

Founded 1774



Friends' School Lisburn

2026 / 27

Information for Parents of Year 8

Contents Page

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Foreword | 3 |
| Aspire | 4 |
| Contact Information | 5 |
| General Organisation | 6 |
| Senior Staff | 6 |
| Pastoral Care | 7 |
| Safeguarding | 8 |
| Support | 8 |
| Mentors | 9 |
| Assembly | 9 |
| Special Educational Needs | 10 |
| Medical Information | 10 |
| School Attendance | 10 |
| Communication | 11 |
| Mobile Phones..... | 11 |
| School Policies | 11 |
| Curriculum | 12 |
| Assessment | 13 |
| Parents' Meetings | 13 |
| Homework | 14 |
| Voluntary Contribution | 15 |
| How to Pay the School Bill | 17 |
| Dining Hall | 18 |
| Library | 18 |
| ICT Facilities | 18 |
| Music Tuition | 19 |
| Extra-Curricular Activities | 20 |
| Appearance Code 2026-2027 | 21 |
| Transport | 22 |
| Autumn Term 2026 | 23 |
| Term Dates | 24 |
| Parental Support | 25 |
| Study at Home | 25 |
| Attendance & Punctuality | 25 |
| Participation | 25 |
| Sense of Responsibility | 26 |
| Contact with Teachers | 26 |

Foreword

Dear Parent

This booklet provides a brief introduction to life at Friends' School, which I hope will prove a useful point of reference for parents of pupils who are preparing to join us in September 2026. You will receive further information about School during our Induction Evening on 16 June, when you will also have the opportunity to speak with members of staff.

The move from primary to secondary school is an important and significant transition in a young person's life. Although our Year 8 pupils will continue with work begun in primary school, they will also have the challenge of learning a variety of different subjects, getting to know a range of new teachers, making new friends and moving around a much larger building. They will also have to organise their lives around books, bags, lunches, homework, different study tasks, musical instruments and PE kits, which is not always straightforward for an eleven-year-old accustomed to the simpler routines of primary school life.

We hope that the information in this booklet will allow you to work productively with us over the coming weeks and months as we help our new pupils settle in. We believe, together as teachers and parents we can play an important role in helping them to navigate this formative and exciting period in their lives. Your active involvement over the next seven years will support our efforts in assisting our young people as they adjust to their new environment, and our aim is to ensure that the initial transfer from primary school into Year 8 will be as smooth and enjoyable as possible.

We very much value your support and look forward to developing and nourishing a good relationship with you, as together we watch these young people mature and flourish, achieving excellence within the caring and supportive community that is Friends' School.

I look forward to meeting with you on 16 June, and hope that you find these resources useful as you help your child prepare for life at Friends'.

With best wishes,



Stephen Moore, Principal



Quae Sursum Sunt Quaerite

'Seek those things that are above'

NEW TESTAMENT, BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

ASPIRE

Our values underpin everything we do in school and are encapsulated in the word ASPIRE, which stands for Adventure, Sustainability, Peace, Integrity, Respect and Equality. These are values we seek to model in our everyday lives and which we want each of our pupils to nurture.

We aspire to live **adventurously**, to take risks in our learning and grasp the opportunities available to us to explore the world around us.

We aspire to live **sustainably**, to make good use of our resources and reduce our impact on the environment.

We aspire to live at **peace** with ourselves and others, to nurture our wellbeing and to resolve conflict where we see it.

We aspire to live with **integrity**, to be honest in our dealings with others and to be true to our values.

We aspire to show **respect** to ourselves and others, to nurture our talents and to build our school community. We aspire to promote **equality**, to value everyone for who they are and to celebrate the contribution they make.



Contact Information

- 1 All calls and emails to the following will be received by the Office. Staff there are happy to pass on messages, and the relevant person will get back to you as soon as possible.

Telephone: 028 9266 2156

E-mail: office@friends.lisburn.ni.sch.uk

Opening Hours: 8.30 am - 4.30 pm

- 2 Appointments with Mr Moore are made by his PA, Mrs Agnieszka Rayes. She can be contacted by telephone (**02892662156**) or e-mail [\(office@friends.lisburn.ni.sch.uk\)](mailto:office@friends.lisburn.ni.sch.uk).

- 3 Who to contact in School:

- (a) review of pupil progress: contact Year Teacher, in the first instance
- (b) pastoral concern: contact the Collect Teacher or Year Teacher, this can be done via email **pastoral@friends.lisburn.ni.sch.uk**
- (c) medical information: contact School Nurse (Mrs J Newberry)
- (d) School Policy matters contact the Principal or Vice Principals
- (e) Planned absence: email **attendance@friends.lisburn.ni.sch.uk**

General Organisation

School has seven year groups: Years 8 - 14. When pupils come into School, they are placed in registration groups called Collects. It is in Collects that pupils form their early friendships and they remain in these groups until Year 14. Year 8 pupils are taught in Collect groups, except in practical subjects where the teaching groups are smaller.

We have a House system with four Houses (Aughrim, Collin, Croob and Divis) which have members from each year group, led by Sixth Form House Captains and Staff House Leaders. All pupils in Year 8 are allocated to a House. Pupils will be placed in the same House as siblings currently enrolled in School.

Senior Staff

The Board of Governors, which consists of representatives from the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the Department of Education, parents and staff, has responsibility for the appointment of staff and the running of the school. The Principal, with the Leadership Team, is responsible for the formulation of curriculum policy, pastoral care and the general administration of the school. The Heads of Department are responsible for the development and organisation of the teaching programmes in each subject area. The Year Teachers supervise the general welfare and the academic progress of pupils. They have direct responsibility for communication with parents, teachers and the Principal on pastoral and academic issues.

The Bursar and Office Staff facilitate the administration of the school.

| Principal | Vice-Principals | Senior Teachers |
|------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Mr S Moore | Mr S Alexander Ms S Cochrane | Mr C Cunningham Mrs C Lowe Mr R McKinley Mrs D Semple |

Pastoral Care

School is committed to promoting both the academic and the personal and social development of our pupils. We aim to create an environment which is based on the principles of care, security and responsibility. School has established a structure to support and implement the provision of pastoral care. It has three main aims:

- to enable the monitoring of pupils' progress, achievement and contribution to School
- to enable a variety of personal, social or vocational issues to be addressed
- to ensure that pupils and parents have clear points of contact in the event of concerns being raised or guidance being sought

All staff in Friends' School have a duty of care to all pupils. We promote open and positive relationships between pupils and staff and endeavour to support pupils in their learning and in their contribution to the school community. There are, additionally, specific, designated and trained members of staff who have responsibility for various aspects of pupil welfare.

The **Collect Teacher** will be your son or daughter's first point of contact in School, and will see your son or daughter most often, having daily contact each morning and getting to know him or her best. Collect Teachers will also meet with pupils in their Collects for an Extended Collect period of thirty minutes every week. If you need to talk to someone in School about your son or daughter, the Collect Teacher is your first point of contact also and can be contacted via the General Office.

The **Year Teacher**, has overall responsibility for Year 8. They will co-ordinate the work of the Collect Teacher, liaise with other subject teachers, monitor academic progress, contribute to reports and deal with behaviour and more serious disciplinary matters. The Year Teacher can also be contacted through the General Office.

Please be mindful that if you contact School during the day, both Collect and Year Teachers are most likely to be teaching a class and may not be in a position to take your call. Staff will endeavour to return your calls as soon as possible.

Safeguarding

In line with Department of Education guidance, the School Policy contains details about recognising signs and symptoms of abuse and specifies procedures to follow in the event of a concern expressed or a report received. All parents receive a Safeguarding information update once a year, including procedures for reporting. In brief, the procedure for parents wishing to report a Safeguarding concern is to contact the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher, in the first instance.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Designated Teacher | Mrs C Lowe (Senior Teacher) |
| Deputy Designated Teachers | Mr S Alexander (Vice-Principal) Ms S Cochrane (Vice-Principal) |

The Principal will initiate and take responsibility for appropriate action, including possible referral to outside agencies

Support

Pupils have access to a confidential counselling service, provided by two trained and experienced Counsellors, on a weekly basis. Counselling can be arranged, as discreetly as possible, via the Vice-Principal or through referral from parents, Year Teachers or pupils themselves. In the event of self-referral, pupils are encouraged to tell their parents.

School will also liaise with a variety of external agencies, when relevant and appropriate, to ensure particular and specific support for pupils.

Mentors

Many senior pupils assist with the pastoral support of Junior and Middle school pupils. Senior Prefects are assigned to each Collect in Year 8 and these pupils are called Mentors. They help with the induction of new pupils to School and assist Collect teachers, on four mornings a week throughout the year, in Year 8 Collects. They give guidance and support on settling in, personal organisation, routines, procedures, homework and relationships. Their experience of school life and the variety of situations that might arise for new pupils is invaluable for our incoming Year 8 pupils as they adapt to their new learning environment and progress through the year.

Mentors are also available later in the year to provide homework and study support on a one-to-one or small group basis. Mentoring recognises that all pupils have something valuable to offer their fellow pupils and helps to create a community in which pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and to help one another.

Assembly

We place much value on our morning Assembly. Year 8 pupils attend Main Assembly and Junior Assembly throughout the week. This allows time for quiet reflection through a period of silent worship, and guidance on a range of relevant moral and social issues. Assemblies also provide pupils with an opportunity to feel an integral part of the school community and to celebrate and share all of their achievements with other pupils.

A weekly Extended Collect provides an opportunity, with Collect Teachers and Mentors, to discuss pupil concerns and issues relating to their induction, organisation and personal and social development.

Special Educational Needs

Your son or daughter may require special educational provision to be made due to a recognised learning difficulty or medical need. This will be coordinated by the SENCO, Mrs M Waring. It is Important that you share any relevant information regarding this to ensure that your son or daughter receives the best possible support within School.

Medical Information

Our School Nurse, Mrs J Newberry, provides care and support for students throughout the school day. She can be contacted through the Main Office during school hours (02892662156) to discuss the mental or physical health needs of your child.

Please ensure that the medical section on the Enrolment Form is completed accurately and the school is notified of any changes.

During the school day pupils who are feeling unwell should not contact home or leave the school without permission from the nurse or a member of staff.

In school we have a number of pupils with nut allergies so nuts and nut products are not permitted on school premises.

School Attendance

While frequent absences have a negative impact on learning, we recognise that is sometimes inevitable that pupils will miss school for a variety of reasons. In the case of planned absences, such as medical/dental appointments, please notify the school. Please note that school are not permitted to authorise family holidays during term-time.

Communication

Friends' School uses SIMs InTouch to send email messages to parents about their son/daughter's progress in school. This includes regular information on attendance, assessment and reports. You do not need to do anything to register of this, your contact details are stored within SIMs following completion of the enrolment form. We also take the opportunity to celebrate pupil achievements and highlight key events taking place in school through our Newsletter which is emailed home at the end of each month.

Mobile Phones

Friends' School does not permit the use of mobile phones during the school day. If pupils need to bring a phone to school, it must be switched off and kept out of sight at all times.

We ask for parents' support with this policy by not contacting pupils on their phones during the school day. If there are any urgent messages, these can be communicated via the school office, which will ensure they are passed on promptly.

School Policies

Policy statements are maintained to cover all aspects of school life. These serve to give an indication of practice and procedures and provide guidance for staff and parents. Policies are in line with Department of Education recommendations and requirements and are reviewed regularly. Copies of the school policies can be downloaded from our website www.friendsschoollisburn.org.uk

Curriculum

We offer a balanced, robust and relevant curriculum for all of our pupils which will equip them for more specialised study in a range of areas when they reach the Sixth Form. Pupils entering Year 8 will be taught the Northern Ireland Curriculum and will be encouraged to acquire the knowledge they require to develop a deep understanding of each subject. Our aim is to foster a love of learning and to inspire the kind of intellectual curiosity that will serve our pupils well as they move through School. Based on what they learn, pupils will have opportunities to develop creativity, independence and the ability to work with others. A Curriculum booklet, giving details of all subjects studied in Year 8, will provide further information on this.

The school week is divided into forty-five periods, each lasting thirty-five minutes. Pupils study sixteen subjects in Year 8 and are timetabled for double periods in the practical subjects. In Year 8, classes are not streamed. Pupils are already divided into six Collect groups and are taught in this arrangement for non-practical subjects. The practical subjects are taught in eight groups. Pupils are given every encouragement to achieve the highest academic standards through challenging and engaging lessons.

At GCSE level, pupils normally take ten subjects, including English, English Literature, Maths, Religious Studies, a Modern Language and at least one Science.

Assessment

In most subjects, pupils have summative or end of topic tests, many of which are standardised across the whole year group. Additionally, pupils sit school examinations in Winter and in Summer. Copies of the school examination timetable, indicating changes to break, lunch and end of school times are posted on the school website before the start of the examinations. A School Report is issued twice yearly: there is a short mid-year report and a more detailed report at the end of June.

Parents' Meetings

Both pupils and parents are invited to consultation meetings, which take place once a year for each year group and provide the opportunity to discuss progress with subject teachers. These meetings take place virtually via School cloud with details being sent out prior to the meeting. Year Teachers monitor the work of pupils throughout the year and alert parents if any concerns arise. We also arrange Information sessions at the beginning of each academic year to share information with parents. Please contact the school at any time to discuss matters relating to pupil progress.

Homework

Homework is an integral part of the assessment process and it is a very important learning experience for all pupils. It serves a number of purposes:

- to encourage good personal organisation and study habits
- to reinforce work that has been completed in class
- to prepare for the next lesson
- to inform you, as parents, what is being done in class and to encourage your involvement

A Homework Planner is issued to all pupils at the start of the year. As well as allowing pupils to record homework, the planner includes sections on study skills, tips on personal organisation, homework and revision. The Homework Planner gives pupils the opportunity to record their achievements and involvement in extra-curricular activities. It also encourages them to record and reflect on their examination performances.

With a larger number of subjects, Year 8 pupils will have to learn how to organise and manage their homework; parents can support pupils' learning at home by checking and signing the Homework Planner once a week and encouraging them to:

- check through work for accuracy and presentation
- take time each week to review work, possibly even setting a few weekly targets for improvement
- manage and organise books and materials required for lessons the next day

Voluntary Contribution

As a Voluntary Grammar School, Friends' derives its funding from a combination of government grants, a compulsory capital fee of £140 per annum, and Voluntary Contributions from parents. The capital fee is used for essential building projects and to service existing loans, while the Voluntary Contributions allow us to add value to what we offer, including a range of extra-curricular opportunities.

Without our Voluntary Contributions, we would not have the same ability to subsidise trips, pay for transport, sustain our coaching programme in sport, provide additional support in music, continue to enhance our grounds, or buy equipment for clubs and societies.

The Voluntary Contribution is not compulsory and whether you pay or not is kept in strict confidence. Your support for School is much appreciated and the Voluntary Contribution is more important than ever, particularly as reductions in public expenditure are affecting the ability of schools to provide for pupils as they would wish. For administrative purposes, the termly amounts are shown on the school bill. If you wish to contribute a lesser sum, simply deduct the difference when paying the bill and our staff will make the necessary adjustment to your account.

Voluntary Contributions can be given under the Gift Aid Scheme. This allows School to recover additional funds from HM Revenue and Customs. Agreeing to Gift Aid does not involve you in any additional cost or paper work. We would encourage all parents who have not already done so to tick the Gift Aid agreement box on the Form of Acceptance to allow us to benefit from this possible source of 'free' income from HMRC.

During 2026 - 2027 the following fees and voluntary contributions will apply:

School Fees, Charges and Contributions

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Capital Fee (compulsory) | £140 per annum |
| Parental Contribution (voluntary) | £360 per annum |
| Materials Charge | £50 per annum |
| Homework Diary | £5.00 per annum |

In addition, the School Magazine costs £5 per family and is published in the Autumn Term.

Bills are issued just before the start of each term (in late August, December and March) and are payable immediately. Parents may opt to pay by Direct Debit and spread the cost of fees over the 10 months from September to June

If your child wishes to use a locker, this may be purchased separately in September at a cost of £5.00.

During the year the PTA will ask for a membership fee of £20 per family per annum; this voluntary sum is used to support key projects and provide resources that benefit all our pupils.

How to Pay the School Bill

Our preferred methods of payment are:

- Online banking: payments may be directed to School's bank account at AIB, Sort Code: 93-83-35, Account No: 51062088. If using this option, it is essential that you quote your School account number (found on the school bill) each time you make a payment. Bills should be paid in full within two weeks of issue or, with the prior agreement of School, repeat payments may be set up to clear the bill between September and June.
- Direct Debit: Payments may be spread over the 10 months (September – June inclusive) of the school year. If you wish to pay by Direct Debit, please contact the School office or email **fees@friends.lisburn.ni.sch.uk**

Alternatively, parents may present payment and the giro slip from the bottom of the school bill at any AIB Bank, or at their own bank.

School Facilities

Dining Hall

We currently operate a biometric system for purchasing food in school. This allows for easy and quick payment for lunches. Hot and cold lunches are served daily, or pupils may bring packed lunches which can also be eaten in the Dining Hall. Snacks and drinks are also available from the Dining Hall at break.

Library

Our Library caters for all pupils and is open from 8.45 am to 4.30 pm every day, except Friday, when it closes at

3.30 pm. All Year 8 pupils are introduced to the Library through their English classes. Pupils may borrow up to four books for a period of two weeks. During the first term, we concentrate on establishing good reading habits, and throughout the year we encourage pupils to use the multitude of resources available to them.

ICT Facilities

Pupils have access to ICT rooms for personal use during and after school. The opening times of the Computer rooms are displayed in the ICT department. Pupils are asked to refer to our Acceptable Use Policies and guidelines available on our website.

Music Tuition

Private music tuition is available in School for:

- violin, viola, cello and double bass, guitar (acoustic and electric)
- flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone and bassoon, traditional fiddle/whistle
- trumpet, cornet, French horn, trombone, baritone and tuba
- piano
- drum kit
- singing, musical theatre
- music theory

Instrumental lessons are arranged through the Head of the Music Department, Mrs N Blakeman. Where more pupils apply for lessons than there are places available, prior attainment is taken into account. Lessons are given during class time, rotating through different periods each week so that pupils do not repeatedly miss the same subject. Pupils may have shared or individual lessons. Parents enter into a private contract with the tutor and fees are paid in advance, directly to the tutor. The cost of a 30-minute individual lesson is between £13.50 - £18.00*, and pupils with shared lessons split the fee. School provides a number of instruments for hire.

*Information correct at the time of printing.

Extra-Curricular Activities

We consider participation in clubs and societies to be an important part of each pupil's social and personal development. Involvement in at least one activity encourages pupils to make new friends, develop new skills, and grow in confidence.

As pupils progress and later apply for Higher Education or employment, they often find it extremely valuable to be able to draw on the experiences gained through extra-curricular involvement.

Pupils have opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities, including competitions, expeditions, day trips, and residential visits. Pupils of all ages also represent the School in a variety of sports.

The range of activities available may vary from year to year, depending on staffing and resources.

Additional information on schools teams and practice days will be distributed by the PE Dept in September.

| | | | |
|----------------|------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Athletics* | Gymnastics | Show Jumping* | Badminton* |
| Orienteering | Rugby* | Basketball | Health Related Exercise |
| Volleyball | Cricket* | Hockey* | Softball |
| Cross Country* | Netball* | Swimming* | Football |
| Rounders | Tennis* | Golf* | Handball |

*indicates school sports in which we field teams

Other Extra-Curricular Activities:

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Junior Choir | Debating (Junior) | Well-being Club |
| Drama | Languages Club | Orchestra |
| Flute Ensemble | String Ensemble | Folk Group |
| Public Speaking (Junior) | Science Club | Jazz Band |
| Scripture Union | Robotics Club | Maths Club |
| Chess club | Art Club | Wind Band |
| Boys' Choir | Junior Guitar Group | Dance |

Appearance Code 2026 - 2027

Friends' School's Appearance Code is set within the context of the Pastoral Care Policy and the Behaviour Policy and Code and has been established through appropriate consultation. It is expected that all pupils understand and accept the Appearance Code, and therefore all are expected to adhere to the guidelines set down. Any deviation will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and requests must be submitted by a parent in writing to the Principal. Friends' School appreciates the support and co-operation of parents in upholding our high standards regarding appearance.

Main items of School uniform may be purchased from:

- **McCalls of Lisburn, Market Street, Lisburn**
- **Warnocks, 791-2 Lisburn Road, Belfast**

Items of PE/Games kit may be purchased **online from the school shop** which can be accessed at any time throughout the year by clicking **here**.

***Our Appearance Code is currently under review, please do not purchase uniform until this is finalised. More information on uniform will be available at our Induction Evening.**

Transport

The Education Authority (EA) oversees an online process for parents applying for home to school transport assistance. Applications for transport assistance to all schools, Primary and Post Primary should now be completed online via the EA website at <http://www.eani.org.uk/transportapp>

It is essential to apply as soon as possible as an offer of transport assistance cannot be guaranteed for September if an application is made late.

Eligibility for transport assistance to mainstream schools is based on the distance from the pupil's home to the school at which they have been offered a place or currently attend. The qualifying distance is three miles for Post Primary and two miles for Primary, measured by the shortest available walking route door to door.

Transport information on the services which stop at school can be found here <https://www.translink.co.uk/using-translink/school-services/find-a-school-service>

A number of our pupils travel into the centre of Lisburn on public transport and then walk or get the K38 bus to school.

Autumn Term 2026

The Autumn term begins for our new Year 8 pupils with a half day on Wednesday 26 August 2026. Year 8 pupils are invited into School to meet again with their Collect and Year Teacher, their pupil Mentors and the others in their Collect. They will also have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with their surroundings. On Thursday 27 August they will be in school with other Year Groups and will experience their first subject classes. Induction activities will continue during the first month of the Autumn term. Pupils have an 'Away Day' together in September and we organise a series of personal development activities which will allow them to settle into friendship groups and get to know staff.

Term Dates

Autumn Term: Thursday 20 August — Friday 18 December*

Autumn Half Term: Monday 26 October — Friday 30 October

Spring Term: Monday 4 January — Friday 19 March

Spring Half Term: Monday 8 February — Friday 12 February

Summer Term: Monday 5 April — Wednesday 30 June

Summer Bank Holidays: Monday 3 May, Monday 31 May

* 20 August will be a school day for Year 13 only

25 August will be a school day for Year 14 only

TransformED Days

Friday 25 September 2026

Monday 25 January 2027

Tuesday 4 May 2027

Staff Development Days (to be confirmed)

Friday 16 October 2026

Wednesday 17 March 2027

Wednesday 21 April 2027

Thursday 20 May 2027

Tuesday 15 June 2027

Speech Day

Friday 4 September 2026

Open Morning

Saturday 9 January 2027

Parental Support

We appreciate your support as parents and you can provide valuable help in the following areas.

Study at Home

- by helping to organise books and materials for each day
- by providing a quiet place to study, without distractions
- by taking an interest in the presentation of homework

Attendance and Punctuality

- by encouraging attendance
- by contacting School early in the event of sustained absence
- by ensuring that your son/daughter is in School, ready to begin the school day, by 8:45 am
- by following procedures concerning return to School

Participation

- by encouraging involvement in extra-curricular activities, either after School, lunchtime or on Saturday

Sense of Responsibility

- by supporting School in matters of appearance and behaviour

Contact with Teachers

- by taking advantage of Parents' Meetings to discuss progress with subject teachers
- by consulting Class Teachers or Year Teachers on matters of concern

As pupils enter Year 8 we take the opportunity to stress the importance of the partnership between School, the pupil and his or her parents. The ethos of Friends' School is based on a firm sense of community. We look forward to developing strong links and effective communication between School and home and working together with you in the academic and personal interests of your son or daughter.

We hope that your child will settle smoothly into school life here at Friends' and trust that our programme of induction activities will ease the transition from primary school.