

STUDYING IN THE SIXTH FORM

**A Guide
for Parents/
Guardians**



Welcome

We would like to formally welcome the parents/guardians of students beginning their Sixth Form career at The Cotswold School in September 2017, whether your son/daughter is joining us from another school or whether they have been part of our community in Years 7-11. Our goal is to enable each student to flourish, providing them with the strong foundation they need to achieve their aspirations. Studying in the Sixth Form can be quite different to the type of learning that your son/daughter has undertaken previously, so we would like to introduce you to some of the differences, and reassure you of some of the similarities, of Sixth Form study and life at The Cotswold School.

The Sixth Form at The Cotswold School is nationally recognised as being *outstanding*. But this accolade is not simply for our students' academic success; we aspire to provide the highest quality of Sixth Form education, helping every student here to develop their wider skills and qualities, whilst recognising the different interests and strengths of each individual. To this end:

- We believe that Sixth Form education should develop a broad range of academic, personal and social skills and we will offer every student the opportunities and support they need to achieve this.
- We aim to provide the breadth and diversity of curriculum that allows each student to choose subjects, learning styles and levels of study that are right for them.
- We are committed to providing the highest standards of teaching and learning, offering the expertise and the challenge to motivate students.
- We provide information and guidance for both Higher Education and Career pathways, to enable students to continue to progress after they have completed their Sixth Form courses.
- We believe that active citizenship should be at the heart of Sixth Form education and expect all Sixth Form students to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community.
- We believe that a key to success in the Sixth Form lies in the partnership between student, school and home and we are committed to building a positive and open partnership.
- We offer every student the pastoral support and guidance they need to flourish in the Sixth Form. We have a committed and skilled team of tutors.

Tutor Groups and Pastoral Care

As in the lower school, your son/daughter is in a tutor group* and the tutor is the first point of contact if you have any questions or concerns regarding your son's/daughter's wellbeing or progress at school. Tutors can be contacted via our Sixth Form Administrator, Mrs Jane Tanner on 01451 812946 or via email: sixthform@thecotswoldschool.co.uk. If the matter is urgent, please do not hesitate to contact the Head of Sixth Form, Mr White, via 01451 812946 or 01451 820554 or via his email on pwhite@thecotswoldschool.co.uk. Alternatively contact Mr Sweetlove, Head of Year 12 on msweetlove@thecotswoldschool.co.uk or Miss Rodrigues, Head of Year 13, on arodrigues@thecotswoldschool.co.uk.

** Students will be placed in tutor groups following enrolment in August, and parents will be informed of the name of your son's/daughter's tutor in early September.*

As well as seeing your son/daughter daily for registration, form tutors have regular conversations with each of their tutees. These are good opportunities for tutors to praise/encourage, offer guidance and discuss your son's/daughter's academic progress and development of wider skills. Sixth Form students all keep a diary/blog of their achievements, progress and involvement in extra-curricular activities in and out of school.

Morning tutorial sessions (which are compulsory for all students, and start promptly at 8.50am) include:

- One upper-school assembly per week *with a social, moral, spiritual*
- One Sixth Form assembly per week *or cultural theme*
- Whole class or small group discussions of ethical issues and current affairs
- Peer coaching (usually Year 12 and 13 students working together to sharpen a particular skill such as note making, file organisation or revision)
- Opportunities for less structured activities, allowing the group to bond.

Sixth Form students participate in three PSHE days per year. These complement and extend the Personal, Social and Health Education they will gain through tutorial sessions, assemblies and their core options. The PSHE programme for the year includes:

- preparation for post-18 study and employment (e.g. how to research university courses and careers; how to make Higher Education, apprenticeship and job applications; managing finances; interview skills)
- improvement of study skills and time management skills
- development of extra-curricular interests and activities

- health education, including drug, alcohol and sexual health education.



Curriculum

Core Subject Options:

Students entering the Sixth Form will usually have chosen four AS-Level subjects or a vocational course. Their teachers and tutor will help them to make a successful transition from Key Stage 4 to 5, and we hope students settle in quickly to the demands of their courses. However, we would encourage students to discuss their choices with their tutor and their parents if they feel, in the first two or three weeks of Year 12, that they have made inappropriate choices. In choosing their courses, students should bear in mind not only which subjects they did best in at GCSE but also which career direction they might wish to follow; for example, if they wish to pursue Medicine, they would need to study Sciences and ideally Mathematics at A-Level. Students should also choose subjects which they enjoy: A-Level study involves much more independent study (we recommend 4-5 hours per week per subject) than they have been used to and it is easier to be motivated in a subject you enjoy.

Extended Project Qualification (Level 3):

The EPQ is an independent qualification in which students devise their own research question, which must be significantly different to the content of their chosen A Level specifications. This unit does not have formal lessons: students are expected to take the lead and undertake a significant body of research, although they do have the support of a supervisor (normally their tutor). They either write an extended essay or produce an artefact and have to keep a log book to reflect on their research “journey”. The culmination of their work involves giving an oral presentation and fielding questions from a small audience. Students who complete an EPQ benefit tremendously from the independent learning skills it helps them to develop. Universities and employers highly value these skills with some universities now slightly lowering the terms of their offer if students secure a high grade in their EPQ.

Extra-curricular:

Students in the Sixth Form are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities. These are not only great fun, but help students to develop a range of skills.

There are numerous trips and visits on offer, including day trips and residential visits, both in the UK and abroad. There are also a range of groups in which sixth formers can take part. These change from year to

year, depending on demand, but typically include: Debating society, Sixth Form Magazine club, Book club, Photography club, Senior Choir, Instrumental ensembles, Sports teams, School Productions, Sixth Form Council, Christian Union, Fashion Show, Talent Show ... and more.

Students and parents will be informed of extra-curricular opportunities via letters home and via the weekly Sixth Form bulletin (which is emailed each Monday to all Sixth Formers and parents/guardians and displayed in the Sixth Form Common Room and Study Room)

SIXTH FORM
THE COTSWOLD SCHOOL

Independent Study

Due to the increased demand for independent study, Sixth Form students enjoy the privilege of Private Study, commonly known as ‘free periods’. These are non-timetabled lessons where students are expected to undertake much of their independent research. Effective independent study is crucial to success in the Sixth Form. Students need to develop and maintain a focused and disciplined approach to private study during the school day if they are to make the best use of their non-timetabled time.

It is our experience that Year 12 students, in adjusting to the greater independence they enjoy in the Sixth Form, may need guidance and monitoring before they are able to manage their time effectively. To this end, the PSHE and tutorial programmes are tailored to include guidance and training in independent research skills and effective time management. Your son’s/daughter’s tutor will also support them by monitoring their progress and providing guidance and by keeping you informed of any concerns that may arise.

Whilst it is valuable for students to have a designated study area at home, private study in school can take place in a variety of locations - such as the Sixth Form Study Area (which has more than 40 computers) or the Library. Students wishing to work on collaborative projects or discuss their work with peers may do so in the Sixth Form Common Room or designated free classrooms.

Year 12 students who are studying three AS level subjects will have more “free” periods and therefore must nominate four of their free double periods as *supervised study* periods, which take place in the Sixth Form Study Area. Likewise, any students who, during the year, are making slower than expected progress may be timetabled into *supervised study* to further support them. A register is taken so that their attendance at these compulsory sessions can be monitored.

Break and Lunchtime

One of the privileges of being a sixth former is that our students are allowed to go off site at break and lunchtime if they wish. They should not be off-site at any other time (e.g. “free” study periods.) If going off site at break or lunchtime, students **MUST SIGN OUT** using the signing-out folder in the Sixth Form foyer and they **MUST SIGN IN** again when they return. Excellent

behaviour is expected whether on or off the school site, including no smoking/vaping. The privilege of going off site will be removed from a student, temporarily or permanently if they do not follow the procedures.

All Year 12 students carry out a 25 minute lunchtime duty on a rota basis. This is very useful to the smooth-running of a busy school at lunchtime and enables our sixth formers to be good role-models and to develop leadership skills. Their support is much appreciated.



Attendance and Punctuality

The procedures for attendance and punctuality are similar to those you have been used to in Years 7-11. All Sixth Formers are expected to be in school from 8.50am to 3.20pm, Monday to Friday, apart from authorised Home Study Agreements which are available in Year 13 only. Sixth Form students will register twice daily - at 8.50am and 2.05pm. They are expected to be punctual to these registration times, which form the legal register. If a student is late, a valid reason will be expected from the student at the next registration. If your son/daughter is late more than twice in one week and/or five times in a half term, you will be notified.

In the event of an unplanned absence (e.g. illness), please would you contact Mrs Jane Tanner as early as possible on the morning of *each* day of absence, to give the reason for absence. This can be by email to sixthform@thecotswoldschool.co.uk or a phone message left on 01451 812946. When a student returns to school after a period of absence, written parental confirmation or a telephone conversation with Mrs Tanner is required, so that we are fully aware of the reasons for absence. You will be notified if there are two consecutive absences without reason.

Where an absence can be foreseen, this must be agreed with Mr White, Miss Rodrigues or Mr Sweetlove and the student must complete a signed Planned Absence Slip. The following are examples of reasons for absence that tend to be acceptable, although the decision as to whether to authorise an absence is at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form:

- A university open day, taster day or interview
- A professional work experience placement
- A driving test
- Attendance at a funeral
- Observance of a religious holiday
- A medical appointment that cannot be arranged outside of school hours
- Participation in a significant extra-curricular activity

The following reasons for absence will *not* generally be acceptable:

- Holidays
- Paid employment
- Leisure activities or shopping
- Birthdays/other celebrations
- Babysitting younger siblings

- Driving lessons

PLEASE NOTE: When enrolling in the Sixth Form, students must sign an agreement, which includes agreeing not to miss school days for holidays with friends, such as music festivals. A-Level courses resume after AS Level exams, so students are *not* free to take days off for leisure activities or festivals in June and July.

Lesson attendance is monitored by teaching staff and absence from any lessons is notified to tutors, Heads of Year and the Head of Sixth Form. A summary of your son's/daughter's attendance record will be included in each Grade Card.

Sixth Form Dress Code

The Sixth Form is a stage of transition between compulsory education and the world of work or Higher Education. Therefore, Sixth Form students at The Cotswold School are expected to **dress smartly**, while also having the freedom to express some individuality. There is no uniform in the Sixth Form, but all students who enrol in our community sign an agreement which includes adhering to our dress code.

As part of the Sixth Form student body, our students represent the school when in and around the community and when meeting with prospective parents and other guests to the school. They are role models to pupils in Years 7 to 11. Therefore it is important that they act and dress accordingly.

Outdoor Jackets & Coats	Outdoor jackets or coats of any description must be taken off when in the school building. A blazer or suit-style jacket may be worn.
Skirts & Dresses	Skirts and dresses should be smart, and of a modest length.
Trousers	Smart trousers should be worn. No blue denim. No ripped, faded, stonewashed or frayed jeans of any colour.
Shorts	Smart tailored shorts may be worn.
Shirts & Tops	Collared shirts/blouses or plain t-shirts should be worn Shirts, blouses and t-shirts must not be revealing (strapless/spaghetti straps; showing midriff), low cut or carry large logos, images or slogans.
Shoes	Smart leather shoes or boots, or smart ballet-style pumps should be worn. No trainers or canvas-style shoes.
Tights	Tights should be of a plain and subtle colour
Hats	No hats can be worn of any kind

Other items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No sportswear of any description may be worn <i>except</i> during PE activities • Extremes of: hair colour and style, makeup, piercings and visible tattoos are not acceptable.
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On particular occasions the dress code may be altered. Prior notice as to expectations for these occasions will be given to students. For example: Open Day - more formal dress e.g. tailored trousers/skirts with collared shirts / blouses will be expected from all students.

PSHE Days - occasionally PSHE sessions can involve different activities, which require more suitable clothing for these more practical events.

Non-Uniform Days: non-uniform days are calendared and run through the school year. Sixth Form students are able to wear clothes that would not normally adhere to the dress code on these occasions but would be expected to contribute £1 towards the supported charity on each of these dates. If they choose to not support that charity then normal dress code would be expected as per any other school day.

The Sixth Form Leadership team maintain the right to determine whether or not dress is deemed appropriate. We appreciate parental support with this.



We hope that the guidance offered in this introduction will give you an insight into the ethos behind Sixth Form Study at The Cotswold School. If, however, you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at the school.

We hope that the continuing partnership between the students, teachers and parents will ensure the future success of our students, both academically and personally.

Mr Phil White
Sweetlove
 Head of Sixth Form,
 Head of Sixth Form,
 Deputy Principal

Miss Angela Rodrigues
 Deputy Head of Sixth Form,
 Head of Year 13

Mr Mike
 Deputy
 Head of Year 12