



Aspire Enjoy Achieve

Soar Valley College is an Outstanding school, as judged by Ofsted and as shown through our results each year. Whilst very proud of our achievements we are far from complacent, always striving to improve the provision and outcomes for the young people in our care.

At Soar Valley College, every individual is highly valued. We are committed to providing a stimulating and caring environment, within which ALL

ASPIRE to reach the highest standards,

ENJOY every aspect of school life and

ACHIEVE their full potential.



The following pages contain further information. Should there be anything else you require, do please refer to our website or contact us. The details contained in this booklet are correct at the time of publication but may be subject to change.

This College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

ASPIRE

Effort
High expectations
High quality
curriculum

It's all about effort

At Soar Valley we value effort above all else. We expect every student, regardless of ability, to do their best and to be the best they can be. We know everyone can try, and expect this to be the case. We celebrate effort and will talk to students and parents/carers about this first and foremost, and then about grades. In this way, every child can be a success!

High expectations for all aspects of school life

High expectations of behaviour are essential for students to do well at school. We are all guided by 'The Soar Valley Way' which is a shared set of expected behaviour and attitudes that underpin our college ethos of 'Aspire Enjoy Achieve'. If students stray from the 'Soar Valley Way', staff may use a variety of sanctions to address and attempt to rectify this. Our Behaviour for Learning principles make clear the behaviour that will enable students to become successful learners. These are displayed in classrooms.

Like all schools we have some basic rules to which we expect our students to adhere. These are linked to the principles in 'The Soar Valley Way'. For example, for key stage 3 students, we do not allow mobile phones, which can be lost and/or have a disruptive effect on learning. No responsibility will be taken by the college for any loss.

Students can earn reward points in line with our ethos of 'Aspire, Enjoy, Achieve', with exceptional effort, participation and engagement in lessons being rewarded.

THE SOAR VALLEY WAY



Effort

Effort is everything at Soar Valley.

Effort is something that anyone can demonstrate, no matter your starting ability. You are expected to demonstrate excellent levels of effort in all aspects of your school life, within and beyond the classroom. With maximum effort, you can aspire to great things and ultimately make great progress.

How will you show excellent effort?

By being:

Organised, Diligent, Resilient, Dedicated, Committed, Reflective, Ambitious

Participation

You are expected to participate fully in the wide and rich experiences that Soar Valley offers to you. Participation, in its fullest sense, ranges from your academic contributions in lessons, attending a variety of extra-curricular opportunities and volunteering your time and effort to support the work of the whole school community.

How will you ensure you fully participate?

By being:

Courageous, Confident, Proactive, Reliable, Independent, Responsible, Enthusiastic

Respect

Our strong and positive relationships underpin much of Soar Valley's great success. Being respectful to all members of our proudly diverse community creates an environment where you, and others, feel safe and supported to achieve your very best.

How will you show respect?

By being:

Kind, Polite, Empathetic, Caring, Considerate, Thoughtful, Trustworthy

I agree to do my best to follow the Soar Valley Way

Name: _____ Form: _____

They may also receive postcards home or be nominated as a Soar Valley Star for outstanding work or contribution. These achievements are publicly recognised and celebrated.

Attendance and Punctuality

Our school attendance has regularly been amongst the highest in the city, and we are very proud of this. Excellent attendance and punctuality are essential for all students; it is no surprise that those with better attendance are more successful at school and so we work with parents and carers to ensure attendance is as high as possible. If, however, a student is likely to be away from College, parents are asked to inform us by phone, email or in writing.

On the first day that a student is absent parents will be informed through our text messaging system. Parents are asked to keep the College informed of any changes to contacts/telephone details for this purpose.

Following changes to law and as approved by the Governing body, no authorised absence is granted to students in years 7 – 11 for non-educational purposes. It is therefore important that, as far as possible, medical and similar appointments are arranged outside College hours.

We have a 'Welfare Room' for any child ill or injured during the school day with trained staff. A First Aider will take appropriate action and contact parents if the student is too ill to stay at College or has to go to a doctor or to the hospital. It is yet another reason for parents p-to-date emergency telephone number.to keep us up-to-date with any changes to contact information.

A letter/email is required immediately following any absence. A letter is also required if a student needs to leave the premises for an appointment.

Our Curriculum

"The college has very high expectations and makes challenging demands on students. Both teaching and support staff are highly effective, as they command the respect of the students and know them very well. Students thrive and enjoy most lessons greatly and, as a result, teaching in most subject areas is exemplary and leads to students' outstanding achievement." Ofsted.

All tutor groups are mixed ability; that is they contain students of different levels of ability. In most subjects in Year 7 the students are initially taught in these mixed ability groups, of about 26 students. They are setted in Maths during Year 7 and in various other subjects in Years 8 and 9, for example, in Science and Languages. Class sizes are smaller in Design & Technology (approximately 20), and reduce in size from Year 9 onwards in English, Mathematics, Science and RE.

At Key Stage 3 (Years 7 – 9) students at Soar Valley follow the National Curriculum. At Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11) there is a core of compulsory subjects and a range of courses from which students choose (see next page). The teaching of all courses is characterised by a variety of challenging teaching methods and the quality of teaching is very high.

Years 7-9 (Key Stage 3)	Years 10-11 (Key Stage 4)
<p>English Mathematics Science French or German Geography History Religious Studies Design & Technology Computing Art Drama Music Physical Education/Dance Personal, Social & Health Education (PSHE)</p>	<p>Core subjects studied by all students English Language English Literature Mathematics Science (double award) Physical Education Religious Studies PSHE</p> <p>Plus 3 options, subjects, which currently include; Citizenship, *Computer Science, Creative Media, Fine Art, Food Technology, *French, *German, *Geography, Graphics, *History, ICT, Music, Drama, Photography, Physical Education, Product Design, Sport Studies, *Triple Science (separate Biology, Chemistry, Physics)</p> <p>*Each student must choose at least one of these starred subjects</p>

Relationships and Sex Education

We help students to gain knowledge and understanding of how people grow and change as they mature towards adult life. In addition we encourage students to explore attitudes towards sexual relationships and to develop strategies for control over their own lives. We also focus on understanding roles within a family. Physical, social and emotional aspects of relationships are explored, including examining possible consequences of decisions taken, along with specific issues such as birth control and sexually transmitted infections.

A variety of teaching materials have been selected from approved health education authority sources. Parents are welcome to view these resources.

Most of the programme will be delivered as part of the Science curriculum and during PSHE lessons.

Religious Education

Religious Education is taught as a discrete subject throughout Years 7-11.

Under statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship, students meet as a year group once a week for an assembly. On all other mornings, registration time with the Form Tutor provides a time for reflection, quiet reading, reinforcement of basic rules, sharing of information, etc.

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from Religious Education or morning assembly they should contact the relevant Head of Year to discuss the issue in the first instance.

Homework

Homework is an essential part of each student's curriculum. The homework could be revision, reading or research as well as written work. The amount of time spent on each subject will vary and in Years 10 and 11 the amount is increased.



Students are given a student planner which reminds them when homework for individual subjects should be handed in. All homework is also recorded on the online school homework calendar. Students and parents can use this to see what homework has been set, what the particular task is and when the homework is due in. There is a link on the school website which takes students and parents to this homework calendar. It helps students to plan so that they give themselves adequate time in which to complete their work and so do not leave all their homework tasks until the last minute! Parents are asked to check planners on a weekly basis and initial them to indicate they have done so.

Students are able to stay in college after 3.00pm and use the Learning Resource Centre to complete homework tasks.

ENJOY

Respect and
relationships

Community
Participation

Working Together in Partnership

Communication

We believe that the happiness and success of students in College depends heavily on parents and teachers working together. We have a Parent-Student-School Agreement that recognises the importance of this partnership. We encourage parents to take an active interest in the development of the College and in the progress of their child.

Parents are kept informed, usually by letter/email, of events going on in College, of the College's achievements, of their child's progress and of any

particular problems we might be having. We may also send text messages to alert parents to particular events. The website is an additional source of information, and we hope parents will follow us on twitter too!

Similarly, we encourage parents to keep us informed about the development of their child and never to let worries or concerns linger. Very often what can appear to be a major problem can be solved by a phone call or visit to the school. We are always happy to talk with parents, discuss their concerns and help in any way we can. We hope that in this way we can forge a real partnership from which the College and all of its students must surely benefit.

The Pastoral System

Students are placed into a tutor group of approximately 26 students. The Form Tutors, who usually move through the College with their forms, take responsibility for the well-being and progress of the students in their form. They check their attendance and punctuality, their appearance, their attitude to work and their behaviour. They advise students who have problems, offer them support and, where appropriate, consult parents.

In this important pastoral role the Form Tutors work closely with all their colleagues including Heads of Year, Associate Heads of Year, Pastoral Support Workers, Assistant Principals, Vice Principals and the Principal.

"A distinct feature of the college's culture in creating a very purposeful environment for learning is the excellent relationships between the teachers and the students. One student summarised the feeling of others: 'It's not just the teachers, it's all staff.' Students feel that the staff make time and get to know them very well." Ofsted.





Reporting to Parents

A report on each student's progress is issued each term. The report includes teacher assessments, effort scores and target grades, as well as indications about behaviour and homework. The student's attendance record is also shared, along with the total number of Achievement and Behaviour Points accumulated to date in the academic year.

Each year group also has a Parents' Evening where parents can talk to subject teachers about progress and targets for future improvement. Additionally, there is a Year 7 'Settling In' Evening during the Autumn Term, a useful opportunity to meet form tutors and discuss the transition to secondary school.

"Very robust checking of students' progress and high-quality teaching are leading to outstanding achievements by the students and exceptional attitudes to learning." Ofsted.

Participation in the wider life of the school

At Soar Valley College we are justifiably proud of the wide variety of activities available for our students on a daily basis that we feel bring a range of benefits and opportunities. These activities occur before school, lunch time or after school. Our Participation Passports allow students to be rewarded for the extra-curricular activities they engage in and students have responded very positively towards this.

Activities include:



Breakfast Club	A variety of healthy food and drinks, both hot and cold are served in the Dining Room every morning from 7.45am until 8.30am. Toasted bagels are provided free of charge for any student wishing to have one before school.
Games Club	Games are provided in the Learning Resource Centre every morning from 8.00am – 8.35am. Students are able to learn and play together amicably in a safe setting prior to commencing the school day.
Homework Club	A calm, supervised environment in the Learning Resource Centre allows students to do their homework using College resources and computers. This is held every day from 3pm until 4pm.
Subject Based Activities	Most subjects offer sessions for the students to further pursue their interests and receive extra guidance from the teaching staff.
Opportunities to pursue particular interests	There is a wide variety on offer and for example may include chess, ICT, Art and Design, Book Clubs, Film Clubs, Games Club, Eco Groups etc.
Creative Activities	Music, street dance, drama, guitar and drum lessons are amongst those activities offered for students who wish to pursue creative activities. There are also music and drama performances throughout the year, as well as art clubs.

Physical Education and Sports	A wide variety of sports is offered for all students, including football, hockey, trampolining, cricket, tennis, rugby, table tennis, badminton, fitness sessions, netball, basketball, rounders, aerobics, street dance and athletics. They may be single or mixed sex, competitive or non-competitive situations. Students from the College have represented the City and County in many sports such as football, cricket, badminton, rounders, hockey, and college teams have been successful in these areas and others.
Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme	This highly valued Award is offered to students in years 9, 10 and 11. Those involved in the Duke of Edinburgh programme also undertake expeditions as a part of their assessment. The success rate at Soar Valley is very strong, receiving special commendation.
National Citizen Service (NCS)	A great many students in year 11 take part in the NCS, a national scheme with the aim of building skills for work and life.
Study Support	Advice on how to study/revise and time to undertake homework or additional work is offered to Key Stage 4 students using the College ICT facilities each day at lunchtime and after school.
Trips and Visits	We are very proud of the large number and variety of trips and visits offered to students. In the recent past these have included trips to France and Germany, visits to Bosworth Battlefield, numerous theatre visits, Poetry Live, the Mathematics Team Challenge and skiing trip to name but a few.

The House System

Our thriving House system is a great vehicle for increasing participation, with all areas of the curriculum offering activities and competitions for students to take part in. Students and staff are in one of six Houses, all named after Leicestershire parks – Abbey, Beacon, Bradgate, Castle, Victoria, Watermead. Each House is led by a member of staff and student House Captains. The competition between Houses can be quite fierce (amongst both students and staff!), and culminates in a Sports Day at the end of each academic year.

Recent competitions have included The Great Soar Valley Bake-Off, a Harry Potter quiz, chess tournament, library quizzes, sports tournaments, an Eco quiz, and many more.

With the vast array of extra-curricular activities and various House competitions and events, there really is something for everyone!

ACHIEVE
Excellence
Inclusivity and
support
Preparation for
life

Academic Excellence

We are very proud of the academic achievements of our students. Students at Soar Valley achieve some of the highest results in the city year after year, and progress measures are consistently strong.

Performance information 2019 - 2023

Results in 2023 were again outstanding! Schools were told they would return to 2019 levels (with those in 2020 and 2021 being determined by teacher assessments), but in fact results at Soar Valley remain in line with those in 2022 in many areas, a fantastic achievement.

Key performance measures for schools are the proportion of students who attained a Good Pass in English and mathematics (grade 4 or above) and a Strong Pass (grade 5 and above). NB. For English, it is the student's best grade of English Language and Literature which is included.

As can be seen from the table, Soar Valley's results are significantly above national and, even with a return to formal examinations, are well above 2019 levels and very similar to those obtained through Teacher Assessments in 2021 and amended exams in 2022. They demonstrate excellent levels of progress for our students from their starting points on entry in year 7.

	English AND maths	English	Mathematics
% Grade 4+ 2023	72	81	77
2022	76	86	76
2021	77	88	80
2020	72	84	75
2019	67	80	71
National 2019	65	62	60
% Grade 5+ 2023	53	69	59
2022	55	78	57
2021	55	68	59
2020	51	66	57
2019	45	67	50

Progress Measures

A figure called Progress 8 is also usually reported on. This figure is a calculation based on the achievement across 8 subjects for each student based on whether they met, exceeded or were below their expected performance in each subject. A figure is then calculated for the whole school. -0.5 is considered to be the 'floor standard', or the minimum expected standard set by the government, and national averages are just below 0.

This figure was **+0.5** for Soar Valley in 2017, **+0.3** in 2018, and **+0.5** for 2019. Our internal data showed figures for 2020 and 2021 of **+0.51** and **+0.58** respectively (national figures will not be released for these two academic years). 2022 saw our best progress scores ever, at +0.73.

Early indications are that the 2023 figure will be similar to 2022, in the region of +0.7 again.

This means our students make significantly more progress than their peers nationally on average, and indicates very strong performance.

The English Baccalaureate

The EBacc is a measure that continues to be reported on. This year 25% of students entered the EBacc suite of subjects, meaning they studied English, maths, science, and two from Geography, History, Computer Science and French or German. Many more entered most of those subjects but not all. Our policy is to not force any particular option choices on students, but to allow and guide them to follow their strengths and interests. At Soar Valley, students who are capable of doing the EBacc are advised that this is a pathway that they should consider but they are not made to do so if their interests and abilities lie in other subjects. The EBacc figure reflects this student-centred approach and the breadth of our curriculum.

Attainment 8

This is the average grade that students obtained in their GCSEs at a school, and for 2019 this was 48.30. In 2023, the year when results were to fall back to 2019 standards, the attainment 8 figure is 51.05, impressively an increase on the 2019 figure and only just below that of 2022. Given that our students have very varied starting points when they enter the school in year 7, these represent very impressive outcomes and again demonstrate outstanding progress.

Destination measures

A measure of a school's success is how well-prepared students are for the next stage in their life. In 2021 96.9% of our students were in full-time education, employment or training by November of the year they left school, 96.8% in 2022. This reflects the strong emphasis in school on careers education and preparation for working life.

Valuing Everyone

“The curriculum is highly effective. It is planned to suit the needs of the individual. The provision for more able students allows them to be challenged fully and to achieve higher-level qualifications.” Ofsted.

More Able Learners

Students identified as more able in each subject have a range of opportunities to extend and enrich their learning, both within and outside the curriculum. Their achievements are closely monitored as part of our formal review procedures.

Many students are very gifted in many subjects and are given a wealth of opportunities to succeed at the very highest level. This includes curriculum provision, for example, Triple Science is studied by many in Key Stage 4, and the most able mathematicians take an additional qualification leading to A level.

There are numerous additional opportunities for students to develop their interests, abilities and talents, such as the national (and international!) Maths Challenges, visits and activities (such as debating competitions, links with the Space Centre, etc.).

Special Educational Needs

All schools and colleges in England have to identify children who have Special Educational Needs. This may be due to difficulties with learning, communication and interaction, behaviour or mental health issues, or a medical need. Students with additional needs will be named on a Special Educational Needs Register which will be shared with all staff to ensure that their needs are met across the curriculum and in all aspects of school life.

At Soar Valley we are determined to identify students with additional needs early, by liaising closely with primary schools and through assessments when students start with us. Students are supported in a variety of ways including in-class support and small group interventions, and targeted interventions focus on the development of reading, language, numeracy, communication and social skills, occasionally involving intensive support on an individual basis. We are keen to involve students and parents in addressing and supporting additional needs.

Language Development

Members of our SEN staff work in partnership with subject teachers to develop activities and resources to enhance the English language skills of all students. They provide support for students who use English as an additional language, helping them to acquire the English language skills that will enable them to achieve their full potential.

Preparation for Life

Careers Education and Guidance

We aim to provide all our students with the skills, knowledge and information to enable them to make decisions about their futures which are consistent with their abilities and needs. A variety of activities are in place to ensure students are well prepared for the next stage in their education or training, including:

- Personal Development lessons which cover Careers Education in years 8 and 9. In years 10 and 11 students follow a careers guidance programme covering key aspects of the world of work and post-16 education.
- One to one interviews, supported by an extensive Careers library.
- A 'World of Work' (WoW) week in Year 10 which includes practice applications and interviews, visits to colleges, universities and places of work.
- Assemblies and tutor periods devoted to Careers Education throughout Years 7-11.
- Information evenings for parents and students, including a Post-16 Evening in October with representatives from Colleges of Further Education, Sixth Form Colleges, Training Providers (Apprenticeships), local employers and local universities.



Guidance and support at transition points

Smooth transitions at other key points in a child's education are essential, both in terms of student wellbeing but also academic progression. We are very proud of our extensive transition procedures which are designed to ensure students and families feel welcomed, safe and equipped to flourish at Soar Valley.

Transition from primary school begins in March when we welcome all new students to the school, followed by a full transition day in July with a focus on building new relationships as well as communicating our high expectations. Each new tutor group is assigned trained Year 9 Peer Buddies, another supportive mechanism as they assist with the initial movement around our building, encouraging and forging new friendships, and support with class work.

Unlike many other schools our support programme does not stop here. All new Year 7s then experience an extended induction of team building activities, literacy workshops and a series of specially designed breakout sessions which are centred around our core values and building on skills such as resilience, empathy and questioning, in order to be successful both in and out of the classroom.

Extensive support is also built in to ease the move to Key Stage 4 and exam courses, and then to post-16 provision.

Practical Information

The school day

The school building opens at 8.00am. The day begins formally at 8.45am with an assembly or registration in Tutor Groups.

The day is comprised of five one-hour lessons, with a 20 minutes' break during the morning (split, with Years 7 and 8 having an earlier break than Years 9, 10 and 11) and 40 minutes for lunch, 12.20 – 1.00pm for Year 7 and 8. 1.20 – 2.00pm for Year 9, 10 and 11.

The teaching day ends at 3.00pm, and there is then a wealth of after-school activities for students each day, including the Learning Resource Centre which is open for students until 4.00pm for students to complete homework, do research, or simply to enjoy reading.

Lunchtime arrangements

In the interest of the health and safety of all our students, we encourage all to stay on the school site at lunchtimes. Our school kitchens prepare a wide variety of hot food daily, offering a wide choice including vegetarian meals. Sandwiches, salads, jacket potatoes and pasta are also available each day.

Students load money onto their identity cards so that no money changes hands at the till point. This can be done in school with cash or online via the School Gateway app. Those eligible for free school meals have the designated amount loaded onto their cards automatically each day.

Students may of course also choose to bring a packed lunch from home.

Uniform

We have high expectations of all students at Soar Valley and standards of uniform are no exception. The uniform is very smart, and our students are a credit to the College. Items of clothing must conform exactly to the uniform, most of which is available from Uniform Direct, online at www.uniform-direct.com or through the retail outlet in Leicester city centre.



Admissions

The admission arrangements for this school are managed by Leicester City Council School Admissions Service, www.leicester.gov.uk/admissions

The number of preferences (1, 2, 3 or 4) received by the closing date in 2021 was 825. As this was more than the number of places, they were prioritised and allocated on 1st March 2022).

Order Of Criteria	No. of places allocated	Over subscription criteria
1	1	Children who have a statement of SEN or an EHC Plan
2	1	Children in the care of a local authority within England or who were previously in the care of a local authority within England.
3	1	Pupils who have a serious medical condition or exceptional social or domestic need.
4	91	Children whose home address is in the catchment area of the secondary school with a sibling at the school.
5	19	Children whose home address is outside the catchment area of the secondary school with a sibling at the school. By sibling we mean a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, or a child of the parent/carer's partner and in every case the child must be living in the same family unit at the same address.
6	201	Children whose home address is in the catchment area of the secondary school.
7	0	Children who are sons/daughters of staff working at the school for at least 2 years at the time of application.
8	6	Children whose home address is outside of the catchment area of the secondary school and who have requested a place (furthest distance from the school 0.548 miles)
TOTAL	320	

The school's Planned Admission Number is 255. However, more places have been made available at the school, taking the total in each year group to 312. The school accepted 8 additional children initially to allow for 'drop-off' at the start of the academic year.

Published Admission Number	255
Agreed additional places for Y7	57
Total 2017 onwards	312

APPLICATION FORMS are available from the Education Authority.
The closing date for preferences is **31st October 2023.**