



Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School



YEAR 12 PARENT HANDBOOK 2023 - 2024

Dear parent/ carer

This is a new and exciting journey which our Year 12 students are embarking upon. They have made their own subject choices and are now studying specific subjects which they are passionate about.

Our Sixth Form team will ensure that each student is given all the support, guidance and encouragement that they will need in order to have a successful start to their Post-16 experience.

We want all of our students to be happy in our Sixth Form. They will have every opportunity to achieve their very best in academic terms and there are a wealth of opportunities to enable them to develop as a whole person during this final stage of their school career.

Our School Mission Statement

Our *Mission* is to be an **active Christian
community of **love** and **service**,
where ***all feel*** they belong
and are valued.**

**We will help each other to recognise
the **gifts of God** within us,
to search for ***excellence***
and to foster the development
of our ***true self***.**

Our School Mission Statement is at the heart of all that we do.

Key members of staff for Sixth Form

Mr C Billings	Headteacher
Mrs S Boyle	Deputy Headteacher
Mrs P Casey	Assistant Headteacher and Head of Sixth Form
Ms T Brazil	Student Liaison Officer
Mrs F Grearson	Student Liaison Officer
Mrs W Bellingham	Careers Advisor

Form Tutors

Mr J Griffiths
Mrs J Kirkman
Mrs H Penson

Our curriculum

A level studying is a complete two-year programme. Students will sit their A level public examinations at the end of Year 13, being examined on the full two-year subject content.

However, all students will sit formal end of year exams in **June 2024**. This allows us to be sure that students have progressed during their first year of A level study and that they have reached the standard needed to continue into Year 13.

A levels are much more demanding than GCSEs. Therefore, during the second full week in September, Year 12 students will sit an assessment in each of their subjects to assess their capability to withstand a two-year A level course.

We rightly seek to educate the whole person and it is our aspiration that each young person who leaves our Sixth Form is ready for their next steps. Hopefully they will have a genuine sense of who they are and their potential to make a positive impact on those around them.

Most students will study three A Levels for two years. Alongside this, will run our pastoral programme which comprises the A level Mindset programme (explained on the next page), enrichment opportunities, outside speakers from various professional backgrounds and mental well-being sessions. There is an extensive programme of careers support and guidance throughout Year 12 and 13 to assist students in their vision for the future, whether it be at university or in the world of work. Students will also follow a Core RE programme for one hour a week, where they will learn the art of debating as they research and reflect on the “the ultimate questions of life”. **They will also have a dedicated A Level Mindset (VESPA) lesson for 1 hour each week to support them in becoming high level, independent learners.**

There will be opportunities for students to undertake work experience, voluntary work, service to our community and beyond. Students need to be **proactive in availing themselves of the opportunities that will be offered**. There are numerous ways in which students can be involved in our spiritual life by working with our Lay Chaplain and supporting the Chaplaincy team. Later in the year, students will be able to put themselves forward to be part of our Sixth Form Leadership Team.

There is no doubt that A Levels are challenging but they are an incredibly exciting time of personal growth and development. It is a journey which we share together.

How is A level study different to GCSE?

The course content is much deeper and more intellectually demanding. Independent learning is the basis of Post-16 study. Productive private study in school and at home is essential. It is a big jump from GCSE to A level but we have dedicated, individual support in place to help every student achieve their full potential. Students will be set target grades for their subjects and progress towards these targets will be monitored and reviewed at regular stages. **You will know exactly how your child is progressing following each of our formal data collections. There will be four formal data collections, including a mock examination in January and the end of year examinations in June. Parents' Evening will be held on Thursday 7 March 2024.**

Parents may well be asked to make consultative appointments in the course of the year to discuss pastoral and/or academic issues which may arise and decide upon a course of action.

Studying at A Level

A Levels will challenge students in several ways and a significant factor for success will be to develop the right approach to their use of time outside lessons: at home and during study periods. There will be a period of transition while they adapt to this and we will support each student in their development of these skills. However, **ultimately they need to take on board the advice given and act upon it.**

Successful studying in Years 12 and 13 is not just dependent on the development of skills but also attitudes and approaches which will enable students to overcome the inevitable challenges. To support this, we will be following the A level Mindset, the VESPA model. Students will learn about this approach during Form Time, as well as their weekly VESPA lesson. Strategies will be further developed by their subject teachers. VESPA is a model based on five core principles:

V – Vision – developing a vision for what you want to achieve

E – Effort – the number of proactive independent hours of study you are willing to do

S – Systems – the level to which you organise your learning resources

P – Practice – the level to which you commit to practising and developing your skills

A – Attitude – the way you respond constructively to setbacks

Organising time and paid employment

Subject teachers will help students understand how best to work outside lessons, including how to study beyond their homework. We would strongly recommend a minimum of **14 hours of independent study** each week in addition to study periods.

Having study periods is a new experience for students. We have a dedicated Sixth Form study area with computer access as well as classroom facilities and our school library. It is vital that students adapt to this independent way of learning.


Some students take on paid employment as well as their studies. In these circumstances we strongly advise that this should not be more than **eight hours per week**. If students are working more than this then it will have a negative impact upon their studies and final A Level grades.

Support Structure and Well-Being:

Bishop Ullathorne is a Christian community of love and service. The health and well-being of all of our students lie at the heart of everything we do.

It is of central importance to recognise that our well-being begins looking after ourselves. Everyone is different, but we all need to find ways which work for us. There are extensive structures in place to support students when they face challenges in their lives, be they academic or personal; these are summarised on the next page.

PROMOTING YOUR OWN WELL – BEING	SCHOOL SUPPORT
Getting 7 to 8 hours sleep each night	Guidance from your Form Tutor
Eating a healthy, balanced diet	Making the best use of form time resources
Organising your time so that there is a work/life balance	Guidance and regular one to one meetings with Ms Brazil and Mrs Grearson
Taking regular exercise	Appointment and support from Mrs Casey
Playing a full part in the life of our school – worship, extra-curricular activities	VIVA meetings with subject teachers
Taking time out – listening to music, reading, being with friends	Appointment with Mrs Bellingham
Relaxation – meditation, mindfulness	Support from Lauren, our school lay chaplain
Prayer	Mentoring
Making the best use of online resources	UCAS and careers sessions and workshops at various stages in the year, educational visits, support sessions promoting independent learning, enrichment opportunities
Sharing academic concerns	Talking to your teachers

EXTERNAL SUPPORT	Kooth On line counselling
	 <p>The image shows a screenshot of the Kooth website. At the top, it says 'Kooth On line counselling'. Below that is the Kooth logo and some small text about being free, safe, and anonymous. There's a testimonial from a young person saying 'Want someone to understand or advice to help a friend? We're here for you.' There are buttons for 'JOIN KOOTH', 'WATCH VIDEO', 'Need to talk? We're online now to help until 11pm', and 'CHAT TO US NOW'.</p>

Enrichment and work experience

It is the expectation that all students undertake enrichment and a minimum of one week's work experience. Students have the responsibility to select a morning or afternoon during the week to become their timetabled enrichment session. These additional experiences enhance the impression that they give to future employers and are extremely valuable on their **Universities and Colleges Applications Service (UCAS)** application form. Students will be provided with an enrichment booklet highlighting all of the opportunities which they can consider, along with a log book to record what they do.

Students can build up their week's work experience by undertaking it during school holidays. This could be through two days at one time and three days at another time or as a full week. Work experience should link directly to their career interest. It is important that they begin applying for relevant work experience opportunities early in the Spring term as quality experiences get taken up very quickly. Students will be guided through this process.

The Super-curriculum

The super-curriculum is important because it represents all those opportunities to develop depth and breadth of learning which extend beyond what each subject curriculum requires. Universities and employers are showing increasing interest in students' super-curricular profiles. They recognise the need for specialism with breadth, and the flexibility that this implies.

Students will be provided with a range of super-curriculum opportunities that they can engage with for each of their subjects.

Widening Participation Programmes

Universities and professional organisations help to deliver a range of Widening Participation Programmes to encourage sixth form students from under-represented groups to apply to university.

Consequently some of our Year 12 students have the opportunity to attend Sutton Trust Summer Schools, Pathways to Law, Business, Banking and Finance programmes to name but a few.

All students who have a GCSE profile of Grade 7s are able to participate in the HE+ Programme facilitated by Cambridge University.

University Applications

All Year 12 students will visit a Russell Group university in the Spring term. This provides them with the opportunity to see what student life is like, visit the halls of residence and experience a lecture.

Students will be introduced to the UCAS application process in the Summer term. They will have time allocated off-timetable for guided sessions on preparation for life after Bishop Ullathorne; including university & job applications. They will be guided through the online UCAS process and be provided with bespoke resources to support them in their application. The Form Time programme up to October Half Term of Year 13 will be devoted to UCAS support from tutors. Students will also have one to one support meetings.

University visits - Students may take up to two days off school during Year 12 or Year 13 to visit universities for their open days. To request permission they should speak to Ms Brazil or Mrs Grearson. Additional visits must take place at the weekend or school holidays.

Oxbridge

Students who wish to make an application to either Oxford or Cambridge University will receive bespoke guidance. It begins with early identification of those interested students in order to ensure that their enrichment activities directly support their pathway. Students are steered through the early application and subsequent interview process.

Progression into Year 13

The end of year examination results at the end of Year 12 allow us to evaluate a student's options for continuing into Year 13.

The 16 to 19 Bursary

What is the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund?

The Fund is a limited amount of money made available from the government through its funding body, the Education Funding Agency, to provide assistance to students whose access to, or completion of education is inhibited by financial constraints or barriers.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund has two elements: the 16 to 19 Vulnerable Student Bursary and the 16 to 19 Discretionary Bursary.

For further information regarding eligibility and how to apply please see the section in the Sixth Form area of our school website.

Sixth Form dress code

All of our students are expected to wear business dress. Please refer to the following guidelines:

- smart trousers/ skirt, of appropriate length (no bandage skirts)/ dress - no jeans, leggings or shorts
- shirt/ tie/ blouse – no bold branding or wording
- jacket, if required - no hoodies
- shoes/ boots - no trainers



A is for Attendance

Full attendance in all lessons, form time, and assembly is expected and has never been more important. Attendance records are used in application forms and references for future employers, higher education institutions and universities.

90% attendance means a student will have missed up to four weeks of lessons over an academic year.

Studies show that 90% attendance reduces results by up to one grade.



Punctuality is also very important as crucial information and new learning strategies takes place each morning in form time.

Please contact the school first thing in the morning if your son/daughter is going to be absent. The student liaison officers contact home in the morning if a student is absent and no information has been provided.

Email: sixthform@bishoppullathorne.co.uk

Phone: 02476 414515

Finally

We are at our best when we are all in full cooperation and collaboration with each other. You can support your son/daughter by

- discussing their studies with them and supporting them with their independent study.
- contact subject teachers or relevant staff if you have any concerns, or want a progress update.

A strong work ethic, in and out of lessons, coupled with outstanding attendance will lead to a successful year.

With hard work and dedicated support from the Sixth Form team the building blocks for success are all there for every one of our students. You are very welcome to contact one of the Sixth Form team at any time.

Notes

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