

Transition letter to Year 6 parents and students

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

The move from primary school to secondary is a transition which can bring uncertainty at the best of times. During the current pandemic the future looks even less sure as our tried and tested normal transition processes are not possible. I want you to know that our school community is very much thinking about our Year 6s, talking about them and refining the plans which will support a successful transition.

Over the past two weeks we have been telephoning the families of our new students, offering further support and making the first steps in establishing a relationship which will prosper over the next five to seven years. This is an enjoyable but time-consuming undertaking and we are working our way through; if you have not yet have a telephone call, you soon will. We have contact details for the majority of you but if you have not yet returned your School Forms booklet please get that back to us by hand or post as soon as you can.

The new student page of our website is constantly updated and is the best place to go to receive the latest information: <https://samuelward.co.uk/new-student-guide> You could also keep an eye on our twitter feed: @SamWardAcad

The coming weeks will see a step-up of our transition processes and it is timely to let you and your child know what will be in place to support them.

Virtual tour and welcome video

Our Head Girl and Head Boy, Nicole and Finn, are filming and editing a video of the school and community. As of this writing I have not seen any of their work but I know they will cover all the main topics students will be excited and possibly anxious about: what they will learn in Year 7, what new equipment they will get to use, what the teachers are like, what new opportunities will be available, what the food is like, who to go to if they are worried, whether they will get lost or bullied, how much homework there will be and much more besides. This video should be accessible through the website link above by the end of the month.

The best way to predict the future... is to create it.

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Visits to Primary Schools by pastoral team

In September our new Year 7s will be very ably supported by the experienced pastoral team of Sophie Ireland and Sian Cripps. Sophie is the Head of Year and also one of our senior leaders. Sian is the inclusion officer for the year group. They, along with their team of Form Tutors, will be central figures in your child's life while they develop and learn at Samuel Ward Academy. Sian and Sophie are very keen to visit all our primary schools and meet the Year 6 students. We are currently arranging this with primary schools, the first happening this week, and are confident this can be done safely. We are acutely aware that some Year 6 students cannot currently attend primary school because their family is shielding. To support these students there will be a video of Sophie and Sian available through the website introducing themselves and explaining the various types of support our students will enjoy. In addition, they will answer any questions students or parents wish to ask. In the unlikely event that visits to any primary schools are not possible we will try and use video link instead.

Online Question and Answer

If you, or your child would like a question answered by Sophie or Sian please e-mail me and I will ensure it is featured online (anonymously!)

Kev Geall: kgeall@samuelward.co.uk

Sophie, Sian and I are also available to answer questions privately but I find that students often have very similar things they would like to know about. For many students it is reassuring to hear that other children are feeling exactly the same. While the answers will be directed to children, parents are encouraged to ask any questions they may have. While students never ask about setting/streaming it is one of the most common questions asked by parents. We will cover this topic in any visit and online Q and A.

Sophie Ireland: Sireland@samuelward.co.uk

Sian Cripps: Scripps@samuelward.co.uk

Transition support resources

We know that by now most students are a bit tired of working from booklets or websites. We would not normally set Year 6 students summer work to do and the current situation does not change that. However, it seems certain that we cannot run our transition days in July as normal and need different means of supporting students to be "secondary ready". We have purchased for each child two books on preparing for secondary school. They cover key topics such as "unlocking your mind", "dare to take risks", "friendships and fallouts", "what is normal anyway" and more. A suggested programme will be on our website. These books will be available through a socially-distanced collection from our reception or, if you are unable to collect, we will arrange delivery. The books will be ready for collection from the 1st July.

In summary:

- Please keep checking our website and twitter for regular updates
- Return your completed School Forms booklet if you haven't already done so
- If you have any questions please get in touch using the e-mail addresses above or the contacts listed on our website

Exactly what schooling will look like in September remains uncertain but I can guarantee that we will do everything we can to ensure your child experiences a high-quality transition. The Samuel Ward Community is very much looking forward to welcoming you and your child.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'K Geall'.

Kev Geall

Dr K Geall

Deputy Headteacher

Samuel Ward Academy