



Welcome to Princess Helena College



PHC

Hitchin
Independent School

New Parent Information Guide

Welcome from the Head

Starting a new school brings much excitement and often many questions; we want to help you and your son/daughter to adjust as easily as possible to life at Princess Helena College.

In this booklet, you will find information about school life, which will enable you and your son/daughter to feel part of our community very quickly.

Your son/daughter's progress will be overseen on a day-to-day basis by their form tutor and Head of Key Stage 3, Miss Prosser. Throughout our students' time at school, they are guided and supported as we seek to fulfil our aim to inspire, encourage and enable every student to:

- Realise their academic potential and achieve their highest grades in public examinations.
- Develop strengths and skills through a wide range of activities and opportunities outside the classroom.
- Think independently and grow in confidence, courage and compassion
- Take responsibility for themselves and others and develop a sense of service in the community.

We look forward to welcoming you and your son/daughter to PHC and to working with you over the coming years.

With best wishes,

Mrs Sarah Davis, Head of Princess Helena College



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Recommended Academic Equipment

Students will require the following basic equipment:

- Pens – blue or black
- 30cm ruler
- Small, clear plastic, semi-circular protractor (parents are advised not to purchase expensive geometry sets as many of the items are not suitable for school use)
- Locking compass e.g. Maped Study Stop or Helix Locking Compass
- Pencil sharpener
- Soft rubber
- Safe scissors
- Coloured pencils
- Pencil case
- Calculator

Extended School Day

We aim to offer students every opportunity to develop their potential to the full. Our extended school day offers students the chance to stay in school for prep and extra activities.

Day students may be collected from 4pm onwards although the vast majority remain in school until 6pm to take part in an activity or attend supervised prep. PHC Transport departs at 6pm.

PHC Transport

For full details of the mini-bus service we offer including pick-up and drop off points, please contact Ms Esther Vanmali on 01462 443 874 or email esther.vanmali@phchitchin.com

Contacting the School

Late Arrival / Early Departure:

All students should arrive in school by 8.20am. Any student arriving after this time must sign in at reception. Similarly, any student leaving school before the end of the school day at 4pm must sign out at reception.

Access Control Entry System

We operate an Access Control Entry System for increased security. On their first day at school your son/daughter will be provided with a swipe card which they must remember to bring with them every day. There is a charge for replacement cards.

Absence

A telephone call/answerphone message or email to the school office (01462 432100 / office@phchitchin.com), on the first day of absence, should be made by 8.45am for morning registration and 1.45pm for afternoon registration. An absence letter or email to school, addressed to their form tutor must accompany your son/daughter on return to school. This is a legal requirement. Requests for absence for medical/dental appointments should be made to the form tutor in advance, where possible.

All requests for absence from school for exceptional circumstances should be made to the Head.

Any absence from school, however short can affect your son/daughter's academic progress.

Permission to be off PE

If your son/daughter is unable to participate in a PE lesson, please email jay.szwajback@phchitchin.com

Regular Communication with Parents

Our website, www.phchitchin.com is an invaluable tool for all parents.

You will find information such as news from academic departments, the weekly menu, the calendar including amendments and downloads for parents.

In the event of bad weather or an unusual situation, key messages are posted there.

Informal updates and photos are also posted via our Twitter (@PHCPreston) and Facebook accounts, so please follow us.



Information outlining forthcoming events and other notices associated with the day-to-day running of the school is also sent by our school system iSams.

Mrs Sarah Davis sends out a fortnightly newsletter to parents which will contain all the latest news from the school.

iSams Parent Portal

The Parent Portal includes the following information:

- Reports and Grade Cards;
- Timetables;
- School Calendar;
- School Policies;

Login details will be sent to you once your son/daughter has started school.

Help and Support at PHC – Academic and Pastoral

Heads of Key Stages

Miss Prosser is Head of Key Stage 3, overseeing Years 7, 8 and 9

Ms Stanford is Head of Key Stage 4, overseeing Years 10 and 11

Mrs Chambers is Head of Key Stage 5, overseeing Years 12 and 13

Form Tutors and Mentors

Form tutors are an important point of contact for students and they will meet for registration twice a day. Your son/daughter's form tutor or another member of staff will also act as their mentor, playing an important role in supporting them academically and pastorally on a day-to-day basis.

Pastoral Support

Ms Rachel Penberthy is Head of Boarding and DSL, she provides pastoral support to all students.



Learning Support

Extra support is provided for students who have specific learning difficulties. The SEN department also provide guidance on study and revision skills for all students.

Reporting on Progress

Details of progress are reported as follows:

- A written report commenting on academic and extra-curricular achievements. This is published on the iSams Parent Portal.
- Half term grade cards, where appropriate, outlining attitude and attainment in each subject. These are published on the iSams Parent Portal.
- Parent/Teacher evening

Uniform

Years 7 - 11

Girls

- School blazer is compulsory but the navy school jumper is optional.
- White long/short sleeve fitted open necked blouse.
- Tartan school skirt (not rolled up at the waist)/navy school trousers.
- Navy opaque tights or navy long/short socks (no trainer liners).
- Years 10 and 11 may wear natural/nude tights.
- Black flat leather shoes (no trainers).
- Hair should be natural in colour and tied back if long.
- No make-up or nail polish to be worn.
- A single stud earring can be worn in each ear with a simple ring and a discreet necklace.

Boys

- School blazer is compulsory but the navy school jumper is optional.
 - White long/short sleeve shirt.
 - Navy socks.
 - School tie (to hang level with the waist band).
 - Black leather shoes (no trainers).
 - Hair should be natural in colour, no longer than collar length or shorter than a No.2.
- A single stud earring can be worn in each ear with a simple ring and a discreet necklace.



Mobile Phones

Years 7 and 8 hand in their phones during morning registration. Year 9 may keep their phones but they are not allowed to be used at school. Should a Year 9 student need to use their phone as an emergency, they should do so in reception after obtaining permission.

Laptops

Students in Year 9 and above are allowed to bring a laptop/ iPad into school if they wish, however it will be their responsibility. Students will need to discuss with individual teachers regarding using them in lessons. Some students may use laptops in KS3 as agreed with the learning support staff.

Behaviour

We expect all students to abide by our expectations of behaviour: good behaviour is rewarded. Please see the Behaviour and Rewards and Sanctions Policies, which can be found on www.phchitchin.com, for further information.

E-Safety

E-Safety is something we take very seriously and we actively promote e-safety with students, staff and parents and have a programme of awareness which is taught through PSHE, form times and assemblies.

You are asked to discuss the school's Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP) regarding use of the internet, email, images and mobile phones with your child, before they sign it.



School Meals

We provide tasty and nutritious meals for all our students. A weekly menu is available on the school website. The Catering Committee, with students and staff, meet regularly to feedback opinions and comments relating to the school meals.

Morning Break

10.15 to 10.35 am - A drink and fruit in the dining hall

Lunch

12.20 – 1.15pm - Hot and cold dishes including vegetarian options, as well as a salad buffet, sandwiches and a choice of dessert and fruit are available daily

Afternoon Tea

4 - 4.30pm - Juice, cake and fruit is provided for all students if they wish.

Supper

6.30 pm - Choice of hot and cold dishes and salad with a vegetarian or meat option



Any day student wishing to stay for supper should arrange this by contacting our boarding house on 01462 443 884 or email boarding@phchitchin.com. A charge will be added to your school accounts.

Our catering staff will make every effort to cater for individual needs – please contact your son/daughters Form Tutor if they have specific dietary requirements and these will be passed on to the Catering Manager.

We operate a “nut free” policy; our kitchen uses no nuts or nut products and we ask for your support and understanding in ensuring that any food items your child may bring to school are entirely nut free.

Pastoral Care

PHC is characterised by mutual respect between the students and the teachers: everyone is expected to accept responsibility for their own actions and to behave with care and consideration towards others.



Buddies

All Year 7 students and new entrants in other year groups are allocated a Buddy who helps them settle in and supports them throughout the year.

Medical Arrangements

The Surgery is staffed by the School Nurse. She can be contacted on 01462 443893 or 07775 742705. In addition, we have a number of trained first aiders in school.

If your son/daughter needs to take any medication during the school day, this must be left with the Nurse for safe storage. It should be in its original packaging and clearly marked with the name of the student and dosage instructions. Students are not allowed to have tablets or any other medicines at school in their own keeping.

Co-Curricular Activities

House System

The school has a strong “House” system. Each student belongs to one of three houses: York (blue), Gloucester (yellow) and Windsor (red). Students participate in a variety of House events including music, sport and drama. Points awarded go towards the House Trophy ‘The Cockerill Trophy’ which is awarded to the winning house on Speech Day.



Individual Lessons

We have a wide variety of activities designed to extend the core curriculum and to provide an opportunity for personal development. The following optional activities are available to individual students at an additional charge:

- Instrumental/Vocal music (private lessons)
- Speech & Drama (LAMDA lessons)
- Dance (private lessons)

Please note that these lessons occur during the school day and students are therefore likely to miss academic lessons. Every effort is made by staff to rotate their timetable so that students will not miss the same lesson consecutively week after week. Students taking GCSE and A Level examinations are prioritised over lower-school students for slots which fall between academic lessons

Fees for the activities are reviewed annually and published on the activity sign up form. Should you decide to discontinue a fee-paying activity a half term's notice in writing must be sent to the teacher concerned and the accounts department. Fees in lieu of notice will be payable where this notice is not given.

Weekend Activities

All students are welcome to join in weekend activities. Please contact boarding@phchitchin.com if you wish your son/daughter to take part in any of the activities on offer and costs will be added to your account.

Co-Curricular

Our co-curricular activities allow our students to develop interpersonal and practical skills that will stand them in good stead later in life and also to take the chance to broaden and deepen their wider interests.

We encourage students to try out new activities, as well as improving and expanding existing passions.

Mentors support students in maintaining a healthy balance between academic studies and co-curricular activities.



Sport

We want all students to enjoy their sporting activities; for some students this will be in lessons and during club sessions and for others, it will mean commitment to team practices and fixtures.

Arrangements for both are published in the calendar. Some local matches are not confirmed until the beginning of the term so there may be some additions.

Team lists are published in advance on the PE notice board. Some matches will take place at the weekends. If the weather is bad, you should contact @phcsport to check if the match is still on.

PHC Parents' Association

The school benefits enormously from the work of this dynamic and committed group of parents who organise social events and help raise funds. Parents benefit from the opportunity to socialise with parents of their son/daughter's friends and to be involved in school life.

Please contact the PHCPA via phcpa@phchitchin.com.

Governors

A full list of the governing body can be found on the school website, www.phchitchin.com

The Chairman of Governors, Mr David Prosser and Vice Chairman of Governors, Mrs Louise Smith, can be reached via the Clerk to the Governors, Mrs A McCambridge c/o Princess Helena College, School Lane, Preston, Hitchin, Herts. SG4 7RT or 01462 432 100.

School Policies

These are available on the website and hard copies may be requested from the school office by emailing office@phchitchin.com.



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Useful Contacts

If you have an academic query regarding the progress, their lessons, prep or a general academic request please contact the head of department on their email below.

Art and Design

Miss Lucy Prosser, lucy.prosser@phchitchin.com

Business Studies & Economics

Mrs Rachel Poston, rachel.poston@phchitchin.com

Dance

Mrs Elizabeth Newland, elizabeth.newland@phchitchin.com

Drama

Mrs Elizabeth Chambers, elizabeth.chambers@phchitchin.com

English

Mr Alexander Garner, alexander.garner@phchitchin.com

Geography

Mrs Sylvia Hutchinson, sylvia.hutchinson@phchitchin.com

History

Dr Stewart Faulkes, stewart.faulkes@phchitchin.com

Maths

Mrs Ruth Key, ruth.key@phchitchin.com

Media Studies

Mrs Elizabeth Chambers, elizabeth.chambers@phchitchin.com

Modern Foreign Languages

Mrs Wahiba Mani-Saada, wahiba.manisaaba@phchitchin.com

Music

Mr Jonathan Ingam, jonathan.ingam@phchitchin.com

Physical Education

Mr Jay Szwajbak, jay.szwajbak@phchitchin.com

Psychology

Mrs Daljit Lall, daljit.lall@phchitchin.com

Religious Studies

Ms Hannah Stanford, hannah.stanford@phchitchin.com