



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 AS and 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 that 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

Ms H. Brady
Head of Year 12

THE SCHOOL DAY

The school day is divided up as below

We operate a 2 week timetable i.e. 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 13 12.10 pm – 12.45 pm Lunch 12.45 pm – 1.10 pm Tutor Period	PLaN B: Year 12 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/TIMETABLE

All students take **4 AS subjects in the Lower Sixth**. Following results in the August at the end of the Lower Sixth, students can discontinue one subject to study **3 A level subjects in the Upper Sixth**. A minority of students may choose to study 5 AS courses and those with borderline GCSE's may be advised to take only 3 AS subjects.

Each course has 9 hours of teaching per fortnight and may be taught by 2 or 3 specialist subject teachers.

All students are issued with a printed 2 week timetable on joining the Sixth Form. This includes the teacher and room for the each lesson.

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

CHANGING/DISCONTINUING COURSES

During Year 11 students had considerable guidance and advice selecting their A level choices. If a student finds that they need to change a course there must be a full discussion between Subject Leader, Head of Department and parents/carers. Once an alternative is found, students must complete a change of course form which should be returned to the Sixth Form Office so that a new timetable can be issued. Students cannot simply decide to drop a subject and not attend lessons.

Lower Sixth students must complete any changes by the beginning of October because experience shows that they would have great difficulty catching up on more than 20 hours of missed lessons.

We take subject choices and timetabling very seriously to ensure that students get the best fit possible.

Lower Sixth students are advised not to discontinue courses immediately after AS examinations since failure to achieve success in 3 AS subjects will prevent them continuing into the Upper Sixth.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

All students are expected to take responsibility for regular attendance and punctuality. The school has an electronic registration system which automatically calculates the student's percentage attendance/punctuality for each subject, teacher and registration. Students will require references when they leave school for higher education/employment. Admissions tutors and employers 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.

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 letter of explanation needs to go to the form tutor before the absence takes place.

Holidays

Holidays should not be taken during term time including the examination periods of January, May and June. Sometimes some family holidays can only be taken during term time and in such circumstances students need to submit a holiday request form well in advance. These forms are available from Student Reception. Once completed and submitted, the school will assess whether this absence can be authorised or if it will be rejected.

Students are not permitted to take time off school to attend festivals or holidays with friends in term time.

Students taking AS examinations will be required to return to school after the examinations in June to start A Level courses; holidays should not be planned for this period.

All students are advised to be available in mid-August to receive their results, especially the Upper Sixth, when tutors and the Higher Education Adviser will be available for guidance with university issues.

Open Days

We encourage students to visit universities and colleges. This is best done after the AS examinations while students can research their course and institutions of higher education. Students can visit up to 3 places during term time. To take time off from school, students need to complete the 'Open Day reply slip' in their diary and give it to their tutor well in advance of the visit.

Many universities have Saturday open days and they encourage parents to accompany the student. Please look on the university websites.

Punctuality

Registration is from 8.40 a.m. until 8.50 for all Sixth Form students. Students should be on time and also need to be punctual for all their lessons.

Dental/Medical Appointments

These should be arranged outside lesson times, i.e. after school, during holidays or in private study periods. Where such times are not possible, for example for some hospital appointments, a note of explanation needs to be given to the form tutor in advance.

Home Study

Only the Upper Sixth have Home Study, which commences after the Autumn half term break. Year 12 do not have access to Home Study.

STUDY PERIODS AND TIME MANAGEMENT

AS and A Level courses require students to work 'beyond the lesson'. They should be developing independent study skills of research and reading textbooks and researching the internet – but not just Wikipedia! Students need to regard the Sixth Form as a full time job and as a priority, as they have chosen to undertake the course.

A student studying 4 AS levels will have 9 hours of study time in 2 weeks. An Upper Sixth student taking 3 A Levels will have 9 hours for study. As a 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, examinations, etc. Students will be issued with textbooks and given

references to research. This has to take place outside the lessons. Students must make time to study. Balancing work and relaxation is difficult at first. Students will learn by their mistakes. The advice is to work hard at school in study periods and this will make more time available for sport and leisure outside 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.

Working in the Sixth Form

In the Sixth Form, the level and intensity of the workload for students increases dramatically; this requires students to have a practical approach. 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.

Additional Study

Independent study is an essential part of Sixth Form life. Students are expected to carry out homework, coursework, wider reading and research as part of this additional study. As a general rule of thumb there is 4 – 5 hours of work per week, per subject.

As a guide, 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 hours of study, as advised by individual departments that Sixth Form students are expected to do **outside** of timetabled lessons. Please note this is a guide.

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 + ICT	5 hours	5 hours
Design & Technology	3 – 5 hours	3 – 5 hours
Drama	4 – 6 hours	4 – 6 hours
Economics	6 hours	6 hours
Environmental Science	4 hours	4 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 provides 21st century research facilities. In addition to books and journals, there are PCs, printing and photocopying facilities. The Hub has wireless enabled for students' own laptops and the Learning Resources Manager will provide support in using the available resources. Nevertheless, it is a whole school resource and is also used by other students. Teachers may also use the Hub for lessons/research, therefore Sixth form students will need to co-operate fully with the Learning Resource Manager and other users at all times.

PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

It is useful that students take part-time employment for their economic well being. It also builds up their confidence, social and inter-personal skills.

However, extensive employment in the evening plus weekends is not compatible with A level studies. Students will get tired and will not cope with their work as a result. Our guidance is to suggest **no more than 12 hours of part-time employment per week**.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Students often want to take up some work experience opportunities that will help them access some higher education courses – e.g. for medicine, education, etc. 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

There are many opportunities for Sixth Form students to develop skills additional to those of academic studies. These opportunities for enrichment include many activities associated with sport, enterprise, the community and culture. There is something for everyone and students are encouraged to get involved. Participation in these activities will enhance confidence and build up very transferable skills both for higher education and employment.

Charity work

Each year we raise thousands of pounds for local and national charities. We have a Charity Week, run by Sixth Form Students, every year.

Mentoring younger students

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

Business opportunities

There are several business related opportunities including *Young Enterprise* and *Young Consumer* for which we regularly have both local and national winning teams. We participate in the *Nuffield Bursary* and the *Engineering Education Scheme* which involves working on a problem currently facing a real company.

Debating Society

The Debating Society provides regular opportunities for students to exercise their powers of persuasion. Students can also 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 and Fair Trade group.

Sixth Form students are given the opportunity for international travel and have recently visited countries such as China, India, Gambia, 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 new modern studio which caters for a cross section of musical interests and everyone who would like to perform is welcome. There are opportunities in gospel choir, musical theatre group, senior band, guitar club and rock bands.

Drama

The school has a musical production each year which provides the opportunity for many kinds of involvement 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 all day café to provide 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 school 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 to use the bins provided.

The Hub has wireless internet and comfortable seating so students can study in a quiet and purposeful atmosphere.

In warm, dry weather, when the playing fields are dry, students may relax on the field so long as 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 at other 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 Miss Gordon 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 for getting to school cannot use car or traffic related problems as a valid excuse for lateness.

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

The school is not responsible for any loss or damage whilst on school premises or elsewhere.

EXAMINATIONS

The Government has implemented a range of reforms for AS and 'A' level subjects; teaching of the first wave of this reform of AS and 'A' level started in September 2015. In this first cycle, A Level students in England study new linear courses in a number of specific subject areas, alongside other subject areas that will continue to follow the AS/A2 modular model.

The A level subjects reformed by the Government from September 2015 are AS/A level English Language, English Literature, English Language and Literature, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Psychology, Art and Design, Photography, Art, History, Sculpture, Textiles, Business Studies, Computing, Economics, History and Sociology. First examination of these are in Summer 2016. Marks and grades at AS level will not, however, count towards the final marks and grades at 'A' level in summer 2017. A Level marks and grades will be determined in end of course exams taken at the end of the second year of study in summer 2017.

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 (Awards Day, Open Evening etc.) must be appropriate. If you fail to meet these standards you 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 important events. It also contains a wealth of useful information.

Students in the Sixth Form must be properly equipped for lessons. Students should have folders with dividers for each subject to file their notes and enough writing equipment and paper. Each subject will give guidance, but to arrive at a lesson unequipped is unacceptable for a Sixth Form student.

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 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.

Progress Review Summary

Interim and Main reports are sent home via email. These provide a basis from which to monitor progress. Students receive a spreadsheet of grades which identify strengths as well as areas for concern which can be followed up further in the different subject areas. Students discuss their progress with their tutor and subject teachers and set targets and strategies to achieve or exceed their target grade.

Reports

An annual report will be written from each subject area which details a student's progress and attainment with targets improvement. Two additional interim reports are published in the academic year.

SIMS Learning Gateway (SLG)

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

Home/School Communication

Improving communication between home and school.

We sometimes send information to parents via text message to a mobile phone. A free smartphone app for parents is available for download called 'School Gateway' for Apple (iPhone 3GS or later, iPad, iPod Touch) and Android (2.3 / Gingerbread or later) devices.

Please could you download this new app to your phone as it will help us improve communication with parents.

The set-up process is simple and will take no more than a couple of minutes:

1. Search for "School Gateway" in the Apple App Store/Google Play or on your phone go to www.schoolgateway.com/apple (Apple) or www.schoolgateway.com/android (Android)
2. Install the app and if you are asked then say yes to "Allow Push Notifications"
3. When you launch School Gateway for the first time, please select 'New User' and enter the email address and mobile telephone number you have registered with the school.
4. The system will send a PIN code to your phone; please enter this PIN code and the app will be activated for you.

As soon as you've got the system set-up, all of the text messages we send to you will appear in the app, however emails will appear as normal, in your inbox.

If you do not have an Apple or Android phone you can still receive emails and text messages from the school which will appear in your usual email/message inbox.

An annual report will be written from each subject area which details a student's progress and attainment with targets for the future.

Parents' Evenings

Parents' Evenings provide an opportunity to discuss a student's performance with specific subject teachers. You will be able to see approximately 6 members of staff. Your son or daughter must take the letter of invitation home and return it duly completed to school by the deadline specified.

If you have any concerns regarding your son's or daughter's progress, please contact the Head of Department of the relevant subject.

SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

At Upton we pride ourselves in taking care of every individual. From the moment students start thinking about the Sixth form through to their final examinations, we are there with the right advice, support and encouragement.

Form Tutor

The Form Tutor can be a lifeline for students during their time in the Sixth form. All Sixth Form tutors have experience of guiding students through the two years of the Sixth Form. Students will receive advice and guidance to help them adapt to the new study skills and more independent style of learning that is expected in the Sixth form. Tutors also provide guidance on time management, choosing employment and personal career ambitions, which could include applying for university.

Form tutors get to know their students well and write references for university or employment as well as helping students to write their CV or personal statement. They collate all the responses from subjects to write the reference, so it is vital that your son or daughter has regular meetings with his or her tutor. Students will have regular formal one-to-one reviews with their tutor and the outcome of their discussions are noted in the student's school diary to be reviewed at a future meeting. Form tutors also assist with identifying concerns and suggesting strategies for improvement.

Careers Adviser

We have superb links with our Careers Adviser, Mrs S Wood, who helps students with any careers questions. Students can book interviews and receive guidance and impartial advice to make informed decisions about their future career.

PSHE – Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education

Students follow a varied programme of topics, delivered by the tutor or outside speakers. These help prepare students for life beyond the Sixth Form, including university, apprenticeships or employment.

Examples of some of the lessons:

- Academic skills
- Current affairs

- British Values
- Staying healthy (including SRE)
- Post-18 pathways.

All students **must** attend these lessons.

Other Support

Students may occasionally have difficulties and may need advice and support. They can seek help from their tutor, subject teacher, Head of Department or the Sixth Form year team.

We have access to specialist counsellors and can refer students where appropriate for support. Advice can be sought at any time.

POST-18 OPTIONS

Upon joining the Sixth Form students are asked to consider 'what next' through the PSHE programme. This includes:

- Presentations made during the spring term of the Lower Sixth by university/college admissions tutors and employers
- Students are given a day to attend the Liverpool University Higher Education Fair, which is normally held in June
- Students are encouraged to research and visit institutions on their open days
- Students are encouraged to have a careers interview with Mrs Wood who is our Careers Adviser.

Applications to university/higher education institutions are administered by UCAS through a web based application system. Students are fully briefed on how the system works and how to write their personal statements.

Students should not leave this application process until the last minute because places at popular universities and the popular courses get filled early.

We encourage all students to register with UCAS as it is easier to withdraw from the process than to make a late application.

All students and their parents are invited to a higher education evening in the autumn term of the Lower Sixth.

Employment and Apprenticeships

Higher education is not the only post-18 option. Students have access to CV writing workshops and those concentrating on interview techniques to assist them in gaining apprenticeships or employment.

Gap Year

A final option would be to take a gap year by deferring the start of employment or higher education. There are many gap year opportunities and these must be planned for.

CELEBRATION

Students in the Sixth Form need to work hard and consistently to achieve their goals. As a result of this hard work, they come out of the Sixth Form as successful young adults with a

great future ahead. Their success is celebrated through Sixth Form assemblies, in subject areas, at the leaving ball for the Upper Sixth at the end of their school life and the presentation evening of A level certificates.

The Sixth Form has a happy and purposeful atmosphere because of the respect and good relationships that exist between staff and students. We provide students with the opportunities and encouragement they will need to enjoy their time here and reach their full potential. In return we want our students to give their best, work hard and take a pride in their achievements.

SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS

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

Telephone: 01244 981240
Fax: 01244 981248

E-mail: admin@uptonhigh.co.uk

Website: www.uptonhigh.co.uk

Headteacher: Mrs P Dixon

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

Head of Lower Sixth: Ms H Brady
Head of Upper Sixth: Miss K Main

We hope you have found this guide useful. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the school.