

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What do I do to report a pupil absence?

If your child is unwell, please telephone the school to let us know on a daily basis by calling 01925 724118 and selecting Option 1 for the Absence Line.

## What if I have a medical/dental appointment for my child?

We ask parents/carers to make these outside school hours unless it is an emergency or urgent situation. Where they are unavoidable, we ask for a dated, signed note in advance. Please email this to our Attendance Officer: [alison.hales@greatsankey.org](mailto:alison.hales@greatsankey.org).

If you need to take the pupil from school early due to an appointment, remind the pupil of the appointment in the morning and agree a time to collect them. The learner must sign out with the Attendance Officer at the agreed time and await collection. The parent or carer must come onto the school site to collect the pupil at the agreed time.

If you travel to collect the pupil by car, please call reception on 01925 724118 (Option 7) at the vehicle gate. Reception will open the vehicle gate and you will be asked to park in one of the Pupil Collection Bays. The pupil will be sent to your car.

If you travel on foot, please call reception on 01925 724118 (Option 7) at the pedestrian gate. You will be asked to make your way to the Pupil Collection Point. This is signposted and to the right of reception. Your pupil will be sent out to you. Please be aware that there is no shelter at the Pupil Collection Point so we advise you to travel onto the site by car when possible.

If your child is returning to school after their appointment, they need to go through reception to sign themselves back in.

## What if I have an emergency medical appointment or need to speak to somebody urgently?

Please call reception on 01925 724118 and select Option 7. For all non-urgent enquiries, please contact your child's House Officer. You can do this by selecting Option 2 and the name of the House from the sub menu.

## What if my child has forgotten something?

We are currently not accepting any forgotten items into reception unless it is an emergency. If your child has forgotten their lunch, homework or other non urgent items, please let your child's House Office know.

## **When does my child need to arrive in school?**

Registration takes place in form rooms at 8.25am. After this time a student will be marked late in the class register and on School Reports. Arrival after 9.00am legally is recorded as an unauthorised absence unless there are legitimate reasons provided by parent/carers.

## **What is the best way for my son / daughter to get to school?**

We urge all students to walk, cycle or use public transport to get to and from school as part of our promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Travelling to and from school in a car is not desirable. If you do drop off or collect your child from school, please use the designated drop-off zone on the leisure centre car park. Please check the school website regularly as this may change as the LIVEWIRE development progresses.

Please **do not** drop off or collect your child on Barrow Hall Lane as there is very bad congestion at the start and end of the day which is a hazard to all members of the school community and local residents. Cycle sheds are provided to store bikes safely during the school day. We ask that bikes are regularly checked and maintained in good working order.

## **How has my child's form and House been decided?**

At Great Sankey High School we pride ourselves on the quality of our pastoral care and our personalised approach. We work very closely with our primary colleagues to identify the best working groups for your child to be a member of. The emphasis here is on students they work well with, enabling them to learn best, not who their best friend is. High school is very different to primary school; many classes are taught in sets, not as a form and social time is limited to before and after school, breaks and lunchtimes. There are plenty of opportunities for your child to be with their friends but in lessons we want to create the best learning environment to allow each child to thrive. Students will quickly settle and make new friends, while being able to see all their old friends irrespective of their house and form

We have Healthy School status and our catering provides high quality and nutritious options. We actively encourage our students to make healthy choices, not only for the long term health benefits, but also to help them with their concentration levels in lessons during the school day.

## **What is Wisepay?**

This is our online payment system. Students must have a wise pay account to pay for their food and drink. This facility can also be used to pay for lockers, trips, extracurricular activities and for music lessons etc.

## **How do I visit the School?**

Parents/carers considering applying for a place at the school are welcome to visit at any time by appointment through the school office please telephone 01925 724118 or email [enquiries@greatsankey.org](mailto:enquiries@greatsankey.org)

We hold an annual Open Evening for families of students in years 5 and 6 who are researching their next options, this is held in October and provides an opportunity for visitors to see the school buildings and facilities, displays and sample all the subjects and extra-curricular activities offered, as well as an opportunity to meet our students. All members of staff are present around the school to answer any visitors' questions and talks are given by the Headteacher.

Barrowhall College, our sixth form, holds an open evening in November and this is for students in year 11 planning their next steps into FE.

We hold progress evenings throughout the year when Parents are invited in to meet with their child's teachers and also have regular opportunities for parents to visit school and see their child in action through sports activities, drama productions, music concerts, gymnastics displays, dance performances, etc.

## **What is the schools position about my child going on holidays in term time?**

In September 1<sup>st</sup> 2013, changes to the law relating to school attendance came into force. This means that holidays in term time will not be authorised. Full attendance is extremely important for the next five years of your child's education. All subjects follow a lesson by lesson programme that does not allow for repetition and so a lesson missed has been effectively "lost" for ever.

## **What if my Child needs First Aid?**

The school has a large number of staff who are trained and qualified as first aiders. All first aiders have a responsibility to help casualties with common injuries or illnesses and those arising from specific hazards in the school. When necessary they will ensure that an ambulance or professional medical help is called.

If a student is injured or falls ill during the school day, he/she must inform a teacher immediately. The teacher will either send for a first aider or will send the student to the House office. The student will then be assessed, treated (where appropriate) and parents/carers contacted if deemed necessary.

The student will remain under the care of that member of staff until they are fit to resume normal lessons. In the event of there being no prospect of recovery, the student will be kept in the medical room and a parent or carer will be contacted to collect them.

If the injury/illness does not warrant a student being sent home but is a cause of concern to the first aider involved, then the parent of that student will be informed by telephone

If a student needs to be taken to hospital a member of staff will always accompany them and stay with them until a parent arrives.

### **How does the school praise and reward my child?**

The school operates a Rewards Shop. Students are given House points to acknowledge effort, achievement and good conduct. Certificates are awarded for various numbers of points. Points can be cashed in for items in the Rewards Shop and includes stationery items, vouchers for snacks in the canteen, branded GSHS items, vouchers and more. These points contribute to the success of their House too! Outstanding achievement and great improvement is also shared in House 'Celebration' assemblies

### **How does my child have a say in how things are run in school?**

We have a well established student leadership group who are instrumental in the development of Great Sankey High School. Please see the student section of the website for more information.

### **How do parents become involved in school life?**

We have a parent focus group who meet termly – please see “Parent Voice” under “Parents” on our website

### **How are parents informed of their child's progress or of any difficulties children are experiencing in school?**

Each student will be issued with a Student Planner free of charge on his or her first day. The purpose of it is to help a student organise their learning and enable parents / carers to communicate with staff. There is a lot of useful information within the planner so please take a look. There is a double page section for each school week to help students record their homework for the week. There is also a space for parents / carers and staff to communicate by writing notes. Please sign the planner each week so you can keep an eye on your child's homework and general progress.

Parent Progress Evenings at secondary school are very different to those you have experienced in primary school. Your child has a number of different teachers to report on their progress rather than one and it will be your son/daughters responsibility to organise your appointments. Most appointments are for 5-10 minutes and we advise you discuss the importance with your child so they make as many appointments as possible within the time you have available. It is always a good idea to bring your child with you to progress evening; this is not only so they can guide you round the building to all your appointments, but so they can hear for themselves what their teachers have to say – they have the responsibility of taking steps to improve and more importantly need to hear how well they are doing!

Please check the school calendar for the dates.

### **How does the school deal with bullying?**

Neither physical nor verbal harassment of another member of the school community will be tolerated. All staff will take immediate action with any case of bullying. A school Anti Bullying policy is in place which is available on the School website

## **Teaching and Learning**

### **How many students are there in a class?**

A form group will have between 25-27 students. Class sizes vary in different subjects and sets. Some of our specialist teaching rooms like Design technology have a class size limit for health and safety reasons and some top sets will be large (up to 32 students) while lower sets could be smaller due to the level of support required. We ensure that the learning environment supports teaching and learning and that students who require any additional support are placed in the right classes to receive this.

### **What foreign language will my child study?**

As a school we offer French, German and Spanish and which language your child studies will depend on their House. In September 2016 Austen and Bannister are studying Spanish, Newton and Parks and German are studying German, Stephenson and Thompson French. This is rotated each year.

### **What provision is made for gifted and talented pupils?**

As a school we have high expectations for all our students and our High prior attainers are closely tracked to ensure they meet and exceed expectations. We have a programme to prepare students for Oxbridge applications and offer additional opportunities such as talks by “Speakers for Schools” to stretch and challenge our students.

## **What extra-curricular opportunities are available to my child?**

As a school we champion the Arts and have a very dynamic curriculum offer in this area. School productions, Dance shows, Art exhibitions and Music performances are very well supported and extra-curricular clubs include Dance Club, Art Club, Drama Club, Media Club, Sankey Sankeys, Swing Band, Rock Band, Junior Strings, and many more.

WE have a wide range of after school clubs that allow students to explore STEM subjects further such as our STEM Club and VEX Robotics Club. The school has a huge range of sporting clubs and teams and our students compete nationally.

Please refer to the extra-curricular timetable under students for more information

## **How and when are instrumental music lessons organised?**

We offer a wide range of instrumental lessons and these are co-ordinated by Mrs Meredith, Head of Music.

We've got a wide range of instruments to choose from:

Brass – Trumpet, Cornet, Trombone, Euphonium, Baritone, Tenor Horn, Tuba

Woodwind – Clarinet, Saxophone, Flute, Oboe, Bassoon

Strings – Violin, Viola

Keyboard – Keyboard, Piano (classical, jazz and popular)

Percussion – Drum Kit and Classical

Guitar – Electric, Acoustic and Bass

Vocal (all styles)

Lessons are scheduled on a rotational basis to avoid clashing with the same subject lesson each week. If your child would like instrumental lessons they should see a member of the Music department.

## **What advice and information is available to students around careers, further education and training?**

The student section of the website has a section about Careers with links to external sources of help and advice. Mrs Anders leads our CIAG provision in school and co-ordinates talks and events throughout the year. We also have an independent careers adviser Mrs Conor in school every Thursday.

# SEND

## **What classroom provision is made for pupils with special educational needs?**

Provision for pupils at Great Sankey High School with special educational needs and/or disability is the responsibility of the school as a whole with specialist guidance from the SENDCO, the Governing Body and the Headteacher. All teaching staff are teachers of pupils with special educational needs.

## **How does the school decide if a child needs extra support?**

The class teacher's assessment and experience of working with the student, details of previous progress and attainment, comparisons with peers and national data, specific assessment tasks and tests as well as the views of parents and students is used to identify needs. Advice may also come from external support services

## **What type of support and how much support will my child get?**

Information gathered is then used to develop interventions and adaptations to the environment and to the curriculum. Again advice from outside agencies including schools and families specialist services, the educational psychologist, behaviour support, the emotional health and wellbeing team and speech and language therapists may be accessed. Class teachers work alongside the SENDCO to plan the most appropriate strategies and interventions.

For more information please refer to the "SEND Information Report" under About Us on the website.

## **If my child needs medication in school, how is this managed?**

Please refer to our medications conditions plan under downloads in the parents section of the website.

A Medical Conditions Plan is sent to all parents/carers of students with a long-term medical condition:

- at the start of the school year
- at enrolment
- when a diagnosis is first communicated to the school.
- when the parent/carer identifies that they wish to review the plan

This will allow us to ensure the safe storage of medication and will detail how and when any medication needs to be taken.

Please contact school if you have any further questions.

The parent guide (under downloads in the parents section of the website will give more information too)