



Mendip
Studio School



Writhlington
School

Parents Handbook 2019-2020

Welcome to the Sixth Form 2019-2020

The following booklet has been produced to help provide Sixth Form students with the very best learning experiences.

The following staff are here to support all students:

Mrs Ward, MAT Senior Assistant Headteacher - Radstock & Midsomer Norton Post 16
Miss Taggart, Head of Sixth Form for Writhlington and Mendip
Mrs Haysom, Sixth Form Administrator
Mrs Murphy, Sixth Form Data Lead

Our aim is to ensure that all students have an enjoyable experience that helps them to succeed, enriches their lives and enables them to develop the skills and positive attitudes to go onto their next steps no matter what that is.

This short guide is designed to help parents or guardians support their son/daughter throughout his or her time in the Sixth Form. We are a Sixth Form and not a college. We work within the schools' guidelines to provide a structured environment whilst developing the independence and self discipline of the students during the years they are with us. Please read this booklet carefully.

Contacting the Sixth Form

If you have any concerns or enquiries please do not hesitate to contact the Sixth Form Team by telephone on 01761 433 581 or by emailing hhaysom@writhlington.org.uk. If there is no one to talk to you immediately we will do our best to get back to you within 24 hours.

Communication

We will send you letters and emails to update you with information and events involving the Sixth Form. Most of our communication is via email so we would appreciate it if you could let us know if your email address changes. Please also check that we haven't been filtered into Junk!

We are also on Twitter (@WrithlingtonSch), facebook (WrithlingtonSixthForm) and Instagram (writhlingtongsixthform). Our school website has a section specifically designed for Sixth Form parents.

The Sixth Form Day

All Year 12 students are required to be at school by 8.35 am and remain until school finishes at 3.10pm.

Tutor time is from 8.40 pm – 9.10 am. Lessons then run as follows:

Period 1	9.10am - 10.10am
Period 2	10.10am - 11.10am
Break	11.10am - 11.25am
Period 3	11.25am - 12.25pm
Period 4	12.25pm - 1.25pm
Lunch	1.25pm - 2.10pm
Period 5	2.10pm - 3.10pm

Attendance

All students register during tutor at the start of the day. Having a study period (non-teaching lesson) first thing in the morning or afternoon is not an excuse for not registering. Registration enables us to know who is on site and to give vital information and messages to students. Registration attendance also helps to establish good working routines.

Whenever a reference is requested of the Sixth Form Team, we are asked to comment on attendance and punctuality.

Students may arrange driving lessons during the Sixth Form day but must not miss lessons or tutor time.

Absence

If a student will be absent, parents are asked to ring the Sixth Form before 8.30am on 01761 433 581, giving the student's name, Tutor Group and reason for absence. A doctor's note will be required for long term absence.

Students' attendance is reviewed every term and parents can expect to be contacted by the Sixth Form Team if a student's attendance falls below 95%.

Request for Absence

If a student needs to take a day's absence, for example to visit a university open day, then a Request for Absence form must be completed and signed by their parent or guardian. This is an online form, the link to which can be found on the Sixth Form drop down menu on the school website. The Sixth Form Team will then contact parents to inform them whether the absence has been approved. The form must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the requested absence. Once the requested absence has been approved, students must inform their teachers, ask for any work they will miss and catch up accordingly.

We will not authorise holidays in term time except in exceptional circumstances. Courses in the Sixth Form have a high level of content and if a student is away for one or two weeks a considerable amount of work is missed.

Please note that teaching continues immediately after the end of year exams, therefore holidays will still not be authorised in this period and it is inadvisable for students to miss any lessons.

The Sixth Form leave of absence form is different from the one used in the lower schools.

Bursary

Students can apply for a 16-19 bursary, funded by the Government, by completing the online application form via our website.

Use of bursary funds will be at our discretion, please see the Bursary Policy on our website.

The decision to grant bursary funds to a student is also dependent on good attendance and positive feedback from teaching staff. It is possible to appeal a decision to the Senior Assistant Headteacher. Please note that the bursary fund is limited so please apply as soon as possible.

Dress

There is a flexible dress code in the Sixth Form however students are asked to ensure they dress appropriately. During warm weather in particular students must ensure that they continue to wear clothes suitable for a working environment.

Facial piercings, visible tattoos, extreme or brightly coloured hairstyles or offensive slogans on clothing are not allowed. Students will be given two warnings and will be sent home on the third occasion.

Lanyards

Lanyards and ID cards are issued to all students and must be worn when on school site, unless they are given permission to remove them during a lesson for safety reasons.

Replacement lanyards/cards can be ordered from Mrs Haysom in the Sixth Form Office and cost £5.

Smoking/Vaping

Smoking and vaping is forbidden on site, within a mile and a half of site. If a student is seen smoking they will be given a warning and on the second occasion they will be asked to leave the Sixth Form.

Travel to school

Students who drive their own cars onto either site must drive carefully and responsibly; failure to do so will lead to the parking permit being withdrawn. Students must park in the far car park opposite the Sports Centre car park. There is also an area for motorbikes.

Sixth Form Curriculum

- Students will study a minimum of three A2/BTEC subjects; those taking Further Maths or an Extended Project in Year 13 will study four.
- GCSE English Language/Maths – all students must attend lessons in these subjects if they didn't achieve a grade 4 at GCSE.
- Students must achieve at least a pass in BTEC or a D in A Level end of year exams to automatically continue with subjects into Year 13.
- All A Levels are now linear A Levels. The content studied in Year 12 and Year 13 will be required for the full A Level qualifications.
- BTEC Qualifications have also changed and will require students to sit exams. There are now much more stringent controls regarding the submission of coursework for these qualifications.

Learning Skills

Students need to learn how to manage their work and time in the Sixth Form; they are given a Study Planner in which they can record work assignments that have been set and the deadline dates.

All students have a **non-teaching lessons** during the Sixth Form day and are **required to use two thirds of these in private study**. Students will usually go to silent study to work and may be asked by their tutor to complete a study period monitoring sheet if the tutor is concerned that study time is not being used effectively. Parents are able to monitor students' private study by checking the student's planner.

Parents can help students plan their work and utilise their study time by encouraging them to fill in the weekly work planner in their study planner; this is useful in helping students identify how they should spend their private study time and after school time to meet coursework deadlines.

Please remember that in the Sixth Form students are expected to complete work beyond that set by teachers and to use their initiative to reach their potential. They should for example:

- Identify weaknesses and work at them.
- Undertake extra reading and research to extend knowledge and understanding.
- Review and rework notes so that the learning from lessons is reinforced.
- Practise exam questions.
- Read a quality newspaper regularly to help inform themselves of current events and form an enhanced understanding.

If a parent feels that a student is spending all their time working on Sixth Form assignments then it may be that the student would benefit from support with efficient working practices. For example a student may make overly detailed notes rather than picking out the essential points. If you feel this is the case then do not hesitate to contact the Sixth Form so we can give more help to these students with essential study skills.

Study Habits

A major difference between the main school and the Sixth Form is how students work and learn. Sixth Form students are expected to do far more independent study and to learn how to decide what they need to do rather than just do the minimum set by the teachers.

As a guide, students should do a minimum of 5 hours of study each day (inclusive of lessons) and further learning at weekends. If a parent is concerned that a student doesn't seem to have work to do at home then it would be necessary to remind the student of the expected level of work in the Sixth Form; if the parent is still concerned

they would be very welcome to contact the Sixth Form Office and ask to speak to the student's tutor.

Many students will gain part time employment at weekends whilst in the Sixth Form. Research shows that students who are employed during their Sixth Form years do worse academically than those who are not. The Sixth Form recognises that many students need the extra funds and that valuable social skills are gained from paid employment. Students, however, are advised not to do too many hours, particularly during weekday evenings. At key times leading up to and during examinations it is far better that students are not employed at all.

Changing Courses

Students may wish, in the first few weeks of the year, to change a course. This must be done after consultation with the students' tutor, subject teacher and Head of Sixth Form. There is a form used for the process of changing course which is available from the Head of Sixth Form. This form must be signed by a student's parent or guardian to confirm the change.

Students will not be able to undertake a new course after the first four weeks of the autumn term i.e. students may only change a course during the first four weeks of an academic year (September).

Career Work Experience

It is now a statutory requirement that all students complete some form of work experience that will help them toward their future career path. This can be achieved through voluntary taster days, work shadowing or attending conferences.

Career Experience is vital if students wish to apply for certain jobs and higher education courses, e.g. Law, Medicine, Media, and Teaching.

Students who wish to study medicine must attend the work placement provided by RUH in June and are advised to attend Medlink, as it is difficult to gain the required work experience under the age of 18 and these opportunities are provided for that reason.

Students are expected to organise work experience themselves with our support. Many students will arrange work experience during half term holidays, the final week in Year 12 and the first week in Year 13.

Sixth Form Agreement

All students are required to sign a Sixth Form agreement at the beginning of the academic year. A copy is sent to parents for reference. A copy of the Sixth Form Agreement is included at the back of this handbook.

We expect students, with the support of their teachers, to

- Attend all lessons and be punctual;
- Be committed and enthusiastic;
- Treat everyone in the Sixth Form and the lower schools on both sites with respect, dignity and courtesy.

In return students can expect their teachers to

- Provide high quality lessons that meet their individual needs;
- Mark work and set targets for improvement;
- Provide a variety of opportunities for enrichment.

Prefect Team

The students can volunteer to become a prefect or mentor and give something back to the school community. This can involve supporting the Head of Sixth Form with the implementation of new systems in Sixth Form as well as help organise social and charity events. The Head Students, prefects and other positions are elected annually in June.

Formal Parental Communications

Progress Reports

Progress reports are a brief snapshot of student progress; these are sent to parents and students twice a year, in October and February.

Once reports have been received, there will be a parent/subject consultation evening in order for parents and students to discuss with teachers any concerns. For Year 13 the consultation will be in March, for Year 12 it will take place in April.

The Sixth Form team also review students' progress through an additional set of Mock exams in January and June for Year 12 and in December and April for Year 13. Parents will be contacted if there are any concerns and a meeting may be called to look at intervention and support strategies that may be needed.

Student Support Programme

Students, of all abilities, sometimes struggle to adapt to the different expectations of Sixth Form study. There are, therefore, a number of interventions used to help students achieve their potential in their studies. The Sixth Form Team are aware that it is possible to misunderstand the purpose of some of the interventions, however these interventions are to ensure that students utilise their time in the Sixth Form efficiently and are able to reach their full potential. A less than effective use of time is one of the main obstacles to success in Sixth Form study across the country. It does not mean that a student is not studying enough, but perhaps that they need some support with their time management or other study skills. The decision as to which

intervention may be appropriate is made by the student's tutor or by the Head of Sixth Form.

All students meet with their tutors to discuss their academic progress and will be set targets in throughout the year which they will record in their planners.

If a student fails to submit work by a deadline or to an acceptable standard, they will be required to attend a catch up session after school with their subject teacher to help them get back on track.

If a student is not managing their time or work the Sixth Form Team may ask them to complete a study period monitoring sheet or work planner to help teachers to see how the student is using their time.

Students of Particular Concern – Official Process

The Sixth Form Team aims to identify students who are struggling or falling behind in their studies quickly and there are a variety of methods used to help students get back on track. However there are times when this does not work and students do not adhere to the requirements of the Sixth Form agreement; on these occasions the Disciplinary Procedure will be followed.

Disciplinary Procedure

- Stage One Report with Tutor - Parents informed
- Stage Two Report with Head of Sixth Form - Meeting with parents
- Stage Three Report with Executive Head of Sixth Form - Meeting with parents
- Stage Four Contract - Meeting with parents
- Stage Five Failure to meet the requirements of contract – student leaves Sixth Form, with the agreement of parents and Senior Assistant Head Teacher
- Stage Six Formal exclusion

There may be some circumstances when a student is placed straight onto stage three of the reporting system. Circumstances may include but are not exclusive to; severe underperformance in one or more subjects i.e. failing a mock examination, stage three may be utilised after a student has been excluded, if a contract student has had issues or concerns raised about their behaviour, attendance, attitude or academic performance by a member of teaching staff.

Progression

Higher Education

Writhlington and Mendip Sixth Form has a programme of information and support for students applying to Higher Education. There is a whole programme of support and

events for parents and students throughout the year and Miss Higgins is available three days a week to support with University research and UCAS applications

Direct into Work

Writhlington and Mendip Sixth Form has a programme of support for students wishing to apply for employment and training. Students planning to go straight into the workplace or considering applying for apprenticeships are given individualised support by Mrs Pascoe (Careers Advisor).

Careers' Advice

Mrs Pascoe is the Sixth Form Careers Advisor and students are welcome to make an appointment with her via their tutor or a member of the Sixth Form Team.

Sixth Form Contract

Students within the Sixth Form are considered young adults who should set a model of good behaviour for students in younger years. As such, they are considered to be able to make informed choices about their conduct.

A student's place in the Sixth Form is dependent on the student meeting the following expectations. If these are not met then a meeting with the student and their parents will be scheduled to discuss their place.

In order to be ready, I will:

- Ensure I have excellent attendance of 95% or more **(this includes, lessons, tutor time, Life Skills sessions and Thursday afternoon enrichment)**. If I am unwell I or my parent/guardian will contact the school and I will contact my teachers to get the work I missed.
- Arrive to all lessons on time and engage and participate actively in my learning.
- Bring the appropriate equipment with me every day to ensure I can complete activities in lessons fully.
- Dress appropriately for school and not wear clothing that contains any offensive slogans or symbols and anything that is too revealing. Facial piercings, visible tattoos and extreme hairstyles are also not appropriate.
- Ensure that my mobile phone is on silent and in my bag during tutor time and lessons unless the teacher has said that it can be used for learning.
- Use my planner daily to record my learning and ensure that I am organised and that I meet all deadlines.
- Make use of silent study and work areas in the Sixth Form to ensure that I consolidate my learning and that all work is completed to the best of my ability.
- Prioritise my school commitments and not let part time work/driving lessons affect my learning.

In order to be respectful, I will:

- Behave in a polite and respectful way around the school site, speak to other students and staff in a polite manner.

- Be a good role model to younger students.
- Be respectful of their environment, taking care of the communal spaces within the Sixth Form.

In order to be safe, I will:

- Wear my lanyard at all times.
- Sign out and back in again if I leave the school site during the day (e.g. for a driving lesson).
- Not smoke or vape on the school site or within sight of school.
- Drive safely around the school site and stick to the site speed limits and permitted parking spaces (far car park near the sports centre, not in the sports center or school car park).