



Mark Rutherford School

Motivated • Respectful • Successful

Welcome Information

This handbook aims to share important information about starting at Mark Rutherford School.

All information and policies can be found on the school website [click here](#).



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Headteacher's Welcome



Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to Mark Rutherford School! I would like to extend a very warm welcome to you and your child as you both prepare to join our school community in September. I hope this transition booklet is helpful in understanding our school and the key expectations we have of our students.

We are proud to offer students the opportunity to be part of our community from Year 7 through to the end of Year 13 to study both their GCSE and A Levels, or equivalents. I continue to ensure we provide students with the skills required to be lifelong learners through the broad and balanced curriculum we offer, as well as the wide range of personal development opportunities available to our students.

We have high expectations of all our students whilst also recognising that every child is unique. We have three core values that staff and students work towards each day; these are **Motivated, Respectful** and **Successful**. Students are recognised when they demonstrate these values by receiving reward points via ClassCharts (our online app which you will be given access to at the start of the academic year). In addition, we have a termly focus and reward assemblies on these values. With the support of your child's dedicated teachers and our excellent pastoral staff, they will be encouraged to have the highest aspirations to go on and achieve their dreams and be acclaimed. Regardless of personal obstacles and challenges we will encourage our students to be hardworking, dedicated and resilient learners.

We have highly qualified and hardworking staff. Our students are happy, polite and kind. Together we ensure the school community is a safe place to be.

I hope you find all the information you need in this booklet. If you need further specific information to support your child's transition then please visit our website or contact us via newintake@mrus.co.uk.

I look forward to welcoming your child into our school and also working with you to support your child's academic and personal development.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'K Foster'.

Mrs K Foster
Headteacher

Important Dates

Transfer day	Tuesday 30th June (further details to be sent out)
Induction evening (for parents/carers only)	Tuesday 30th June (times and details to be sent out separately)

To do before you start

- **Order uniform including PE uniform** – refer to uniform policy (PE uniform currently being reviewed).
- **Register for free school meals** through Bedford Borough website (if applicable).
- **Ensure you have all equipment required** (see page 20).
- **Make sure you know how you are going to get to and from school** – if getting school buses make sure you have contacted school transport.

Term Dates 2026 – 2027

Autumn Term

Tue 1st September 2026	Staff Training Day
Wed 2nd September 2026	Staff Training Day
Thu 3rd September 2026	Term Begins
Mon 26th – Fri 30th October 2026	Half Term
Fri 27th November 2026	Staff Training Day
Fri 18th December 2026	Term Ends

Spring Term

Mon 4th January 2027	Staff Training Day
Tue 5th January 2027	Term Begins
Mon 15th – Fri 19th February 2027	Half Term
Thu 25th March 2027	Term Ends

Summer Term

Mon 12th April 2027	Staff Training Day
Tue 13th April 2027	Term Begins
Mon 31st – Fri 4th June 2027	Half Term
Wed 21st July 2027	Term Ends



The School Day

The school opens at 7.45am for students wanting to take up our breakfast provision in the canteen. All student gates open at 8.15am for access to the rest of the school. Students must be in school by 8.25am, ready for morning registration. There are a number of gates along the front of the school which students can use but if a student is coming in on a bike they should use the side gate nearest the rugby club (west side of school). Students must not walk through the main vehicular entrance for safety reasons. At the beginning of each day Year 7 will line up in their tutor groups on their playground outside A block. The school day begins at 8.30am with 30 minutes of Tutor Time. When students arrive at Tutor Time they must hand in their mobile phones to be stored securely by the tutor.

A student who arrives late, after morning registration in Tutor Time, **must** sign in at the Attendance Office.

Attendance is also recorded electronically in each lesson of the day.



Times and Lesson Changes

Admission to School	8.15
Registration + Tutor Time	8.30 - 9.00
Period 1	9.00 - 10.00
Period 2	10.00 - 11.00
Break	11.00 - 11.20
Period 3	11.20 - 12.20
Period 4	12.20 - 13.20
Lunch	13.20 - 14.00
Period 5	14.00 - 15.00
Tutor time	15.00 - 15.10



Your Timetable: Top Tips for New Starters

Your timetable – being in the right place at the right time

Basic expectations of students:

- Know what lessons you have on each day.
- Know where the classrooms are.
- Arrive to your lessons on time.

These will take some time but we would expect you to become familiar with your new school after a few weeks.

Top tips for parents/carers:

Before they start:

- Reassure your child that they will get to know their way around very quickly. The teachers understand if they are late to lessons in the first couple of weeks whilst they are finding their way around and there are staff and other students around to help.

After they have started:

- Go through their timetable and the map of the school so they can begin to get an idea of where their lessons are.
- Have a copy of their timetable somewhere easily visible (such as the fridge door) so you can remind your child which lessons they have. Encourage them to 'learn' their timetable so they can become more independent.

Example Timetable

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1	Humanities AMN 022	Modern Languages ARO B10	Science AS 039	Art LLD B21	Art LLD B21
2	Humanities OB A4	English LE 017	Mathematics AMO 113	English LE 017	English JMR 026
3	Science NB A1	Science AS 039	Design Technology SJS 043	Physical Education LTR Field 2	Design Technology DC 051
4	Mathematics AMO 113	Computing VM 111	Humanities OB A4	Computing VM 111	Physical Education LTR Field 2
5	Modern Languages ARO B10	Humanities AMN 022	English LE 017	Humanities AMN 022	English LE 017

Teacher
Subject
Room

Attendance and Punctuality

At Mark Rutherford School we ask that all students attend each day. We set a minimum target of 95% attendance. There is a clear link between attendance and exam results with students who have above 95% attendance statistically likely to achieve on average one grade above those with below 95% in their GCSE exams. As part of our rewards system we regularly celebrate students with excellent attendance. It is a parent's/carer's legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time. The school works closely with the Education Welfare Service to improve attendance when necessary.

To help in this, if your child is absent from school, you must:

- **Telephone the school on 01234 290200** and leave a message on the Absence Hotline on the first day of absence. Please aim to do this in the morning.

We will contact parents/carers when we are concerned about any unexplained absences.

A student who arrives late due to such an appointment, or who needs to leave during the school day for an appointment, will need an email or letter from home for the school to be able to authorise the absence and the student **MUST sign out**. Students **MUST sign in** upon their return. We would encourage students to register in school prior to any medical appointment to get their attendance mark.

An absence is recorded in the register as either authorised or unauthorised at the school's discretion.

The following circumstances are classed as authorised absence:

- Illness.
- Bereavement of a close member of the family.
- Other circumstances where permission has been granted in advance by the Headteacher.
- Religious observance.

Unauthorised absences are recorded on the student's profile. The school is obliged to report the number of unauthorised absences termly. A student receiving a number of unauthorised absences will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. Ten or more unauthorised sessions of absence within a twelve week period may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Service and/or the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Note that employers/other institutions often request individual attendance records.



Uniform

Please also refer to the uniform policy on our website for full details including PE uniform.

At Mark Rutherford we have high expectations of all, in everything we do. This includes personal appearance. Uniform plays an important role in establishing the ethos of a school and at Mark Rutherford we believe that our uniform policy benefits the school in a number of ways:

- It encourages identity with the school and nurtures the notion of community.
- It protects students from social pressures to dress in a particular way.
- It supports discipline and good behaviour and ensures the health and safety of students.
- It instils a sense of pride in the school.
- It promotes more effective teaching and learning.

Black plain skirt	It has to be knee length. No lycra, contour. Plain black opaque tights or plain, non-branded black or white ankle socks.
Black trousers	No jeans, leggings, jegging, cropped, jogging bottoms or cargo trousers.
Sky blue polo shirt with blue logo	To be worn all year round.
Black V-neck jumper with the school logo	The Jumper is compulsory from September to Easter unless the school emails parents/carers in case of warm weather.
Black shoes	<p>These must be suitable for school (trainers may only be worn for PE), no plimsolls or trainers that look like shoes. This includes Nike Air Force trainers.</p> 
Coat	We would expect all students to wear a coat outside when the weather is cold or wet. Coats do not need to be purchased from our suppliers. No hoodies/sports sweatshirts/zipped sports top to be brought on to and/or worn on school site.

The Curriculum

The curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that we plan for our students. Beyond timetabled lessons extra-curricular and enrichment activities (such as field visits and foreign exchanges) contribute to a rich and varied curriculum. We offer a broad, balanced, ambitious curriculum to all students. At Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9) the curriculum fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum. At Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11) and Key Stage 5 (Sixth Form), students are guided formally towards a personalised

curriculum which meets their individual needs and aspirations. There are clear and diverse pathways from Year 7 through to the Sixth Form. Where students will study a broad range of subjects.



Key Stage 3 – Years 7, 8 & 9

All students follow a broad ranging curriculum that provides a firm foundation for their chosen Key Stage 4 options.

Students in Year 7 follow a timetabled curriculum comprising the following subjects:

Art, Computing, Design and Technology, English, Geography, History, Religious Studies, Mathematics, French, Dance, Drama, Music, Physical Education, PSHE and Science.

Students in Years 8 and 9 follow a broad curriculum comprising the following subjects:

Art, Computing, Dance, Design & Technology, Drama, English, Geography, History, Mathematics, a language (French or Spanish), Music, Physical Education, PSHE, Religious Studies and Science.

Across Key Stage 3 students may be selected to follow a timetabled programme of literacy and/or numeracy interventions when prior attainment and internal assessment is low. All students have the opportunity to take part in field study, extra-curricular activities and enrichment events throughout the year.



Key Stage 4 – Years 10 & 11

Students in Years 10 and 11 follow a core curriculum comprising the following subjects:

English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science (combined or triple), Computing, Physical Education and Philosophy and Ethics.

We pride ourselves on the wide range of subjects we offer, which include academic and vocational qualifications, so in addition to the core subjects students will select three option subjects from the following areas:

Art, Business Studies, Computer Science, Dance, Design & Technology, Drama, Food Studies, Geography, Health and Social Care, History, ICT, Creative I media, Media Studies, French, Spanish, Music, PE, Sports studies, and RE.

Students with specific needs are guided towards a bespoke curriculum supported through the pastoral team and Learning Support Centre.

Our programme of careers advice and guidance enables Mark Rutherford Year 9 and Year 11 students to select an aspirational curriculum which ensures they are both challenged and motivated.



Sixth Form:

Key Stage 5 – Years 12 & 13

Most students in the Sixth Form opt to study three subjects, or equivalent, in Years 12 and 13. Students make their subject choices in the Autumn Term of Year 11.

We pride ourselves on the wide range of subjects we offer, which includes academic and vocational qualifications. For some students they may wish to study a combination of both in the Sixth Form. Students have nine lessons per fortnight for each of their chosen subjects. In addition, students in Year 12 have a fortnightly Speakers Assembly on a wide range of topics.

All students in the Sixth Form are allocated Directed Study. This is a number of allocated hours added to a student's timetable to support them with independent study. This is undertaken in school with students having access to a dedicated study room and the Sp4L (Space for Learning).

All students are provided with information, advice and guidance, particularly during their Sixth Form interview and following the publication of GCSE results, to ensure they are making the right decisions for this high level of academic study.



Extra-Curricular Activities

Clubs

Extra-curricular activities are a vital part of any school provision. We offer a wide variety of extra-curricular activities in the form of clubs, which take place either before school, at lunch time or after school. A programme of extra-curricular activities will be published each term and is regularly updated on the school website. We would actively encourage all students to join clubs as this is also a good way to form new friendships as well.



Student Leadership

The school is committed to consulting its students on all aspects of the organisation, including (but not limited to) teaching and learning, facilities, support services and the schools overall strategic direction. We have high aspirations for our students and believe that developing them as leaders plays a key role in supporting the continual improvement of our school community and improving their life chances by providing opportunities for students to participate in the school community. Students could be involved in a variety of roles including:

Student Ambassadors

We have a variety of groups focusing on specific areas such as Cultural Diversity, The School Environment and Mental Well-Being.

Student Leadership

There are a number of opportunities to develop leadership skills, such as:

Sixth Form President and Vice-Presidents and the Sixth Form Council. These roles provide students with an opportunity to shape their experience within the Sixth Form and to represent the voices of their peers.

House Captains (Sixth Form) and House Vice-Captains (Years 7 to 11), within our School Parliament, provide the foundations for our Student Voice. Our thriving House System (more info below) provides ample opportunities for students to work together to support each other and also to compete against one another.

House System

Every member of the school community is assigned to a House. We have four houses that compete against each other in a range of activities, from sports competitions to charity events, quizzes, talent shows etc. The 4 Houses are named after inspirational individuals from the worlds of The Arts, Sport, STEM and Humanities. The 4 names were chosen by our students and are as follows: Attenborough House (Sir David Attenborough), Blackman House (Malorie Blackman), Curie House (Marie Curie) and Farah House (Sir Mo Farah). Each house has been assigned a colour - Attenborough = Green, Blackman = Red, Curie = Yellow and Farah = Blue and a motto - Attenborough = Explore, Blackman = Empower, Curie = Innovate and Farah = Believe.



Assessment

During the academic year a student's progress is reviewed termly and assessment point data is sent home to parents/carers. Assessments are also used to measure a student's progress towards their end of year or end of Key Stage target within each subject. In addition, at tracking and assessment points, students are given an Attitude to Learning grade for lesson work and homework for each subject.

At Key Stage 3 students are given an end of year target pathway, with termly assessment points to inform parents/carers if your child is on track to reach this target by the end of the year.



Homework

At Mark Rutherford School we recognise that completing homework tasks will enable our students to develop as independent learners and to reach their full academic potential. Completing homework tasks will improve ownership and engagement with students' learning and deepen their knowledge of core skills.

Completing homework tasks should help every student to:

- Develop and improve self-discipline, organisation and time management skills.
- Consolidate and reinforce skills and knowledge introduced during lessons.
- Refine research skills.
- Extend and support learning through reinforcement and revision.
- Involve parents/carers when learning is completed at home.

Teachers will set homework tasks on Class Charts each week and Year 7 students should expect to spend up to 60 minutes on homework tasks per day.

Practical subjects will not set formal homework tasks for students in Year 7 in the first term, instead students are to be encouraged to participate in one or more of the extra-curricular clubs for subjects such as PE, Art, Dance, Drama and Music.



Reading for Pleasure

In addition to homework tasks set by class teachers, it is recommended that students complete at least 20 minutes of reading for pleasure every day. Reading for pleasure means *any* reading that is primarily for enjoyment. It includes both fiction and non-fiction texts and can be printed or accessed via electronic media. Like anything else, reading is a skill that becomes better with practice. It increases the sense of achievement, confidence, self-esteem and widens horizons. It exposes learners to a richer variety of vocabulary and makes them more articulate and better able to access curriculum content across the school. Please refer to our recommended reading list for age appropriate books we suggest.

We ask parents/carers of students at Mark Rutherford to encourage their child to read for pleasure at home, for up to 20 minutes every day. The school library is open every day at breaktime, lunchtime and after school.

“Children who read for pleasure do significantly better at school. Children who read for pleasure make more progress in mathematics, vocabulary and spelling, as well as reading.”

Institute of Education, University of London 2013

Accelerated Reader

What is Accelerated Reader?

Accelerated Reader (AR) is a digital whole-class reading management and monitoring programme that aims to foster independent reading among primary and secondary pupils. The internet-based software initially screens students according to their levels using Star Reading Assessment and suggests books that match their reading age and reading interests. Students will take computerised quizzes on the books that they're currently reading with quiz performance allowing teaching staff to monitor students' progress in literacy.

Why AR?

Accelerated Reader improves literacy skills and helps to provide meaningful data that school staff can use to measure improvement and monitor progress. This helps to generate a 'personal profile' for each student that can allow the class teacher and school librarian to find a personalised reading book that is based on the interests of the student. It also generates an interactive quiz based on the student's reading book. This measures the student's understanding

of the book that they are reading. The programme provides a comprehensive set of reports that reveal how much the student has been reading, at what level of complexity and how well they've understood what they've read. Vocabulary growth and literacy are skills also measured, giving teachers an insight into how well students have responded to reading schemes and instruction.

What can Accelerated Reader do? It...

- Helps to develop a confident, successful reader.
- Encourages the school's focus of Reading for Pleasure.
- Promotes a successful improvement in standards of literacy.
- Monitors the progress of each individual.
- Assists attainment in every subject.

Behaviour Policy

Our Behaviour Policy is on our website and is designed to promote an atmosphere conducive to learning. We believe that teachers have the right to teach and students have the right to learn.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are not permitted in school. We understand students may need to have a mobile phone for their journey to and from school, therefore, we have measures in place for students to hand in phones to be stored securely. All such equipment, including air-pods and smart watches, must be switched off during the school day and be handed in to the Form Tutor in morning registration. It will be kept securely in a locked safe until collection at the end of the school day. Each student will be given a named plastic zipped wallet which will be placed in the classroom's safe.

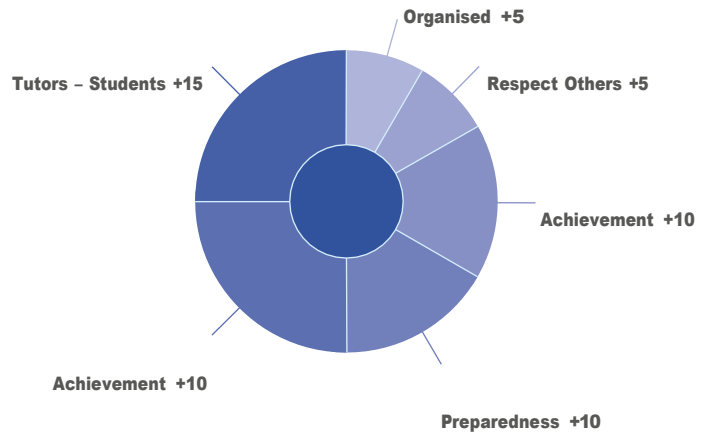
“We believe the best way to encourage good standards of behaviour is a clear code of conduct backed by a balanced combinations of rewards and sanctions within a positive community school atmosphere.”



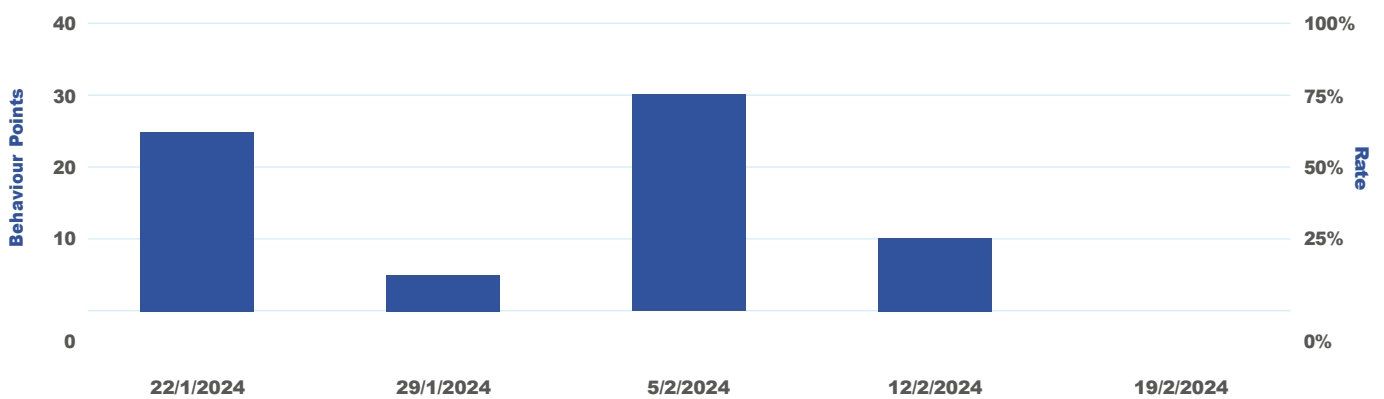
Class Charts

Class Charts is our online app that both parents/carers and students can access to support with communication and organisation. Homework, student's timetable, behaviour points, attendance and announcements can all be accessed via this app so it is vital that parents/carers register once their child has started.

Behaviour Score Breakdown



Weekly Behaviour Breakdown



School Shop

The School Shop operates for the benefit of students and parents/carers where we sell a variety of revision guides and learning resources are stocked. To place an order or for any queries you can contact the school shop on 01234 290237.

The shop is open to students every day at break.

Please pay by **cash, debit card or cheque** made payable to **Mark Rutherford School**.



Canteen Facility and ParentPay

A cafeteria style system operates at Mark Rutherford. Students are able to choose the meal they require and pay accordingly. The canteen is open in the morning from 7.45am – 8.15am for breakfast and at break and lunchtime. There is also a smaller serving facility for cold lunches located in B block at break and lunchtime. There is a variety of food available including sandwiches, jacket potatoes and the main school lunch with a varied menu. We have a rolling 3 week menu which is on our website and sent to all parents/carers.

We have a biometrics system for our canteen. This will link to ParentPay and will enable parents/carers to pay into a meals account for any canteen purchases. Parents/carers will also be able to view what items are being purchased and the price of the items. Consent for this system is required from parents/carers.

If parents/carers wish to make an application for free school meals this can easily be done by contacting Bedford Borough Hall/through their website. We are keen to ensure that any child entitled to a free school meal does so. Information regarding this entitlement is passed to us, but if family income/circumstances change please do not hesitate to contact the school.

All applications are treated confidentially and we would urge parents/carers to ensure they take advantage of this if applicable.

There is provision for students bringing packed lunches to eat these at lunchtime. Please note that priority seating in the canteen is offered to those students eating a hot meal.



Equipment and Personal Property

Students should ensure that they **always** have the following equipment with them to ensure they are 'Rutherford Ready':

- Pens.
- Pencils.
- Rubber.
- Ruler.
- Highlighter pen.
- Glue stick.
- Calculator (essential for all Maths lessons – the recommended calculator for students is the **Casio FX83GT CW**).
- A sturdy bag, suitable for carrying books and equipment – not a handbag.
- Reading book.

This is a **minimum** that each student will require for their daily work. Students who come fully prepared with all the above items during tutor time can be awarded 'Rutherford Ready' points by their form tutor

Specialist equipment for practical lessons (e.g. PE kit or ingredients for food technology lessons) should be brought to school on the appropriate day as required.

All personal property/school uniform should be marked with the owner's name.

Valuables should not be brought in to school. If the need does arise, valuables should be handed in at Main Reception for safe keeping.

Students are expected to take great care of school property, text books and library books. In the event of damage or loss, parents/carers will be expected to contribute towards repair or replacement.



“Make sure you have all the equipment needed for each day like your pencil case. If you need something specific for a lesson (e.g. PE kit) make sure you organise yourself the night before. If you leave your bag by the front door you won't forget it as you leave.”

Transport

Bikes

Students may wish to come to school on a bicycle. Students are advised to wear a safety helmet and to lock their bike securely. They do so at their own risk and again no responsibility can be accepted for the security of the bicycles. You are advised to insure the bicycle on your Home Contents Insurance Policy. The gates on the bicycle sheds will be shut at 8.40am and opened at 3pm. Only in exceptional circumstances will the gates be opened outside of these times. To ensure the security of their bicycles, students will have to arrive and lock their bikes inside the cycle sheds before they are closed. It is essential to lock any bicycle left in the cycle racks with a strong padlock.

The school has invested in the erection of security fencing around the cycle sheds with access only through gates which will be opened and closed at set times.

E-scooters

E-scooters are not permitted.

Cars

Due to health and safety of students on site parents/carers are not permitted to drive onto the school site unless by appointment. Parents/carers may park their cars in Wentworth Drive, but please do not park on the grass verges or on double yellow lines between the speed signs.



www.markrutherford.beds.sch.uk

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