



OPPORTUNITY • ACHIEVEMENT • EXCELLENCE

YEAR 8 TRANSITION HANDBOOK 2026-2027



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SWA VISION & VALUES

VISION STATEMENT:

'To be the BEST that we can be.'

MISSION STATEMENT:

'To foster a learning community where everyone has the opportunity to achieve and excel.'

VALUES:

EQUALITY

Celebrating and understanding difference

TEAMWORK

Working together to achieve goals

DETERMINATION

Making the effort to succeed

INTEGRITY

Being honest and trustworthy

EMPATHY

Understanding others and supporting them

INGENUITY

Taking risks and thinking outside of the box

RESPECT

Courtesy, manners and enabling others to succeed



TERM DATES: 2026-2027

AUTUMN TERM	SPRING TERM	SUMMER TERM
Monday 7 th September to Friday 18 th December	Tuesday 5 th January to Thursday 25 th March	Monday 12 th April to Wednesday 21 st July
HALF TERMS		
Monday 26 th October to Friday 30 th October	Monday 15 th February to Friday 19 th February	Monday 30 th May to Friday 4 th June

THE SCHOOL DAY

08:15	<i>Warning Bell (Year 9 Welcome Line-Up)</i>
08:20 - 08:45	<i>Registration & Tutor Activities</i>
08:45 - 09:45	Period 1
09:45 - 09:50	<i>Changeover Time</i>
09:50 - 10:50	Period 2
10:50 - 11:15	<i>Break</i>
11:15 - 12:15	Period 3
12:15 - 12:20	<i>Changeover Time</i>
12:20 - 13:20	Period 4
13:20 - 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>
14:00 - 15:00	Period 5
15:00 - 16:00	Period 6 (<i>Enrichment on Tue and Thu</i>)



COMMUNICATING WITH SWA

Communication is key in supporting our young people to be the best that they can be. Below are all of the methods of contact we can use to communicate.

How you can contact the school:

- Important information and announcements will be made via our website: www.samuelwhitbread.org.uk.
- You can contact us by telephone on 01462 629900 between 7.45am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.
- You can email SWA-Info@bestacademies.org.uk for general queries, where our reception team will respond or forward your request to the relevant member of staff.
- You can email a member of staff, whose email address usually starts with their initial, followed by their surname and ending with @bestacademies.org.uk.
- All students will receive their own email account in September, which ends with @mybest.org.uk. Students can use these to contact their teachers about their learning.
- If you require an appointment with a member of staff, please make contact by email or the school's telephone number above.

How we will contact you:

- **My Child at School (MCAS):** This will be our main method of communication. You can download the MCAS app and you will be sent login details. You will be able to see information about your child's timetable, achievement, behaviour points and reports, SEN and medical information, notification of detentions and homework set by teachers. Students will also receive their login for Student Portal upon starting at the academy.
- **ParentMail:** You will receive a link to this so that you can use this account to pay for school dinners and trips.
- **School Newsletter:** This is sent to you via email.
- **Social Media:** We regularly share our students' successes via [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).
- **Email:** Individual members of staff can email you directly from their school accounts.
- **Text Messaging:** We will use this for emergency announcements.
- **Telephone:** We will phone when we can, during the working day.

Staff members at Samuel Whitbread Academy will endeavour to respond to your requests within 24 hours, but in some cases, this may take up to 48 hours. We take safeguarding very seriously, please be understanding as we will protect young people's information with all formats of communication.

The Pastoral Support Team are based in year group offices around the school. They work on a daily basis with Heads of Year, tutors, parents and carers as well as outside agencies. Their role is to support our young people in achieving their potential, and to be the best that they can be.

The Year 9 team will be in communication with all Middle Schools prior to pupils joining SWA in September 2026.



KEY STAFF, YEAR TEAM & SAFEGUARDING



Mrs Melissa Godfrey
Head of Year 9



Mr Scott Bratt
Assistant Head of Year 9



Mrs Sarah Pryor
*Year 9 Pastoral Support
Officer*



Miss Alex Duric
*Assistant Principal &
SLT Link for Year 9*

Our Inclusion Co-Ordinator, Mrs Elizabeth Lockhart, works with students who have long term social, emotional and mental health needs that prevent them from accessing the curriculum in their timetabled lessons for a period of time.



Our First Aid Co-Ordinators, Mrs Alison Eaton and Mrs Paula Codling operate the Medical Room at the academy. It is open for non-emergencies (for example headaches, stomach aches or toothache) during lunch and break times. The Medical Team can administer, with permission, basic pain relief. However, we do recommend that all students carry their own pain relief and self-administer this.



Samuel Whitbread Academy takes safeguarding our students very seriously. Their safety, wellbeing and protection is paramount in all that we do. The safeguarding team is vast and always willing to support and give advice as required. If you do have any concerns about any the safety of any students, please contact a member of the safeguarding team to discuss your concerns, or contact The Central Bedfordshire HUB on 0300 300 8585 or if you live in Bedford Borough please call 01234 718700.



Mrs Charlotte Kirkman
*Vice Principal &
Designated Safeguarding
Lead*



Mr Andrew O'Rourke
*Assistant Principal &
Deputy Designated Safeguarding
Lead*



Mr Harry Charter
*Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Lead*



Mrs Jennifer Swift
*SENCO &
SEND Safeguarding*



Mrs Paula Waring
*ASC Provision Manager &
Provision Safeguarding*



ATTENDANCE, PUNCTUALITY & FIRST DAY RESPONSE

It is vital to personal academic progress that pupils attend the academy regularly. Research shows high attendance rates go hand in hand with good outcomes for wellbeing.

- If a pupil is absent from the academy the parents/carers should contact the attendance office on the first morning of pupil absence.
Tel: 01462 629900 (Option 1) or 01462 628041.
- Students arriving after 8:20 to school site or their tutor base, without good reason, will be considered late. Parents will be informed of this to have a discussion with their child. Patterns of persistent lateness are monitored.
- If the academy has not heard from home by 11am, parents/carers will be contacted by Truancy Call.
- If a pupil is absent for more than FIVE continuous days, a medical certificate may be required. Students must bring a note from home on their return to the Academy, this should be shown to the attendance officer in Room 337 Block 4.
- Any unauthorised absence will be followed up and you may be referred to the Access and Inclusion Service.
- Medical appointments should, wherever possible, be arranged out of academy hours. If this cannot be avoided, written evidence must be provided, e.g. appointment card, or a letter from the doctor. These appointments are recorded as an absence. Failure to provide evidence could result in an unauthorised absence being recorded on the attendance record. If your child needs to sign out during the day, please ensure the academy is informed via Reception or the Attendance Office in advance.
- Parents / Carers may be liable for a Fixed Penalty Notice if pupils fail to attend school regularly.



SCHOOL UNIFORM

Communication in June-July 2026 will confirm the House your child is part of, which will inform which logo-coloured blazer to purchase.

Our school uniform supplier is [Total Clothing](#).

GENERAL UNIFORM

Coat:

Dark and functional.

SWA Trousers:

Black and tailored.

Leggings are NOT permitted.

SWA Skirt:

Pleated skirt ONLY.

Must come down to the knee.

Full black pleated skirt available from many retailers including ASDA and Next.

SWA Blazer:

Black with SWA logo on chest in house colour (cannot be purchased until July).

SWA Tie:

Royal Blue tie clip for all Year 9s.

Belt:

Dark and functional.

Blouse / Shirt:

Plain white button up.

Optional V-Neck Jumper:

Plain black without any fashion labels.

Shoes:

Formal and black - NOT trainers, boots, high heels or canvas shoes.

Must cover both toes and heels.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

Jewellery / Piercings

Earrings should be limited to one pair of small stud earrings. Students who wish to wear for a piece of jewellery for religious or cultural importance may be allowed if parents contact the relevant year team to request permission. There should be no visible facial or body piercings.

Make-Up

A small amount of make-up is acceptable but students should not abuse this privilege.

Hair

Hair should be a 'natural' colour and styles should not be too extreme or 'attention grabbing' e.g. large stripes of colour or shaved patterns. Students should not adorn their hair with excessive accessories.

General

We advise that all clothing is clearly marked with the student's name.

Boots can be worn in extreme winter weather, but students must bring a change of shoe once on-site.

Hats/caps may only be worn for prolonged periods outside the buildings in extremes of cold or sun.

'Hoodies' must not be worn and will be confiscated.

Extremes of fashion must be avoided. A student appearing at the Academy dressed unacceptably may be sent home to change or isolated.



SCHOOL UNIFORM



SHOES

A reminder that trainer style shoes, which may be advertised in 'back to school' sections of retailers, are **NOT** acceptable.



These are trainers, which are not acceptable.



PE UNIFORM

Samuel Whitbread Academy has a proud place nationally as a highly successful sporting school. Our PE uniform adorns the initials of each student and the SWA logo.

Our PE uniform supplier is [Total Clothing](#).

BOYS PE KIT

Compulsory:

SWA PE Shirt
SWA PE Shorts
SWA PE Rugby Shirt

Optional:

SWA PE Tracksuit Jacket
SWA PE Tracksuit Trousers
SWA PE Fleece
SWA PE Socks

GIRLS PE KIT

Compulsory:

SWA PE Shirt
SWA PE Skort or Shorts
SWA PE Fleece

Optional:

SWA PE Tracksuit Jacket
SWA PE Tracksuit Trousers
SWA PE Rugby Shirt
SWA PE Cotton Spandex Camisole
SWA PE Socks

All boys will require a pair of football boots, and girls may need these for football and hockey. An expensive pair is not necessary, and these can be purchased from a retailer of your choice.

All PE kits must be suitably marked with the students' initials and full surname.

During PE lessons, stud earrings are required to be removed for health and safety purposes. Long hair should be tied back. Plain black sports leggings are permitted, but **MUST** be made of nylon and **NOT** cotton material.

Expectations:

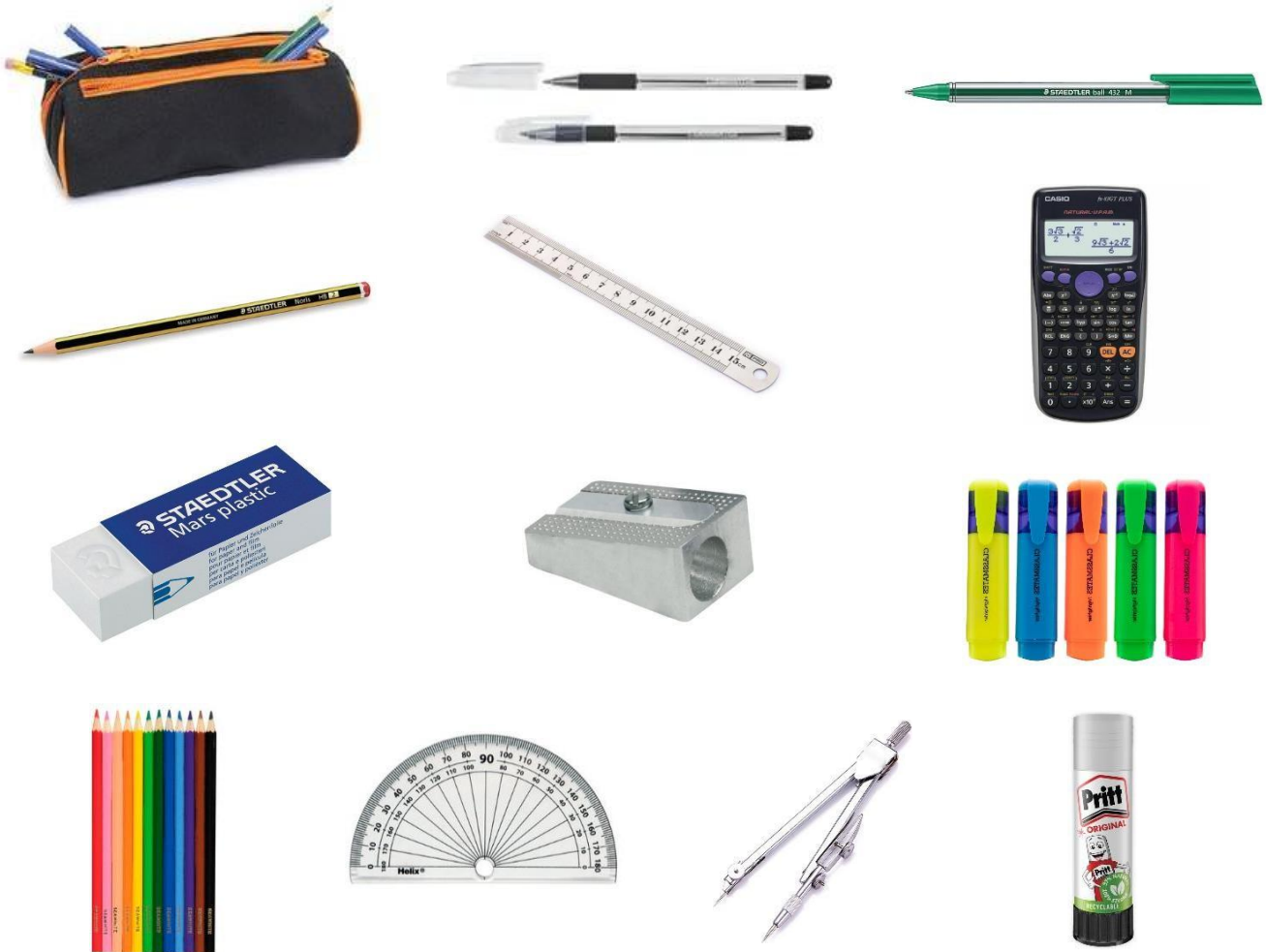
All students are expected to participate fully in PE lessons. There may be occasions, however, when students are physically incapable of participating. Where this is the case a letter from the parent or carer should be submitted to the class teacher requesting permission for the student to be excused from activity.

Where non-participation is likely to be extended over a period of more than two weeks a medical certificate is required. Non-participants should still be involved in the lesson either by coaching, umpiring, helping with equipment or by working on appropriate work sheets. Students will, therefore, still need to bring their kit.



SCHOOL EQUIPMENT

In order for students to access their learning in the most effective manner, they require a set list of equipment (purchased from any retailer). Students will have regular equipment checks during tutor time, and will be issued behaviour points for missing equipment.



EXPECTATIONS AT SWA

Pencil case	Ruler	Highlighters
Black and green pens	Scientific calculator <i>Casio FX-83GTX</i>	Coloured pencils
Glue stick	Eraser	Protractor
Pencils	Pencil sharpener	Compass



MOBILE PHONES

Students in Year 9 at Samuel Whitbread Academy must use compulsory lockable phone pouches (if they choose to bring their phone to school).

How does the phone pouch system work?



Upon arrival to tutor time each morning, place your phone in your pouch.



Once inside, the pouch is locked. You will maintain possession of it all day.



At 3pm each day, you unlock your pouch at the school gates.

- There is a £10 deposit scheme in place to provide students with a phone pouch, if your child will be bringing a phone to school.
- The £10 deposit is to be paid online before transition evening on Tuesday 30th June 2026 using this link: [Please pay £10 to Samuel Whitbread Academy](#)
Please enter your child's name on the payment form in the notes section.
- The phone pouches will then be given out on the transition evening to those who have paid the phone pouch deposit online.
- The £10 deposit will be refunded, provided SWA receives the pouch back and they are in good working order.
- Students will be responsible for the safety of their own phone pouches, as they will maintain possession of it throughout the school day, and bring it to school each day.
- Any students who do not currently bring their phone to school, and will not in future, do not need to purchase a phone pouch.
- Students should then bring their phone pouch with them to use on their transition days at SWA, where they will show how to use them.





USEFUL INFORMATION

Toilet Use:

All students have access to various toilets around the academy. Toilets should only be used before tutor time, during the 5-minute lesson changeover, breaktime, lunchtime and at the end of the day. Students therefore have nine opportunities to use the toilet during the day, without missing lesson time. Should students require the use of a toilet on any other rare occasion, particularly for a medical reason which staff are aware of, students must seek permission from their teacher to visit the toilet and to receive a hall pass.



Seeking Support:

The Year Team Office is situated in the DT block where the Head of Year 9, Assistant Head of Year 9 and PSO are based. The Year Team are available to students **before school starts, at breaktime, lunchtime and after school**. They are **not available during lesson time**, and all students will be required to be in lessons during this time.





CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT & REPORTING

Samuel Whitbread Academy provides a broad, challenging and ambitious curriculum to our Year 9 students as part of the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum.

The curriculum is timetabled each fortnight as follows:

Subject	Hours (Per Fortnight)
English & Media	8
Maths	8
Science	8
Geography	3
History	3
MFL (French OR Spanish)	3
Philosophy, Religion & Ethics	2
Physical Education	4
Information Technology	2
Dance	1
Music	1
Drama	1
Food & Design Technology	2
Art	1
Financial Awareness	1
Engaging Minds	2

For information on the curriculum content that we teach Year 9 at SWA, please visit the curriculum section of our website.

Students will receive three reports on their progress, attitude to learning and independent learning throughout Year 9. In the Autumn report, teachers provide an indication for each student as to whether GCSE level in that subject would be appropriate for them. This helps to inform students options choices later in the year.

Students are assessed regularly in each subject throughout the year, to ensure that teachers can accurately report progress to parents.



INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC TEACHERS

To support you with applying for Music lessons, please find below the Music provision at Samuel Whitbread Academy. If your child is interested in learning a musical instrument from September 2026, or wishes to continue their lessons, please contact the relevant teacher directly using these details. If your current teacher is listed, you are still required to contact them to re-enrol for the Autumn Term.

Family of Instruments	Instrument	Name of Teacher	Contact Details
Brass	Cornet, Trumpet, Tenor Horn, Trombone	Alex Ellar	https://ukinspiring.speedadmin.dk/registration#/
Strings	Violin, Viola	Alison Brown	https://ukinspiring.speedadmin.dk/registration#/
	Guitar	Danny Page	https://ukinspiring.speedadmin.dk/registration#/
Woodwind	Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone	Paul Clarke	https://ukinspiring.speedadmin.dk/registration#/
Percussion	Drums and Percussion	Steve Howard	Drumsolo10@gmail.com Youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/c/SteveHowardDrums
	Piano	Clare MacDonald	Claremac01@yahoo.co.uk
Voice	Voice	Carley Broom	Carleybroom1980@gmail.com

If you have any further questions regarding Music lessons, please contact the Head of the Music Department, Mrs H Meadows on hmeadows@bestacademies.org.uk



PRAISE AND REWARDS

Samuel Whitbread Academy celebrates the hard work of our students through our seven school values.

Below are the ways in which students can receive recognition of their work.

PRAISE POINTS

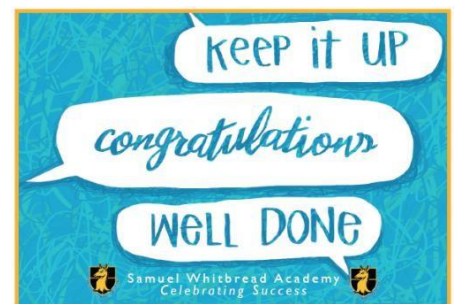
At Samuel Whitbread our philosophy is to reward students positively for behaviour and attitude and commitment in all aspects of academy life. The praise system enables members of staff to reward students immediately, so they can see their hard-work and effort is being acknowledged, this is recorded through Bromcom. Students are praised for meeting one of our seven school values.

ACHIEVEMENT ASSEMBLIES

Achievement Assemblies are held twice a year to celebrate the efforts and successes of students. Achievement Assembly Newsletters are sent home and attached to the academy website. Award photographs are also displayed around the Academy to celebrate achievement both in and out of school.

POSTCARDS HOME

Praise postcards may be posted or emailed home to congratulate students for sustained good work, learning, behaviour, improving standards and completing larger pieces of high-quality work.



PRAISE WEEKS

At the end of every term, we celebrate 'Praise Week' to reward students who have demonstrated exceptional effort and achievement in school. Rewards during this week include offsite trips, non-uniform days, canteen queue passes, cinema afternoons and praise breakfasts.

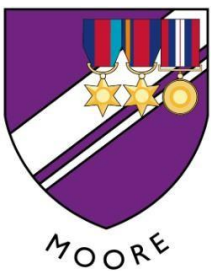
SOCIAL MEDIA

The academy also regularly publishes the work of our students, both academically and in the extra- curricular on our [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) platforms.



THE HOUSE SYSTEM

Samuel Whitbread Academy students are all members of one of our five houses. They represent their house in department competitions and sporting events, as well as their Praise Points contributing to their house tallies.



House Colour: **Purple**

Founded after Captain Sir Thomas Moore, a British Army Officer who served in WWII.



House Colour: **Turquoise**

Founded after Michelle Obama, former First Lady of the USA. She promotes courage and self-esteem for women, fighting inequality.



House Colour: **Royal Blue**

Founded after Marcus Rashford (footballer), who has campaigned for essential items for the homeless and reducing child poverty.



House Colour: **Red**

Founded after SWA alumni Ben Whishaw (actor), who has appeared in many films and series such as 'Skyfall' and 'Paddington'.



House Colour: **Green**

SWA alumni, David Sims, who suffered a stroke resulting in mobility issues. Supports adults with mobility issues to gain independence.



TRANSPORT

WITHIN CATCHMENT

If the Academy is your 'nearest school' and qualifies for home to school transport, Central Bedfordshire Council will distribute the passes over the summer holiday. If your child needs assistance with transport provided by Central Beds or you have any other queries regarding local authority run buses, please contact them via the [school transport](#) section of their website. The deadline for getting an application in to CBC is 31st March. Applications sent after the deadline may not be processed by CBC until the October half term.

OUT OF CATCHMENT

The Academy also offers some out of catchment students, the SW1, 2 & 3. Registration for these closes on 29th March and we hope to have confirmation letters out to those with a place just after the May half term break. If you have missed the deadline to apply for these buses and would like to make a late application, please contact the Transport team via email to SWA-Transport@bestacademies.org.uk. If you do not receive a place on the bus in the first instance, you will be placed on a waiting list and kept informed if a place becomes available. Additional capacity usually becomes available after GCSE results day when we hear of any sixth form applicant withdrawals.

EXPECTATIONS

On all bus routes we expect students to abide by the Central Bedfordshire transport 'code of conduct', available on the [school transport](#) section of the Central Beds website.

We expect all students to arrive at their bus stop 5 minutes before the timetabled collection time. We endeavour to keep our website up to date with the latest timetables as they are received from CBC. For the latest timetables, please refer to our [website](#).

LATE BUSES

To support the after school extra-curricular offering at SWA, we have a provision of late buses that aim to serve most surrounding villages/towns. These leave the Academy at 16:30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. For details of routes, please refer to our [website](#). Please note - these services are not designed to be door to door and are sometimes cancelled to accommodate school events such as open evenings. Messages regarding late bus cancellations will be shared with parents/carers via our weekly newsletter and students informed via tutors.

FIRST WEEK SUPPORT

During the first week of the school year, we will ensure staff are on hand as well as signage in place to assist your child with getting on the bus after school. We hope to have an up to date 'bus line up' poster on the website prior to these dates. Information about transport including bus timetables can be found on the [travel section](#) of our website, or contact Mr B Whittle on SWA-Transport@bestacademies.org.uk.

TRANSITION DAY TRANSPORT

Please be aware that due to changes in CBC policy, students are unable to use school transport on transition days.