

**Soham Village College**  
*Achieving Excellence with Care*



**The Parent and Carer Guide  
to Soham Village College**



## **Introduction**

Welcome to this brief guide for parents and carers who have a child starting with us in September 2021 and thank you for trusting us with the next important part of their education.

No doubt you already know a lot about the school and we certainly couldn't cover everything in a booklet this size, but it should give you the key information that you need so they can make a positive start in September.

Along with information covering topics such as uniform, travel and term dates, it also introduces upcoming events which should help build the relationship between you and the school. I look forward to meeting you and your child in the coming months and hope you find this guide useful.

*Richard Pearce*  
Assistant Head

# Induction Events

The events outlined below are subject to government restrictions and we will confirm via email as soon as possible. If the events can go ahead, we will continue to take steps to minimise the risk of infection by following the school's risk assessment. This can be found on the Staploe Education Trust website by [clicking here](#).

## Year 6 Induction Day

8.25am – 2.30pm on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> July

We will be inviting all year 6 students, who have a place with us in September, to come up to experience a school day. On arrival, they will meet their new form group and tutor, before spending some time doing fun ice breaker activities to get to know each other. Then they will experience 3 lessons, which will give them an idea of moving around the school and meet some of our fantastic teachers and classrooms. After lunch, they will finish back with their form tutor for a reflection activity, before their day finishes at 2.30pm.

Due to current school bus restrictions, year 6 students will not be able to travel on school buses as usual. Therefore, if necessary, we ask that you arrange to drop-off/pick-up your child from the grass area to the left of the main school reception, entering through the gate opposite the Ross Peer's Sports Centre entrance. For students who need to stay on school site until 3pm, we will have an area for them to wait.

## Year 6 Parents' Induction Evening

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> July

We are looking forward to welcoming your child into Year 7 in September and would like to invite you in for a briefing about the college at our Parents' Induction Evening.

Along with a presentation from key members of staff, there will also be an opportunity to purchase some basic new items, including school ties and blazer badges. Please note payment can be made by cash or cheque only.

To help keep numbers at the gathering to a minimum, we will hold three identical presentations during the evening, and request that only one person per household attends.

- 5.30pm Parents of students from The Shade and Weatheralls
- 6.30pm Parents of students from Fordham, Isleham, and St. Andrew's
- 7.30pm Parents of students from Burwell, Ely St. Mary's, Kennett, Stretham

\*If your child's primary school is not mentioned here, you are welcome to attend either of the sessions.



## Home College Agreement

### Aims

- Our vision is to be a consistently high quality and improving school
- We aim for all of our students, irrespective of background, to make excellent progress
- We are committed to offering a broad curriculum and extensive curricular and extra-curricular opportunities
- We encourage students to develop their personal qualities, ready for adult life
- We are committed to the well-being of all of our students and helping them to adopt healthy lifestyles
- We wish all our students to develop positive relationships and be respectful of others at all times

### School

- To provide a secure and welcoming environment
- To care for each student's well-being
- To set high quality, meaningful homework
- To report regularly to parents and provide opportunities to discuss students' progress
- To support parents and carers through the period of their child's transition from primary to secondary school.
- To work with parents and carers to support students' attendance, punctuality, behaviour and progress
- To provide information and guidance about careers and higher education
- To encourage high standards of behaviour from our students

## Parents and Carers

- To support the aims of the school
- To ensure that your child attends school punctually and with maximum attendance and not to take your child out of school during term time without the explicit permission of the Headteacher
- To ensure that your child is smartly dressed in correct school uniform
- To ensure that your child completes all homework set on time and to the best of his/her ability
- To attend Parents' Evenings and meetings about your child's progress
- To advise the school of any concerns or problems which might affect your child's progress or well-being
- To work constructively and cooperatively with the school to resolve any concerns about attendance, punctuality, behaviour or work

## Students

- To attend school punctually and with maximum attendance
- To bring necessary equipment
- To try hard and complete classwork and homework as well as you can
- To ask teachers for help when you have problems with work
- To be kind to others
- To observe the school rules
- To wear school uniform and be tidy in appearance
- To be polite and respectful to others
- To conduct yourself at all times and including when you are online in such a way as to enhance the school's reputation





## School Uniform

We expect students to look smart and ready for work, we therefore insist they wear the following uniform. The senior leadership team will have the final say on queries related to smartness, decency and safety.

### Lesson Uniform

- Black blazer with college badge
- Standard plain white-collar shirt (long or short sleeves) – worn with top button done up and tucked in
- Years 7 to 10: Red and black college tie
- Year 11: Blue fleur-de-lys college tie
- Plain black trousers (not leggings or jeans) may be worn by boys and girls. Alternatively, girls may choose to wear a knee-length grey skirt
- Plain black shoes or trainers. There should be no white/coloured logos and heels should be no higher than 5cm (no open backs or boots)
- Plain socks or natural coloured/black tights

### PE Uniform

- School specific rugby shirt and/or polo shirt
- Plain navy shorts/skirt/tracksuit bottoms (no stripes or logos bigger than 40mm x 40mm)
- Navy blue sports socks
- Appropriate clean indoor and outdoor footwear
- Shin pads for football and hockey
- Gum shield for hockey and rugby
- Kite-marked studs for football and rugby
- No jewellery or watches may be worn during PE lessons, including no ear studs, even if recently pierced and taped over

## Optional Uniform

- Netball skirt
- Grey 'V' neck pullover

## General Uniform Rules

- The only body piercings allowed are; one small stud in the lower lobe of each ear, and a nose stud with a maximum diameter of 2mm. No other jewellery is allowed
- No false nails are allowed due to health and safety concerns in PE and practical subjects
- Nails and any make-up must be natural-looking
- It is unacceptable for students to dye their hair an unnatural hair colour or present themselves with extreme hair fashions
- Any clothing worn under white shirt must be plain white with no logos

We aim to make our uniform as affordable as possible by reducing the number of items that include college emblems. College badges and ties can be bought from reception during term time and other items are available from Paul Day's Sports on Ely High Street and online at:

[www.schooltrendsonline.com/uniform/SohamVillageCollegeCB75AA](http://www.schooltrendsonline.com/uniform/SohamVillageCollegeCB75AA)



# Getting to and from school

## Driving, Cycling or Walking

If you plan to drive your child to and from school, please park away from where the buses stop near Lodeside reception as this area is very busy at the start and end of the school day.

We encourage students who cycle to wear a helmet and lock their cycle in the CCTV-monitored area next to the library. Students should be careful on busy roads. We ask students to walk their cycle down the central footpath.

Students who walk must be sensible and careful crossing busy roads, ideally using the pedestrian crossings. They should remember that while wearing uniform they are representing the school and should be polite and respectful to members of our local community.

## Catchment Buses

There are different types of support available for travel to school. If your child is starting school in September and meets the qualifying criteria for free school transport shown below, you will need to complete an application form even for free entitled transport; [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/education/transport](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/education/transport). The Education Transport Team will then send out travel passes and details of transport arrangements directly to your home address in August.

### Free school transport

Some school children may be entitled to free school transport. To qualify your child must meet all of the following criteria:

- live within the area where Cambridgeshire is the local council
- be registered at his or her catchment school
- live more than 3 miles (secondary) from their school

### Secondary school pupils from low income families

Some secondary school children may qualify for help with transport costs under 'Extended Secondary Rights for Low Income Families'. To do so your child must meet certain criteria. For more information please visit:

[cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20059/schools\\_and\\_learning/496/school\\_transport](http://cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20059/schools_and_learning/496/school_transport)

### Replacement bus pass

Should your child lose their bus pass then it is your responsibility to apply for a replacement, full information on the costs and how to apply for a replacement pass can be found on the school transport section of the Cambridgeshire County Council's website.

### School bus timetables

You will receive information about bus allocation and a timetable with your child's bus pass.

### Induction days

Unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions, Year 6 students are not able to use these services on Induction Days.

## **Behaviour on a school bus**

All pupils who use transport provided by the council are expected to abide by the Travel Code of Conduct. Students who fail to abide by the Code of Conduct when using transport provided by the council may be banned from using the transport for a set period. It will become the responsibility of the student's parent or carer to arrange transport to and from school for this period of time. For more information regarding this code of conduct please see the school transport section of the Cambridgeshire County Council's website.

## **Contact details**

Education Transport Team  
Box No. SH1013 Shire Hall  
Cambridge  
CB3 0AP  
Telephone: 0345 045 5208  
Email: [edtransport@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:edtransport@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)



## **Out of Catchment Buses**

If your child lives out of catchment and is not entitled to free transport, there may be private bus routes available. To arrange a place for your child on the bus for September, or to discuss costs, you must contact the relevant bus company directly.

Private buses currently run to and from the following places every day: Ely, Newmarket, Exning, Littleport, Little Downham, Haddenham, Wilburton, Stretham, Little Thetford, Stuntney, Mildenhall, Red Lodge and Fordham.

Owing to limited space on the buses, you will need to contact the appropriate bus company if your child is intending to use this service on any induction days. Please note there may be a charge.

## **Private Hire Bus Routes**

**Jans Coaches – 01353 721344**

### **Route J1 Ely to Soham VC**

07.40hrs The Oakery, Lynn Road, Ely  
07.42hrs Deacons Lane, Lynn Road, Ely  
07.45hrs Oliver Cromwell House Layby, St Mary's Street, Ely  
07.50hrs St Johns, Ely  
07.53hrs Top of Pilgrims Way, Ely  
07.56hrs Barton Square, Barton Road, Ely  
07.58hrs Tesco's Bus Stop opposite Petrol Station, Ely

Price Package: £70.00 per month (except August) which works out as 11 months x £70.00 per year, per child. This package includes two journeys per day, AM & PM.

### **Route J2 Ely to Soham VC**

07.43hrs Cam Drive, Bus Stop 1, Ely  
07.45hrs Cam Drive, Bus Stop 2, Stour Green, Ely  
07.47hrs Kings Avenue, Junction of Lynn Road, Ely  
07.48hrs Kings Avenue, Junction of High Barns  
07.50hrs Sailing Club, Prickwillow Road, Ely  
07.53hrs Sainsbury's Bus Stop, Lisle Lane, Ely  
07.54hrs Opposite Elyte Fitness, Broad Street, Ely

Price Package: £70.00 per month (except August) which works out as 11 months x £70.00 per year, per child. This package includes two journeys per day, AM & PM.

### **Route J3: Red Lodge / Fordham to Soham VC**

07.35hrs Boundary Road Bus Shelter, Red Lodge

07.39hrs Walnut Tree, Worlington

07.40hrs War Memorial, Worlington

07.44hrs Bus Shelter, Freckenham

07.50hrs The Church, Collins Hill Layby, Fordham.

07.51hrs Mill Lane, Fordham

White Pheasant, Fordham - See Route J4

07.55hrs Lloyds Garage, Fordham

07.56hrs The Grove, Fordham

07.57hrs Bottom of Murfitts Lane, Fordham

07.58hrs Top of Murfitt's Lane, Fordham

#### Price Package:

Red Lodge £240.00 per term

Worlington £225.00 per term

Freckenham £210.00 per term

Fordham £185.00 per term

This package includes two journeys per day, AM & PM.

### **Route J4: Newmarket to Soham VC**

07.30hrs White Lion Bus Stop, High St, Newmarket (am only)

07.33hrs New Cheveley Road (opposite St John's Avenue), Newmarket

07.36hrs Cheveley Road (opposite Stanley Road), Newm07.39hrs Bus Stop

(opposite Racing Centre), Newmarket

07.39hrs Layby opposite Racing Centre

07.41hrs Leisure Centre, Exning Road

07.43hrs Laureate School (opposite side facing Exning)

07.45hrs Rumbles Fish & Chip Shop, Exning

07.53hrs White Pheasant, Fordham

#### Price Package:

£70.00 per month (except August) which works out as 11 months x £70.00 per year, per child. This package includes two journeys per day, AM & PM.

## **Private Hire Bus Routes**

**Greys of Ely – 01353 662300**

### **Haddenham to Soham VC**

The most up to date information on times and prices can be found on Greys website:

<https://greysofely.co.uk/soham-village-college-haddenham-school-route>

## Temporary Bus Passes

Unfortunately we are unable to accommodate students travelling on the county council catchment school buses who do not hold a valid bus pass for that route. If your child wishes to travel home to a friend's house you will need to arrange transport for this.

If your child wishes to go home with another child who lives out of catchment and therefore uses a **private hire** bus, we are unable to issue temporary bus passes. All private hire buses operate on a contract between the parents and bus company, with the school or county council having no involvement. The parents of your child's friend will need to contact the operator of the route their child uses and request for your child to use the service. They will then advise the parent if this is possible and what the cost for this would be, it is usually around £3 per journey.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the bus services and routes please do not hesitate to contact Student Services by email on: [studentservices@soham-college.org.uk](mailto:studentservices@soham-college.org.uk)

## Contacting Home

If a student needs to communicate with parents and carers during the school day or vice versa, our Student Services staff can assist with messages in both directions. If valuable possessions have to be brought into school, they may be handed into Student Services for security during the day or to PE staff to be looked after during PE lessons.

Soham Village College has a policy of no mobile phones in use during the school day (8.30am-3pm) for two reasons:

1. To minimise disruption to learning
2. To minimise cyberbullying

To avoid breaking the school rules, students should keep mobile phones switched off and out of sight between 8.30am and 3pm unless they have the direct permission of a member of staff. We ask parents to support us with this policy by not contacting their child directly between 8.30am and 3pm by text or call. Should you need a message to be given to your child, please call Student Services and we will ensure the message is passed on.

## **Free School Meals**

You may be entitled to claim Free School Meals if you are currently in receipt of Income Support or Income-based Job Seekers Allowance. Secondary school pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals are entitled to a two-course meal worth £2.35 per day. If you currently qualify and are in receipt of Free School Meals, this will continue throughout your child's transition to Soham Village College, requiring no further action on your part.

## **Cashless Catering**

To avoid the need for your child to bring cash to school, the school canteen uses a biometric data system for purchasing food and drink called Vericool. To use the system, a finger is placed on a scanner and the student's name and photo are displayed on the screen as a double check for identity.

It is widely used in schools nationally and is a very efficient system. The biometric data held is a number of separate image points read from the finger which are stored as a string of complex electronic characteristics and not as an image. No complete fingerprint is ever taken, and the information stored on these systems is not used anywhere else or for any other purpose and is deleted when a student leaves the college.

The government has recently introduced legislation that now requires us to obtain express permission from one parent for us to do this. If a parent or student asks us not to take biometric data, we are obliged not to do so, even if one parent has given permission. Your child will still be able to use the canteen and library, although the process for them to do so each time will be slower and less efficient.

If you have any queries about anything to do with biometric data, or if you would like to see the system in action, please do not hesitate to the Finance Manager.

Please ensure you complete the section on the 'Student Details' form on biometric data.

We usually scan fingerprints on the induction day, but this may need to change depending on COVID-19 government guidance.

# Term Dates

## Autumn Term 2021

Wednesday 1 September	Staff training day – school closed to students
Thursday 2 September	Year 7 students start academic year
Friday 3 September	Year 8 to 11 students start academic year
Thursday 23 September	Students finish school at 1.15pm
Friday 24 September	Staff training day – school closed to students
Monday 25 to Friday 29 October	Autumn half term break
Friday 26 November	Staff training day – school closed to students
Friday 17 December	School closes for Christmas break

## Spring Term 2022

Tuesday 4 January	School re-opens for spring term
Monday 14 to Friday 18 February	Spring half term break
Friday 1 April	School closes for Easter break

## Summer Term 2022

Tuesday 19 April	School re-opens for summer term
Monday 2 May	May Day bank holiday
Monday 30 May to Friday 3 June	Summer half term break
Wednesday 20 July	School closes for academic year
Thursday 21 July	Staff training day – school closed to students
Friday 22 July	Staff training day – school closed to students

## Planned Term Time Absence

We strongly recommend that families do not book holidays during term time. In accordance with government guidelines, any absence due to holiday during term time will be unauthorised and parents/carers liable to a penalty notice unless exceptional circumstances apply. Requests for term time leave must be made to the Head teacher in writing (using the form available here: [www.sohamvc.org/attendance](http://www.sohamvc.org/attendance)), and these will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If you have any questions about this, please contact our Attendance Officer before making any travel arrangements.

# Dates for the Diary

## Term starts for Year 7 Students

Thursday 2 September 2021

## Year 7 Parents' Information Evening

6pm – 7pm on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September\*

Held in Lodeside Hall, there will be brief presentations on topics specific to the year group, as well as a chance to talk to key members of staff. Ed Slingsby, Assistant Head, will also be introducing 'Go4Schools', the main system we use to report students' progress, behaviour, attendance and set homework.

All parents and carers of Year 7 students are welcome.

## Year 7 Parents' Evening

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March

This is a virtual event where meetings between family members and teachers are conducted on a platform similar to *Zoom*. The brief discussions will give you an opportunity to find out how your child is getting on in lessons, with regards their progress and attitude to learning, and also allow you to ask any questions you may have. Details of how to book appointments will follow in due course.

*\*Subject to change due to government guidance.*

