

# Moving on to the Abbey CBS 2017-2018

 Welcome    
 To Our School

Welcome to the '**Moving on to Grammar School**' booklet. This booklet has been produced to help you, as the move to Grammar School can be quite an anxious time for both child and parent. Many families have a lot of the same concerns surrounding this transition and I hope that you can use this booklet to address these issues and seek further advice if necessary.

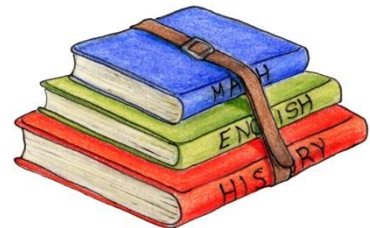
It is important to note we will have already a lot of ground work prepared before your son arrives in the Abbey to start Year 8. Primary schools will have been contacted to allow us to place your son in the correct form class and to allow us to know a small bit about your son before he embarks on his educational journey with us.

### Parental concerns

- Being able to help him with his homework if he has any queries or cannot grasp what he has been taught in a particular subject in school
- Hoping that he is able to keep himself safe from potential harm in case of bullying and also during his journey to and from school
- Being an active parent in our school

### Student concerns

- The amount of homework I will get
- Rules and guidelines to learn for my new school
- The journey to school
- Finding my way around
- Developing new friendships



## What we do to help your child to settle into the Abbey.

### Form class:

We have a dedicated team of very experienced form teachers. There are five form classes in Year 8 which are **Iveagh, Donard, Slemish, Oriel** and **Breffni**. The team of form teachers will be introduced on our Induction days.

If you have any issues or concerns usually the first point of contact would be with the relevant form teacher on **02830263142**. If they are teaching they will return your call when they are free to do so. They may also provide your son with their email address if this is a more convenient way for you to contact them. The Year Head (**Mrs A Elmore**), VP/Head of Junior School (**Mr Ruddy**) and the Principal (**Mr Mc Govern**) can also be contacted on the same number.



During your one-to-one meetings with the Headmaster, your son will be asked who they would like in their form class. Every effort will be made to accommodate this request. However, sometimes this is not possible as some students want a fresh start and may not want to be with students from their primary school. This is a very acceptable and common request and one we will accommodate. If your child is anxious about his class mates assure him that by the end of

the two day Induction Programme he will have made new friends and this should be very much encouraged.

### **Induction programme:**

This programme runs over two days.

- Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> August 9:30 - 2:30 (Parents will remain with students until 10:30)
- Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> August 9:30 - 1:30.

**Parents are invited to our Garden Party in the Quadrangle at 12:30.**

**Day one** is more administrative when the pupils are:

- sorted into form classes and introduced to form teachers and senior prefects;
- photos and finger prints (for canteen use) are taken
- and the bus inspector, **Mr Gerry Darcy** will speak with them.

The day is very much a 'taster day' where the pupils will get to know the running of the canteen, where their form class will be, the journey to and from school and the vast range of extra-curricular activities the school has to offer.

**Day two** is a 'fun day'. The students will:

- meet with the senior prefects upon arrival to school and be directed to their form class (if they have forgotten!).
- meet briefly with their form teacher and we will then begin the day's activities.
- the morning session is divided into 5 parts with a variety of activities including:
  - a treasure hunt
  - chinese whispers
  - name cards
  - dodge ball and
  - a quiz.

The aim is for all students to mix together to get to know each other better and to be more confident around the school. A letter will be sent to all parents in late July/early August with additional information regarding these 2 days.

Also as part of our on-going Induction Programme in Year 8 the students will, for the first week and during the first term:

- be released early for break, lunch and after school (week one)
- be accompanied from class to class by the senior prefect (week one)
- be escorted to the correct bus stop at the end of each day (week one)
- be given details by class teachers of what is expected of them in their subject area
- be taken to **Croke Park** on **27<sup>th</sup> October 2017**



### Buses:

Any student who is entitled to a bus pass will receive it in the first couple of days of the new term. Any questions or queries regarding bus passes should be forwarded to **Fred Wilkinson** on **02837512278**. The school has no input into the allocation of bus passes. If your son loses his bus pass, again, you will need to contact the number provided. The school can provide a temporary one in the interim.

The teacher in charge of buses in the Abbey is **Mr Savage**. If your son has any issues on the bus with coming to or from school please inform us immediately. Senior students, on each bus, will also let us know if there are any issues or concerns. Your son will know who these bus prefects are in early September.



### Extra-curricular activities:

The school runs a vast range of activities both during and after school. Notifications of all activity start dates and times will be forwarded to your son via the form teacher during registration. Please try to encourage your son to participate in at least one of the activities we have on offer as this is an excellent way to form new friendships. A free after school link bus, for those attending after school activities, runs each day to the bus depot to allow your son to get his connecting bus home. The bus will leave school each day at 4:35 pm.

### Lunch/dinners:

On display outside the canteen is a selection of menus for each month. As we operate a cashless system in the canteen your son is encouraged to top up his account first thing in the morning so they are not carrying money around school with them. Parents may also top up their sons account over the phone using their debit cards on **02830263142**. If your son forgets money or lunch he can be issued a dinner slip by his form teacher. These are kept at the back of the homework planner and the account now in debt must be cleared as soon as possible.

Students who are entitled to **free school meals** will have their accounts credited with **£2.75** each day (this amount may change in September). If they overspend they must clear this bill before the next day, as their account will not top up and if they are absent or don't use the money it cannot be carried over to the next day. This only applies to those entitled to free school meals.

Of course pupils can bring in their own break and lunch each day.



### Homework planner:

This should be read thoroughly as it contains a lot of very useful information about our school day and the policies and procedures we follow. It is also a very valuable way of communicating information from school to home and vice versa. You are expected to sign the planner every week and this will be strictly enforced by the form teacher. Your son will be shown how to use the planner correctly and it is important they bring this with them to school each day.

### Merits/demerits:

In the Abbey we very much promote good behaviour and work and this is reflected in the planner by the teacher awarding either a sticker or a comment to indicate a merit has been received by your son. In Year 8 we run a merit competition between the classes and a special treat is received by the winning class in June which consists of an afternoon of football, pizza and a DVD! In addition to the class merits each form class can gain bonus merits. At our monthly assemblies I will inform the Year group of how to receive the bonus merits. Examples include

- the class with the least demerits
- the class with the most merits
- the class who raises the most money in the bun sale (in conjunction with Home Economics)
- the class who is most successful in our Lenten fundraising efforts
- the class who receives the most points from class teachers in our 'Good Manners week', etc.

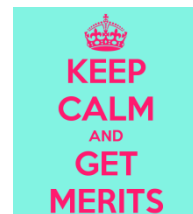
Also at the end of each month, the student or students with the most merits are rewarded by their form teachers and this will be communicated to you in the planner.

It is important to note that demerits can also be issued for non-completion of work, forgetting books or inappropriate behaviour. Please refer to the planner for more information on this.

### Homework policy:

A common issue in Year 8 can be the change in teaching styles and work expected. Having successfully completed the GL assessment in the early part of P7, a lot of our Year 8 students have had a very relaxing year in P7 and rightly so! Homework may not have been in huge supply in comparison to what was expected of your son in P6 and the first couple of months in P7. In Key Stage 3 we follow the Northern Ireland Curriculum as required by CCEA. Each subject (English, Maths, Science, French, Irish, Geography, History, Art, LLW, Computers, Religion, Technology, P.E., Drama and Music) in the Abbey has its own homework policy (this can be accessed through the school website: [abbeycbs.co.uk](http://abbeycbs.co.uk)) However homework given in Grammar School can come under many guises such as:

- Reading
- Writing
- Researching
- Learning



- Drawing
- Summarising notes

In year 8 students will be expected to give as much time and effort to any homework issued by class teachers and will always have something to do. Students will be made aware of this early on in Year 8 and will be requested not to write 'no homework' in their planners unless the teacher specifically asks them to do this. As part of the progression to Grammar School we will work with your son to help him understand that all types of homework issued are equal in importance.

### Anti-Bullying:

As a school we work very hard enforcing anti-bullying and educating our students. We are very clear what bullying is and in fact have just updated our bullying policy in consultation with staff, parents and students. Issues which can arise with Year 8 include:

- **Developing new friendships:** - In our experience friendships in year 8 do change and whilst this is very much a good thing it can be hard on some students. As part of the Year 8 Induction Programme and the various extra-curricular activities we offer at the Abbey, our students are encouraged to develop new friends. If this is proving difficult for your child please let us know. The school counsellor, Ms Hughes has plenty of experience in dealing with any of these issues. Ms Hughes will also make herself known to all Year 8 pupils early in Term 1. She can be contacted on 02830263142 and is in school each day until 1 pm.
- **Name calling:** - whilst this may happen and be considered as low level bullying, our experience in dealing with this in school has proved to be very effective. The key is to let us know as soon as possible and not to deal with it yourself by contacting other parents directly. Also, whilst this may be seen as low level it can be distressing to other students, so please talk to your son about what is inappropriate behaviour and be reassured we will deal with this as quickly as possible.



### Use of mobile phones/ social media

A lot of our Year 8 pupils have probably just recently received their first phone. With your son travelling on buses or staying in school late this is a good way to keep in contact with him. However as a school we are adamant that if your son chooses to ignore our school policy on using a mobile phone to take photos of another student without permission or to have his phone switched on during class, we will be in contact with parents immediately. Please also be aware of the increasing use of social media apps/sites such as Instagram, Snap Chat, Face book and Twitter. If inappropriate use of mobile technologies is brought to our attention we will intervene where possible, impose sanctions and notify parents.



### The 'Buddy Scheme'

This scheme has been set up to allow our senior students to work closely with those who we identify as struggling to adapt to the demands in Year 8. If your son is struggling with organisational skills, completion of homework, etc, this will become apparent early on with comments in his planner from class teachers. If this is the case, I will contact you by letter to offer your son an excellent opportunity to be assigned a senior student who will meet with your son after school to help him. This has proven to be successful year on year and is in no way to be seen as a punishment but rather an opportunity to address key issues with an experienced student.

### Personal Property:

We try as much as possible to encourage your son to look after his own property but one of the biggest issues we have each year is students leaving PE gear/musical instruments on the bus or misplacing them in school. Lockers are provided for your sons at a cost of £1 which is refundable. Please encourage your son to use the lockers and to be careful when transporting property on the buses so it is not left behind. Another issue can be when changing for PE; as all PE gear looks the same and is similarly sized it is important names are put onto uniforms to avoid confusion and for it to be returned to the rightful owner if it is picked up by the caretakers or cleaners.

### Uniform and P.E. Kit

On the day your son has PE, he must wear his FULL school uniform (see planner) to school. Lockers are available for your son to leave his PE gear, during the day, until it is needed. Everyone is encouraged to use the lockers available.

### School counsellor:

My name is **Fiona Hughes**, I am the School Counsellor. As School Counsellor I am experienced and trained in working with young people and am here to offer any support and reassurance the boys may need on their journey through the coming year in the Abbey.

Not so long ago counselling held a stigma! I really hope that attitude has changed and that people realise counselling is a really valuable service which can enhance a person's quality of life immensely.

When the boys come up to see me, I make them feel welcome. A wee cup of tea and a biscuit doesn't go amiss. We talk things through together and I help the student come up with a solution, an easier way to deal with his problems. 90% of the time I have a much happier child.

There can be lots of pressures on young people growing up:

- friendships,
- teasing
- bullying
- bereavement
- adolescence and the strong feelings and physical changes that go with it.

The transition from Primary School to Grammar School can both be an exciting and a scary time for our young boys. Young people find that the time and space they get from counselling helps them feel better at home and in school.

I also deliver a Mental Health B+ positive programme over a five week period. This programme helps the boys have an understanding of mental health and teaches coping strategies and skills to enable them to maintain a healthy mind.

### School Nurse

My name is **Jane Maginn** and you can come and see me for lots of different reasons, below are a few examples.

- acne,
- asthma,
- allergies
- diabetes
- disability
- cardiac
- eczema
- epilepsy
- First Aid treatment or
- general illness during the school day.

A health check for all Year 8 pupils is conducted by the School Health Team. This usually happens in January.

### So what can parents do to help?

- Help your son to be organised for the day ahead
- Encourage your son to keep PE Kits/footwear in lockers when he has PE
- Talk to him - if you have any issues or concerns contact the form teachers or Mrs Elmore (Year Head). Believe me there is nothing we have not heard or dealt with before
- Make sure we have up-to-date contact details for you and if possible follow the school on Facebook and Twitter and our website to keep informed of school life, celebrations and achievements. Please download the **Abbey App** free of charge!!
- Encourage your son to get involved with all aspects of school life - sign up to something new to meet new friends!
- Don't overreact!! Your son is growing up and will shortly become a teenager and as I know from experience, this can be an emotional rollercoaster. You are not on your own!!



### How can you become involved?

Early on in the year you will be contacted via email or text being offered the chance to join the **APTA** committee. One of the first events organised by the group is the Year 8 Fun Quiz. This usually happens in the first couple of weeks of term and we would love to see you and your extended family at the Quiz.



Please do not hesitate to contact any of the following staff if you have a concern regarding your son whether pastorally or academically:

- Mrs A Elmore (Year Head/Deputy Designated Officer for Child Protection)
- Mr Ruddy (Head of Junior School/VP/Deputy Designated Officer for Child Protection)
- Mr Mc Govern (Principal)
- Mr O'Shea (VP/Designated Officer for Child Protection)
- Ms F Hughes (School Counsellor)
- Mrs J Maginn (School Nurse)

Finally, a very big welcome to each and every new Year 8 - and in particular to the new 'Abbey' families. We hope your son enjoys his journey with us!

**Mrs Annette Elmore**

**(Year 8 Year Head)**

## What do I need to bring to the Abbey???

During the 2 day Induction Programme, pupils will receive 10 exercise books along with a homework planner. In addition to this pupils are expected to bring the following to class –

### Science:

A4 hard backed notebook (not spiral bound)

Plastic zip folder (large enough to hold hard backed notebook, workbook and textbook)

### Technology:

Project folder – Club Rexel (Brand name)

### Home Economics:

Hardback A4 book

Plastic zip folder (large enough to hold hard backed notebook and workbook)

Biscuit tin / container to take home cooking

### French

A folder to hold their exercise book and booklet

A 2<sup>nd</sup> exercise book for their tests (*this book remains in my classroom & lasts until 5<sup>th</sup> yr so it is a one-off purchase*)

### Art

2B/B pencil

A4 spiral bound Daler Rowney art pad

A4 Plastic Folder

Coloured Pencils (Crayola are recommended)

### Irish

We provide our Year 8 pupils with a display booklet (40 pages) at the cost of £1.50.

£1 for a pupil CD

### Maths

1 Hardback book (notebook)

2 blue exercise books

1 plastic zip folder (keeps all books together)

30cm clear plastic ruler

Protractor

Pens (red, black, blue), pencils, rubber & sharpener for Maths

### Music

Although not essential but can be useful, a set of headphones.

### Physical Education:

full abbey PE kit

football boots

trainers

gumshield

**Geography, RE, History, LLW, English, Spanish and ICT** all request the following be brought to class each day:

- Red, blue and black pens
- Pencils and colouring pencils
- Pritt stick, scissors
- Sharpener, eraser, ruler

