



Midsomer Norton  
Schools Partnership  
The Sixth Form

# **Sixth Form Parents' Handbook**

## **21-22**

## Welcome to the Sixth Form 2021-22

The following booklet has been produced to help provide Sixth Form students with the very best learning experiences.

The following staff are here to support all students:

Mrs Ward	Director of Sixth Form
Ms Oxley-Hughes	Deputy Director of Sixth Form (MSN Sixth Site)
Ms Barker-Starling	Deputy Director of Sixth Form (Writhlington Site)
Ms Cantrell	Mendip Pastoral Lead (MSS - Mendip Studio School)
Mrs Parker	Sixth Form Administrator (Based at MSN Sixth site)
Mrs Murphy	Sixth Form Data Lead (Based at Writhlington site)
Mrs Pascoe	Head of Sixth Form Careers

*Our aim is to ensure that all students have an enjoyable experience that helps them to succeed, enriches their lives and enables them to develop the skills and positive attitudes to go onto the next stage in their lives.*

*This short guide is designed to help parents or guardians support their son/daughter throughout his or her time in the Sixth Form. We are a Sixth Form within four schools and not a college. We work within the schools' guidelines to provide a structured environment whilst developing the independence and self discipline of the students during the years they are with us. Please read this booklet carefully.*

## **Contacting the Sixth Form**

If you have any concerns or enquiries please do not hesitate to contact the Sixth Form Team by telephone on 01761 402280 or by email on [sixthformadmin@msnsixth.com](mailto:sixthformadmin@msnsixth.com). If there is no one to talk to you immediately we will do our best to get back to you within 24 hours.

## **Communication**

We send a weekly newsletter to parents to update you with information and events involving the Sixth Form. These newsletters are also available on our website.

Our switchboard mailbox is checked regularly throughout the day and we will always endeavour to respond within 24 hours.

Most of our communication is via email so we would appreciate it if you could let us know if your email address changes. Please also check that we've not been filtered into Junk!

We're also on Twitter (@msnsixth), facebook (The Sixth Form MSNP) and our website has a section specifically designed for Sixth Form parents.

## **The Sixth Form Day**

All Year 12 students are required to be at school by 8.50 am and remain until school finishes at 3.25pm.

There are two tutor sessions a day. The morning session is from 8.50 - 9.00 and the afternoon tutor time is from 12.40 pm – 1.00 pm. Lessons before lunch end at 12.40 pm. Lunchtime is at 1.00 pm and afternoon lessons start at 1.45 pm.

Key to success in the Sixth Form is for students to use their time wisely. It is for this reason that Year 12 students are expected to remain on site for all periods until their first progress report. It allows them to learn to manage the additional study periods they have during the day and also for tutors to be able to support them effectively.

All subjects complete a skills review for each Year 12 student giving feedback on how effectively they are using this time and their organisation. If students show they are meeting expectations and making progress then they will be given periods of time when they can work from home (home study). This arrangement is made together with parents at students' academic review meetings.

Year 13 students are automatically awarded home study periods provided they are continuing to meet deadlines and make good progress. Students in Year 13 who have a whole day with no lessons are able to work from home for these days but must obtain permission from the Pastoral Lead for their site.

Home study is a privilege and if teachers report that students are falling behind or if their quality of work is declining they will be required to work on site all day.

All students are welcome to use the site for study throughout the day. All sites are open before the start of the school day and remain open until 5pm each day.

## **Attendance**

All students sign in using their ID cards when arriving and leaving their Sixth Form site. This is a vital health and safety requirement so that we know who is on site. The system used in the Sixth Form is the same one as used by staff on most of the sites.

Students are expected to always attend registration if they are on site. Having a non-teaching lesson first thing in the morning or afternoon is not an excuse for not registering. Registration enables us to know who is on site and to give vital information and messages to students.

Whenever a reference is requested of the Sixth Form Team, we are asked to comment on attendance and punctuality.

Students may arrange driving lessons during the Sixth Form day but must not miss lessons or tutor time.

Students are able to leave the school site during break and lunchtime, but must sign out.

## **Absence**

If a student is absent, parents are asked to ring the Sixth Form before 8.30am on 01761 402280, giving the student's name, Tutor Group and reason for absence. A doctor's note will be required for long term absence.

Students are not able to report their own absence. If a student contacts us then we will always verify this with parents for safeguarding purposes.

Students' attendance is reviewed every term and parents can expect to be contacted by the Sixth Form Team if a student's attendance falls below 95%.

MSN and Wri absence - 01761 402280

MSS absence - 01761 438557

## **Bursary**

Students can apply for a Sixth Form bursary, funded by the Government. The link for the application form is on the Sixth Form website.

Use of bursary funds will be at the discretion of the Director of Sixth Form, please see the bursary policy for further details of how bursary funds are often used to help eligible students. It is usual for eligible students to request resources and for the Bursary Administrator to then purchase resources on the student's behalf. In some circumstances the Director of Sixth Form may be able to use bursary funds to reimburse a student for expenses if a receipt is provided, however this must be pre-agreed with the Bursary Administrator.

The decision to grant bursary funds to a student is also dependent on good attendance and positive feedback from teaching staff. It is possible to appeal a decision to the Director of Sixth Form. Please note that the bursary fund is limited so please apply as soon as possible.

The Bursary is allocated on an annual basis, so students need to apply for this every year to continue to qualify. Students are also able to apply during the academic year should their home circumstances change.

## **Request for Absence**

If a student needs to take a pre-arranged day's absence, for example to visit a university open day, then a Request for Absence form must be completed by their parent or guardian. This is an online form, the link to which can be found on the front page of the Sixth Form website. The Sixth Form Team will then contact parents to inform them whether the absence has been approved. The form must be submitted **at least** two weeks prior to the requested absence. Once the requested absence has been approved, students must inform their teachers, ask for any work they will miss and catch up accordingly.

We will not authorise holidays in term time except in exceptional circumstances. Courses in the Sixth Form have a high level of content and if a student is away for one or two weeks a considerable amount of work is missed.

Please note that teaching continues immediately after the end of year exams, therefore holidays will still not be authorised in this period and it is inadvisable for students to miss any lessons.

Please note that the Sixth Form leave of absence form is different from the one used in the lower schools.

## **Dress**

There is a flexible dress code in the Sixth Form however students are asked to ensure they dress appropriately. During warm weather in particular students must ensure that they continue to wear clothes suitable for a working environment.

Visible tattoos, extreme or brightly coloured hairstyles or offensive slogans on clothing are not allowed. Students will be given two warnings and will be sent home on the third occasion. Students are allowed a single, discreet nose piercing.

## **Smoking & Vaping**

Smoking & Vaping are forbidden on both sites, within a mile and a half of either site and when travelling between the two sites. If a student is seen smoking or vaping they will be given a warning and on the second occasion they will be asked to leave the Sixth Form.

## Travel to school

### MSN Site

Students may apply for a Parking Permit to park their car or motorbike in the car park. Once a permit has been granted it should be displayed in the windscreen when parked on either site. Students who drive their own cars onto either site must drive carefully and responsibly; failure to do so will lead to the parking permit being withdrawn. At the Somervale site, students are asked not to park inside the school gates but to use the external car park; on the Norton Hill site students are asked to park to the right hand side of school by the Drama/Technology block. There is also an area for motorbikes. There is limited parking on site and students are asked not to bring cars into site unless absolutely necessary.

### WRI & MSS Site

Students may apply for a Parking Permit to park their car or motorbike and they may park on the far side of the Leisure Centre car park. Once a permit has been granted it should be displayed in the windscreen when parked on site. Students who drive their own cars onto site must drive carefully and responsibly; failure to do so will lead to the parking permit being withdrawn. There is limited parking on site and students are asked not to bring cars into site unless absolutely necessary.

## Sixth Form Curriculum

- Students will study a minimum of three A Level/ Pre-U / BTEC subjects, or a BTEC or CACHE equivalent of three; those taking Further Maths, GPR, Core Maths or Extended Project in Year 13 will study four.
- GCSE English Language/Maths – all students must attend lessons in these subjects if they didn't achieve a grade 4 at GCSE.
- Students must achieve at least a pass in BTEC or a D in A Level end of year exams to automatically continue with subjects into Year 13.
- All A Levels are now linear A Levels. The content studied in Year 12 and Year 13 will be required for the full A Level qualifications.
- BTEC Qualifications have also changed and will require students to sit exams. There are now much more stringent controls regarding the submission of coursework for these qualifications.

## Learning Skills

Students need to learn how to manage their work and time in the Sixth Form; they are given a Study Planner in which they can record work assignments that have been set and the deadline dates.

All students have a few non-teaching lessons during the Sixth Form day and are required to use two thirds of these in private study. Students will usually go to the Library or WRI Silent Study area or MSS Hub to work and may be asked by their tutor to complete a study period monitoring sheet if the tutor is concerned that study time is not being used effectively. Parents are able to monitor students' private study by checking the students' planner.

Parents can help students plan their work and utilise their study time by encouraging them to fill in the weekly work planner in their study planner; this is useful in helping students identify how they should spend their private study time and after school time to meet coursework deadlines. An example of this is included at the back of this handbook.

Please remember that in the Sixth Form students are expected to complete work beyond that set by teachers and to use their initiative to reach their potential. They should for example:

- Identify weaknesses and work at them.
- Undertake extra reading and research to extend knowledge and understanding.
- Review and rework notes so that the learning from lessons is reinforced.
- Practise exam questions.
- Read a quality newspaper regularly to help inform themselves of current events and form an enhanced understanding.

If a parent feels that a student is spending all their time working on Sixth Form assignments then it may be that the student would benefit from support with efficient working practices. For example a student may make overly detailed notes rather than picking out the essential points. If you feel this is the case then do not hesitate to contact the Sixth Form so we can give more help to these students with essential study skills.

## Head of Sixth Form Homework

This homework is designed to encourage students to develop effective revision resources and skills and will be set by individual subjects. Example homework assignments may be producing a revision resource or completing an exam revision question to improve exam performance.

## Study Habits

A major difference between the main school and the Sixth Form is how students work and learn. Sixth Form students are expected to do far more independent study and to learn how to decide what they need to do rather than just do the minimum set by the teachers.

As a guide, students should do a minimum of 2 hours study most evenings as well as further learning at weekends. This is in addition to the two thirds study periods they spend in the library. If a parent is concerned that a student doesn't seem to have work to do at home then it would be necessary to remind the student of the expected level of work in the Sixth Form; if the parent is still concerned they would be very welcome to contact the Sixth Form Office and ask to speak to the student's tutor.

Many students will gain part time employment at weekends whilst in the Sixth Form. Research shows that students who are employed during their Sixth Form years do worse academically than those who are not. The Sixth Form recognises that many students need the extra funds and that valuable social skills are gained from paid employment. Students, however, are advised not to do too many hours, particularly during weekday evenings. At key times leading up to and during examinations it is far better that students are not employed at all.

## Changing Courses

Students may wish, in the first few weeks of the year, to change a course. This must be done after consultation with the students' tutor, subject teacher and Deputy Director of Sixth Form. There is a form used for the process of changing course which must be completed with the Deputy Director of Sixth Form. An email is required from the student's parent or guardian to confirm the change.

Students will not be able to undertake a new course after the first four weeks of the autumn term i.e. students may only change a course during the first four weeks of an academic year (September).

Year 12 students will have in-class assessments in each of their subjects at the end of September. If there is a concern about their progress at this stage then parents will be contacted to discuss this further; this does not mean that a student has to change a subject.

## Career Experience

It is now a statutory requirement that all students complete some form of work experience that will help them toward their future career path. This can be achieved through voluntary taster days, work shadowing or attending conferences. Career Experience is vital if students wish to apply for certain jobs and higher education courses, e.g. Law, Medicine, Media, and Teaching.

Students who wish to study medicine must attend the work placement provided by RUH in June and are advised to attend Medlink, as it is difficult to gain the required work experience under the age of 18 and these opportunities are provided for that reason.

Students are expected to organise work experience themselves with our support. Many students will arrange work experience during half term holidays or in Activities Week in Year 12. In order to be granted home study after Academic Review meetings in November students must have a plan in place, signed by their tutor.

## Sixth Form Agreement

All students were required to sign a Sixth Form agreement at the beginning of the academic year, via their enrolment form. Parents were asked to read this with students for their reference. A copy of the Sixth Form Agreement is included at the back of this handbook.

We expect students, with the support of their teachers, to

- Attend all lessons and be punctual;
- Be committed and enthusiastic;
- Treat everyone in the Sixth Form and the lower schools on both sites with respect, dignity and courtesy.

In return students can expect their teachers to

- Provide high quality lessons that meet their individual needs;
- Mark work and set targets for improvement;
- Provide a variety of opportunities for enrichment.

## Rewarding Students

Usually teachers reward students by giving praise during lessons and may issue Sixth Form 'lottery' tickets for good effort and progress. Each student who receives a lottery ticket is then entered into a half termly lottery to win an Amazon voucher.

There is also a student of the term awarded based on nominations from tutors and Sixth Form teachers.



There is also usually a celebration assembly in January for Year 13 and in June for Year 12 in which subject awards are given.

## **Student Council**

The students run their own council that organises social and charity events and helps to support the work of the Sixth Form. The Head Students, prefects and other positions are elected annually in June.

## **Formal Parental Communications**

### **Progress Reports**

Progress reports are a brief snapshot of student progress; these are sent to parents and students in November of Year 12 and 13 and in the Spring Term of Year 12.

### **Full Reports**

Full reports are written after the Mock exams (December for Year 13, June for Year 12) and are sent to students and parents in February and June respectively. They give a detailed view of students' achievement and are accompanied by mock exam results and target grades. All this information gives parents and students a clear understanding of how students can achieve the best possible examination results.

Once reports have been received, there will be a parent/subject consultation evening in order for parents and students to discuss with teachers any concerns. For both years, the consultation will be in March.

The Sixth Form team also reviews students' progress through an additional set of Mock exams for Year 13 and in end of year exams in June for Year 12. Parents will be contacted if there are any concerns.

### **Student Support Programme**

Students, of all abilities, sometimes struggle to adapt to the different expectations of Sixth Form study. There are, therefore, a number of interventions used to help students achieve their potential in their studies. The Sixth Form Team is aware that it is possible to misunderstand the purpose of some of the interventions, however these interventions are to ensure that students utilise their time in the Sixth Form efficiently and are able to reach their full potential. A less than effective use of time is one of the main obstacles to success in Sixth Form study across the country. It does not mean that a student is not studying enough, but perhaps that they need some support with their time management or other study skills. The decision as to which intervention may be appropriate is made by the student's tutor or by the Deputy Director of Sixth Form.

All students have regular mentoring sessions with their tutors to discuss their academic progress and will be set targets in these sessions which they will record in their planners.

If a student fails to submit work by a deadline or to an acceptable standard, they will be required to attend a catch up session after school with their subject teacher to help them get back on track. Parents will be informed via the Portal/ Insight.

If a student is not managing their time or work the Sixth Form Team may ask them to complete a study period monitoring sheet or work planner to help teachers to see how the student is using their time. Students may also be asked to complete a study health check if there is an inconsistency in their performance across subjects to review how they are using their study time.

## **Students of Particular Concern – Official Process**

The Sixth Form Team aims to identify students who are struggling or falling behind in their studies quickly and there are a variety of methods used to help students get back on track. However there are times when this does not work and students do not adhere to the requirements of the Sixth Form agreement; on these occasions the Disciplinary Procedure will be followed.

### **Disciplinary Procedure**

Stage One	Report with Tutor - Parents informed
Stage Two	Report with Deputy Director of Sixth Form - Meeting with parents
Stage Three	Report with Senior Assistant Head teacher / Director of Sixth Form - Meeting with parents
Stage Four	Contract - Meeting with parents
Stage Five	Failure to meet requirements of contract – student leaves Sixth Form, with agreement of parents and Senior Assistant Head Teacher/ Director of Sixth Form
Stage Six	Formal exclusion

There may be some circumstances when a student is placed straight onto stage three of the reporting system. Circumstances may include but are not exclusive to; severe underperformance in one or more subjects ie failing a mock examination, stage three may be utilised after a student has been excluded, if a contract student has had issues or concerns raised about their behaviour, attendance, attitude or academic performance by a member of teaching staff.

## **Progression**

### **Higher education**

The Sixth Form has a programme of information and support for students applying to Higher Education. This starts with a Parent/Student Higher Education meeting in March and a visit to a Higher Education Fair in April of Year 12. Applications should be complete and submitted by half term in October of Year 13.

### **Apprenticeships and Employment**

The Sixth Form has a programme of support for students wishing to apply to employment and apprenticeships. Students planning to go straight into the workplace or considering applying for apprenticeships are given support by Ms Pascoe (Sixth Form Careers Lead).

### **Careers' Advice**

Mrs Pascoe (Head of Careers, Writhlington) and Mrs Windsor (Careers Advisor, MSN) are available for support; students are welcome to make an appointment with them via the Sixth Form Team.



## Sixth Form Agreement

- All students entering The Sixth Form have made a conscious and free decision to continue their education at school.
- To ensure the best possible experience, the Sixth Form makes a commitment to all students, and we ask them to make a similar commitment at the start of their Sixth Form Career.
- If either the Sixth Form or student feels these commitments are not being fulfilled they should discuss the issue immediately with their Tutor or Deputy Director of Sixth Form

### As a student, I will:

- 1 **be present for all required registrations, assemblies and tutor sessions.** I will register on and off site using the thumbprint machines. If I am absent because of illness or personal reasons a parent/ guardian will contact the school before 8:30am.
- 2 **attend all of my lessons** and arrive punctually, participate actively and complete my work assignments to the best of my ability carefully and on time
- 3 to bring **appropriate equipment** with me every day
- 4 bring **commitment and enthusiasm** to my studies and make the most of the opportunities that the school offers
- 5 **work closely with my tutor** to set and work towards targets that are challenging but realistic
- 6 spend **two third of my non contact lessons** in private study in the library or Sixth Form study area
- 7 treat everyone in the school with **respect, dignity and courtesy** and fulfil the expectations of Sixth Formers outlined in the Sixth Form Planner.
- 8 Adhere to the Sixth Form dress code by not wearing facial piercings, visible tattoos or have extreme hairstyles
- 9 To ensure my lessons and studies take priority over other activities, such as driving lessons.
- 10 To be available for twilight lessons and catch up sessions afterschool as required.
- 11 To ensure my part-time work does not interfere with my studies or ability to attend lessons and twilight lessons after school.
- 12 Maintain good attendance of at least 90% and make up any work missed in catch up sessions.

### As a Sixth Form we will:

- 1 ensure that each individual's course, as closely as possible, fits his or her particular needs, interests and ambitions
- 2 provide **high quality lessons**, regularly set work assignments and mark them promptly and constructively
- 3 offer a **core curriculum common** to all students including tutorial sessions and assemblies
- 4 provide each student with a **tutor** who will carefully **monitor attendance and progress**. The tutor will also offer advice and a **termly academic tutorial** to support each student and **set targets for improvement** to enable students to make successful transitions to the next phase of their careers
- 5 **provide opportunities for residential and other visits, of sporting, artistic and cultural activities**
- 6 provide **places where students can work** in a **stimulating** and cared for **environment**, and offer **support, advice and expertise**.

*Unauthorised absence breaks this agreement, ie absence of which there is not a genuine acceptable and authorised reason.*

*A minimum of 90% attendance at lessons every half term is expected from all students. Failure to maintain this level of attendance will lead to a parental discussion and may lead to the student being asked to leave the Sixth Form.*

Week Commencing

	Study Periods	Evening
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		