

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a typical day like?

Students are expected to be on the school site by 8.35am and will start the day with their form tutor at 8.40am. Students have five lessons each day which begin at 8.55am. Break time is 10.55-11.15am and lunch is 1.15pm-1.55pm. The day finishes at 3pm.

What should I do if my child is absent from school?

We encourage all students to attend school 100% of the time. If your child is too unwell to come to school please contact the absence line (0191 2961432) as soon as possible every day of absence and leave a message for Mrs Gardiner or Mr Lion. If you are unsure whether to send your child in, please do so and we will contact you if they are too unwell to be in school. We understand that children sometimes need to attend appointments and we would ask that these are scheduled outside of school times where possible. If this is not possible please send a note in with your child for their form tutor prior to the appointment.

What happens if my child is ill in school?

If your child feels unwell they need to ask their class teacher for a note before going to reception. Your child's Head of Year or a member of the Senior Leadership Team will make the ultimate decision as to whether your child needs to be sent home. If this is the case, we will call you to either obtain permission to send them home or request that someone collects them.

What arrangements are in place if my child needs to take medication in school?

If your child has any regular medication they need to take during the school day they can only do so after the relevant forms have been signed by you. The medication should be brought into school by you and once in school is kept in a secure location. There are a small number of staff who deal with administering medication and a comprehensive record is kept of when and how much is administered. It is vital that we have up to date medical information so please ensure the medical forms are completed and the school are informed of any changes.

Who do I get in touch with if there is a problem or I have a query about something?

For most issues your first point of contact will be your child's form tutor. For more urgent or serious concerns you may wish to contact your child's Head of Year. If you wish to meet with a specific member of staff we are very happy to accommodate this and again the best person to facilitate this is the Head of Year. Please contact the school office to arrange a mutually agreeable time or contact the Head of Year via email.

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What equipment will my child need?

All students are expected to have a pencil case containing at least two blue or black pens, a pencil, a rubber and a ruler. Other pieces of equipment which would be beneficial are a calculator, highlighters and a glue stick. Students will also be responsible for remembering to bring in their PE kit and any ingredients they may need for catering.

How is homework set?

Homework is set using a program called Show My Homework so both your child and you can view it. You will both be given 'log ins' to access the work. The exception is the Maths department which uses a program called Hegarty Maths.

Are mobile phones allowed in school?

Mobile phones are allowed to be brought into school but the rule about their use is quite simple. They are not to be used or visible anywhere inside any of the school buildings. If this is not adhered to a member of staff will ask your child to hand their phone to them and it will be placed in the school reception for the remainder of the day. It can then be collected at the end of the school day. Mobile phones are allowed to be used outside of the buildings at break and lunchtimes. We do though encourage pupils to limit their mobile phone usage during these times and instead advocate that they use this time to communicate with their peers in a more traditional sense!

What should my child do if they have a problem/worry in school?

There are lots of adults that can help in school – your child's class teachers, form tutor and head of year can often solve or help with a situation if they are told about it. We also have a great team of highly trained learning mentors if your child needs longer term specific support. What we actively discourage, is for your child to phone you in the middle of the day with an issue that may have arisen. There are several very good reasons for this: firstly we would like your child to try work out and solve issues for themselves, they need to work out where to go for help at the time and lastly it could upset you knowing that your child is upset but you are not with them. It is vital however that your child does discuss a problem with you and that you get in touch if you think there needs to be further discussion/action.

What happens if my child has Special Educational Needs or a disability?

We collect details regarding SEND from primary schools during transition meetings prior to the start of each new school year. This is used to allocate support where appropriate. The various support programs are coordinated by our SENCO Andrew Purvis and where possible will be discussed ahead of your child starting in September. It is very likely that Mr Purvis will have already been in touch regarding your child's specific needs after liaising with feeder primary schools. If this isn't the case please do get in touch.

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How will I receive information from the school?

We post out letters and information regularly as well as allow for them to be viewed on the school's website. The school's website will also have the calendar for the academic year for notable dates and term times etc. All our policies, curriculum information etc. are available for viewing on the website. We may also call, text or email you to request or pass information on. It is vital that we have at least two other contacts for your child in case of an emergency and that you inform school of any changes to any of your contact details.

What are the meal arrangements at school?

The opening times for the dinner hall are: Breakfast – 8.00-8.30, Break – 10.55-11.15, Lunch – 1.15-1.55.

The current cost of the daily main meal is £2.25, we run a cashless system via ParentPay.

If your child has any food allergies or intolerances please inform the school via the medical form.

How do I buy school uniform?

Our uniform is supplied by a specialist uniform company called Michael Sehgal. The uniform can be purchased via their website <https://www.michaelsehgal.co.uk>. For further details about uniform, please view the school website.

What are the schools uniform expectations?

We like students at John Spence to look smart at all times and this means we check uniform at the start of every day. What is and is not allowed in terms of uniform, footwear, jewellery and make up is clearly outlined on our website. There may be the odd occasion where there is a genuine problem with uniform and in this instance we ask that your child produces a note from you outlining the issue. Heads of Year have items of clothing and shoes that your child will be expected to borrow from school if they do not have the correct uniform on.

Are there any kinds of rewards/incentives for my child to work hard and behave well?

Teachers are constantly looking for opportunities to hand out a SKILLED, RESILIENT or CONSIDERATE reward cards. These can then be saved and cashed in for items such as stationery or sports equipment or, they can be put into the half termly raffle draw for cash prizes. Senior staff who are on duty each lesson are keen to give out on the spot free cookie vouchers or fast track lunch passes.

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What happens if a student gets it wrong in school?

Learning in a disruptive free classroom is a commitment we make to all students at John Spence. If a pupil chooses to disrupt someone else's learning, the teacher will give them a warning and remind them of the expectations. If a pupil continues to choose to disrupt learning they may be given a detention or removed from the lesson dependent on the severity of their disruptive behaviour. The pupil is collected by a senior member of staff and placed in a supervised study area at which point the pupils home contact is notified. Repeated removal from class will trigger additional support.

Are there any other school routines/expectations which my child needs to be aware of?

- Students have the opportunity to access the school toilets before school as well as during break and lunch time. Students can request to go to the toilet during lessons 2 and 4 but they must receive permission from their class teacher.
- When moving between lessons we ask pupils to carry their coat as no coats are to be worn inside the school building.

Communication is key to your child being successful and happy in school and we pride ourselves that this is a strength of ours. Please get in touch if you have any question that has not been answered here and someone will get back to you as quickly as possible.