



AD LUCEM

*St. Bartholomew's School
Business & Enterprise College*

Sixth Form



Business &
Enterprise

HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS 2009 / 2010

- Everyone should be treated equally
- Everyone should feel safe at school
- Everyone should be valued and respected
- Everyone's concerns should be listened to
- Everyone should have the opportunity to learn

(Extract from the Equal Opportunities and Racial Discrimination Policy)

Sixth Form Parent's Handbook

The contents of this handbook are designed to inform and help parents of Sixth Form students at St Bart's. We hope that you will find it useful.

We want every Sixth Former to achieve their full potential, and we view the partnership between the students, their parents, and the teaching staff as essential in ensuring that happens. Together with other documentation, and with the opportunities to meet with subject staff that we provide, we hope that this booklet keeps you well informed about your son or daughter's education, and helps you to help them succeed at the highest level.

The Sixth Form Planner

Every student is issued with a planner to help them keep up to date with work. The planner also contains several pages of guidance for sixth form students. Some of this information is included in this booklet, but we would strongly encourage you to read through the information in the planner so that you are fully aware of some of the more detailed guidance given to students.

Contacting the School

Parents who have concerns about a student are encouraged to contact the School as soon as possible. In most cases the Tutor will be the first point of contact. If you are uncertain as to whom you should contact, please telephone the Sixth Form office (01635 576340) in the first instance. If you want to enquire about your child's work in a specific subject, contact the Subject Hotline (01635 576358) leaving details of your child's name, tutor group, subject, teacher name and your contact details and a teacher will contact you within the following five working days. There is also an e-mail address which is specifically for any Sixth Form concerns:

sixthform.stbarts@westberks.org

We would specifically ask that you contact the school if your son or daughter is absent by ringing the attendance hotline on 01635 576372. This is checked daily and means that we can be far more efficient in following up unexplained absences from registration or from lessons.

The Parents' Association

All parents are automatically members of the PA. Several events are organised during the year, all of which are publicised in the calendar provided to every student. We hope that as many parents as possible can be involved in these events, many of which help to raise valuable funds for the school.

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Expectations – Extract from Sixth Form Planner

THE SIXTH FORM AGREEMENT

A copy of this agreement will be signed by all students and their parents at the start of year 12.

THE SCHOOL'S COMMITMENT TO YOU

The school will provide for you:

- Initial and continuing guidance about courses to meet your needs.
- Appropriate teaching and opportunities for learning.
- Setting and marking of study tasks.
- Regular Reports and Progress Reviews which will take account of your abilities and your objectives for the future.
- Regular formal meetings with your Tutor at Study Focus Sessions, and contact with your tutor every day of the week except Friday.
- Facilities and resources for study and the encouragement to acquire sound learning skills and study habits.
- Careful and comprehensive advice and guidance on progression routes.
- A willingness to meet with yourself (and parents / carers) at published meetings and when an appointment is requested.
- A genuine concern for the welfare and development of all students. Staff are available for consultation and will seek the help of outside agencies when needed.

There will always be someone on the staff for students to turn to

THE SIXTH FORM STUDENTS' COMMITMENT

You will be expected to:

- Show respect for people and property at all times.
- Have a high rate of attendance (90%+), with an absolute minimum of absence both during and at the end of terms.
- Be prompt to all lessons, tutorials, assemblies and to fulfil any additional commitments you have undertaken; field trips, sport, events, duties, etc.
- Arrive fully prepared for each lesson, or school activity, with required work completed, and appropriate resources.
- Strive to attain good standards of work, and meet all requirements of the course.
- Systematically use study time to follow up and consolidate work covered in class. The expectation is that each hour's lesson should be matched by an hour's independent study.
- Respect the working environment in the designated silent study areas.
- Be available to staff / Tutor who need to see you at times when you have no lesson timetabled.

Remember you are a role model to younger students

Students who do not meet these expectations will be given additional support to do so. If this support is not acted upon a student may ultimately be asked to leave the Sixth Form.

Results Summary Summer 2009

Year 13

- 99.5% pass rate at A-level (2008 95%)
- 62% of all A-level grades A or B (2008 52%)
- 37 students gained 3 or more A grades (2008 24 students)
- 5 successful Oxbridge applicants (2008 4 students)
- Value-added measure – top 10% of the country
- We await final confirmation from UCAS, but at time of writing we believe that over 95% of university applicants who wanted to start in September 2009 were successful in obtaining places

These represent the school's BEST EVER A-level results

Year 12

- 89% pass rate at AS-level (2008 90%)
- 36% of all AS-level grades A or B (2008 43%)
- 24 students gained 3 or more A grades (2008 31 students)

Year 11

- 79% of students gained 5 or more A*-C grades (2008 73%)
- 26% of all grades A or A* (2008 27%)
- 36 students gained 8 or more A or A* grades (2008 50 students)

(A full breakdown of results by subject is available upon request)

The Structure of Courses

- **Year 12**
 - **AS and BTEC level 3 courses** in 39 subjects
 - 'Half an A-level'
 - Two modules in most subjects, three in some
 - Examined in May/June
 - 4 ½ hours per week per subject
 - **GCSE courses** in Mathematics and English
 - 3 hours per week per subject
 - **BTEC level 2 courses** in 2 subjects
 - 5 hours per week per subject
 - **Core Studies** programme leading to a qualification in either AS General Studies, AS Critical Thinking (*see following page for further details*)
 - 2 hours per week
 - **Personal Development Programme** covering careers guidance; Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE); CV writing; university applications; safe driving, and other sixth form related issues.
 - 1 hour per week

- **Year 13**
 - **AS completed to A2, BTEC level 3** continued to certification
 - Two further modules
 - Total of the AS and A2 modules provides the final A-level grade
 - 4 hours per week per subject
 - Opportunity to study for different AS courses with year 12
 - Students who studied successfully at level 2 in year 12 can begin level 3 courses
 - **Personal Development programme** continues, with a particular focus on university and career options at the start of year 13

Core Studies

The Core Studies programme is designed to complement the programme of studies that you have opted for in year 12 and both to broaden your thinking and develop your skills. It is a rich course with two key elements to it.

1. AS General Studies

The General Studies course will enable you to discuss a wide range of topical and important issues. It will broaden your thinking and allow you to explore topics outside the confines of your subject choices, whilst also being able to bring some of your own specific knowledge and experiences to the lessons.

2. AS Critical Thinking

This course is different from other AS subjects because it is not about learning facts, but about how to analyse and evaluate ideas and arguments, and how to construct clear, logical and coherent arguments yourself. You will be able to develop skills that will be useful for your other subject areas and also important for success in Higher Education.

We have been offering these opportunities for a few years now, but in response to comments and suggestions from previous year 12 students we have made some changes. One of the main concerns in the past has been the compulsion involved in these studies, so the structure of the Core Studies course has been changed to allow you to choose the element most suited to your individual needs and interests. This choice needs to be an informed one however, so for a short time you will follow a programme allowing you to have a taster of both elements. At the same time as allowing you to decide which course suits you best you will of course gain from being in the lessons in their own right. Before October half term you will be asked to choose just one of these courses to follow from then until the exam period begins in May. You will be entered for the exam in this qualification and the final benefit will be that your result in whichever qualification you choose will contribute to your overall points score for entry into higher education. You will also have an opportunity to take the A2 exams in year 13 to gain a full A level qualification.

(Due to timetabling constraints, students studying Further Mathematics are unable to access the Core Studies programme.)

Reporting Arrangements

Sixth Form students are encouraged to have on-going dialogues with their teachers about their progress. Mature relationships with teaching staff in which areas for improvement can be aired and shared is a feature of successful students, and staff will always respond positively to students who take the initiative in seeking to improve their work.

More formal reporting to parents occurs as follows:

Year 12:

- Interim reports in November, January, and July
(*Current attainment will be reported as an AS or GCSE grade as appropriate, with progress measured as P++, P+, P, P- or P - -*)
- Study Focus Sessions in December and March
- Subject Parents' Evening in January
- Full written reports in March

Year 13:

- Interim reports in November and January
- Study Focus Sessions in December and March
- Subject Parents' Evening in October
- Full written reports in March

These opportunities are set up to provide both students and parents with regular formal feedback and should, we hope, be extremely useful to all involved. Students are expected to engage in an active discussion with staff about their progress as a result of each report. Students who are under-achieving can expect to be asked to discuss their progress with their Head of House or with Mr Davis, with their parents present if necessary.

Careers Guidance

Careers education forms part of the tutorial programme and there are strong links with the local Connexions careers service. Programs such as 'Kudos' and 'Fast Tomato' are available on the school system to help students to make decisions about what careers may be appropriate for them.

Individual interviews are held around Easter of year 12 with any students who may be considering leaving school at the end of year 12, and follow-up appointments with Connexions are made if necessary. Students will be helped to complete a CV.

Students who decide not to apply to university, or who are uncertain whether they will take up a university place, are given both group and individual guidance during the autumn term of year 13. Again help is given with compiling a CV, and Connexions guidance is set up for each student who would benefit from it.

The University Application Process

St Bart's is justly proud of its record of students achieving their desired places at university, including at Oxford and Cambridge. There is a strong and supportive process to help students make the right decisions and then submit an effective application:

March (Year 12):

- All students encouraged to attend UCAS convention in Reading
- High achieving students taken to Oxbridge conference

April to June (Year 12):

- Students encouraged to start making decisions about courses; focus on this in tutorial programme.

June and July (Year 12):

- Intensive programme of guidance in tutorial sessions, including the first drafting of personal statements for UCAS forms and introduction to the on-line application system. Alternatives such as gap years and employment also discussed.

June/July (Year 12):

- Higher Education Briefing Evening for students and parents.

September and October (Year 13):

- UCAS forms completed, with guidance from tutors at all times, and Heads of House and Mr Davis as required. All forms rigorously checked before sending. All students are encouraged to apply by October half term, and most do.

Applicants for Oxford, Cambridge, medicine, veterinary science or dentistry must apply by October 15th.

The final UCAS deadline for other applicants is **January 15th**.

October/November (Year 13):

- Applicants for Oxford and Cambridge given mock interviews and advice about reading around their subject in preparation for college interviews. Some students for top universities will also be prepared for and sit entry exams such as BMAT, HAT and LNAT tests.

October to April (Year 13):

- Students receive offers from universities and clear advice is given on making final decisions about which offers to accept. We also counsel the few students who change their minds or who are not happy with the offers they receive.
- Students apply on-line to claim funding whilst at university. **The deadline for completing this is normally the end of June.**

August (Year 13):

- A-level results are issued. Most students are delighted to have made their offers. Staff will be on hand to advise the few who miss out – nearly all can find places through the 'clearing' system.

Wider Opportunities

We believe that St Bart's offers an unrivalled choice of activities to broaden students' opportunities beyond the classroom. Some of these are focused around the strong House system and result in friendly rivalry between students in the four Houses.

Some of the options include:

- **Games**
Timetabled for a Wednesday afternoon. Options usually include rugby, lacrosse, soccer, hockey, netball, cricket, tennis, athletics, swimming, badminton, and cross-country
- **CCF**
The combined cadet force meet on Friday afternoons and also follow a programme of off-site activities and trips
- **Leadership**
A team of School Officers is selected to lead the Sixth Form and coordinate activities
- **House and School Drama**
Opportunities to star in and direct House plays and whole school plays, plus sound, lighting and backstage activities
- **House and School Music**
Senior Choir, House Music Competition, Christmas Carol Concert (St. Nicolas Church), Big Band, Concert Band, Jazz Combo, other concerts and recitals
- **Mentoring**
Supporting students from lower years by helping with literacy, numeracy and social skills. Students are also invited to be mentors to the Chinese students from Newbury Hall who study with us
- **World Challenge, Debating, Young Enterprise, Equestrian Team ...**
... and an ever-changing array of further activities, some initiated by sixth form students themselves.

Supporting Excellence

Support provided by the School

- Every student is supported by the school's strong House system via their tutor, Head of House, and Head of Sixth Form.
- Regular formal feedback to students and parents via reports, Study Focus Sessions and parents' evenings.
- Excellent support from teaching staff in subject areas, and a tutorial programme designed to reflect the needs and interests of sixth form students.
- Strong links with the Connexions careers service and other local agencies who can help students with particular needs.
- Clear publicity via tutors, in the Year 12 Common Room, and around Wormestall site of opportunities for university taster courses, careers experience, local events, appropriate employment etc.

We would also view the other aspects detailed in this handbook as supporting students with their education in the widest sense.

Support that parents can provide

The best support usually takes the form of ongoing communication and encouragement about how studies are going, what students are learning, and what other opportunities they are taking.

Some specific areas in which parents often provide excellent support to students and the school are:

- Time management, especially when students are balancing their studies with extra-curricular activities, their social lives, and paid employment. (Studies suggest any more than 8 to 10 hours of paid employment per week are detrimental to students' academic work).
- Helping to ensure excellent attendance.
- Being aware of key deadlines (such as school reporting, coursework deadlines, UCAS deadlines, applications for funding etc.) and supporting students as these approach.
- Helping to decide about universities and courses, by being aware of www.ucas.com, and by helping students with open days and other visits.
- Providing students with a good work area at home, and monitoring it – for both under-use, and, in some cases, over-use.
- Contacting the school with any concerns about a student or their progress.

Key Dates 2009 – 2011

Exact dates are given where known. Please look out for confirmation of other dates in the calendar and in other communications. Please note this is not an exhaustive list, but is designed to highlight key milestones in the Sixth Form.

Year 12

2009

Tuesday 8 September: Sixth Form Information Evening
November: Modular examination for GCSE Maths students
Tuesday 17 November: First interim report on progress
December: Study Focus Sessions

2010

January: Second interim report
Tuesday 19 January: Year 12 Parents' Evening
February/March: AS practice exams
March: Modular examination for GCSE Maths students
Full written report
Visit to UCAS convention at Reading University
Study Focus Sessions
March: Study Focus Sessions
Monday 10 May: AS and GCSE examinations begin
Wednesday 16 June: Year 12 return to begin A2 courses
June/July (to be confirmed): 'Options at 18' Parent's information evening

Thursday 19 August: AS Level results published
Tuesday 24 August: GCSE results published

Year 13

15 October: Final deadline for UCAS early applicants
October: Year 13 Parents' Evening
November: Interim report

2011

15 January: Final deadline for all UCAS applications
January: AS Resit examinations (if necessary)
February: A2 Practice Exams
March: Full written report
April: Deadline for final decision about UCAS offers
Deadline for application for university funding
May/June: A2 examinations
August: A level results published (provisional)