

**METHODIST COLLEGE
BELFAST**

**A HANDBOOK
FOR
FORM 1 PARENTS
and GUARDIANS**

2021-2022



INFORMATION FOR THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS
OF FORM ONE PUPILS

Welcome to Methody as a Form One parent/guardian. In these unprecedented times we will be more reliant on online communication. The College website, www.methody.org should be of use to you, with the *Junior School* in the *Inside the classroom* section being most relevant. We would encourage you to check it regularly.

We aim to work with parents to ensure the best possible education for their children. This booklet has been written to try to help you adjust to life as a Form One parent. It is hoped that the information will reassure you and make the next year a positive experience for everyone. While subject teachers and Form Staff in the College do their utmost to maintain and develop high standards, it is hoped that parents will take an active interest in their child's progress as they have a significant role to play. The College needs the active co-operation of parents in encouraging their child to participate fully in all that is offered to them, and to conform to the standards that are set by the College.

Form One consists of eight Tutor Groups with about 32 pupils in each. Tutor Groups have a range of ability and the letter of the alphabet attached to each group is of no significance. All pupils study a broad range of subjects:

Art	Latin
Drama	Learning for Life and Work
English	Mathematics
French	Music
Food and Nutrition	Physical Education
Geography	Religious Education
History	Science
Information Technology	Technology

Due to the Covid pandemic, the situation might arise again when Form One pupils may have to manage online learning, which they will have some experience of from Primary School. We use Google Classroom as our online learning platform which some pupils will already be familiar with. However, with a greater number of teachers and subjects they will need parental support as well as school guidance to manage this.

HOMEWORK

The first year in secondary school is when pupils establish patterns of study and therefore it is vital that they get into good habits. Every pupil will be set homework on a regular basis. Detailed information regarding subject specific homework requirements will be available in the Junior School website at the start of term and will also be sent to parents via schoolcomms. Some of the homework will be set for the next

day/class but some may also be set over a longer period of time. It is important that pupils record all of their homework in detail in their homework diary along with the date that it is due. Pupils should aim to spend approximately 1 to 1½ hours on homework each evening.

- A quiet area at home in which to work (e.g. bedroom, kitchen) without access to a mobile phone is most desirable.
- Try to ensure that sufficient time is spent on each homework and that learning and written homeworks are alternated.
- It is important that reading and learning homeworks are not neglected.
- Encourage your child to do written homeworks as neatly as possible.
- Regular revision of classwork is also recommended to ensure sound understanding.
- At home, try to encourage independent reading. This will also be encouraged through DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time during Tutor Group and by teachers.

To avoid forgetting essential books, we would advise that school bags should be packed each evening, using the next day's timetable as a guide. Although we hope that pupils will eventually learn to organise their own work and be independent, we know that initially Form One pupils need regular supervision and guidance.

It is important that the homework diary is monitored closely by parents/guardians as it provides an opportunity for teachers to communicate with home, if necessary. Parents may also write a note to Tutors in the space provided if required. We ask parents to sign the homework diary on a weekly basis and your child's Tutor will endeavour to check the homework diary each week. Again, due to current circumstances this may be slightly different until normal school resumes.

ASSESSMENTS AND REPORTS

Information will be sent out to parents during the first term about which assessments and tests will go towards the Form One Winter Report.

PARENTS'/GUARDIANS' CONSULTATIONS

While teachers' comments on homeworks and reports are a good guide to general progress, the College also encourages links between home and school. Please feel free to contact your child's Tutor at any time. Information relating to this will be sent to you at the start of the new term.

In the Spring term you will have an opportunity to consult with subject teachers. Discussions between parents and teachers are always of mutual benefit. Further details will be sent out in the Spring term and it is hoped that as many parents as possible will avail of this opportunity.

BEHAVIOUR

Our expectations about pupil behaviour are in the Code of Conduct section of the Homework Diary which your child will receive at the start of term. The *Positive Behaviour Policy Appendix B* in the *Outside the Classroom* section of the school website also contains this information.

Pupils are reminded of these expectations on a regular basis by their subject teachers and by Form staff.

ABSENCE

In the case of absence, due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, parents are asked to contact the school before **9.00 am** on **each** day of absence. The preferred methods are via schoolcomms or the school gateway app. However, the Administrative Assistant for Junior School, Mrs Henderson, can also be contacted by phone and can record the details or you can leave a message on her voicemail.

028 90205206 Junior School (Forms 1-3) Mrs R Henderson

Parents who have signed up to our schoolcomms system will receive a message if their child does not arrive in school. You will be provided with information about schoolcomms and the school gateway app.

It is hoped that pupils will not be taken out of school for family holidays during term time but, for an unavoidable planned absence for one full day, communication requesting permission should be sent (well in advance) to your child's Head of Form, Mr Thompson, and for more than one full day, to the Head of Junior School, Miss McDonald.

USE OF ICT FACILITIES

An Acceptable Use of ICT Policy is covered in ICT classes during the first term. This includes reference to the safe use of the internet. This policy is also available on our website. Parents usually have the opportunity to attend an information evening in the first term at which internet safety will be discussed further. However, due to social distancing regulations it may not be possible this year.

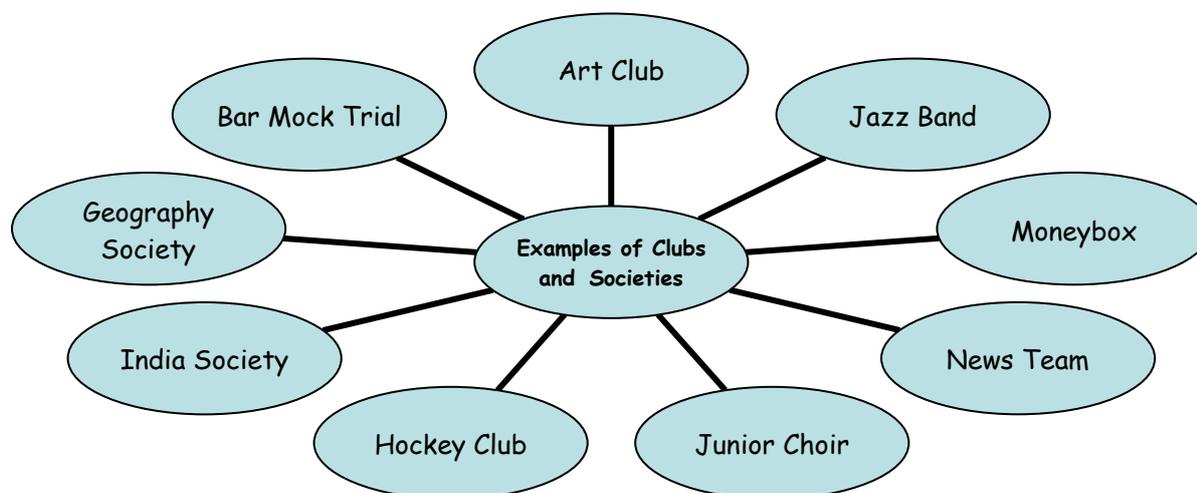
SCHOOL POLICIES

Parents/guardians may wish to visit our website www.methody.org to find out information about school policies, for example:

- Anti-Bullying
- Child Protection
- Raising an Issue or Concern
- Allergies

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The following are examples of some of the clubs and societies that will be open to Form One when school returns to normal. Please do encourage your child to get involved.



Pupils are often required to attend activities on a Saturday morning, unless non-attendance is agreed in advance.

FORM AND PASTORAL CARE AND CHILD PROTECTION INFORMATION

In the College we are concerned about the development, welfare and safety of all our pupils. All members of staff have a pastoral function but some have a specific role. For example, each Tutor Group will have a Tutor assigned to them whom they meet each morning at the beginning of the school day. Tutors are in a unique position to establish a relationship with the pupils in their group and their role is to monitor the general welfare, behaviour and progress of their pupils. They are an integral part of the Form Teams that are responsible for the pupils in each year and they are able to deal with a wide range of matters.

Parents should contact the Tutor in the first instance if they require information or have a concern they wish to discuss.

Form One is led by Head of Form, Mr Thompson, who may be contacted if there is a particularly serious issue to be discussed. The Head of Section, Miss McDonald, has responsibility for co-ordinating the Form work for Junior School within the College and liaises closely with the Form Team.

The Head of Pastoral Care, Mrs Logan, has responsibility for co-ordinating pastoral work in the College. She works in conjunction with the Deputy Heads of Pastoral Care for each section of the school and with the Form Teams. In Junior School, Dr Quinn, has this responsibility and, both she and Mrs Logan, can be contacted directly if a particularly sensitive issue is affecting your child.

First Day of Term - Details will be posted on the school website as soon as they are finalised.

