

Frequently Asked Questions...

The change from Primary to Secondary school is an exciting process, but it is also common to feel uncertain and nervous about the changes ahead. This is very normal, and we would expect all students starting at Barnwell to feel a bit nervous.

If your child is feeling very worried or anxious about moving to Secondary School, then talk to their Head of College about it.

Here is a list of questions that we are frequently asked at induction. You may find it useful to go through them. If there are any other questions that you might have then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Parent FAQs

Who is responsible for Transition at Barnwell?

Our Head of Transition is Mr Reavell. He works closely with the primary schools to ensure a smooth transition to Barnwell. In year transfers are dealt with by Mrs Latta and the pastoral team

How will my child know where to go on the first day?

Plenty of staff will be on hand to meet your child outside the school and direct them to the appropriate place. Our Year 7 tutors will also be there to escort students.

What is a tutor group?

Every student at Barnwell has a tutor group. Your child will spend the first part of each day with their tutor group which will have approximately 30 students in. The tutor's role is to help your child with their work, and they are the first person your child should go to if they are worried about anything.

During tutor time we follow a specific programme of activities which are different each day, for example reading, cultural capital quizzes and assemblies. During tutor time each day tutors check tutees are prepared for the day ahead by checking uniform and equipment. The tutor also monitors attendance, rewarding those with good attendance with reward points and following concerns with parents in the first instance and then Head of College where applicable.

Where can my child find out about extra-curricular clubs?

There will be information in tutor rooms and in assemblies. We also have an [extra-curricular link](#) on our website.

Will they get lockers?

Lockers are allocated on a first come, first served basis. There is a £10 charge for the entirety of the time students are at Barnwell.

My child has additional needs. What extra help will they get?

Inclusion is a core value at Barnwell School and we have very high expectations of all our students, whatever their additional needs. Our SENCO will liaise with the SENCO of your child's primary school to make sure that we understand your child's individual needs and to plan for any support that needs to be put in place to allow your child to access a full and varied curriculum. PSP's (Pastoral Support Programme) and access plans are an additional means of support for those students who have needs outside of SEN.

When will I be able to buy school uniform?

Our uniform is supplied by a specialist uniform company called Kids Connection. Details of uniform ordering can be found on our website via [this link](#).

What happens if my child is absent from school?

Excellent attendance is key to a student's success, both academically and socially. We expect all students to meet our minimum target for attendance of 95%. If a student's attendance falls below 95%, we meet with home to offer support and to explain the consequences of a failure to improve. We work closely with Hertfordshire County Council Education Welfare Service to make sure that parents and carers fulfil their statutory obligation to send their child to school regularly.

What happens if my child feels unwell during the day?

If your child feels unwell during the day they should go to the medical room at break or lunch, or if in a lesson, ask their teacher if they can go there. The medical team will discuss how your child is feeling and ascertain if it is necessary to contact you.

What should we do if we do not have access to the internet or IT facilities?

We have our library which has excellent computing facilities available for students to use at break, lunch and after school. We also offer short term support for parents/carers that are unable to afford IT equipment for their child. Please contact communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk if you require support.

What should I do if my child has not been able to complete their homework for a genuine reason?

Write a note or send an e-mail to the class teacher so they know your child has a genuine reason.

What should I do if I am concerned about the homework being set for my child?

In the first instance contact the class teacher for that subject. If it is a wider or persistent concern contact the Head of College.

Which subjects are taught in ability groups?

In Year 7 Maths and Science are taught in ability groups.

How long can my child stay at school in the evenings?

School ends at 3pm but the school building will be open until 4.00pm for after school activities and homework club. Students can remain until then provided there is an adult available to supervise.

How will students be placed in sets.

As part of the transition process, Mr Reavell will have detailed conversations with your child's teachers regarding their ability based on teacher assessments they have already done in school. We ask teachers for information on your child's reading, writing and spelling as well as maths data. Students will initially be placed in group based on this information.

When will my child and I know which form they will be in?

Your child will be put into their form group on Transition Day.

Student FAQ's

Do we have assemblies?

We have regular assemblies. You will have an assembly once a week with your Head of College and Senior Team. These can also be delivered virtually.

Will I be in the same tutor group as my friends?

We try to put people in a tutor group with people some of their friends but likely not all of them. We do not want you to feel isolated, so we ask who you get on with. We use that information to help us put together the form groups. When you are at secondary school you have lots of different lessons in different teaching groups so you will meet lots of new people and make lots of new friends too.

What if I am the only person from my Primary School that is going to Barnwell?

This sometimes happens. What we try to do is to put children who come to us as the only person from their Primary School together, so there will be people in your tutor group in the same situation that you can make friends with. We find that children quickly make new friends at school and your tutor will look after you and check that everything is going well for you.

Is the work really difficult?

The work at secondary school is a continuation of what you have been learning at Primary. Some of the learning will be a recap of work you have already done at Primary. The teachers have planned the curriculum to build upon your learning at Primary so that it is both accessible but also gives you the right level of challenge.

What happens if you are late to school or are late to a lesson?

If you are walking to school you will need to be organised so that you are not late to school. You could try timing how long it takes from your house to school. Many students arrange to meet friends on route. You need to be in the school building by 8.35am every day.

If you are taking the bus, you do not need to worry if the bus is late – this is not your fault and you will not be punished if your bus is late.

Your tutor keeps a record of your attendance and punctuality in school. Students should aim to have an attendance of 95% or above.

Being late to lessons may happen sometimes in your first couple of weeks as you get used to finding your way around the school buildings. If you get lost, then other staff or older students will only be happy to help you find your way. After a couple of weeks, we will expect you to be used to the school and you will need to be on time for your lessons.

What happens if you get lost when you first arrive at Barnwell?

Although Barnwell is a large secondary school so you will soon find your way around. Your timetable will have the room and the subject on it to support you finding your way. You will have a map and orienteering session on your first day of school to help you get around the building. The school will seem a lot bigger than your primary school, but you will soon get used to it and will be able to find your way around.

Is it true that secondary school teachers are really strict?

We have high standards at Barnwell and expect students to behave really well and wear their uniform correctly. The main difference at secondary school is that you will have a lot

more teachers because you have specialist teachers for each subject. You will find that we have the same high expectations for behaviour, attitude and work.

What are detentions given for?

Detentions are given for people that do not follow the rules within school. These take place at the end of the school day. The vast majority of our students do not get detentions and visitors to Barnwell often comment on how well-behaved students are within school.

How much homework will you get?

This really depends on the teacher and the subject. Your teachers know the appropriate amount to set you in Year 7. They will also set the homework through Show My Homework and they will always tell you how long to spend on the homework and what date it is due in.

Will we be in sets?

For some subjects, you will be placed in sets. Other subjects you will be taught in mixed ability groups. Where students are taught in sets, we take account of lots of different things including teachers' assessments from your Primary school. The sets can and do change throughout the year, so you are not stuck in the set you are in from the start of the year.

Are there bullying issues at Barnwell?

Every school has to deal with bullying of some form or another and we would be wrong to say it never happens. However, bullying is very rare at Barnwell and is mostly to do with fallings out and friendship groups. We use a repair and rebuild approach when dealing with issues of falling out of friendship groups. The Head of College will deal with issues in the first instance which follows a structured process which parents are kept informed of, including the outcome.

Nevertheless, Barnwell takes bullying very seriously and always deals and resolves issues that take place. Bullying often takes place secretly. Students see their tutor every day and therefore have the opportunity in a safe forum with a member of staff to communicate their worries. Parents are also encouraged to communicate any concerns or worries of this nature to the tutor in the first instance, who will seek advice and hand over to the Head of College if this is deemed applicable. We also have a dedicated [online form](#) so students can contact our team for support should they feel they are unable to do this in person.

Who do I go to if I have a problem at Barnwell?

Your tutor is the first person you should speak to if you have any issues at school. You will also have a Head of College who is solely responsible for your college. We also have

members of staff responsible for safeguarding in school who are able to help you with your worries, concerns or moments of crisis.

Do you need to bring in lunch money every day?

Children all have an account and parents can pre-load this account with credit so you don't need money to buy your school lunch. You pay for your school lunch through this account either through your fingerprint or putting in a pin code. You will be shown how all of this works as part of your induction into the school.

How will our parents know how we are getting on?

We have a computer system known as 'SIMS' where staff record good things you are doing and any negative things that happen too. Your parents can get this information as soon as it goes on through an app called 'School Gateway'. This means your parents always know what has been happening in your school day. We also give out rewards for students who get lots of positive comments – we call these PRIDE Points.

What are the rules on mobile phones?

Students are not allowed to use their phones in the building. Mobile phones that are seen or heard will be confiscated and a sanction will be issued.

Where are the toilets?

This is a very popular question. You will be given a tour on your first day of school and you will be shown where all of the toilets are. We have multiple toilets on site.

What if I get stuck doing work?

Your teacher and tutor are always there to help you. If you are stuck with something in class or with your home learning you can speak to your teacher or tutor and ask them to explain it again. Your fellow students are also on hand so don't forget to ask them too.

What sports teams are there at Barnwell School for Year 7?

There is a whole range of sports on offer at Barnwell for you to take part in. Including; Football, Rugby, Netball, Table Tennis, Basketball, Trampolining, Athletics and Cricket.

How long is break and lunchtime?

Morning break is 20 minutes, and lunchtime is 40 minutes. Year 7's in their first two weeks will have 10 minutes extra at lunch.