

Dear Year 6 Parent/Carer,

As we approach the end of the academic year, we begin to look forward to welcoming our newest Balshavians into the Balshaw's family. Last year we received funding from the Department for Education to host a Summer School for those students currently in Year 6. Unfortunately, the same funding has not been made available this year. Despite this, we as a school recognise the impact and importance in helping our new students settle in and have therefore decided to fund the Summer School ourselves. We will be inviting them to join us for 2 days at the end of the Summer holiday and believe that, alongside the transition day on the 7th July, this will give the pupils the best start to their time with us at Balshaw's C.E. High School.

The Summer School is open to all children who will join us in September, will run on Tuesday 30th August and Wednesday 31st August. This will allow the students to then have the Thursday at home with yourselves as this is a calendared training day in school, before they begin life in Year 7 on Friday 2nd September.

I am sure that reading this letter may have left you with many questions regarding the proposed Summer School:

How much will the Summer School cost?

The Summer School is a fully funded by the School and provided free of charge to all children for both days.

What will my child be doing during the Summer School?

During the Summer School our new Year 7s will get to sample a range of engaging lessons and get to know the school and some of the staff in it. Most importantly they will have a great opportunity to get to know one another and make some new friends with children from other primary schools. They will also take part in a team building visit on the second day to the Anderton Centre at Rivington, where they will be able to join in with some fun team building and 'problem solving' activities, including raft building, canoeing and low ropes. This visit is fully funded by the school and at no cost to parents.

Will my child be with all their friends from Primary School during the Summer School?

We hope to introduce your child into their new tutor groups as soon as possible during the Summer School, whom they will stay with for the next 5 years. Tutor groups are populated taking into consideration the feedback from feeder primary schools with regards to the social interactions of all the children at the Primary, so it is highly likely that your child will be with at least some of the people they get on well with. They will of course have chance to catch up with other friends at breaks and lunches. When your child officially starts Year 7 in September they will spend time with other children outside their tutor groups as their teaching groups will vary from lesson to lesson.

What will my child wear during the Summer School?

On Tuesday 30th August our new Year 7s will wear their new Balshaw's uniforms. School shoes should be worn, but your child should also bring a pair of trainers separately for a light PE activity and in case they wish to play sport at break time. Please ensure that all items of clothing and footwear are labelled with your child's name. On Wednesday 31st August we will be taking our new Year 7s to the Anderton Centre for team building activities. For this day your child will need to wear clothing appropriate for outdoor adventurous activities, trainers, tracksuit pants, jumper and trainers for example, as well as a water proof coat. They will also need a towel and a change of footwear on this day

Will food be provided for my child?

Pupil's need to bring a packed lunch for both days of the Summer school. They are given an opportunity to try the food from our canteen (The restaurant) on their sample day in July, but we are unfortunately unable to offer this as part of the Summer School.

What does my child need to bring with them to the Summer School?

The school will provide most resources needed for the activities planned on the days however your child may wish to bring their own basic stationary, pen, pencil, ruler, rubber etc. in addition to the trainers, packed lunch and drink mentioned above. As mentioned above on the Anderton Centre visit they will need outdoor clothing including a waterproof, change of footwear and a towel.

Why have these dates been chosen?

Following the transition day on the 7th July, we believe that by selecting two days in August, we will give the School chance to properly induct the children into Balshaw's C.E. High School, allowing us to really get to know the children and they us. As they will be the only Year group on site, it will also be a chance to familiarise themselves with their new surroundings. The Year 7s would then have a break on Thursday 1st September, ahead of the full school opening on Friday the 2nd of September.

Is attendance at the Summer School compulsory?

No, attendance at the Summer School is not compulsory, however we would strongly recommend that if at all possible your child should attend. The first few days of settling in are always the most daunting and challenging of transition from Primary to Secondary school, and going through that process as a group, rather than an individual, is much easier for those children. We feel that those who are able to attend will have a great opportunity to spend time building familiarity with each other and the school enabling them to really hit the ground running and have a flying start with their learning in September. However, if it really is not possible for your child to attend any or all of the days we will of course do everything we can to make their own individual transition into the Balshaw's family as quick and easy as we can. Unfortunately, **we would be unable to take students on the second day only.**

Will there be any other Year groups in School during the Summer School?

It is our intention that only Year 6 moving into Year 7 will be present in the building during Summer School, however, we may utilise some of our Transition Leaders as a support to our newcomers. These children are selected by staff at the school with the purpose of helping our new Year 7's settle in.

It is unfortunately not possible for the school to accommodate parental requests for older siblings who are Balshaw's students to also come in during the Summer School.

What happens if my child becomes upset during the day for any reason?

We understand that the transition from Primary to Secondary can be a very challenging time for all children, and some will feel very emotional at the prospect of 'big' school, whereas others will be excited and take to it quite naturally. Experienced pastoral staff will be available on both days of the Summer School including members of the Senior Leadership Team and Heads of House, and these staff will be ready and able to help support your child and will keep you updated if your child is experiencing difficulties. Ultimately, as difficult as it may be, we feel that the transition process will be far easier in an environment where the rest of the School are out of the building and there is more time and support available to our newest additions.

What arrangements will be made to support children with SEND/medical needs?

The school will support all students identified as having SEND/medical needs during the Summer School in the same way it would during regular term time. This will be guided by our experienced learning support team and SENCO in school, as well as in consultation with our feeder Primary Schools.

I hope this clarifies some of the questions that you might have about the exciting opportunity Balshaw's Summer School has to offer. Final details regarding the organisation of the Summer School, such as start and end times, will be confirmed in due course, however should you have any immediate questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me on g.jennings@balshaws.org.uk and I will be happy to clarify.

Please can I ask that you indicate your intention to accept or decline a place at our Transition Summer School by completing the questionnaire via the following link https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=cat8LtPr6028-i5gfJiO_f4Hdj-rC-pFsDeqfbVy6x9UNUFcUTRLUEEyRUIlV1Q5WUVIQUINSUVRONi4u by no later than 3pm on Monday 9th May, in order to support our planning and preparation for the Summer School.

I look forward to meeting your child and welcoming on their first days at Balshaw's, hopefully during our Summer School at the end of August.

Yours sincerely,
Mr G Jennings

Summer School Organiser