



TBSHS SIXTH FORM

ACADEMIC GUIDE FOR PARENTS

2021 - 2022

Introduction

This booklet complements the [Sixth Form Guide](#), issued on joining our Sixth Form, to provide more details about the Teaching and Learning aspects of the next two years and is designed to help you to support your son or daughter. We have tried to address issues which are important for students during their time in the Sixth Form and other frequently asked questions from parents.

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Key People

Sixth Form Management Team (SFMT) members and responsibilities

Assistant Headteacher Head of Sixth Form	Mr Robert Stark (RHS)	Oversight of all matters related to the Sixth Form
Deputy Head of Sixth Form	Mr Simon Mariner (STM)	Student Achievement Academic Support + Guidance Tutorial Programme
Deputy Head of Sixth Form	Mr George Munro (JGM)	Student Welfare Attendance and Punctuality Enrichment Programme
Assistant Head of Sixth Form - Post-18 Coordinator	Mrs Fiona Price (FJP)	UCAS and Post-18 advice
Sixth Form Administrator	Ms Chrissy Goan (CMG)	Sixth Form Administration

Term dates

Autumn Term 2021 31 August - 17 December (Includes INSET Days)
 Half Term Break 25 October – 29th October
 31 August (INSET/Staff Training/No Students) 01
 September (Years 07 and 12 Students Only)
 02 September (All Students in School)
 24 September (INSET/Staff Training/No Students)

Spring Term 2020 04 January – 01 April (Includes INSET Days)
 Half Term Break 14 February - 18 February
 04 January (INSET/Staff Training/No Students)
 05 January (All Students in School)

Summer Term 2020 19 April - 20 July (Includes INSET Days)
 Half Term Break 30 May - 03 June
 06 June (INSET/Staff Training/No Students except
 Public Exam Students)
 21, 22, 25 and 26 July (INSET and Occasional Days
 - No Students)

NB: Students do not attend school on INSET or Occasional Days.

GCE (A-Level) Exam Results10 Aug 2023 (To be confirmed)

At the end of Year 13, the August 2023 Results Day will be a crucial time for students to be in the country to deal with university and other post-18 acceptances.

Please note that the complete TBSHS Calendar can be found on the school website at <https://library.tbshs.herts.sch.uk/ajosaspx/calendar/index.aspx>

How we work together for successful learning

Teachers by:

- providing a challenging and stimulating programme of study designed to enable all students to reach the highest standards of personal achievement
- recognising and being constantly aware of the needs of each individual student according to ability and aptitude by regularly assessing student progress
- ensuring that learning is progressive and continuous
- delivering well-planned, enjoyable and challenging lessons
- working collaboratively with a shared philosophy and commonality of practice and purpose to ensure a consistent approach ensuring early contact with parents to discuss matters which affect student progress

Students by:

- having high attendance and attending school in good health maintained by adequate diet, exercise and sleep
- being punctual and ready to begin all lessons on time
- bringing necessary books and equipment, keeping accurate, concise and well-structured notes
- taking responsibility for their own learning
- being accountable for quality of work and meeting deadlines
- being proactive in lessons and making valuable contributions in class
- being ambitious and motivated to learn and achieve
- having a sound work ethic by working effectively outside of lessons and using study periods appropriately
- understanding that intelligence is not fixed and effort has a direct impact on achievement
- supporting the A Level Mindset and VESPA programme
- regularly reviewing and updating E-Tutor
- making full use of Enrichment and Wellbeing sessions

Parents by:

- ensuring that students attend school in good health, regularly and on time
- providing support for the discipline within the school and for the teacher's role
- being realistic about their son's/daughter's abilities and offering encouragement
- participating in discussions concerning their son's/daughter's progress
- ensuring early contact with school to discuss matters which affect their son's/daughter's happiness, progress and behaviour
- giving due importance to independent study and homework and assisting with planning for revision and examinations
- allowing their son/daughter to take increasing responsibility as they progress in the Sixth Form

A Level Mindset

As a school, we think there are five key elements to success at A level, and more importantly, that these five elements can be learned. They are not gifts or genetic quirks handed down to lucky people, but skills that can be worked on and improved. These five elements are Vision (V), Effort (E), Systems (S), Practice (P) and Attitude (A) and are known by the acronym VESPA.

Students will be introduced to the A Level Mindset in late September and it is our belief that an improvement in these non-cognitive skills will help them to find success at A level.

To support the transition of Year 11 students into Sixth Form, new Year 12 students were required to complete 'Bridging Units' prior to the start of term. Bridging units are designed to 'bridge the gap' between GCSE and Year 12 and give students a flavour of the demands and the type of work they will be covering in their post-16 courses. Students were expected to complete work for each of their three subjects and to take their completed work to their first timetabled lesson on Tuesday 3rd September.

Personalised Learning in the Sixth Form

Universities and employers will be looking for certain skills. They are interested in the five 'R's: resourcefulness, resilience, reciprocity, responsiveness and reflectiveness. They will be interested in students having the following skills:

- Managing their own learning
- Problem solving
- Research
- Enquiry and investigation
- Invention
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Independent thinking

Exam boards expect students to study each subject out of school for the same amount of time as it is studied in school. **This means that students should be doing 15 hours of independent study per week.** Students will receive guidance from both the Sixth Form team and their subject teachers regarding appropriate tasks for independent study, but as a general rule it should entail work beyond what has been formally set for homework. This means that just relying on getting all of your homework, revision and independent study done during supervised sessions in the Turing Suite will not be enough for you to cope with the demands of Sixth Form study.

It is important that students develop strategies for note taking and organisation of their notes and folders. All students will get advice about this during their time in the Sixth Form and general principles are incorporated in the Sixth Form Folder Policy below.

Sixth Form Folder Policy

The purpose of this policy is to help ensure all students are keeping a logical, thoughtful and well-organised record of information. This will aid progression in learning, help with an understanding of the bigger picture, improve students' ability to look for information independently, whilst encouraging self-reliance. Folders will consist of class notes, homework, assessments, records from further reading, questions and summaries of larger pieces of information and texts. This will help to enable students to formulate revision materials and have a central source of reference.

The folder will form a key indicator of their progress and therefore it is vital that folder reviews are carried out to assess performance and identify any issues or gaps in knowledge. Folder checks will be carried out every half term for the first two terms and then additionally as required.

General Folder Principles

Students should:

- Have a clearly labelled A4 Lever Arch File for each subject, with topic dividers
- Have the specification/syllabus at the front of the folder
- Have smaller file(s) with dividers for weekly note taking
- File their notes in the main subject ring binder weekly (ensuring they have any necessary information with them for the next lesson)
- Write dates and headings on each piece of file paper
- Use subheadings, highlight key words.
- Note sources of information – e.g. author, page number
- Keep notes brief and organised rather than copying large chunks of text - use own words where possible
- Ensure they have their main folder in school when there is a Folder Check

Students may find it useful to:

- Use abbreviations
- Number points
- Make the page memorable – with colour, relevant illustrations, etc.
- Link up information – using arrows, dotted lines, numbers, same colours etc.
- Write quotes in a different colour
- Leave a wide margin and spaces to add notes later

Revision Strategies

There are a number of ways that students can improve revision. The revision process should be continuous through the year. Notes should be organised clearly as outlined in the Folder Policy. **Filing should be happening at least once a fortnight.**

The following revision strategies can be used for end-of-topic tests and exams.

- Flashcards: key words/questions on one side of the card and definitions/answers on the other side (this is a short-term strategy).
- Spider diagrams/mind maps.
- Super teaching: one of you who is confident about a topic teaching someone who is having difficulty with it.
- 'Processing Notes': notes condensed onto a small number of cards with key terms and definitions highlighted.
- Past paper questions: you should build up to being able to answer previous exam question without notes and in timed conditions
- Reviewing the Specification: you should use the specification as a checklist of topics you have learnt.

A lot of work will be done on using these strategies and others to improve revision and study, both in subject lessons and as part of the Sixth Form tutorial programme.

Tutors and Tutorials

The Sixth Form Tutor Team

The Sixth Form tutor should be a student's first port of call if they have any questions or are facing difficulties. Tutors will have an overview of each student's academic progress as well as their pastoral well-being.

Academically:

- Tutors coach and mentor each student under their care to ensure that they are getting the best from their learning.
- Tutors help students to personalise their learning and develop revision strategies.
- Tutors stretch and challenge students through learning conversations.
- Tutors offer advice and guidance on future plans.

Pastorally:

- Tutors monitor students in respect to their well-being.
- Tutors are the first port of call in times of trouble.
- Tutors support and encourage students in their extra-curricular endeavours.
- Tutors track attendance and punctuality, informing SFMT of any issues.

Tutorials

Normally students would have 30 minutes of tutorial time on Monday afternoon from 3.00 to 3.30pm. Under the current Covid-19 timetable, this is now 25 minutes from 10.55 to 11.20am for Year 12. The foci of these sessions will vary week to week, and be tied in to the academic calendar and assembly programme where possible – session types will include PSHE, Current Affairs, and Project Management (designed to develop each element of the VESPA model discussed earlier in this guide (*A Level Mindset* section, page 4). Monday tutorials are compulsory for all students but tutors will see individuals by appointment during Tuesday and Wednesday sessions (see section on Tutor 1-1s).

There are two compulsory Sixth Form assemblies per week which students can only miss for a scheduled one to one with their tutor. These are currently being held by Zoom in form time on Thursdays and Fridays.

Tutor 1-1s and the eTutor System

Students will organise a time for a 1-1 appointment meeting with their tutor (a minimum of once per term) at the start of each term. These times will be used to conduct individual learning conversations with the students, giving them the opportunity to reflect on their progress and think about how they can improve. Targets for future development will then be set relating to the content of these discussions.

To support their increased independence and development as responsible learners, students log these meetings, and the targets set within them, using an online system called eTutor. This allows them to regularly revisit the issues and targets that emerge from each meeting, and facilitates ongoing engagement with their progress throughout the year. eTutor logs are then signed off by tutors and automatically emailed home on completion.

Testing Week and Progress Checks

During the first half term, students in year 12 will participate in some form of testing within each classroom. The results of these tests act as a baseline assessment of a pupil's abilities. This enables us to amend our planning, seating plans and delivery of course content. In addition, it informs the progress check completed by all classroom teachers towards the end of September. Pupils will receive either a Y or N for each subject; this information will only be used internally. Parents will receive further information if students have received multiple N marks and require a Progression Interview with a senior member of staff. We expect all pupils to follow the advice given by classroom teachers regarding the preparation and expectations for these initial assessments.

Academic Support

The transition from GCSE to A level study is considerable and students will be given support and guidance from subject staff and their tutors. The School closely monitors all students, dealing with issues and concerns as they arise following the procedure overleaf.

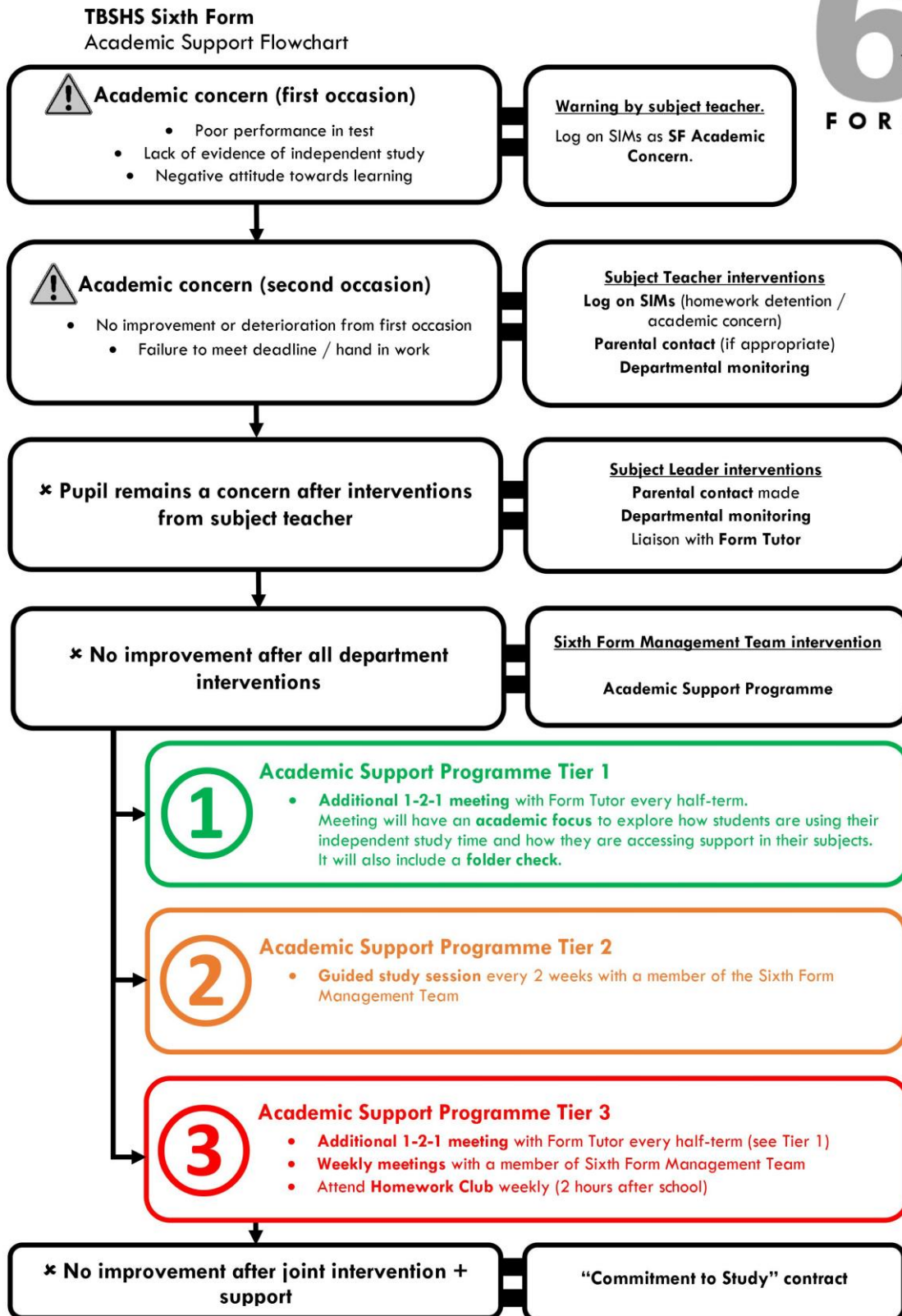
Academic Support Programme

The Sixth Form provides an Academic Support Programme (ASP) for students who require additional guidance in order to reach their target grades and achieve their potential. Pupils who would benefit from this guidance are identified through a holistic consideration of their projected grades, awarded by teachers, examination results and other academic and pastoral information. The ASP is designed to track the progress of students and provide help in a variety of ways including organisation, revision, examination technique and time management. During each session pupils will gain specific and tailored advice and will set short-term targets to ensure steady progression towards their target grades.

There are three tiers of support ranging from interventions during form time to an intensive weekly course with the Sixth Form Management Team. Within each stage pupils will continue to receive support from Subject Teachers and Subject Leaders where they require assistance in particular areas.

Please see the Academic Support Flow Chart on the next page.

Sixth Form Academic Support Flowchart



Lowest Expected Grades and Aspirational Grades

The Advanced Level Information System (ALIS) provides performance indicators for post-16 students across all sectors of education and includes analysis of A level, AS level, and BTEC courses. ALIS is run by the University of Durham and covers over half of all UK and international A level and A level equivalent entries this year.

The value-added approach provides fair comparisons between the progress made by students and the large sample of similar students in the ALIS project. In order to make these comparisons, all students need to be measured against a common baseline representing their ability before starting their post-16 courses. The average GCSE score is the baseline for ALIS. This has repeatedly been found to be the best single indicator of post-16 performance.

We use ALIS to calculate lowest expected grades (LEGs) for students. These grades are the **minimum** grade at AS/A2 that the student should be gaining with his/her GCSE results. The aspirational grade (AG) is generally one grade higher than the LEG and this is what students should aim for once the LEG has been met.

School Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism in the School's context is defined as follows:

- Copying the work of another student
- Collaborating with another student on a piece of work, such as coursework, where collaboration is unauthorised
- Copying from a source without attributing the work to the author of that source
- Downloading information directly from the internet and passing it off as one's own

The School will not accept for assessment, any work where there is evidence of plagiarism. Plagiarised work submitted for assessment, where that assessment does not form part of an examination qualification, will be returned to the student and the student will be required to complete an original piece of work and/or cite references depending on the nature of the plagiarism.

Cases of plagiarised work submitted for assessment, where that assessment does form part of an examination qualification, will be dealt with according to the relevant examination board's regulations.

A student caught copying the work of another student in a public examination or communicating with another student in a public examination will be dealt with according to the relevant examination board's regulations.

It is the School's professional duty to report to the relevant awarding body any evidence of plagiarism in a public examination or in work to be submitted for assessment, where that assessment forms part of an examination qualification.

Priorities for each term in the Sixth Form

Year 12	Year 13
<p>Term 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of summer exam results and setting of targets for the term • Learning how to become independent learners in the sixth form • Transition GCSE to A level – introducing the A Level Mindset and the VESPA principles. • Understanding the importance of Least Expected Grades (LEGs) and Aspirational Grades (AGs) • Testing week and the Progress Check • Organisation and maintenance of folders • Engaging in extra-curricular activities • Preparation and continuation of assessments within subjects 	<p>Term 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of summer exam results and setting of targets for the term • Continued transition A level – further developing VESPA and the A Level Mindset • Completion of UCAS process by half-term • Oxbridge applications mid-October • Research jobs/apprenticeships if not applying through UCAS. • Maintain extra-curricular activities • Preparation for January mock examinations
<p>Term 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation and continuation of assessments within subjects • Setting of targets for term in light of assessment performance • Coursework: managing the demands on time of this as well as lessons and homework • Working towards targets set with tutor during 1-1s (logged on eTutor) • UCAS and Work Experience research • Preparation for summer examinations • Revision techniques 	<p>Term 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mock Examinations (January) • Setting of targets for term in light of exam performance • Coursework: managing the demands on time of this as well as lessons and homework • Working towards targets set with tutor during 1-1s (logged on eTutor) • Student Finance Application • Apprenticeship/job applications • Preparation for summer examinations
<p>Term 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working towards targets set with tutor during 1-1s (logged on eTutor) • Subject-specific revision sessions • Exams • Work Experience • UCAS process begins: research of courses and universities, careers software, Unifrog, Open Day visits, starting personal statement. • Students not applying through UCAS: research of jobs/apprenticeships, registration on apprenticeship and job websites, use of careers software • Preparation and completion of Year 12 Gateway Examinations. 	<p>Term 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working towards targets set with tutor during 1-1s (logged on eTutor) • Subject-specific revision sessions • Finalising UCAS offers and job placements • Completion of A Level Exams

Questions you may wish to ask your son/daughter at key points during the year

Year 12	Year 13
<p>All Terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your folder organised? • Are you up-to-date with all work? • Are you talking to your teachers where necessary? • Are you managing your time well? • Are you doing enough background reading? • Is paid work affecting your schoolwork? 	<p>All Terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your folder organised? • Are you up-to-date with all work? • Are you managing your time well? • Are you doing enough background reading? • Is paid work affecting your schoolwork?
<p>Term 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you regularly reviewing the previous lesson's work for each subject? • What are your LEGs and AGs for each subject? • Have you started implementing your revision systems? • How are you preparing for testing week? • Do you need to make any amendments to your studying, based on the progress check? 	<p>Term 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you completed the UCAS process? (if appropriate) • Are you researching apprenticeships/jobs? (if appropriate) • What targets have you been set? • Have you started revising for January mocks?
<p>Term 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you revising enough and in a structured and effective way? • Are you completing independent study? • What are coursework deadlines for each subject? (where relevant) • Are you managing the demands of coursework and other work? • Do you have evidence of working towards your targets? • What have you done to organise relevant work experience? 	<p>Term 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you revising enough and in a structured and effective way? • What exams do you have and when? • What are coursework deadlines for each subject? • Are you managing the demands of coursework and other work? • Do you have evidence of working towards your targets? • What offers do you have from UCAS?
<p>Term 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you revising enough and in a structured and effective way? • Do you have a realistic revision timetable? • What exams do you have and when? • Have you researched universities /courses/jobs/apprenticeships? • Are arrangements in place for Work Experience week? • Have you written at least 1 draft of your personal statement? 	<p>Term 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you finalised UCAS offers and job placements? • Are you revising enough and in a structured and effective way? • Do you have a realistic revision timetable? • What exams do you have and when?

Parents' role in the Post-18 process

Students will receive a comprehensive programme of Post-18 guidance and support. They will also have one week of Work Experience in June after their summer examinations for which they will need to find an appropriate placement.

You may wish to discuss some of the following points with your son or daughter.

If planning to go to university	If not planning to go to university
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the reasons for your decision to go to university? • What course do you wish to follow at university? • Are you finding it difficult to choose what you want to do? What are your considerations when trying to make up your mind about post-18 options/courses? • How are you planning to choose universities? What are the benefits/problems associated with choosing a university a long way from home? Do you want to be in a big city or a smaller town? What other factors need to be considered when choosing the location of a university? • Where can you get advice about universities/courses? Have you looked at the UCAS website? Have you spoken to subject teachers? • Are your choices of university appropriate for the grades you are achieving? • How can you make your application stand out from other applications for places on your chosen course? • When are there Open Days for universities? • When should we visit universities? • What are the deadlines for UCAS forms to be completed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the reasons for your decision not to go to university? • What job/apprenticeship/training will you do? • Are you finding it difficult to choose what you want to do? What are your considerations when trying to make up your mind about post-18 options/courses? • Where can you get advice about courses/apprenticeships? Have you registered with apprenticeship and job websites? Have you used available careers software? Have you spoken to subject teachers? Have you asked for an appointment with the school's Career Advisor? • How can you make your application stand out from other applications for places in your chosen apprenticeship/job? Could you find any relevant work experience or shadowing?

For all applications (university, apprenticeships or other employment), both academic and extra-curricular experiences are essential to show genuine interest in the course or job and also to evidence the specific skills looked for by Admissions Tutors and employers. Throughout Sixth Form, you should encourage your son/daughter to engage in a wide range of activities outside of the classroom including additional reading, watching documentaries, viewing exhibitions, listening to podcasts, attending workshops, masterclasses, taster sessions, work shadowing, entering competitions, completing online courses, taking on leadership roles etc. This will also help them develop a clearer understanding of what they might wish to do after Sixth Form.

A personal statement is an important part of the UCAS application form. Most of it (80%) should be about academic work and choice of course and part of it (20%) should be about what else your son/daughter has done/has to offer an institution. They should draw on extra-curricular experiences, as outlined above, to clearly state what skills they have developed.

The same principle of using experiences to evidence skills is also vital for constructing a CV that will demonstrate suitability for a job and for answering skills-based questions that feature on many online job application forms.

The school website has a number of links regarding the post-18 process and information will also be provided through the fortnightly Post-18 Bulletin geared specifically to Sixth Form students. Additionally, our Careers Adviser, Claire Jonas, produces weekly career notices for all age groups that students should also check for items of interest.

Your son/daughter will have a timeline to show what deadlines have to be met in the UCAS application process. It is important that students appreciate that deadlines for UCAS are set externally and they must be met. There is no negotiation over these deadlines. It is in students' best interests to make early applications and that is why we start the post-18 process in Year 12.

There is no standard apprenticeship application timeline as companies run their own individual recruitment processes. Applications will not open until at least Autumn of Year 13 but during Year 12 students will have CV education, receive CV feedback and a practice interview with a business professional.