



THE SIXTH FORM

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Learning to shape the future

When students join the Sixth Form at Upton-by-Chester High School, they have chosen to further their qualifications by embarking on A level courses.

We believe that the Sixth Form is the transition between school and university or employment where young people will be developing into mature, self-motivated and confident learners who universities and employers want in this fiercely competitive world.

We feel that students should be working with their teachers, tutors and their parents on their journey towards taking full responsibility for their own learning and future career pathways. Students need to meet our expectations of attendance, punctuality and appearance and to take responsibility for their own learning. We want all students to play a key role in the life of the school and the community by taking leadership roles in the many enrichment opportunities which are available. Most of all, we want students to get the most from their experiences in the Sixth form.

We are aware that, as young people gain independence, they are less likely to keep their parents informed about what is going on in school, so we hope that this guide will give you all the information that you need to assist your son or daughter to get the best out of their time in the Sixth Form by making the most of what it offers.

Miss W. Gordon
Director of Sixth Form

SIXTH FORM ETHOS

The Sixth Form aims to provide our students with the opportunities and encouragement they need to reach their full potential. We want to prepare them for life beyond school, ensuring that they leave us as well-rounded, confident and reflective individuals, well-prepared for the challenges ahead. We are proud of our outstanding status and encourage our students to celebrate their successes and achievements and hope that they will look back on their time here at Upton-by-Chester High School Sixth Form as a happy and rewarding experience.

GENERAL INFORMATION

THE SCHOOL DAY

We operate a two week timetable: Week 1 and Week 2

Period	Start time	End time
Movement bell at 8.35 am		
Registration	8.40 am	8.50 am
1	8:50 am	9:50 am
2	9.50 am	10:50 am
Break	10.50 am	11:10 am
3	11:10 am	12:10 pm
Lunch	PLaN A: Year 12 12.10 pm – 12.45 pm Lunch 12.45 pm – 1.10 pm Tutor Period	PLaN B: Year 13 12.10 pm – 12.35 pm Tutor Period 12.35 pm – 1.10 pm Lunch
Movement bell at 12.35 pm and 12.45 pm		
4	1:10 pm	2:10 pm
5	2:10 pm	3:10 pm

THE SIXTH FORM CURRICULUM

All students study three subjects in the Sixth Form. Each course has ten hours of teaching per fortnight and may be taught by one or more specialist subject teachers.

All students are issued with a printed two week timetable on joining the Sixth Form. This shows the teacher and room for the each lesson.

We offer re-sit opportunities in both GCSE Mathematics and English.

CHANGING COURSES

We take subject choices and timetabling very seriously to ensure that students get the best fit possible. During Year 11 students received considerable guidance and advice about selecting their A level choices. If a student wants to change a course in the first few weeks of

Year 12, there must be a full discussion between the student, the head of the relevant department and parents/carers. The change of course must be made by the beginning of October, after which time it is deemed to be too late to catch up on a new course. Once a decision has been made to change a subject, students must complete a form, obtainable from the Sixth Form Office, which should be returned to the Head of Sixth Form, so that a new timetable can be issued.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

All students are expected to take responsibility for regular attendance and punctuality. Registration is from 8.40 a.m. until 8.50 for all Sixth Form students and students should be on time for this and for all of their lessons. The school has an electronic registration system and students use swipe cards to register in and out of school. The system automatically calculates the student's percentage attendance and punctuality for registration and every lesson. Students will require references when they leave school for higher education or employment; employers in particular take attendance into consideration when assessing applications.

Absence

If a student is absent because of illness or other unavoidable circumstances, please telephone or e-mail the school as soon as possible. If school is not notified of an absence, a truancy call will be made to the home.

On returning to school after an absence, students should complete the home and school communication form in the student's planner.

If the absence is known in advance, a brief letter of explanation should be sent to the form tutor before the absence takes place.

Holidays

Holidays should not be taken during term time. If there are extenuating circumstances and students wish to take a holiday during term time, they must submit a holiday request form, available from Student Reception, in advance of the holiday, for consideration by the school. Once completed and submitted, the school assesses whether this absence may be authorised or not.

It is recommended that Upper Sixth students are available in mid-August to receive their results, when the Sixth Form Team and the Higher Education Adviser are on hand to give guidance with any issues regarding university offers.

Open Days

We encourage students to visit universities and colleges so that they can research courses and institutions and thereby make informed choices. Students can visit up to three institutions during term time. To take time off from school to do this, students need to complete the 'Open Day reply slip' in their diary and give it to their tutor in advance of the visit. Many universities also have Open Days on Saturdays. Parents are encouraged to accompany students; information can be found on the university websites.

Dental/Medical Appointments

Medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside lesson times and preferably after school or during holidays where possible. Where this is not practical, a note of explanation should be given to the form tutor in advance.

Home Study

Year 13 students are allowed to take Home Study, commencing after the Autumn half term break. Home Study is where students may work at home for some sessions of Period 1 or Period 5, on a pre-arranged basis, if they do not have lessons at those times. Year 12 do not have access to Home Study.

STUDY PERIODS AND TIME MANAGEMENT

The workload increases dramatically from GCSE to A level and students need to have a practical approach to their learning. Good organisation is crucial, as is the ability to work independently, whilst seeking advice from teaching staff. Making the best use of time, both in and out of school, is part of the Post 16 learning curve.

A level courses require students to work substantially beyond lessons. Students are required to develop independent study skills of research and reading around their subjects. Students should view their time in the Sixth Form as a full time job and make their learning a priority. As a general guide, students should be studying 3-4 hours per day beyond their lessons, either in school or at home.

Students will be set homework and coursework assignments, plus revision for tests, assessments and examinations, all of which should take place outside of lessons. Students must make time to study; balancing work and relaxation is difficult at first. Our advice is to work hard at school in study periods, which will make more time available for leisure pursuits outside of school hours. It is important to have a sensible work-life balance, but often students have the wrong balance of too much social life and part time employment and this manifests itself in poor performance and results.

Additional Study

Independent study at home is an essential part of Sixth Form life and students are expected, as a general guideline, to complete between 4 and 5 hours of work per week, per subject. Students should use approximately 75% of their non-teaching periods in school time for independent study, supplemented by time outside of school hours to meet this requirement.

The table below details the **guidelines** for hours of study, as advised by individual departments, that Sixth Form students are expected to do **outside** of timetabled lessons.

Subject	Year 12	Year 13
Art (Textiles and Fine Art)	5 hours	5 hours
Biology	6 hours	6 hours
Business Studies	3 hours (minimum)	4 hours (minimum)
Chemistry	6 hours	6 hours
Computing	5 hours	5 hours
Economics	6 hours	6 hours
Governmental + Politics	5 hours	6 hours
Modern Foreign Languages	4 hours	4 hours
Further Maths	5 hours	5 hours
Geography	4 hours	4 hours
History	5 hours	6 hours
Mathematics	5 hours	5 hours
Media	6 hours + hotspots	6 hours + hotspots
Photography	4 – 5 hours	4 – 5 hours

PE	4 hours	5 hours
Physics	6 hours	6 hours
Psychology	4 hours	5 hours
Sociology	4 hours	5 hours

PLACES TO STUDY

Students have a number of places to study in the school.

In subject departments – many Departments have areas made available for Sixth Form students to study.

The common room – for study that involves discussion and group work.

International Learning Hub – The International Learning Hub is a silent study space that provides research facilities. In addition to books and journals, there are laptops available and printing and photocopying facilities. The Hub has wireless enabled for students' own laptops and the Learning Resources Manager provides support in using the available resources. Sixth Form students must comply with the rule of silence in this workspace and must co-operate fully with the Learning Resource Manager and other staff and school users at all times.

PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

We consider that it can be beneficial for students' confidence and economic well-being to have some part-time employment if they wish to do so. It can enhance team-building, social and inter-personal skills and enables students to write about the skills gained in their personal statements or on their curriculum vitae. However, too many hours of employment in the evenings plus weekends is not compatible with A level studies. Experience tells us that students get tired and do not cope with their school work as a result. We suggest that students work **no more than 12 hours of part-time employment per week**.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Students often want to take advantage of work experience opportunities that will help them access some higher education courses – e.g. for medicine, education, etc and we fully support this. Students in the Upper Sixth and the Lower Sixth can use their study periods after the examinations to arrange work experience or shadowing placements.

OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SIXTH FORM

The last week of the Summer term is devoted to individuals' self-development and enrichment. Students may opt to undertake a variety of experiences, such as volunteering, work placements or projects related to one or more areas of their studies. Students are given advice and support with their choices and are encouraged to challenge themselves and to engage positively in the initiative. The experience enables students to give details of the skills gained in their personal statements for university or in applications for employment.

In addition to this week, there are many enrichment opportunities for Sixth Form students to develop skills alongside those pertaining to academic studies. These include activities associated with sport, culture, enterprise, drama, volunteering, working in the community and many more. There is something for everyone and students are encouraged to get involved. Participation in these activities will build confidence and enable students to gain transferable skills both for higher education and employment.

Charity work

School has a Charity Week, run by Sixth Form Students, every year from which we raise thousands of pounds for local and national charities.

Mentoring younger students

There are many opportunities to help out younger students in a variety of academic and sporting activities. These may include helping as reading buddies, mentoring gifted and talented students and providing assistance for younger students in their lessons.

Business opportunities

There are several opportunities relating to business, including *Young Enterprise* and *Young Consumer*, for which we regularly have both local and national winning teams. We participate in both the *Nuffield Bursary* and the *Engineering Education Scheme*.

Debating Society

The Debating Society provides regular opportunities for students to exercise their powers of persuasion and students are encouraged to get involved in the *European Youth Parliament*.

Community Action

We place a high value on community interaction and Sixth Form students contribute to the school community through leadership of the Eco-Schools group, Charity Week and Fair Trade group, to name but a few.

Travel

Sixth Form students are given the opportunity for international travel and over the years have visited countries such as China, India, Gambia, Cuba, Madagascar, Ecuador, the USA, Spain, Italy, Germany and France as part of their studies or as a cultural exchange linked to languages.

Music

The music department has a modern studio which caters for a cross section of musical interests and everyone who likes to perform is welcome. There are opportunities in gospel choir, musical theatre group, senior band, guitar club and rock bands.

Drama

The school puts on a musical production each year, which provides the opportunity for involvement in many aspects of that a production affords, including acting, dance, lighting, sound, stage sets, make-up etc. It is a whole school, large scale production and the key roles are usually taken by the Sixth Form students.

Sixth Form Student Leadership Team

Each tutor group elects a form representative to join this Team. The members of the Team are encouraged to get involved in matters pertaining to the Sixth Form and play key roles in organising events such as the Charity Week.

AMENITIES

The Sixth Form has its own purpose-built common room which is used for private study and relaxation. The Sixth Form also has its own café which provides light lunches, snacks and drinks. The common room and café are open from **8.00 a.m. until 1.30 p.m.** The Cafe is strictly for the Sixth Formers and students are **not** allowed to bring in guests or visitors without the prior permission of the school. Ball games, Frisbee and similar activities are not

allowed inside and students must take responsibility for keeping the room clear of litter and use the bins provided.

The Hub has wi-fi and comfortable seating so students can study in a quiet and purposeful atmosphere.

In the Summer months, when the playing fields are dry, students may relax on the field, providing they do not disturb adjacent classrooms or PE lessons. Football and other games are allowed on the field during morning break and lunch, but not during lesson times.

VEHICLES AND DRIVING LESSONS

Students may only bring a vehicle to school when they:

- have passed the driving test
- display a valid permit.

The permits are available from the Sixth Form Office and must be obtained before bringing the vehicle to school. Permits must be signed by a parent/carer of the student.

Students **must** park in spaces specifically designated for Upton-by-Chester School. Students who use their car as transport to school cannot use car or traffic related problems as a valid excuse for lateness.

Driving lessons must not coincide with any timetabled lesson, during PLaN or registration period. Learner drivers are not allowed on the school premises.

The school is not responsible for any loss or damage to a vehicle whilst it is on school premises or elsewhere.

EXAMINATIONS

Formal examinations take place in May and June and mock exams also take place in both years. Year 12 students sit their mock exams in the Summer and we place considerable importance upon these as an indication of how well the students are performing at this half-way point in the A level courses. The exams enable teachers to assess how well prepared students are to progress into Year 13 and to put in support and set targets where required.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Standards of dress and appearance should be appropriate for the business of studying and should not include styles which are extreme. Low cut tops and clothes that expose underwear should not be worn. Skirts and shorts should be of a respectable length. Tattoos should not be visible. Dress for more formal occasions (Celebration Evening, Open Evening etc.) must be appropriate. If students fail to meet these standards they may be asked to go home and change.

SMOKING

Upton-by-Chester High School is a 'no smoking' site and therefore smoking is not permitted on the school or County Offices premises. Students are asked to refrain from smoking on the school buses and in the immediate vicinity of the school.

STUDENT EQUIPMENT

All students are issued with a bespoke diary/planner to record homework and reminders of events. It also contains important dates and various general information which students might find useful.

Students in the Sixth Form must be properly equipped for lessons. We recommend that students have folders with dividers for each subject to file their notes and worksheets, as good organisation is crucial to succeeding at this level.

MONITORING PROGRESS AND TARGET SETTING

Students are set challenging targets based on their GCSE performance when they enter the Sixth Form and subject teachers, Heads of Departments, tutors and the Sixth Form Team monitor progress against these targets. Students are also expected to monitor and evaluate their own progress and are provided with materials in form time for this purpose. Students have regular one to one reviews to discuss their progress and reports are published three times a year. In addition to this, parents/carers and students are invited to discuss individual progress at a parents' evening.

Reports & Progress Reviews

We publish three reports per academic year: Interim, Interim Plus and Main reports are sent home via email. These provide the basis on which we monitor academic progress and we are able to identify strengths and underperformance, which is discussed in individual reviews with the Sixth Form Team and then followed up in the relevant subject areas. Targets are set and strategies to improve are negotiated and monitored.

SIMS Learning Gateway

SIMS Learning Gateway provides parents and carers with secure online access to achievement, progress and attendance information, including any homework set.

Parents' Evenings

Parents' Evenings provide an opportunity to discuss a student's performance with their subject teachers. You will receive an e-mail giving you details of the date and times of the evening and bookings for appointments can be made online.

If you have any concerns regarding your son's or daughter's progress at any time during the academic year, please contact the Head of Department or the subject teacher directly. The Sixth Form Team is also happy to provide assistance, support and guidance wherever possible.

Form Tutors

All Sixth Form tutors have experience of guiding students through the two years of A levels and are able to give considerable support to students during this time. All students receive advice and guidance to help them adapt to the new study skills and more independent style of learning that is expected of them in the Sixth form. Tutors also provide guidance on time management, career ambitions, writing personal statements and the process of applying for university and writing CVs. Students have regular informal and formal one-to-one reviews with their tutor, the outcomes of which are recorded for monitoring purposes. Targets for improving academic performance are set and reviewed.

Careers Adviser

We have established excellent links with our Careers Adviser, Mrs Wood, who gives students impartial advice and guidance on apprenticeships and career opportunities, enabling them to make informed decisions about their future plans.

PSHE – Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education

A varied, topical programme of current issues and themes is delivered by tutors during PLaN time. Outside speakers are regularly invited into school to deliver specialist talks across a wide range of subjects. This comprehensive coverage of political, economic, global, current and relevant issues is designed to help prepare students for life beyond the Sixth Form, whether it is university, apprenticeships or employment.

Further Support

Students do sometimes have issues, whether personal or related to their studies, and may need to seek advice and support. Tutors, subject teachers, Heads of Department or the Sixth Form Team are always on hand to help. We can guide students towards specialist counsellors and can, under certain circumstances and where appropriate, refer students to external support teams.

POST-18 OPTIONS

Upon joining the Sixth Form students are asked to consider 'What Next?' To support students in making those important decisions, the Sixth Form offers many events, which include:

- Presentations during the Spring term of the Lower Sixth by university/college admissions tutors and employers
- A visit to Chester University in the Autumn term of Year 12.
- A day out of school to attend the Liverpool University Higher Education Fair in June
- Attendance at the Oxbridge Conference
- An overnight trip to Oxford for their Open Day
- Students are encouraged to research and visit institutions on their open days
- Students are encouraged to have a careers interview with Mrs Wood, our Careers Adviser or Mr Clive Jones, our Higher Education Adviser.
- Students receive comprehensive guidance on completing the online applications via UCAS to university/higher education institutions and receive support in writing their personal statements
- All students and their parents are invited to an Information Evening in the Autumn term.

SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS

Address: Upton-by-Chester High School
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CH2 1NN

Telephone: 01244 981240
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E-mail: admin@uptonhigh.co.uk

Website: www.uptonhigh.co.uk

Acting Headteacher: Mr J Arnull

**Director of
Sixth Form:** Miss W Gordon

Head of Year: Ms H Brady
Head of Year: Miss K Main