

Open Event Questions

Question	Answer
<p>What trips does Hitchin Boys' School offer?</p>	<p>The school offers an extensive range of trips. They range from short local trips for a few hours to global trips to places such as Malaysia, China and Japan. Most trips are optional and are offered to support the boys personal, social and cultural development. Some trips, such as the annual Holocaust Memorial Trip to north London for an afternoon, is strongly encouraged with only a handful of students not attending. Most trips are aimed at a particular year group(s) to ensure there are even opportunities.</p> <p>From a sporting perspective, there is a tour within Europe when they are in Yr8 or 9 and a longer haul sports tour if they play in the senior teams later in their school life. An example is the Rugby tour to Los Angeles in 2022. We also have an annual ski trip and have had trips to exciting destinations such as China, Malaysia, Iceland, Japan and many more.</p>
<p>What lessons are like.</p>	<p>Very varied! This is the big difference from primary school - you may have some lessons that are taught in a classroom that may be more familiar but also incredible lessons in science labs, music in performance rooms, drama in the auditorium, PE in our extensive sports facilities, Art in our beautiful studios, Computing in an IT suite, D&T or Food Technology in our workshops and kitchen. Each hour of the school day will bring something different and you will be taught by inspirational teachers who love their subject and are enthusiastic to see you learn and progress.</p>
<p>A couple of messages worried about bullying at HBS</p>	<p>This question was arguably best answered by George on our online open evening which can be viewed here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jb-A9EGhiy8. In his answer George highlighted that he was worried about bullying himself before joining but hasn't personally seen any. Sadly young people in every school across the country make mistakes and get things wrong so like all schools we do have to deal with bullying incidents from time to time but as George said it is not tolerated. The boys also receive lots of pastoral guidance on what to do if someone is bullying you and in their Learning 4 Life programme they learn about all the different forms of bullying from online to name calling. Tolerance is one of our 3 key themes in Years 7 & 8 so supporting those who do bully is also central to how we deal with it.</p>
<p>Do you do football?</p>	<p>The boys do more football than perhaps is the common perception. Whilst it is not on our sporting curriculum it is something the boys play at break and lunch when the fields are open. We also have inter form football and house football competitions throughout the year. The sixth formers do enter the local district league and have done so since</p>

	<p>the 2005/06 season. We hope that boys and parents would recognise the opportunities to take part in sports many boys have not had any exposure to (such as rugby, hockey, cricket, athletics) and if your son does love his football, he will more than likely be playing it regularly outside of school. We do recognise for some boys this is a factor when choosing schools but hope you see the positive opportunities outweigh the perceived negative. Finally, we have a great history of supporting boys in their pursuit of becoming a professional footballer. Recently, Ben Wilmot has gone on to become a Premier League footballer. Last year, Alex Kirk signed a full time scholar contract at Arsenal. Both benefited tremendously from the HPG system at school and the support in place to help them get to where they are now.</p>
<p>Are teachers strict or nice?</p>	<p>We have very high expectations of behaviour but teachers will be friendly, supportive and kind (so long as you give them the same courtesy in return and respect others in your class!)</p>
<p>I don't like sport - what is there for me?</p>	<p>We appreciate that boys are all individuals with individual preferences. Every year boys excel in a range of fields through both academic and extracurricular activities, such as Science, Music, Drama, English, Languages, Humanities. A list of the clubs available can be viewed in another answer.</p>
<p>How much homework do you get?</p>	<p>We have a homework timetable in place in year 7 so that you know how much homework you can expect in each subject and when it is set. Across a week, 1-2 hours per night would be typical.</p>
<p>Is HBS often over subscribed?</p>	<p>Yes. It is a very popular choice for boys. We would recommend that you put HBS first on your list of preferences on the Admissions application form. This won't reduce your chances of being allocated another of your preferred schools if the admissions process isn't able to allocate you a space at HBS. Putting HBS as second or third preference would be unlikely to see a place allocated as we generally cover our full admissions number from first preferences.</p>
<p>Have you had any boys from Oaklands (AL6) area accepted to Hitchin in recent years?</p>	<p>Not in recent memory, though we welcome all students given a place at the School by Hertfordshire County Admissions.</p>
<p>Living in Great Ashby, is that part of the catchment area for HBS?</p>	<p>Hertfordshire County Admissions decide who is offered a place at Hitchin Boys' School. It is not unheard of for a student from Great Ashby to come to the school but this would depend on the various variables affecting who is offered places for any particular cohort.</p>
<p>What is the worst thing about your school?</p>	<p>At the moment, the worst thing is having to limit the offering we can make in terms of trips and extra-curricular activities because of the current circumstances. We are sad about this, but hope that we can restart our trips and full extra-curricular programme as soon as it is safe.</p>
<p>What do you think are the pros and cons of HBS being</p>	<p>We think it gives the boys a chance to excel in class. Our experience shows that it allows a more gradual transition from childhood and time to mature at their own pace. We believe that social pressures are</p>

<p>an all-boys school?</p>	<p>lessened and our values and traditions foster camaraderie and the development of lifelong friendships. Another advantage is the relative lack of gender stereotyping around subjects - our boys are equally likely to express themselves in the school show, visual arts, choir, orchestra and photography as they are in the science lab and on the sports field. The whole range of school experiences are open to them. When in the sixth form, boys can access the best of both worlds as all genders move between the three Consortium schools freely depending on their subject choices.</p>
<p>What do you think makes HBS unique?</p>	<p>We believe that HBS provides an unrivaled balanced education for boys to grow into young men, a careful blend of an academic education and personal development, with a vast range of opportunities to grow and thrive in culture, arts, sports, STEM, extra-curricular and more.</p>
<p>How do you get the best of your students at HBS?</p>	<p>Our aim is for all our students to achieve their best. We believe that all of them can succeed and we support each individual to discover what they will shine at and what interests them. We provide support for those that are aiming high with the High Performance Group and support for application to competitive universities. We also have a team of dedicated Learning Support Assistants who support those with special educational needs and disabilities. We have an excellent system of pastoral care to make sure students are looked after and each student's Form Tutor will be someone who will have the best interests of every one of their tutees at heart. Extra support and tuition is offered to those who need it, particularly as they approach their GCSEs.</p>
<p>The Headteacher's speech focuses on achievement and results and competing - is this what HBS generally believes education is for? Do you enjoy school?</p>	<p>We don't agree with this - the Headteacher said quite clearly that HBS was about both Learning and Life. At least two thirds of the talk was about the opportunities beyond the classroom that are on offer at Hitchin Boys' School and he definitely said about making friends and having fun. Of course we are proud of our results, but this most definitely isn't an 'exam factory'. Education is a passport to adult life - both in terms of getting qualifications to take you to the next step and also about supporting you to be the best person that you can be, prepared for the wider world.</p>
<p>Lots of information about high performing groups, how do you help the average students and those that need more help?</p>	<p>We believe that every student can achieve and part of life at HBS is discovering interests, developing talents and trying your best. We recognise that not everyone will hit the same heights academically, but our teachers are there to develop potential in everyone, whether that be 4 A*s to study medicine or a set of GCSEs to be able to take on an apprenticeship or access a college course. We have plenty of support available for individual needs, whether that be support from a Learning Support Assistant or simply access to Homework Club for a bit of help and support. As you progress through the school, you will be able to choose subjects that interest you and that you can do well in.</p>
<p>My son has been bullied in primary</p>	<p>We monitor our new Year 7 students' wellbeing carefully from the form tutor to the Head of Year to our Year 7 & 8 Pastoral Support</p>

<p>school and is worried about going to secondary school. How do you reassure year 7 students in school that they are safe? How does HBS deal with online and in school bullying?</p>	<p>Worker. Year 7s have their own hard surface to play on, so that they are not competing for space with the older boys. Our Learning for Life programme covers bullying and similar behaviours and boys are taught how and where to report any incidents. We don't tolerate bullying and respond immediately to any concerns.</p> <p>Online bullying is dealt with in a similar way - issues raised to form tutors or Head of Year will be investigated and addressed using the behaviour system and appropriate sanctions. We have a Home School Agreement where we write down and agree to our expectations of each other and we also ask for parents to support the appropriate use of technology outside school</p>
<p>Is the school wheelchair accessible?</p>	<p>The short answer is yes. Whilst some rooms in the school are inaccessible due to their age, we would (and have) make reasonable adjustments to rooming for any boys with temporary or permanent mobility issues, so that they would be able to access the full curriculum and specialist teaching areas. If this is likely to be an issue, please contact our SENDCo so that we can work with you to plan effective provision.</p>
<p>Do you have any autistic students within the school?</p>	<p>Yes. Every year group from Year 7s to Year 13s has a number of students who have a diagnosis of autism. We have seen that the medical profession has been more prepared to make a diagnosis of autism, that will then allow us to provide appropriate care and education. It also helps the parents and schools in working together to more easily meet their needs. Whilst we have specialists with experience of working with children with ASD in the Learning Support team, the system of Pupil Passports contains information for teachers on how to best support the individual needs of each child with an SEND need.</p>
<p>Are there lessons available for football and cricket?</p>	<p>Cricket, along with athletics, is one of the two main summer sports. We have indoor nets and a bowling machine in our main sports hall for lunchtime practices and also outdoor nets. We have two cricket squares marked out on the fields. During the winter we run a HPG Cricket session in the sports hall, regularly helping produce county cricketers. Overall, we are proud of our cricketing success and traditions. With regards to football please see a more extended answer in the FAQs above.</p>
<p>Do you have to bring your own sports equipment like hockey sticks, cricket bats etc?</p>	<p>Boys do purchase their own hockey sticks but a basic hockey stick is relatively affordable. Cricket bats are more costly and we have a number of basic ones boys use for practice. Generally only students who take part in the school teams will want to purchase their own though there are school bats and pads in each team's equipment bag for use (though we recommend you purchase your own 'box').</p>
<p>How many sports clubs are there? Does the school have a football team?</p>	<p>The Clubs and Activities list is published here. There is no official school football team, but there is an informal senior football team consisting of students from years 11, 12 and 13, who enter the district cup. Please see a more extended answer in the FAQs above.</p>

<p>The school seems sports focused, what if you're not particularly sporty?</p>	<p>Although we are proud of our achievements in sport, there are so many other opportunities and clubs in the majority of curriculum areas for boys to get involved in to support and enhance their personal development. From rocket club in science, to debating society in English through to drama and music in our newly built auditorium, to mention a few.</p>
<p>How does HBS encourage healthy living not just through exercise?</p>	<p>Through your son's tutor time and 'Learning for Life' curriculum programme we will cover the benefits of healthy living, not just through exercise but eating healthily, with awareness of not only physical health but mental health as well. All students have weekly timetabled opportunities for exercise through Games, PE or Sports Leadership to ensure that students stay active.</p>
<p>Can you eat lunch outside or in a quiet place?</p>	<p>You can eat in the canteen if you have school lunches. If you bring a packed lunch you can eat outside with friends. Students who need a quiet space will have a space provided by their Head of Year.</p>
<p>What sort of food is available for lunch?</p>	<p>There is a variety of food on offer for lunch, both from the canteen and our outdoor pod. It includes a hot meal choice, with vegetarian options, every day as well as other healthy eating choices. We have a range of 'grab and go' wrapped food and snacks that are on offer at break and lunch.</p>
<p>Does the canteen cater for specific dietary requirements, such as Halal?</p>	<p>We do indeed cater for some dietary needs such as Halal. What we can't do is claim to be a nut-free school. Although our canteen is aware of which products have nuts and can support students and parents with knowing this information we simply cannot manage all of the lunchboxes and additional food that is brought onto site.</p>
<p>What environmental sustainability does HBS offer or encourage?</p>	<p>This is a great question and one that we began looking at during the 2019-20 academic year when we appointed our first Year 13 senior prefect for the environment.</p> <p>Within the curriculum, the Geography department takes a lead on covering environmental sustainability at a range of scales (local, national and global).</p> <p>On a school front some of our buildings have been fitted with solar panels to provide clean energy for the school which has reduced our carbon footprint. We are currently in the middle of a programme of replacing some of the old 1930s single pane windows with double glazing that keeps in character with the original style. We have also recently improved our heating system to make it more flexible and energy efficient.</p> <p>Finally, we have a number of staff who cycle or walk to work and actively take part in the government's cycle to work scheme.</p> <p>We would also welcome more engagement with our Parents Society on any ideas they might have to improve environmental sustainability.</p>
<p>What plans does HBS have to</p>	<p>We use Google Classroom as our Virtual platform. This allows us both to set work, post a range of resources and mark individual work,</p>

<p>continue their students in a more virtual environment? (If needed)</p>	<p>as well as link with Google Meets to teach online lessons if necessary. Boys all have an individual school Google account and email, which they would use to access the above from nearly any internet device.</p>
<p>Are you planning to form a MAT with HGS and The Priory?</p>	<p>At the moment, we have a very effective Consortium where we are able to support students with a wide range of sixth form courses across the three Hitchin schools. We also work closely with the other schools in North Hertfordshire and via the North Herts Teaching Alliance where we collaborate on teacher training and development. There are no plans at this stage to join or form a Multi-Academy Trust.</p>
<p>How much interaction is there with the Girls' School?</p>	<p>We have a Christmas disco for Year 7 between students of Hitchin Boys' and Hitchin Girls' that is well attended. Staff work effectively across both schools, in order to promote best practice, support moderation processes and increase recruitment in the local area. In the sixth form we have a well-established consortium between the three Hitchin Secondary Schools, and a significant number of sixth formers have at least one lesson away from their home school.</p>
<p>How many classes are there in each year?</p>	<p>There are 8 forms in each year group in years 7 - 9 and 6 in each year group in years 10 - 13 though this will change over the next few years as each incoming cohort of 8 forms replaces an outgoing cohort of 6 forms.</p>
<p>What is the average class size?</p>	<p>In year 7 each of our 8 form groups has either 26 or 27 students in it. Once setting starts in some subjects you will find the lower ability sets can be as few as 8 students and the top set as many as 32. Only maths, PE, science, languages and English will set students in Key Stage 3.</p>
<p>Do you stay in your form groups for all lessons or do you mix with other form groups?</p>	<p>In Year 7 the vast majority of lessons are taught in form groups (which are mixed ability). There are exceptions and these are</p> <p>Maths - the boys will start in form groups and then after an assessment in the first term they will be put into sets within their timetable block. We have two timetabled blocks each comprising 4 form groups - TEAM and WORK.</p> <p>Games which will see the boys split into platinum, gold, silver and bronze groups within the first fortnight also within their timetabled blocks of TEAM and WORK.</p> <p>Finally the Year 7s will do a rotation of lessons comprising of Computer Science, Drama and Technology. These are random groups within their timetabled block.</p> <p>All other subjects are taught in form groups in Year 7 so there is some degree of mixing between forms (including at break and lunch) but mostly taught in forms. By year 10 they will not have any lessons as a form group due to GCSE options.</p>

How many lessons are there a day?	We have 5 hour long lessons each day plus a 25-minute form time session.
How are the houses decided?	<p>In a nutshell it is determined by which form group the students are placed in. We have 8 form groups and each make up a letter of the word 'TEAMWORK'. 7T and 7E are in Mattocke House (yellow), 7A and 7M are in Pierson (red), 7W and 7O are in Radcliffe (blue) and 7R and 7K are Skynner (green).</p> <p>Occasionally a family will write to us asking for their son to be placed in a particular house as it continues a family transition, often going back several generations. We are always happy to try our best to accommodate such requests but we reserve the right to decide ourselves which of the two form groups within a house a student is placed in.</p>
What do I do if I get lost and cannot find my classroom?	<p>There is an extensive virtual tour that can be watched as part of the transition process. This and other transition videos are on our Youtube channel. However, this virtual tour is just to give a flavour and so we provide a small map to every Year 7 student on arrival.</p> <p>Once on-site students can ask any of the older students or members of staff. Although every student has historically learnt where their classes are within a couple of weeks we do give the Year 7s some grace in terms of getting to lessons on time as they settle in. Most students in a form will work as a team to find each classroom and this is wonderful to see.</p>
Are you allowed to wear shorts?	Only in PE Lessons.
What is your mobile phone policy?	<p>We appreciate that students have them and parents want them to do so for security. They are only allowed to use them at school with a teacher's permission. You can find the School Rules policy here - https://www.hbs.herts.sch.uk/do/get/2912.pdf and a link to all our policies is located in the link below here - https://www.hbs.herts.sch.uk/do/pages/information/school_policies</p>
Do you have a coding club?	Yes, we have run coding clubs in the past, using languages such as Scratch, Python and Javascript. We would hope to do so again in future if demand from students is there.
My son loves robots and engineering. What does the school offer to encourage his interests?	<p>The Design Technology and Computer Science curriculum includes content on electronics, robotics and control via programming. There is a rocket club each year and our Science teachers enter students for local and national competitions.</p> <p>Our Careers department have excellent links with international companies and we organise careers fairs, STEM days and work experience for students in year 10, including in engineering companies.</p>
Do you have 3D printers? What resources are	D&T have fully equipped workshops with tools for woodwork and metalwork. We also have a fully equipped kitchen for Food Technology and a range of computing facilities for 2d and 3d design

available for DT?	and CAD. We have laser cutters and hope to add 3d printers during 2020.
What does it cost to do all these trips?	Cost of trips is hard to answer, as it really depends on each trip and can be very varied. A list is published every year to parents of all trips that will take place within 2 years that cost over £50 so parents can plan if they want to. The costs of trips are kept as low as possible, but the main component tends to be transport and accommodation and airfares for international trips do vary significantly. Where a trip is linked to the study of a particular subject (e.g. geography or biology field trips, art gallery or theatre visits), we will ask for a voluntary contribution to help to cover costs.