



## Archbishop Holgate's School Virtual Open Evening

The following questions and answers are from Archbishop Holgate's School two live webinar sessions which took place at 6.00pm and 7.30pm on Wednesday 7 October.

### Questions about the curriculum and setting

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**Q** *Is it true that what language option you choose determine which form you are in so you will have to choose the same language as the 3 friends you put down?*

A *Language choices will lead to students being in a specific band. For example, A and B band will study French. We give families the opportunity to give a language preference.*

**Q** *What spoken and what computer languages do you teach?*

A *We have French, Spanish and German available for study up to A Level. We work with York ISSP to offer Latin GCSE to a small number of students. We teach coding in our Computing GCSE and also as part of our extra-curricular offer.*

**Q** *What do you do in design and technology?*

A *Design and Technology looks at lots of things, including graphics, resistant materials, CAD design and more. Students design, make and evaluate a range of products.*

**Q** *So for computing, are they learning any or all of these languages Scratch, Python, MakeCode? Any of these before GCSE?*

A *Students will cover Scratch and Python as part of their KS3 IT lessons.*

**Q** *I know the school is predominately a Google technology school, but can you advise if students can access Microsoft Minecraft Education whilst at AHS?*

A *This is not currently covered through IT classes, but it is available as part of extra curricular.*

**Q** *Do you stream classes?*

A *Year 7 are streamed for Maths. In Year 8, students are streamed for Maths and English and from Year 9 onwards, students are streamed for Maths, English, Science and RE.*

**Q** *Do you have any laser cutters and 3D printers in DT?*

A *We have a range of CAD programmes and 3D printer for you to experiment with.*

**Q** *Do we do coding? If so what years?*

A *Coding is included in the GCSE Computing scheme of work. Mr Appleyard, Head of IT and Computing provides some further detail in his curriculum video.*

**Q** *Do we get to choose the language we will learn?*

A *You can - there is a choice of Spanish, French and German.*

**Q** *Can children take Art and Design or are they made to choose only one?*

A *Students study Art, Textiles, Food Technology and Design Technology in Year 7 and 8. In Year 9, students access all these subjects through the Arts Award. At GCSE, students can choose any of these subjects, with the additional choice of Engineering.*

- Q** *What do you mean when you stream classes? Are students still in school for this, or at home?*
- A *Sorry - by streaming, I am referring to when we group students based on their current academic progress and attainment.*
- Q** *Do we choose what languages we do?*
- A *You will be given the opportunity to pick between Spanish, French and German.*
- Q** *In science do we get to make things explode? Like coke and Mentos?*
- A *If you watch the Science video on the website you will see an example of an explosion! There are lots of opportunities to carry out practical work in Science.*
- Q** *Do we have to choose one language, or can we do several?*
- A *Students choose one language in Year 7, but have the option of choosing another language at GCSE.*
- Q** *How do you choose which pupils have the opportunity to study Latin and when do they get the chance to pick up a 2nd and/or 3rd language if they want to study all the languages? You did not really answer whether the language choice in Y7 has to be the same as the 3 friends they put down or they won't be in a form with any of those friends. I'd be grateful if you could clarify this please.*
- A *Each band does a different language, so yes, they will need to do the same language as their friends if they want to be in the same form. They can pick up additional languages at GCSE. Latin is run through the York Independent State School Partnership. Every year, students from AHS access this. This begins in Year 8 - details go out around May time and students then attend a meeting to register their interest and take an assessment prior to starting the course - no prior knowledge of Latin is required.*
- Q** *How do you stream students for Maths in Yr7? Is this from Yr6 SATs or from Yr7 assessments?*
- A *We take information from all of our primary school and use the Yr6 SATs for this.*
- Q** *What PE would we do?*
- A *You will complete a broad PE curriculum, including swimming, football, rugby, netball, cricket, tennis and netball. This isn't everything-you'll try loads of new things!*
- Q** *How are form selections influenced by the language choice? What if the friends from primary school choose different languages, would they end up in a form not knowing friends?*
- A *Yes, language preferences are a limiting factor. We have three bands, which each cover a different language. If students select a different language, they will be in different forms so this is something to be aware of. However, we do our best to get people in the forms with friends.*
- Q** *When do you have access to the 3D printers and which subject do you use them for?*
- A *Design Technology use 3D printers.*
- Q** *Sorry if this has already been asked, how many languages do you offer French? German?*
- A *We offer French, German and Spanish.*
- Q** *I am from Chile so I know Spanish. Am I not allowed to study that language, right?*
- A *You can give a preference to study Spanish as your chosen language.*
- Q** *Is football part of year 7 PE, or do you have to a club?*
- A *Both. You can join the team but you will also cover it in lessons.*

**Q** *How many per class please? and thanks for a great virtual open evening?*

A *Each form has less than 30 students, groups for technology are 24 or less.*

**Q** *Roughly how many children per class?*

A *Fewer than 30 in each form and technology classes have fewer than 24.*

**Q** *How fixed are the sets? Can children move between sets? Why do you do this from Year 7?*

A *They can move between sets. We do this in Maths to ensure that students get the support that they need and can focus on specific areas of Maths appropriate to their stage.*

**Q** *How do you choose which child goes to each class? is it based on their results at previous school etc?*

A *Our forms are mixed ability - students can choose to request to be in a form with students from their primary school.*

**Q** *How many students per class at year 7?*

A *We have less than 30 in each class. When students have Technology, these groups are smaller - 24 or less.*

**Q** *Do you get the SATS results?*

A *We have a full range of transition information that our primaries share with us, this will include SATs results.*

**Q** *What is the staff to child ratio?*

A *We have 110 teachers and then 120 support staff who work directly with students.*

**Q** *Do you have any activities celebrating black history month?*

A *Yes, we have an active range of activities which celebrate Black History Month and the Stephen Lawrence day in April.*

**Q** *As someone new to the UK education system, could you please enlighten me how students will be grouped when they join Year 7 and which year will they need to choose elective subjects and what are the rules for choosing these please?*

A *When students join Yr7 they are streamed (or grouped by ability) for Maths. The only subject they need to elect is their Modern Foreign Language - they have a choice of Spanish, French and German.*

## **Questions about extra-curricular clubs**

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**Q** *Are there out of school activities such as rugby team?*

A *We have over 50 clubs which cater for every possible taste, including rugby. In the past, if students have shown an interest in a particular area, such as board games or retro gaming, we have been able to put on new clubs to meet individual needs. The most popular clubs will either run over several rooms or happen several times a week to ensure everyone can attend. A key part of our AHS Journey is everyone having the opportunity to try new things and take part in enrichment beyond the curriculum. There are loads of school activities, including sports, drama and music clubs. There are a range of teams, including rugby, football and netball.*

**Q** *What range of sports are available?*

A *A whole range of sports are available, including football, rugby, athletics, swimming and more!*

**Q** *What year can you join the cricket team?*

A *You can join the cricket team in Year 7*

**Q Do you have a swimming team?**

A We have inter-house swimming competitions but don't have a specific swimming team. The pool is lovely!

**Q Do we have to join a club in year 7?**

A We believe in the power of clubs! We run the super 7 club challenge and we expect every student in Year 7 to attend at least one club a week in Year 7.

**Q How many clubs do you have in total?**

A We have over 50 clubs in total - something for everyone!

**Q Which clubs have not been able to run this term due to COVID?**

A We have had to limit some of our Sports Clubs, unfortunately.

**Q Would we have a sports day and would we have it with the whole school?**

A We do have a whole-school Sports Day, it's one of the highlights of the year!

**Q Are only some of the sports clubs not running? What about others such as Chess, or Media?**

A At present we are not running swimming clubs and some sports clubs are not running. We are trying to run as many clubs as we can under the current circumstances. In normal times, we run over 50 clubs as week. Unfortunately, we have had to make some changes to extra-curricular club, in light of the restrictions linked to COVID. Whilst lunchtime clubs are difficult at the moment, we have worked really hard to have after school clubs running and hope to have as many as possible up and running as soon as we can.

**Q What after school clubs are available please?**

A We have over 50 clubs which cater for every possible taste. In the past, if students have shown an interest in a particular area, such as board games or retro gaming, we have been able to put on new clubs to meet individual needs. The most popular clubs will either run over several rooms or happen several times a week to ensure everyone can attend. A key part of our AHS Journey is everyone having the opportunity to try new things and take part in enrichment beyond the curriculum.

**Q At what year does the DofE scheme run? Is this currently running despite COVID?**

A DofE starts in Year 10 for the Bronze Award and the Silver Award runs in the Sixth Form. We are currently working under the guidelines given by DofE to complete the aspects which are currently appropriate.

**Q Is there any computer/technology type clubs?**

A Yes, lots. There are computer clubs and retro gaming clubs!

**Q Thank you for the answers - I know COVID is affecting every school, and students, and I appreciate this requires adjustment to clubs and activities. Of course no one knows what will be available in these areas in Sept 2021.**

A Fingers crossed! Our staff love running clubs and are desperate to launch these again!

**Q What clubs do you do?**

A Loads! Over 50-including gaming, board games, drama, sport, soul band, Boys Aloud and more! Check these out on the Personal Development section of the website.

**Q Is there a chance to learn a musical instrument even if I don't have my own?**

A Yes, we have a wide range of music extra-curricular, including Jazz Band, Orchestra, Choir.

**Q Are any clubs run by external tutors? Such as an online club for students?**

A No, all our clubs are run by our staff.

**Q Do you have any gymnastic clubs or some kind of PE clubs?**

A Yes, we have gymnastics and a range of sports clubs for all tastes.

**Q What is retro gaming?**

A Retro gaming is a club where students can play games such as Playstation, Nintendo etc.

**Q How many clubs are we allowed to join a week, do they have a limit in number of participants?**

A No, you can join as many clubs as you like and we create a healthy sense of competition. Year 7 students take part in the Super 7 clubs challenge, ensuring all students go to as many clubs as possible.

**Q Are there any dance classes or clubs?**

A There are a range of dance opportunities throughout the year groups.

**Q Do you have separate football teams for girls and boys or is it mixed?**

A We have separate football teams for the external fixtures but there are lots of mixed sport opportunities as well.

**Q Is there a girls' football team?**

A Yes, there is a girls' football team and they did really well last year!

**Q Are the sports clubs mixed or is it separated into boys and girls?**

A It depends on the sport and club. For example, many of the fixtures are gender specific. However, we never discriminate by gender and all students can take part.

## **Questions about the school site and moving around the school**

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**Q Do you have a different common room for each year?**

A Each year group have their own indoor and outdoor space. We have separate social spaces for each year group and three separate catering spaces.

**Q Is there a one way system throughout school?**

A Certain areas of the school have a one way system. Everyone is shown the correct way to go when they arrive. There is a one way system at the moment, as the school is zoned so that no year groups mix. Under normal circumstances, we have a one-way system in operation in some areas of school and we make this clear to students when they have their tours on the first day.

**Q Is it easy to find your way round?**

A We offer lots of support to help our Y7 settle into school, this includes tours with their form tutors and Year 8 buddies who work with each form.

**Q Will there be our own lockers?**

A Year 7 students are given the opportunity to get a locker at the start of the school year.

**Q Can you get lost easily?**

A No, we will give you a map and a buddy to show you around.

## Questions about Pastoral Care

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**Q** *What kind of pastoral care arrangements are in place for students that struggle with transition or have problems integrating into life in a bigger school - how are bullying incidents handled?*

**A** *If a student has individual needs or worries, we will work with students before they arrive. We will ensure they know the key staff, including the pastoral leads and Head of Year 7. Our inclusion centre will provide ongoing support for students who are nervous and need extra support to enjoy school. We will also continue to work with parents until everyone feels settled and happy. Bullying incidences are rare. When they do happen, they are thoroughly investigated by the pastoral team and appropriate sanctions and support are put in place for everyone involved. We also have a high profile around school, including the November anti-bullying week.*

## Questions about SEND

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**Q** *What provisions do you provide for special educational needs?*

**A** *Our SENDCo Miss Meg Holmes is the contact to use for all things SEND. Please look at the SEND section on the school website and if you cannot find the answer you are looking for, feel free to reach her via email [sendco@archbishopholgates.org](mailto:sendco@archbishopholgates.org). If your child has an EHCP, school are alerted to their application to AHS through a consult letter sent by the Local Authority. The SENDCo would be happy to welcome you for a visit and tour of the school and answer any questions based on the specific needs of your child. EHCP students are prioritised by the SEND department to ensure the needs laid out in their EHCP are met. We have an excellent team of School Assistants to support EHCP students in lessons. All staff are made aware of our EHCP students on our September training days and updates are kept on our central SEND register. Annual reviews are held by the SENDCo to ensure families and the child are involved with the plans and support each child gets.*

**Q** *What is your SENCO provision for students with dyslexia?*

**A** *School welcome any diagnostic reports, screening test results or professional advice about your child's dyslexic need, we would then update our SEND register and let teaching staff know accordingly. We are able to offer coloured paper or overlays, resources printed to refer back to and would be happy to discuss exam Access Arrangements on a case by case basis for when students work towards their KS4 assessments.*

## Questions about school trips

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**Q** *Are all of your external trips currently cancelled due to COVID?*

**A** *We continue to follow the DFE advice regarding external trips for 2020-21*

**Q** *Will there be a year 7 school trip?*

**A** *Hopefully lots. The main trip is Bewerley Park. However, there will also be lots of reward trips and trips to local sites around York and the coast.*

**Q** *Would we have any school trips like Paris?*

**A** *Yes, we have a range of trips on offer. You can go to Paris, Germany, Florence, skiing, South America.*

## Questions about school rules and behaviour

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**Q Can we get detentions on our first week?**

A We aim to ensure everyone has the opportunity to settle in and we will give Year 7 students a grace period during the initial few weeks. However, we set high standards from the start.

**Q What's the difference between isolation and detention?**

A Detentions happen for one off incidences, such as failure to complete a piece of homework. Isolation is for more serious incidents of misconduct. We actively work with students to avoid getting into trouble.

**Q What is the student mobile phone policy at AHS?**

A Students are expected to put their mobiles phones, turned off, in their bag at the start of the school day. These are confiscated if students are seen to be using them during the school day. We believe all students need time away from their phones in school!

**Q When you are in school do you have to wear a mask?**

A At present, we wear masks during corridors and when moving between lessons. We are following government guidelines and adapt as needed.

**Q Do you have to stay quiet in assemblies?**

A We always ask students to listen politely when someone else is talking.

**Q 24hrs leniency for late homework? was that right? also homework given out is surely spread out throughout the week?**

A That's right - we have a homework rota as well, so students will not be overloaded with homework. We also ask that homework per subject takes no more than about 20 minutes.

**Q How strict is the dress code?**

A We do have a very clear uniform policy, but this should be easy to follow.

**Q If you get a certain amount of detentions/isolations will you miss out on certain events?**

A This depends on the individual circumstances as to why you got the detention or isolation. However, our priority is to work with students to ensure they change their behaviour in a positive way.

**Q Do you need to have a phone to enter the school? Also if you already have one, are you allowed to take it to school?**

A No, you don't have to have a phone. We don't allow students to use their phones during the school day.

## Questions about school admissions

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**Q Are applicants in the catchment area likely to get a place or is it necessary to put additional choices?**

A We have 300 places available in Y7 each year which is considerably more than live in our catchment area. As such we admit students from across York, North Yorkshire and the East Riding. Expressing a preference for your preferred school is important when you apply. Although it varies from year to year most families that apply to AHS secure a place, many from outside catchment. In terms of attending another Pathfinder School this does not impact on the process at all, all be it that many are in or near our catchment areas so these families live closer to school.

**Q Are applicants in the catchment area likely to get a place or is it necessary to put additional choices on the application form?**

A We are a very popular and successful school, hence the support for growth. We have 300 places in Y7 and 210 students who live in catchment. That now means that if you don't live in catchment you have an increased chance of getting in. Each year we welcome families from York, N York and East Riding.

**Q Following a lengthy conversation with school admissions I'm feeling anxious regarding my child being offered a place at your school as we are out of the catchment area - would this be something I could discuss further directly with yourselves?**

A Absolutely. If you email the school [reception@archbishopholgates.org](mailto:reception@archbishopholgates.org), we will contact you directly to discuss your concerns.

**Q Will we be with different schools**

A We take students from over 40 different primary schools.

**Q How many students do you take in year 7 every year?**

A We are able to offer 300 places in Year 7.

**Q Do many children outside catchment get in? Do you expect to have more applications than places available?**

A We have 300 places available in Y7 each year which is considerably more than live in our catchment area. As such we admit students from across York, North Yorkshire and the East Riding. Expressing a preference for your preferred school is important when you apply. Although it varies from year to year most families that apply to AHS secure a place, many from outside catchment.

**Q What is the forecasted number of children living in catchment area currently in Year 6?**

A It is forecast the 210 students in Year 6 live in catchment area.

**Q How many children do you expect in year 7 next year?**

A We have 300 places.

## Questions about school dinners

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**Q What sort of lunch options do you have?**

A We have a full range of food options, including hot and cold snacks and a full hot dinner menu. We also have a range of healthy options.

**Q What do you do for lunch?**

A We have lots of options for lunch, including a hot meal each day as well as cold options such as sandwiches and wraps.

**Q Does the whole school have lunch at different times?**

A Lunch times are staggered to ensure everyone can access lunchtime and access other activities.

**Q How are lunches paid for?**

A We have a WisePay system, parents top this up at home and then students can pay electronically for their lunch.

**Q How will we pay for our hot dinners in school?**

A We have a 'WisePay' system that your parents top up, you can then pay electronically.

## Questions about Year 7 and the support available to new students

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**Q** *What can expect on my first day in year 7?*

A *Your first day will all be about getting used to the school and our routines. It will be all about settling in and getting to know your form tutor and the rest of your form. This will also include a tour of the school and some lessons.*

**Q** *Would I get told off if I was late to my class in the first week?*

A *We give Year 7 forms a buddy for the first few weeks to show you around and ensure you are not late. We will be compassionate if you make a mistake in the first few weeks. However, we will help you ensure you are not late!*

**Q** *How much homework can students expect in year 7?*

A *We have homework on a rota for Year 7 students, so they do not get homework from each subject every week. We ask staff to set about 20 minutes worth of homework.*

**Q** *Do we have buddies to go round the school with?*

A *Yes, we have Year 8 buddies who support Year 7 with the transition and show you the way around.*

**Q** *What level of homework do you year 7s get each week?*

A *Year 7 students have a rota for homework, so they won't have homework from every subject each week, this helps them manage their time. We also limit homework to no longer than 20 minutes per subject.*

**Q** *What are the houses? Like the ones from Harry Potter.*

A *The houses are Foss, Ouse, Derwent and Esk. All students and staff belong to a house!*

**Q** *What happens if we have trouble making friends?*

A *We will work with individual students to support them and encourage them to make friends through clubs or other opportunities such as Bewerley Park. We will ensure you can find an environment where you feel comfortable.*

**Q** *Does the "head of year" go up with the students or do the "head of year" maintain the year they are?*

A *Head of Year 7 is always Miss Kincell, to help with transition. In other year groups, we try to ensure consistency with the same Head of Year.*

**Q** *Would we get a planner?*

A *You would get a planner!*

**Q** *Are there lockers?*

A *Yes, we ensure every Year 7 student can have a locker if they wish.*

**Q** *Do we get someone to escort us to our classrooms after every lesson for the first few days is so what year will that be?*

A *Yes, you will have a lovely Year 8 buddy to show you around and ensure you don't get lost.*

**Q** *Are we going to be in the same class?*

A *We ensure that everybody knows at least one friend in their form. However, we mix the classes between different primary schools.*

**Q** *Can I choose where I sit in class?*

A *No, your teachers will choose where you sit.*

**Q** *What time does school start?*

A *Students need to be in form time by 8:45.*

**Q Does school still end on normal time?**

A Yes, school will finish at 3:10.

**Q Are there a lot more lessons?**

A Students at AHS have five lessons per day.

**Q At break times is there equipment you can use with friends?**

A You can use the equipment provided by the school, including footballs and sport equipment. You can also access the library and social spaces.

**Q If you get lost in your first week or month will you get detention?**

A We are conscious that Year 7 students need time to settle in and understand that students can sometimes get lost - they won't get detention!

**Q When we are in school, do we have to stay in our form or can we stay in our year?**

A During Year 7, you will predominantly stay with your form for lessons. However, during break and lunch you can socialise with the rest of the year group. You have your own field, playground, library and indoor social space.

**Q Do kids stay in the same form throughout their whole time or does it change each year please?**

A Forms stay the same throughout Year 7-11. Year 7 form tutors are specifically trained to provide transition for students. Forms get a new tutor in Year 8 who normally stay with them throughout key stage 3 and 4.

**Q If you have friend and there not in your form and you can't make any other friends?**

A The pastoral team will work with you to help you make friends and meet new people. We have lots of experience supporting students who find the transition hard.

**Q Please could you clarify how the year 7 forms are put together (academic/friendship groups etc)?**

A Form groups are mixed ability, students can choose friends that they would like to be in a form group with. Initially, we work with Year 6 teachers to get to know the students. We then ask students to identify four friends. From this, we can guarantee all students have at least one friend in their form. We ensure children from all primary schools are spread across the schools to create a mix.

**Q Will we get to choose a few of our friends to go in your form with you if so how many are you allowed to choose?**

A You can put down 4 friends. We will then guarantee that you are with at least one of these friends.

## Questions about transport

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**Q Is there still a scheduled school bus from Stamford Bridge to AHS? Is this planned to continue?**

A Yes, this will continue to run in September 2021.

**Q Can we get a bus or transport in from Kexby?**

A We have a bus which travels down the 1079.

## Questions about extra support

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**Q** *How do you support children struggling with their work, exams? and also stress, isolation from friends etc?*

A *The large pastoral system will identify and support students in specific circumstances. This will look different situations but we will put a support plan in place to make them feel supported.*

**Q** *Do you have anything like ELSA/pastoral support for children (and parents)?*

A *Yes, our pastoral support workers provide ELSA support and interventions for each student as required. We also build strong relationships with parents and can offer support here as needed.*

**Q** *Are you a nut free school? Can I keep my 2 epipens with me at all times and have class mates trained to help in case of emergency?*

A *We are a nut free school and have staff trained to deal with medical emergencies.*

## Additional questions

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**Q** *How do you support 300 children in one year group, is that not too many?*

A *We don't think so. With a large school comes lots of opportunities. We have a very large staff, including a range of non-teaching specialists who can support students. We are also lucky to have a fantastic site with lots of facilities and outdoor space.*

**Q** *How many of your 6th formers go onto Uni?*

A *We have a very successful progression rate for Year 13. Last year, over 90% of students went to university or apprenticeships. The rest of students gained successful employment. This reflects the range of individual aspirations of students in the school.*

**Q** *Is this virtual open evening just for Year 7 intake rather than 6th form?*

A *Yes, this is the Year 7 information evening. The Sixth Form Open evening is on Wednesday 11th November. We apologise if there has been some confusion. More info for the Sixth Form evening will be released early next week.*

**Q** *What is the weakest point about the school?*

A *All schools can strive to be better and we are constantly taking feedback from parents and everyone involved to ensure we improve. It's hard to pinpoint a specific but we like to think we are proactive in responding to criticism. For example, student voice highlighted they wanted more specific mental health advice. As a consequence, we have introduced daily wellbeing activities and focus each day in form times.*

**Q** *Will you do an open evening again before the next year join for any more questions?*

A *If you have any specific questions, please do get in touch via or email. We are not currently planning to do another open evening but will offer a host of transition events in the summer term.*