A Transfer Student’s Guide to Thriving in Libertyville
INTRODUCTION

Hello there transfer family, and welcome to a Transfer Student’s Guide to Thriving in Libertyville. In this guide, we as Student Ambassadors, hope to break down what may seem like a boring little town, into what seems like THE MOST entertaining travel destination on the planet. Actually, that might be a bit over the top, so I guess we’ll have to stick to the best in North America.

All jokes aside though, Libertyville is an awesome place, with an even better school. Everyone here really does love the town they live in. For a small town, Libertyville offers more than meets the eye in terms of restaurants, shops, and things to do for people of all ages.

But Libertyville can also be a scary place to transfer into at first, just like any other school or town. That’s why we, as Student Ambassadors do what we do. We volunteer to help transfer students with their transition to High School, and families with their move into the community. This guide is designed to go one step further, to cover all the bases so to speak. This will go over everything a new family will need to know to THRIVE in their first few weeks or months at LHS, in Libertyville, and in the surrounding area. After reading this, you
will be an expert in everything from LHS slang to the college application process. At least that's the goal.

So without further ado, let’s get this party started!

**FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL**

The first time doing anything can be scary. Whether it be bungy jumping, or trying a new food, the unknown just brings a sense of unease to a situation. I’m not going to lie, and say that I wasn’t scared of LHS on my first day. I was terrified. I was thinking about locking myself in my bathroom so I didn’t have to go. Fortunately, my mom talked me out of that, and got me to at least go along on the first day.

I’m telling you this to let you know that, as a transfer student, you are not alone. There are people who feel the same way as you, or at least felt the same, even in a sample size of 2000 kids. Whatever you do, just make sure you go to school with an open mind. Don’t go determined to hate it. Think about it like the first time you tried your favorite food, where uncertainty turned to happiness as you took your first bite. I didn’t do this, and highly regretted it. It took 8 periods for me to start enjoying myself, but if you come with an open attitude, you’ll be having the time of your life halfway through period 1.
As this is a guide, it’s only right we include a tips and tricks section. So, here is my tips and tricks for thriving on the first day at LHS:

- Speak to as many people as possible, especially students.
- If you have a gym class, most of them will meet in the main gym on the first day of school.
- Don’t be afraid to ask anyone a question, or for directions, whether it be a student or a member of staff.
- Get to know the people in your LST; they are your home away from home, and can act as your parents or best friend if you ever need them.
- Put your schedule as your screensaver on your phone, that way you don’t have to pull your paper schedule out and block the hallway.

CAFETERIA/LUNCH

The LHS cafeteria is situated next to the main gym, and is where we had the transfer orientation. The cafeteria is split up into 4 main sections during lunch hours. The biggest section is the seating area, where students on their lunch hour can eat lunch and hang out with friends. This spans most of the cafeteria. The second section, and the first of the three dining options is the sandwich bar, where students can choose meat, cheese, fruits, and vegetables to have in a wrap or sandwich, to
go along with a plate of chips. Another dining option is the Italian area, where pizza and pasta are served daily. The third and final option for dining is more traditional American food, with burgers and fries on one side of the line, and a varying meal on the other side. The meal could be anything from tacos with rice and beans, to fish and chips, as it varies daily. You can always find the meal options available that day on the bulletin board on the LHS website. If a senior has a car parked on campus, he or she can go off campus to get lunch, with Culvers and Chipotle two of the prefered destinations nearby. A student is also more than free to bring a sack lunch if he or she prefers.

As an LHS student, I would have to recommend the Buff Chick. Each week, the sandwich bar has a specialty sandwich that they prepare in advance to serve for lunch, and is posted on the bulletin on the website. When this says buffalo chicken wrap, you gotta get one. It is the best food item in the school, rivalling only the freshly made cookies.
SLANG

When you first step foot in LHS, you may notice we talk in a really strange language. We say things that makes no sense to anyone outside of the 2000 LHS students each year. Here is a brief guide on how to understand some of our slang;

- Bayd (pronounced like played but with a -B- instead of a -PL-) means good, or great
- Gud (pronounced like food but with a -G- instead of a -F-) means bad, or is said when you do something wrong
- Soy (like the sauce) is a response when someone says something that seems somewhat unbelievable or ridiculous, similar to ‘No way!’

There’s obviously more slang than this, but most of it doesn’t make any sense to me at all, so I would avoid using it at all costs. Even this slang, DO NOT USE IT. It’s here so you can translate other people, because quite frankly, you sound pretty gud when using it.

LST

LST stands for Learning Support Team. Everyone is assigned to a specific LST, with a specific counselor, based on the first letters of their last name. Within each LST, is a dean, a social worker, secretaries, counselors, and others there to help
students with their high school lives. You can schedule meetings with each person in your LST, or just walk in if whoever you want to see is free. No matter what questions you have, someone in the LST will be able to answer them, or point you to someone who can. The best part is that you can ask in any LST. Everyone is equally friendly, and is ready and willing to answer questions, or support you in whichever way you may need. They are, in my opinion, the best resource LHS has to offer, and I would encourage you to take advantage of them as much as you can.

MASH

The MASH stands for Math and Science Help, but actually offers help for International Languages as well. Located next to the Q-Z LST, the MASH is always staffed by Math, Science, and Language teachers who offer free help on homework or classwork before, during, and after school hours. The MASH also has computers and printers if you need a quiet place to do homework. It is a great resource, and the staff are always able to answer any questions you may have regarding Math, Science, or languages.
WRITE PLACE

The Write Place is like the MASH but offers help for English instead. Located next to the library, the Write Place is staffed by English faculty or high level English students to help other students with essay writing or any other English questions you may have. After getting your essay read through and working on it with a staffer, they’ll stamp your essay with the Write Place stamp. Many teachers either require the stamp, or give extra credit for it, so if you have the time, definitely check out the Write Place.

LIBRARY

The Library is like the swiss army knife of LHS. It contains desks, books, computers, printers, and much more. A student could study in there during their lunch periods if they need a quiet place, or they could go and print out a primary source for their history class. When doing a research project, the Library staff are very helpful when it comes to finding books or databases that you may need to complete research. They don’t allow food, or drinks other than water in the library though, so it is not a place to eat lunch. They also like you to be as quiet as possible.
TESTING CENTER

If a student is ever absent, he or she will have to make up any homework they miss via arrangements made with each individual teacher. If they miss a test however, they will need to make an appointment with the testing center to make up the test. This is done online via the website, where a sign up form can be found under the student resources tab. A student can schedule a test before and after school (except Friday) or during a free period.

CRC

CRC stands for the College Resource Center. Located next to the Spirit Store and across from the main gym, the CRC does exactly what it says on the tin. Inside, you will find our magnificent college counselor, Amy Belstra, whose job it is to make your transition from High School to College as easy as possible. She meets with you in Junior year to discuss where your head’s at: what colleges you're thinking about, what majors you might be thinking about, etc.. Also, the CRC is where college reps come in to talk to students about the schools they represent. A student can sign up for these rep meetings on Naviance, which I’ll talk about later. The CRC also has tutor lists for the ACT and SAT, books on colleges, and you are free
to walk in and ask either Mrs. Jones or Mrs. Lund (CRC Assistants) any college related questions you may have.

POWERSCHOOL

Powerschool is an online grading book system, used by LHS to give students their grades. Students sign in with their school computer login (firstname.lastname) and parents can create an account to link to their students profile to see their grades. A link to powerschool can be found via the LHS website, and most teachers are very good at putting in grades as soon as they can. This means that any work that is incomplete or not turned in can be seen in Powerschool within a couple of days of turning it in, so that the student can go and talk to the teacher and work things out. It is also how teachers record a student's attendance, so a parent can check daily to see if their children were actually in class. Whilst there can be mishaps in the system, teachers are very understanding where they or the system might have made a mistake.

NAVIANCE

Naviance is a website that helps students with the college process. On Naviance, a student can do anything from keep the colleges they are interested in in an orderly manner, to sign up
for college rep visits in the CRC. Naviance also offers the SuperMatch College search tool, which allows students to select different criteria to find a college that best suits their needs. Naviance also has personality tests, to help students find what they might want to do in college or later in life. Furthermore, Naviance also offers the ability to keep track of course you have taken, are taking, or are going to take, to make sure you are on track to graduate with the right number of credits. Students get a school linked account made for them by LHS, and sign in with their (firstname.lastname) as a username, and (6 digit ID number) as a password. For more info on Naviance, go to there website or contact the CRC.

DROPS OF INK

Drops of Ink is the name of LHS’s student led magazine. Hard copy issues come out once a month, and cover a range of topics of varying scope. For example, one issue could cover as narrow as Libertyville Water Polo, to as broad as the Presidential election. Drops of Ink is offered as a Lit class that students can take, to give them more time to write stories as well as getting English credits. DOI is also turning more digital, with online issues becoming available, and prevalent use of social media. The issues are always good reads, and I would
recommend picking up an old issue if you get the chance, because it gives an insight into Life in Libertyville.

**CHROMEBOOKS**

In the 2015-16 school year, District 128 announced they were going digital and providing every student with a Google Chromebook. It was decided that Students would pay $50 for every year that they used the chromebook at LHS, and if a student paid the full $200 for the chromebook (the price paid by a freshman using a chromebook for all four years), they could keep them after graduation. That means that a member of the class of 2016 would pay $50 to use a chromebook in Senior year, and then had the option to pay another $150 to keep the chromebook after graduation. In school, chromebooks are used at seemingly random times. Many teachers expect you to have chromebooks with you at all times, and ask you to take them out with no prior warning. Other teachers tell you when they are needed days in advance so that you know if you need them charged or not. My advice would be to bring your chromebook to school every day, charge it overnight, so there’s never anything to worry about.
SPORTS

At Libertyville High School, Sports are a big part of community life. Many students participate in at least one sport, and those that don’t always cheer on their fellow Wildcats. We’re very passionate about all sports here in Libertyville, but none so much as Football. Last year, we were the runners up in our state division, and there’s nothing like sitting in the student section on game night.

Sports are also a fantastic way to integrate into LHS. Joining a team builds you an instant group of friends, before you’ve even started school in some cases. People will tell you over and over again to ‘get involved’ in your first year, and that couldn’t be more true. Whilst some sports, such as football, can be highly competitive, there are also sports out there for people who don’t want to compete. For example, a student can join the Cross Country club, and just run for fun with some of their friends. Whatever you want to do, chances are there’s a sport for you!
CLUBS

If you can’t find a sport to your liking, I guarantee you that you’ll do so with a club. I’ll spare you the college talk of ‘we have this many clubs and we’re so proud’. Truth is, LHS has a wide variety of clubs such that every student can find something to their liking. From Dungeons and Dragons club, to Model UN, to Film Club; whatever you want to do there’s a club to do it in. If by the off chance there isn’t a club for something you’d like to join a club for, all you need to start one is a few friends and a member of staff and you’re in action. Each year, more and more clubs are expanding and being created. This summer, the Caring for Cambodia club was able to go on a mission trip to Cambodia via the funds they raised as a club. Most clubs meet once a week, some once a month, others more or less frequently. Clubs, like sports, are also a great way to establish a group of friends.

LIFE IN LIBERTYVILLE

LHS wouldn’t be anything without the town of Libertyville. Similarly, Libertyville wouldn’t be anything without LHS. Almost everyone who lives in Libertyville has kids who go to LHS, went to LHS, or work at LHS. That creates a very family friendly atmosphere in the town. Libertyville is
full of delicious restaurants and cute little shops on Milwaukee Avenue, the main street in the town.

If you want more shopping, there’s plenty of options in the surrounding suburbs. Hawthorn mall is just 10 minutes away in Vernon Hills, and offers all types of shops, as well as restaurants and a movie theatre. Gurnee Mills is, as the name suggests, in Gurnee, and is larger, but not quite as upscale as the Hawthorn mall. There is also an outlet mall at Pleasant Prairie, if that is what floats your boat. Other malls nearby include Woodfield, and Old Orchard.

Libertyville is also heavily influenced by the city of Chicago. We are just 50 minutes away from Chicago, and many people like to take the metra into the city and spend the day there. Others drive down and park for the day, or stay overnight in a hotel. Some Chicago highlights are Navy Pier, Michigan Avenue, the Bean, Willis Tower, and many more.

Also in Chicago, are Chicago Sports. Everyone at Libertyville becomes a fan of at least one of those teams, and with the recent success of the Cubs and Blackhawks, those are the two most followed. Every day at school, you’ll be able to catch someone wearing something Chi-Sport related. It’s always fun to go to sports fixtures, and here in Libertyville, we are blessed to have 5 amazing teams right on our doorstep.