90 minutes homework (ie, 30 minutes on each of three subjects) each evening according to the schedule that you will have been given at the start of the school year. Try and get into the habit of recording what you're meant to be doing in your homework diary. This will not only remind you to do the homework in the first place, but will also help to ensure that you do the correct homework!

Here are some top tips on how to use your homework diary and manage your homework in general:

- Make a note of your "homework timetable" –ie, what homework you expect to get on which days.
- Familiarise yourself with the layout of your diary, and make sure that you use the correct week to record your homework.
- Write down your homework – and write down *exactly* what you have to do. If you don't understand the task or are not sure what books/equipment you will need, then *ask*. Some of the questions you might need to ask include: What sort of work is required – notes, full sentences, brief answers, a paragraph or an essay? Can I use a computer for this work, or does it have to be handwritten? Is it neat or rough? Do I answer on the question sheet or in my exercise book? If no homework is set, write down the reason why (eg cover lesson).
- Record *when* the homework has to be done for.
- Make sure you bring home everything you need to do the homework.
- When you get home, use your homework diary to remind yourself of what you have to do.
- Try and work by yourself on your homework, to the best of your ability, spending the correct amount of time on each subject.
- Answer questions accurately. A clear, relevant answer is much better than a long one which has lots of unnecessary information. Pay attention to spelling, especially the spelling of very common words or specialist words used in the subject you are studying. Show your working in calculations. If asked for an explanation or an opinion, always provide detailed evidence.
- Remember that presentation is important. Work for handing in must be written in ink or typed – never in pencil. Give each piece of work a clearly underlined title. Put the date on your work. Space your writing out attractively on the page.

Don't use any of the following excuses for not being able to do the homework, because we've heard them all before!

"We didn't get any."

"I don't need to do that – we did it in class."

"We had a cover lesson."

"It doesn't have to be in for ages." "I left it at school."

“My teacher’s got my book – they took them in.”

“My friend’s borrowing my book.”

“I did it on the computer and the computer wouldn’t print it out/and I forgot to save it/can’t remember what file I saved it in...”

“I’m going to do it with my friend on the bus/at break.”

“I need to do it in the library – I’ll do it lunchtime tomorrow.”

“I’ve lost my homework diary.”

Sometimes, you will be asked to undertake a larger than usual homework assignment over a longer than usual period. While one or two of your friends might thrive on the sense of panic that leaving this until the last minute results in, most boys produce better work by taking a more organised approach. Try breaking the task down into manageable-sized chunks, and scheduling those chunks over the period of time that you’ve been given. Leave yourself a little bit of spare time at the end of the task to review what you’ve done and to tweak it if necessary.

Don’t forget that if your homework is incomplete, late or unsatisfactory, then sanctions may be applied (repetition of unsatisfactory work, repetition of unsatisfactory work on red-lined paper, Tuesday after-school detention).

#### **NOTE-TAKING**

In the Lower School, you will find that some teachers provide you with notes relating to what has been or is going to be taught in class, whereas other teachers will expect you to make your own notes. Either way, it’s a good idea to learn some note-taking skills, as these will stand you in good stead for the rest of your educational and professional life. Here are a few tips:

Don’t try and write down everything the teacher says. Instead, concentrate on listening out for the key points, and make a note of these. When you’re listening, watch out for “signpost” words. These are words that speakers use to show that they are giving examples, are changing the topic or are going to give a negative example, etc. Here are some examples:

1. *OK, Right, Now, Well* – All these show that the speaker is going to introduce a new topic.
2. *Therefore, Nevertheless, Insofar as* – All these indicate that more explanation is coming.
3. *Although, But* – These hint that the speaker is going to come up with examples that lead into a negative comment.

Keep phrases short, and use bullet points.

Miss out words like “and”, “the” or “but”.

Use symbols such as +, - and -> to save on words.

Try and develop your own shorthand, so that you don’t have to write out long or frequently occurring words in full – eg, “k” = “king”, “H” = “Henry”, “cf” = “compare”, and so on.

Do remember to write up your notes as soon as possible after the lesson, or you may find that, despite your best efforts, you can't understand them later on! If it helps you to summarise or organise material, try supplementing your notes with spider diagrams, charts, tables, mind maps, etc. Remember that if you do make the effort to write up your notes, you will almost certainly find that your understanding of the subject is strengthened, and that you won't need to do as much revision come the next lot of tests or exams!

## REVISION TIPS

Everyone revises differently, so experiment to see which of these styles works best for YOU:

- Use **coloured highlighter pens** to mark your revision notes. Identify **key words** (names, dates, places, etc). You could use different colours for different types of information.
- Draw **sketches or cartoons** that relate to a particular topic in the margins of your note book. These will help you to locate a particular section and they will also make it more memorable.
- Learn to **mind map**.
- You may find it useful to use **flow charts** to keep track of events in a certain order.
- Some people find that **soothing music** helps them to revise, although music with a fast tempo or a strong lyric can be distracting.
- **Record key points on your phone or onto a tape or Dictaphone**, and play them over – especially just before going to sleep. If you're technically minded, you might even want to get together with a friend or two to make a **revision video** for a particular subject – as if you were presenting information for a television programme!
- Turn key points into a **rhyme, rap or song**. This will make them more memorable.
- **Explain what you have learnt to someone else** – eg a parent.

## INSTRUMENTAL LESSONS

At Birkdale, instrumental lessons are entirely optional. However, it's important that those pupils who do take lessons at Birkdale are aware of how the system works.

If you're interested in learning an instrument, please see Dr Pitfield in the first instance, who will check whether there are any vacancies for that instrument, and refer you to the appropriate teacher. The teacher will agree on a day and time for your first lesson, but this will vary in subsequent weeks. The lesson may be before or after school, or during the day. If your lesson is during the day, you will have to inform the relevant teacher that you're missing their lesson using one of the "missing lesson slips" provided on the noticeboard outside the practice rooms (on the first floor of Oakholme). You will also need to sign in at the School office after your lesson if it takes place during registration, so that we know that you're on the premises (for safety reasons).

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Birkdale offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities both during lunchtimes and after school, which you will have an opportunity to find out more about at the Lower School activities fair held early on in the Christmas term. The choice of activities varies from term to term and from year to year, so you will need to keep an eye on the clubs and societies section in the Calendar and on the Deputy Head noticeboard in the Exhibition Area to find out what is currently available, when and where. Remember that if you sign up for an activity, you usually need to commit yourself to attending regularly and promptly. This is partly so that you get the most out of the activity in question, but also so that you don't let down the activity leader and the other pupils.

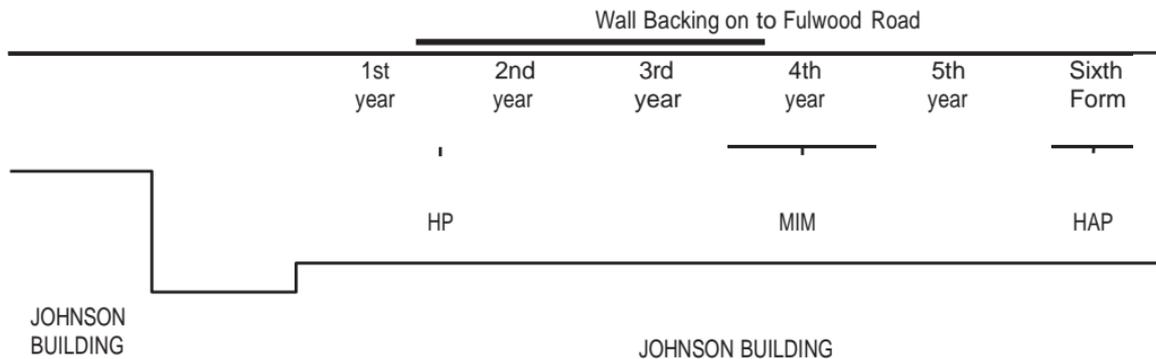
## SAMPLE DAY PLANNER

Task	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
<b>Before school</b>					
Breakfast					
Bathroom					
Dressing					
Check timetable					
Double-check that correct books and homework are in bag					
Leave house 7.55 am*					
Catch bus					
<b>After school</b>					
Change. Hang up school uniform.					
Snack/drink (15 minutes)					
Empty school bag. Put books in for next day.					
Check diary for homework/notes.					
Give parents notes/messages.					
Do homework:					
1.					
2.					
3.					
Show homework to parents.					
Put homework in bag.					

\*This is just an example – your departure time may be different.

# BIRKDALE SCHOOL FIRE DRILL PROCEDURE ASSEMBLY POINTS

## JOHNSON BUILDING (TARMAC AREA)



### ANY PERSON DISCOVERING A FIRE

1. Sound the alarm
2. DIAL 999 to call the Fire Brigade 9- 999 if using school phone
3. Inform a member of staff

DHT  
Secretaries and      PSO  
Staff not

### ON HEARING THE ALARM

4. Leave the building by the nearest route
5. Close all doors behind you
6. Walk quietly to the Assembly Points next to the Grayson Building
7. Line up SILENTLY in the space marked for your Form

0 columns 6th Forms in ONE column

non-teaching  
staff

attached to  
forms

Don't forget that we want you to be very happy at Birkdale, and are always interested in hearing if you have any problems; however, if you have any concerns that you don't think you can easily raise at School, remember that you can always ring one of the following helplines. We also have our own School Counsellor, Miss Brown, whom pupils can approach for support.

Childline:	0800 1111 (call free day or night)
The Mix:	0808 808 4994 (11am – 11pm every day)
Samaritans:	116 123
Footprints Connection:	0114 258 7495
	(Counselling with Compassion)

