



ST PETER'S

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

The **FINAL FRONTIER**

A guide to Year 7 & Year 8 at St Peter's



St Peter's is a leading independent preparatory school for boys and girls aged 3-13



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Contents

Staying at St Peter's.....	4
Profile of a Year 8 Leaver.....	5
What to expect in Years 7 & 8.....	6
The St Peter's School Baccalaureate®.....	8
The Cross Keys Award.....	9
Internal/Academic Scholarships.....	10
The Scholarship Scenario.....	11
Subject specific Scholarships.....	12
Bursaries.....	13
Looking for the next school.....	14
Final advice.....	15



At St Peter's we aim to give children opportunities that enrich their lives and help them find the thing that makes them tick...

Dear Parents and Children,

For over 125 years, St Peter's has been educating boys and girls and, although much has changed, the essence of school life has remained.

We want our pupils from the age of 3 to 13, to be self-confident, inquiring, tolerant, positive young people, with well-rounded characters and independent minds. By the time they leave St Peter's, we want each pupil to have that true sense of self-worth, which will enable him or her to stand up and be counted.

Through this booklet we are helping pupils and parents to do two things:

- To preview (and, we trust, appreciate) the final two years here.
- To choose in an informed way the 'next chapter' of education that will build on the foundations laid here at St Peter's

We aim to take the 'mystery' out of Scholarships, Common Entrance and the Transfer Process - and to make your life that little bit easier.

Charlotte P. Jones

Head.



What will your child gain by staying at St Peter's for Years 7 & 8?

- Taking part in the Cross Keys Award and Leavers' programme. (A form of junior Duke Of Edinburgh award scheme)
- A French immersion week in Year 7 as part of the fees.
- An expedition to Dartmoor in Year 8.
- Being properly prepared with one to one support for entrance into senior schools at Year 9, including applying for scholarships there.
- Being a big fish in a little pond - opportunity to take on roles of responsibility and play in school sports' teams and musical groups which would be harder to come by in Years 7 & 8 of a senior school because of their larger size.
- Maturity and independence are encouraged by being the oldest in a prep school as opposed to the youngest in a senior school community.
- You are unlikely to see a Year 8 pupil in a senior school accompanying visitors on a school tour and making conversation with them, whereas this is expected behaviour of the senior pupils at St Peter's.
- For the less self-assured child, remaining in the small and nurturing environment of St Peter's Prep for longer may well help to build their confidence.
- Leadership opportunities, eg: House Captain or Head of School.
- St Peter's has a track record of 100% entry to senior schools of your choice for many years.
- Year 8 children gain a large number of scholarships every year to senior schools.
- Two more years of being a child



What happens to children aged 11 to 13?

11 - 13 is a critical moment in a child's development and it shapes their progress into adolescence. During this stage, young people are beginning to look beyond family to other social groups, friendships and relationships. A child in Years 7 or 8 is forming a sense of self that is distinct from their family identity.

These youngsters have become conscious of their place and value, along with their responsibilities and rights. As the oldest children in St Peter's, they take on roles of responsibility such as Head Girl, Head Boy, Heads of Houses etc. They become role models and are encouraged to give back to the school community by mentoring the younger pupils, all of which makes them better equipped to face the rigours of senior school.



How are St Peter's children in Years 7 & 8 taught?

The pupils in Years 7 and 8 move independently around the site to subject specialist classrooms and teachers for all lessons. Upper School teachers at St Peter's are secondary trained and stretch, challenge and support as required. Spanish is taught alongside French. Leadership is actively taught in individual sessions and opportunities are encouraged. Children in the Upper School work towards completing their Cross Keys Award (a kind of Junior Duke of Edinburgh).



Preparation for future senior schools

Children are prepared for their future school carefully with an individual programme and targets. Many go on to win scholarships in Academic, Music, Art or Sport and we are proud of our 100% success rate for senior school entry. Pupils leave to local day schools as well as boarding schools further afield, and families are fully supported in making this important step.





Profile of a Year 8 leaver

Emma joined St Peter's Preparatory School in Year 6 and was Head Girl for her final year at the school in Year 8.

Achievements

- Academic Scholarship to Exeter School for Year 9 entrance
- Major Sports Scholarship at St Peter's Preparatory School Years 7-8
- Captain of St Peter's first XI cricket team
- Captain of the Devon U13s Girls' cricket team
- Devon U15 cricket team
- National Festivals U13 cricket team
- Devon Prep Schools U13 hockey Team
- Devon U14 hockey team
- Plays for Exe hockey ladies' 3rd team
- St Peter's Bronze Cross Keys Award
- The Independent Association of Prep Schools' golf
- The Independent Association of Prep Schools' squash

"Emma has been a wonderful ambassador for St Peter's in both the sporting arena and academically. She worked diligently in lessons and always tried her absolute best to meet the high expectations set for her. Emma demonstrates a positive approach to all that she does and was a trusted and well-respected member of the year group."

Mrs Charlotte Johnston, Head

"St Peter's has given my children a strong foundation for them to build on..."

Helen Lee



Supporters

Looking back as parents of a Year 8 leaver, we have been left with countless happy memories of a St Peter's journey that has fully prepared our child to meet any challenge. In addition to the high quality teaching and opportunities in art, drama, music and sport, it has provided social and communication skills that make the transition to their next school seamless and, perhaps most important, has empowered them with invaluable life-skills. We now realise why so many parents advised us not to cut the St Peter's journey short.

So what's the big deal? The answer appears to be a combination of many factors.

The quality of the teaching and pastoral care at St Peter's and its nurturing and caring environment ensures that every child has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. The academic challenges remain high in the final two years. The development of the St Peter's School Baccalaureate® has continued to enhance the curriculum as well as the school's national profile. The sports and cultural school tours are very popular both with the pupils and the many parents who join them (and enjoy the local food and drink!). There continue to be many opportunities to achieve sporting success at a local and National level. St Peter's pupils continue to excel at the regional prep schools athletics championships at Millfield and win medals for the South West in the National finals in Birmingham. The squash coaching also continues to drive National success.

Included in the final two years at St Peter's are several residential trips including those to France and surfing in Cornwall. These develop independence, team work and personal responsibility. They also build towards the final Leavers' Programme, during which the children are given a series of challenges; challenges that test them as they have not been tested previously - and as they would not otherwise be tested at this stage of their education. It gives every child the opportunity to perform under pressure in unfamiliar situations and discover hidden strengths.

Having the chance to take a step back from the traditional busy curriculum allows a pause for self-reflection. The result in every child seems to be a more rounded, self-confident individual who fully values and respects the contributions of teachers and peers. The Year 8 leavers become a very close group as a consequence of facing these team challenges together and collectively overcoming them. It is therefore no surprise that there is genuine affection and mutual self-respect reflected in the seemingly endless group hugs witnessed at the end of term!

The Cross Keys programme provides a series of challenges over the two years - and the resulting logbook provides a lasting, illustrated diary of these experiences. Flicking through these logbooks it becomes very clear exactly how much the children pack into this important time in their educational and personal development. When they reflect on their time at St Peter's it is no surprise that they look back on it and their Leavers' films - with such affection.

Parent of a Year 8 Leaver

Boarders

Boarding remains a popular part of St Peter's life, and for the senior children this offers a great chance to act as role models for the younger ones. Children have the option to try boarding and relish the independence given.

The range of activities offered has never been wider, with indoor and outdoor options making the in-house life attractive all the year round and, in some cases, preparing children for boarding at Senior Schools from Year 9 onwards.



Lunchers

All year 8s enjoy a lunch at the Head's house. They have the opportunity to discuss issues close to home and further away. Not only does this luncheon break the normal school routine; it offers them an oasis of peace and relaxation and is part of the process of becoming more adult.



Expanders

Nowhere is class size more important than at a time when pupils begin to reach adolescence, to spread their wings in an intellectual and emotional sense. Children need the individual attention from form tutors, the personal touch, and the security of friends whom they have made during the previous five years or more.

Workers

The St Peter's School Baccalaureate® is a coherent document which works through from Year 1 right through to Year 8. There are graded targets set for core subjects humanities, performing arts, creative arts and sport. And there is a recognition that pastoral qualities are fundamentally important. Senior Schools have recognised the value of the criteria established here, and appreciate the quality of the information that we are able to present when children move on aged 13. From that point on, a child's foundation carefully laid, the path to GCSE is straightforward.



Returners

In their final two years, pupils learn that it is possible, even at this tender age, for them to 'give something back'. Many an older child volunteers to assist with the younger children, freely giving up his or her spare time either to help readers, to lead play or just be a 'big sister' or 'big brother' to smaller members of the St Peter's community.

Players & Leaders

St Peter's is known for its sport and House Leadership is a part of Years 7 and 8.

It is an honour to represent the school - especially in the top two years.

Children develop self-esteem from representing the school, becoming the major players whom they looked up to just five years or so earlier.

Yes, we enjoy success. And we aim to win. But we relish equally the honing of skills and the creation of camaraderie. Boys and girls who have forged a sense of teamwork during their early years derive the benefit of their industry - and the happy burden of team responsibility - when they reach the upper echelons of sport at the school.



Tourers & Voyageurs

Since 1998, senior children have flown or been bussed off on tours to locations in Britain and abroad. A drama trip to New England has been followed up with excursions to Scotland, Ireland and the Channel Islands, with music and sport as the themes. Recent tours have taken place in Barcelona and Rome.

We know that the merit of these tours is not just in seeing new places and meeting new people. As they broaden their geographical and social horizons, it is amazing how the children make new friendships within their own Year groups.

In Year 7, children head off for a week in France. Across the Channel they understand that the French tongue is not something dreamt up to make their lives more complex; that it is spoken by real, live people who do not all wear blue and white stripes and have strings of onions draped round their necks. Having an opportunity to see the country in all its facets, and to speak French naturally, provides momentum for language learning, engenders confidence, eliminates stereotyping - and is well documented as great fun, too. This invaluable experience comes at no extra cost; it is all part of the package.

Leavers

Our Leavers Programme is varied, inspiring and fun. It offers the chance of work experience, physical exercise and outdoor adventure in a mix that children have found memorable over the decades.

As they prepare for the next stage of their lives, Year 8s are cut a little more slack, in the knowledge that they will behave in a responsible way.

St Peter's has tried to find a judicious balance of firmness and freedom, and the children, having recorded these weeks for posterity, leave school independent, happy and fulfilled.



The St Peter's School Bacculaureate®

St Peter's Preparatory School prepares its students to thrive in the society in which we live through the promotion of key learning skills from 3 through to 13.

The St Peter's School Bacculaureate® (SPB) maximises our students' educational experience and prepares them for the next step in their education. We aim to provide children with the fundamental qualities they need for lifelong learning and to achieve economic well-being.

The St Peter's School Bacculaureate® celebrates the breadth of our curriculum and the range of skills and talents inherent in our students. It seeks to recognise and reward each of those skills.

We pride ourselves on looking at the whole child and the contribution they make to our school. In Years 7 and 8 this particularly focuses on the highest academic standards, confidence in being curious, finding out their own answers and presenting their ideas and learning in a wide range of ways.

It is an award to represent the broad and balanced curriculum St Peter's offers. It exists to reflect the effort, skills, knowledge, citizenship and enthusiasm of a St Peter's child. It also provides our learners with a relevant high-attaining curriculum that prepares them for life in the world as economically viable citizens.

Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are encouraged to develop a more sophisticated critical thinking and problem-solving attitude towards their own learning. We believe it is through nurturing and encouraging these learning skills that our students realise their potential at Senior School.



The skills, attributes and qualities stated in the Years 7 and 8 'Grade Criteria' grids are linked to the school's mission statement and to its Development Plan. The 'Grade Criteria' will change and evolve as the Bacculaureate grows, but we will continue to ask our senior pupils to enhance the school setting by helping with duties, taking care of younger pupils, and contributing to school events and assemblies. They are held in high regard by staff and as a result they develop maturity and a sense of responsibility.

Every person working in the school will be consulted in the awarding of a Bacculaureate Grade to Years 7 and 8 pupils. Each child can be awarded a maximum of four points within each of the seven areas of study. The pupils are able to score a total of 28 points over a two-year period. In Year 7 they are preparing for their Year 8 assessment within the Bacculaureate Award.

Not only has this custom-built Bacculaureate Award been widely praised by Senior School Heads in the South West; there is interest from outside educationalists about how we have developed this high attaining and all-rounder award.

The information that future schools can gain from our assessment of our Years 7 and 8 pupils has been described as 'gold dust', and we are extremely proud of what we have achieved at St Peter's. We know, however, that this journey will never end and, as we reflect upon our own practice and amend the curriculum, we are continually seeing more opportunities for our Years 7 and 8 to develop the skills that we are very much aware will stay with them for life.

Cross Keys Award

We realise that our children have a multitude of different talents, and our unique Cross Keys Award scheme enables both parents and school to celebrate their achievements in a formal way, giving guidance and direction when necessary.

A kind of junior Duke of Edinburgh Award, with awards gained at three levels - Bronze, Silver and Gold - the scheme develops valuable life skills. Designed for senior boys and girls, it is a custom-built programme which provides training and opportunities for developing interpersonal and leadership techniques.

During Years 7 and 8, pupils participate in six sessions, each of which lasts for three hours and is led by leadership skills experts.

The training tests children's initiative and their ability to work with one another as they face a range of challenges. Group and personal performances are reviewed, and experiences recorded in individuals' diaries.

At the end of each of six terms, a child's tutor awards a mark between 1 and 5 for resourcefulness, helpfulness, organisation, politeness and appearance. The Cross Keys Record Card, maintained during the two-year period, informs tutors on the children's thinking and self-evaluation throughout.

Points are gained for the demonstration of study skills involving work rate, information-gathering and information retention.

In the summer, Year 7 children are introduced to the Spirit of Adventure programme. They are required to plan ahead, to think about food and kit requirements, to look at group management. And they are instructed in practical business such as raft-building skills.

Twelve months later, the Year 8 pupils undertake a major expedition, using the nearby wilderness and beauty of Dartmoor. We aim for the groups to be largely self-reliant by this stage. They are responsible for their own navigation, catering, shelter and group management, all with a staff backup team in the wings, should an issue of safety arise.

During the expedition, the groups also have to cope with 'unexpected events', and things might not always go according to plan. The result is a unique opportunity for personal growth and development.

One of the most important aspects of the scheme is the 'Service to Others' element. Members of Years 7 and 8 undertake a series of tasks, which, though simple in themselves, require a regular commitment.

Examples of tasks are: planning and cooking a family meal, organising a buffet, regular voluntary work, charity presentation, acquiring a First Aid Certificate, acting as a Monitor, taking a Lifesaving course, making an adventurous journey.

Most of these challenges will be undertaken at school, but the cooperation of parents in some instances is invaluable.



The Scholarship Scenario

What are Schools looking for?

Senior Schools are looking for academic scholars in children who are extremely bright and studious, and who have a high IQ. (VR score 126+)

They will be especially interested in those who have been identified by St Peter's as being of high potential ability and who have a consistent history of high levels of motivation.

Would-be scholars will be happy to undertake lots of extra assignments beyond school hours, over and above the normal prep workload.

They will be naturally curious about current affairs, they will have a wide general knowledge, a grasp of world affairs and an enthusiasm for solving problems of all kinds.

Potential academic scholars are entering a competitive area. They will need to work extremely hard, especially in the Autumn and Spring terms preceding the build-up to their examinations, which normally take place in February and March. Typically, they will be putting in a couple of hours most days or evenings, including weekends. They will need to be reading the quality press and watching current affairs programmes regularly; parents can help by engaging them in debate and discussion.

Internal Scholarships

St Peter's is proud to recognise the work of its outstanding pupils in academics, sport and the arts.

All scholarships are awarded on the basis of open competition and all scholars are expected to continue to contribute through their specialist area(s) to the life of the school.

It is a great accolade to be awarded a St Peter's Scholarship. Children are offered scholarships at the start of the spring term in Year 6. Scholarships, which take the form of a fees discount, come into effect from the beginning of the Autumn Term in Year 7 and continue until the children leave at the end of Year 8.

We continue to review our scholarships, so it is possible to receive an award during Year 7 or 8.

We can offer the following scholarships:

- All round
- Academic
- Sport
- Music
- Art
- Drama

Where a child shows outstanding talents in a combination of these fields, we adjust the scholarship accordingly.





Academic Scholarships

St Peter's expects the children who have been identified as internal scholars in Year 6 to continue to aim high - with a view to gaining an external scholarship to their next school in Year 8.

This does not preclude other children from trying for external scholarships. Children grow and develop at different rates and may begin to show outstanding talents in Years 7 and 8. This is why we continually monitor children's progress and are vigilant in supporting each stage of their education.

Where children show particular ability in a subject area, we aim to both support and extend their learning experiences so that they can achieve their best and fulfil their true potential in whichever field that may be.

Sports Scholarships

These are awarded to girls or boys with proven outstanding sports ability and potential. Requirements vary slightly from school to school, but a candidate for a sports award will:

- Have represented the school as a member of the 1st team in at least two major sports
- Have county representation in one major sport, as a minimum. Regional or National representation makes a stronger case
- Show consistently high levels of motivation and sportsmanship in all sports
- Participate in other minor sports to a high level
- Have prepared a CV incorporating his or her record of achievements.



Art & Design, Music or Drama Scholarships

The requirements vary from school to school; our respective Heads of Faculty are ready and willing to provide advice about these subject areas.



All Rounder Scholarships

These are aimed at candidates who have significant strengths in more than one area. Candidates need to demonstrate above-average academic ability and high ability and leadership in as many as possible from Art, Music, Drama, Sport, Performing Arts, Design Technology, etc.

The rules vary from school to school; we will help and advise you on the best course to take.

Your child may be asked to attend over a number of different days, to fit in with the assessments for the various areas. The better they perform, overall, the better their chance of a more significant award.

Other Help With Fees

Bursaries are means-tested discretionary awards made by the senior school to assist children for whom a place would not otherwise be possible. They are not scholarships as they are not dependent on or linked to potential performance.

Most senior schools offer some form of bursarial assistance. If you feel that you would like to explore this option, please make an appointment to see the Head or Deputy Head, who can advise on the best way forward.

Any bursary is normally dependent on continued satisfactory effort from the recipient once they have joined the school. They are also completely confidential and a matter entirely between yourselves and the school in question. St Peter's plays no further role.



Spoilt for choice?



Looking For The Next School

It's best to start your research on next schools early; during Year 7 is a good time so that you don't feel you've made a rushed decision in Year 8.

The first question to ask yourself is how far are you prepared to travel each day to get your child to school or how long do you want him or her to be on the bus. Consider where you live, accessibility to transport, does the school offer a bus run or will you need to use public transport.

You should also consider if you want your child to board or to be a day pupil. It is well worth noting that whilst some schools offer day and flexi-boarding options, these are often pre-dominantly boarding schools and, as such, run to a boarding school timetable. This might mean Saturday school, weekend matches and late night pick-up. Do you want your child at a single sex school or at a mixed school? As fees vary greatly, this is also a factor to consider.

It is good to talk to parents who already have children at a school. However, remember that they could have different priorities to you, so don't let their judgements cloud yours. They could be the ones who can give you the 'real' facts about time of day, extra curricular commitments etc.

So what do you want?

Look at distance to travel from home, single sex or mixed, day, flexi or full boarding. You can find this out by looking at the individual school's website.

What are your priorities?

Having narrowed down your possible search, your next step is to consider what your individual priorities are for the school your child goes to. For example, do you want a school that is known for its Sport or Music. What subjects does it offer at GCSE and beyond? What size classes does it have? What learning support does it offer?

Priorities:

Are you hoping that your child might sit for a scholarship? If so, which schools offer the scholarships that you are interested in?

We can offer advice about whether or not a scholarship would be appropriate for your child.

The registrar of the Senior School that you are interested in will be able to tell you which scholarships it offers and their procedure for applying for one.



Attending our next schools' fair

You should also attend the Next Steps Schools' Exhibition held every two years at St Peter's where we invite a large range of senior schools to exhibit. This is an opportunity to meet representatives from a variety of senior schools who will discuss how their schools might suit your child.

And now...

You have narrowed down the choice so it is time to look at more detail at the schools you might consider. If you try to look at too many it will be hard to make the final choice. St Peter's can talk to you and help you make decisions by passing on our knowledge.

Come and See Us for Advice

Yes, that time will come, unfortunately, when your child has to leave us. Parents and pupils in Years Seven and Eight often take advice from us on the best course of action in choosing their next school.

Once you have considered and talked through the issues mentioned opposite, the next thing to do is to come in and share your thoughts with us. The Head and her staff are in very close touch with Senior Schools and visit them regularly. At the same time, St Peter's rigorously defends its independence; we are able to suggest the schools that we feel would best suit your child as an individual. Typically, bearing in mind your criteria, we will try to suggest three schools with different characteristics, which merit a closer look. We can only advise from an educational standpoint. It is up to you to do due diligence with regard to registering your child and signing a contract with your preferred senior school.

By far the better option is to arrange a visit for yourselves. Ask to be shown around by a member of the Sixth Form; he or she will represent the end product of the school, after all. Does the impression your tour guide gives fit with the vision or aspiration you hold for your own offspring in a few years' time? Ask to see a selection of specific lessons, accommodation and staff. In this way, you will gain an insight into the real ethos of the school.

Visit more than once....

If you are happy with what you see and experience, our advice is then to have another visit with your child, after which a 'Taster Day' can be arranged for your child. See if he or she likes it. Return for a private visit when the school is operational and meet the Head for a one-to-one chat.

How to gain a place at the school of your choice...

There are several methods of entry but, typically, you will need to contact the registrar of the school in question to request application forms. He or she will make sure that you know the procedure to go through to register, to sit exams and to secure a place for your child.

Once these are completed, the school will normally ask you to make an appointment for your child to visit for assessment. (The exception to this, currently, are schools such as Exeter and The Maynard, all of which have a set date in early January for their entry tests.)

Be reassured we will guide you through the process.





ST PETER'S

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