

An interview with Charlie and Emma, current Year 7 students

Hi, we are Charlie and Emma, and are currently in Year 7! As Year 7 School Council reps we have been asked to tell you what we think starting secondary school is really like.

Charlie and Emma 😊

Here is our interview!

What opportunities did you have to visit Byrchall before starting school in September?

When we were told we had a place at Byrchall we were invited to lots of different events at school to help us to meet new people and find our way around the school. Some teachers visited us at our primary school to talk to us about Byrchall. We got to come on a curriculum night. I learnt how to use Photoshop in a Computing lesson which was really good fun because I like technology. On another night in the summer we came and spent an afternoon at school. Our Form Tutors came to pick us up on a coach that had disco lights on it from our Primary school. We got to spend an afternoon with our Form Tutor and our form in our form room and did lots of "All about me" activities. Our form tutors all teach different subjects so my form did a lesson about Enterprise and learnt about some of the skills we need to be a business person, my friend did an art lesson because their form tutor is an art teacher. We started to make our first form board display which was put up for when we came in September so our form room already had things in it about us. After the lesson we all had tea in the canteen together and then did lots of team building games in the sports hall. I think some of the form tutors cheated a bit because they are very competitive and wanted their forms to win the team games. Our Form Tutors are lots of fun and still have competitions between each of our forms now! When we did the team games our parents were in a meeting with some of the teachers where they got information about what school would be like. When the meeting was finished we were taken to meet our parents and got to introduce our form tutors. We got lots of information at this night and got our invites for summer school too!

What happens at Summer school?

Summer school was so much fun. At first, I thought oh no not more school but it wasn't like a normal day at school, we did lots of activities, got to meet lots of staff and go on fun trips out, and you don't have to wear school uniform! We tried lessons like cooking scones, used Bunsen burners, made photo frames and built tornado proof buildings out of pasta. We went on a trip to Knowsley Safari park, had a Bushcraft day and finished off the week with lots of inflatables in the sports hall. Some of the teachers enjoyed the inflatable races too! We took part in lots of competitions but best of all got to make lots of new friends so we new people when we came in September.

What happens on your first day at school?

I woke up feeling really excited but also nervous too. I put on my brand new uniform and felt really smart. My blazer was a bit stiff and felt huge but I have soon grown into it! The boys wear ties which was strange at first because we didn't have to wear them at Primary school and I had to learn how to tie my tie! I got dropped off at school on my first day but I knew where to go because I had spent a week at Summer school. I also knew who my Form Tutor was because they were there at Summer school and I got to meet them and other people in my form at a transition night too before the Summer.

I went and sat down in the hall in my form line with all of the other new Y7s. We watched some welcome videos while everyone else arrived. Mr Birchall said hello and then Miss Wilson our Head of Year spoke to us. Our Form Tutor then took us over to our form rooms and we spent the first two hours with them and do lots of activities. We got our new timetables, were given a jotter and went on a tour of the school to show us where our lessons were. We then went for an early break and got to go to the front of the queue in the canteen to pick our snacks, I had toast and a bagel and do most days. After break we had our first lesson followed by another lesson. We then got to have an early lunch before every one else. We have our own year 7 area away from everyone else and our own inside lunch room too if we want somewhere quiet, we can sit with other year groups too though if we want to. After our last lesson we then went home. I felt very grown up after surviving my first day at high school and was very tired! The next day we went straight to form and got to tell our form tutor all about the things we had done the day before.

What does your timetable look like?

You get given a timetable with all of your different lessons and teachers on. You have form time and five lessons every day. For the first half term we were all together as a form for our timetable so we didn't have to worry about getting lost as we could follow each other! This helped us to get to know our way around school but also to get to know people in our form too. After October half term you get put into sets so you are working with people who work at the same level as you. You have all of the subjects you did at Primary but also new ones too like Product Design, Languages and cooking. My favourite lessons at Byrchall are Drama and Product Design. In Product Design we have built night lights with our own designs on that we got to take home. I also like cooking lessons. Sometimes my Form Tutor likes taste testing the things I make – especially if I make scones!

How do I find my way around such a big school?

At first it was a bit tricky. The good thing about you joining us is that we will all be in the new building together so it will be new for everybody and we can all find new rooms and subject areas together. The new year 7 will get to be the first ones in the building on the first day so you will get a tour first before any other year group. In the first two weeks we got early lunches and breaks so you can get to the canteen before anybody else. Your teachers and older buddies will also take you to different classrooms in your first few weeks so you do not need to panic about getting lost at all.

What is different about high school compared to primary school?

At High School you move around to different classrooms. This is because you need to be able to use special equipment like Bunsen burners, computers or saws and drills in Product Design. You have teachers that all know lots of information about their subject areas so you can learn lots and ask lots of questions about different subject areas. You are treated more like a grown up and need to be organised with things like packing your bag yourself and turning up on time to different lessons. A big change for some of us is getting the bus to school too because most of us went to Primary schools that were very near to where we live. Getting on a bus for the first time on your own makes you feel like an adult!

Do you get lots of homework?

You do get a bit more homework at high school than at primary school but your teachers help you to plan your time. You get given a jotter and your homework is also put onto an app called Synergy that shows what you need to do and when it has to be handed in. You can tick off homework when it has been done and then it goes away on your synergy app planner which helps too. Your teachers always make sure you understand the homework and you can ask if you need help.

What is the food like at school?

You can bring a packed lunch or have a school dinner. There is a menu on the school website so you can see what food there is the canteen each day. There are chips on a Friday! You can pick from hot food or sandwiches and there are lots of cakes and drinks to pick too. We pay using our finger print or a code instead of using money. This is set up when you first join us. I enjoy all of the different baguettes that you can get in the canteen and the cakes are good too.

What school trips have you taken part in?

There are lots and lots of trips and activities to go on at school. There is the year 7 residential where you do lots of team building games. I liked collecting the wood for the fires. There are cinema trips and the chance to go and see musicals after school. I am looking forward to going to see Aladdin in Manchester with school in June. I also really enjoyed summer school especially the trip to Knowsley Safari park and the Bushcraft day.

Who is there to help me?

You all have a Form Tutor who you see every morning. They help you with day to day things and can answer any questions you have. They help you to settle into school and are always there to make you feel better if you need help with anything at all. The Year 7 Form Tutors are all really friendly and good fun. We have a Year 7 office where Mrs Robinson and Miss Wilson live. They are there every morning, break time and dinner time if we need some extra help to solve problems or someone to chat to. Mrs Fletcher who looks after Y7 and Y8 is in our building in a morning too. As well as the adults we have buddies from older year groups too. They come in one morning a week to talk to us and

help us with form activities. We also have 3 mental health ambassadors who come into our form every Thursday to talk to us and help with any problems we have. It is nice to have other students to talk to as well as teachers.

What has been the best thing about being in year 7 so far?

The best thing so far about being at Byrchall is there is so much choice. I have clubs nearly every dinnertime. Today I have choir and then later this week I am a librarian one lunch time. I go to drama and dance club and sometimes Science club too. I liked the first science club when we got to make and set off rockets. There are lots of chances to get involved in things like the House Comps. I am hoping to take part in the dancing and art sections for the junior house comps.

What are you looking forward to for the rest of your time at Byrchall?

I am really looking forward to moving into the new building. We have been able to see it being built from our form room window. It will be really good to have lockers so we don't have to carry everything in our bag around with us. I am looking forward to everything being brand new and having a dance studio and a big outdoor cinema screen which will be good for drama performances. I am looking forward to the new technology room and new courses that we will be able to do like engineering when we pick options too.

Do you have tips for year 6 that are reading your interview?

- Try not to be scared about your first day there are lots of people to help!
- Practice tying your tie at home!
- Try new foods that you haven't tried before in the school canteen
- Always pack your bag the night before
- Join lots of clubs and go on some of the trips if you can
- Sign up for Summer school, its good fun!



**Charlie and Emma
Year 7 School Council, 2023-24**