



Frequently Asked Questions

It is a really strange experience for parents and students to move from a setting where all eventualities were understood and where to look for information if clarification was needed was also known. The following few pages will hopefully answer a lot of your questions – they are in alphabetical order for ease.

Attendance – What do I do if my child is unable to attend school?

It is a legal requirement that pupils attend school regularly. Please contact school as early as possible on the first day of absence if unable to attend. If your child does not arrive in school and you have not informed us then you will be notified via our 'Schoolcomms' system. It is crucial that pupils attend school to ensure that they do not fall behind. Also an irregular attendance pattern has an impact on the social aspect of school when non-attendees can begin to feel isolated from their peers. We monitor attendance weekly and work closely with our Educational Welfare and Student Support Officer so that we can encourage 100% attendance as much as possible. We may ask for medical evidence if attendance is a concern.

Appointments – What happens if my child needs to attend an appointment during the school day?

It would be better if appointments can be made outside of school hours, but we know that in the case of hospital appointments this is not always possible. On the day the appointment occurs please send written consent that your child needs to leave school – where possible with a copy of the appointment (where this has been made digitally this will not be possible). Students will then be able to show this to the member of staff when they need to leave lesson. It is then vital that students sign out at the pupil reception on the site they will be leaving. Then, if returning to school students must sign back in again.

Drinks - Can students have a drinks bottle in school?

Pupils are allowed to carry a water bottle with them to ensure that they are properly hydrated during the day. Water fountains are located in the Dining Halls on both sites where bottles can be refilled out of lesson time. In hot weather we would encourage students to bring additional water bottles with them to school. **'Energy' drinks and large bottles of soft drinks are not allowed in school**; they are not considered to be healthy.

Extra Curricular Activities – What can my child get involved with at school?

There is an abundance of activities on offer including: music groups and sports teams, reading club, spelling club, computer club, History club, Drama club and lots more.... These will be advertised in form time, displayed in pupil reception and be available to view on the school website. Pupils who would like to start a club are advised to speak with form tutors in the first instance; they will advise on whom to contact.

Holidays – Can I take my family on holiday during term time?

No – holidays will not be authorised. If you have no alternative to take your child out of school for a holiday because of your work place determining your holiday then please contact the school with the evidence to support this.

Home-School Communication

How can I best communicate with school?

First point of contact is your child's form tutor – they will then be able to help you directly or direct your query to the right person.

How will school communicate with me?

We use a system called Schoolcomms. The contact information that you provide allows us to send school information to you by email and text, helping us to ensure that you receive important communications quickly and securely. We find that this an immediate and cost effective way of communicating with you so please let school know if any of these contact details change. To make sure that your email provider doesn't send communications to your 'spam' folder we advise that you add the school email address to your safe sender list. This email address is : SC3714606a@schoolcomms.com

School also uses social media to make you aware of whole school news.



www.mcauley.org.uk



facebook.com/McAuleySch



twitter.com/McAuleySch



instagram.com/mcauleyhighschool

Will I receive text messages with information?

The school does send text messages to parents/carers for a number of reasons. For example:

- Provide urgent or important announcements (e.g. school closure, transport issues)
- Reminders about important events or dates
- Alert you to the fact that your child is not in school/late to school

Please keep school up to date with and mobile number changes as and when they happen so you don't miss crucial communications.

Is there an app that school uses for communication?

There is and it is called 'School Gateway' and can be downloaded free of charge. For families where there are two parents, whether living together or apart, it is crucially important that you provide us with contact mobile numbers and email addresses for both parents that have parental responsibility. Our systems will then send emails/texts to both parents.

Do I need to check my child's bag for letters?

We will send all general letters to parents/carers by email, we request that if this email address changes you let us know to ensure you don't miss important information that is sent out. If you haven't provided school with an email address you will receive a paper copy of the letter. Please note that parents who receive information this way will receive their information later than others.

How will I know if homework has been set?

Students receive a planner at the start of the year. This is something they should have with them everyday – they fit in a blazer pocket for ease of carrying. In the planner students will have their timetable and will record any homework that is set. Please check and sign your child's planner once a week, it is a vital tool in the home school communication.

How will I find out about my child's progress?

During the course of each year you will receive SARs (student Assessment Reports). This document will give you information about how your child is performing in each subject academically as well as effort and attitude. It will also show you how many green cards they have been awarded as well as red cards and how this relates to the year group as a whole.

Will I have the opportunity to speak with my child's teachers?

Parents evenings are held each year, your child will be asked to make appointments with teachers and we would ask that these meetings are kept to 5 minutes. During the year if you have concerns teachers can be emailed.

What do I do if I'm not receiving communications from the school?

If you have any queries regarding home/school communication, please email schooloffice@mcauley.org.uk or phone the school on 01302 537396 and we will be happy to help.

Medicine – My child needs to take medicine in school – where do they go?

If at all possible we would ask the medicines are taken at home, however we know this can't always be done. The school will only administer medicines that have been prescribed by a doctor. Students should take the medicine to pupil reception where the medication is locked away. When the medicine needs to be taken students return to pupil reception and are monitored whilst the medicine is taken.

Students should not carry any medication on them, even 'over the counter medications' such as Paracetamol. The only exception to this is an asthma inhaler or an epipen.

If you have any specific questions about your child and medication please get in touch with Mrs Myers.

Mobiles Phones - I want my child to take their phone to school in case they need to contact me on their journey to and from school is this ok?

This is a common reason for children having a phone with them and this is not a problem, however all phones should be turned off and put away during the school day. Pupils will be expected to abide by these rules; they are there for their protection as well as to help them focus on learning. Please see the Mobile Phone policy on the school website for more information.

School Meals

What food is available during the school day?

There are a number of options for students to buy food during the day.

The Pods – these are located outside on both sites and students can buy 'easy grab' food. Pods are open at break time and lunch time and offer food such as potato wedges, pizza, chicken nuggets, waffles, garlic bread, sausage rolls and other options are added/changed every week.

Dinner Halls – There are 2 dinner halls on Acacia Road site where Y7 students will go to have their lunch breaks. At lunch time students can choose from :

- Pasta pots – pasta can be topped with a sauce and/or cheese, prices vary on toppings selected.
- Sandwiches and Paninis – A variety of sandwiches, rolls and paninis are available every day with a selection of fillings, meat and vegetarian options.
- ‘Grab and Go’ – these are a selection of ‘smaller’ bites that include; pizza, calzone, chicken burgers, chicken wings, jacket potato, tortilla chips and many more.
- Meal of the Day – a set meal option each day which allows students to have a main course and pudding.
- Drinks – drinks are available at all food serving areas, water, cartons of juice and sugar free fruit fizz and milkshakes are all available.

How do I pay for my child’s food?

We use a cashless system in school and students pay using their thumbprints to authorise payments. These thumbprints will be taken in the first week. You will need to register with ‘SchoolGateway’ after the 1st September to make online payments. To register you will need to provide us with an email address and mobile phone number. When this has been done you will need to:

- Go to www.schoolgateway.com and select ‘New User’
- Enter the email address and mobile telephone number you have registered with the school
- The system will send you a PIN code to your phone
- Enter the PIN code and your account will be activated.

We would encourage you to pay by bank transfer directly into your child’s lunch money account. This avoids the need for your child to carry money around with them. You can also use debit/credit cards. Please use the direct transfer option if possible. It is free and it avoids the school being charged a fee (which it does for every debit/credit card transaction!). If this is not an option there are payment machines in school that students can add ‘cash’ to their account.

SEND – I am concerned about my child’s learning relating to a special educational need, who can I speak to?

If this was something that had been identified at primary school then the information will have been shared as part of the transition process. If you would like to seek clarification please contact our SENDCO Mrs M Keane.

Transport – How will my child get to school?

Many of our students get a bus to school. To be entitled to a reduced fare of 80p a bus journey students will need a Mega Travel Pass which proves that they are under 16 and live in South Yorkshire can be applied for at : www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/megatravelpass

Transport to and from school is provided by a number of bus operators and managed by South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE). Details of available services, timetables and bus operator contact information are available from the Travel South Yorkshire ‘On Board’ website: www.travelsouthyorkshire.com/onboard