

Hitchin Girls' School

Sixth Form Handbook

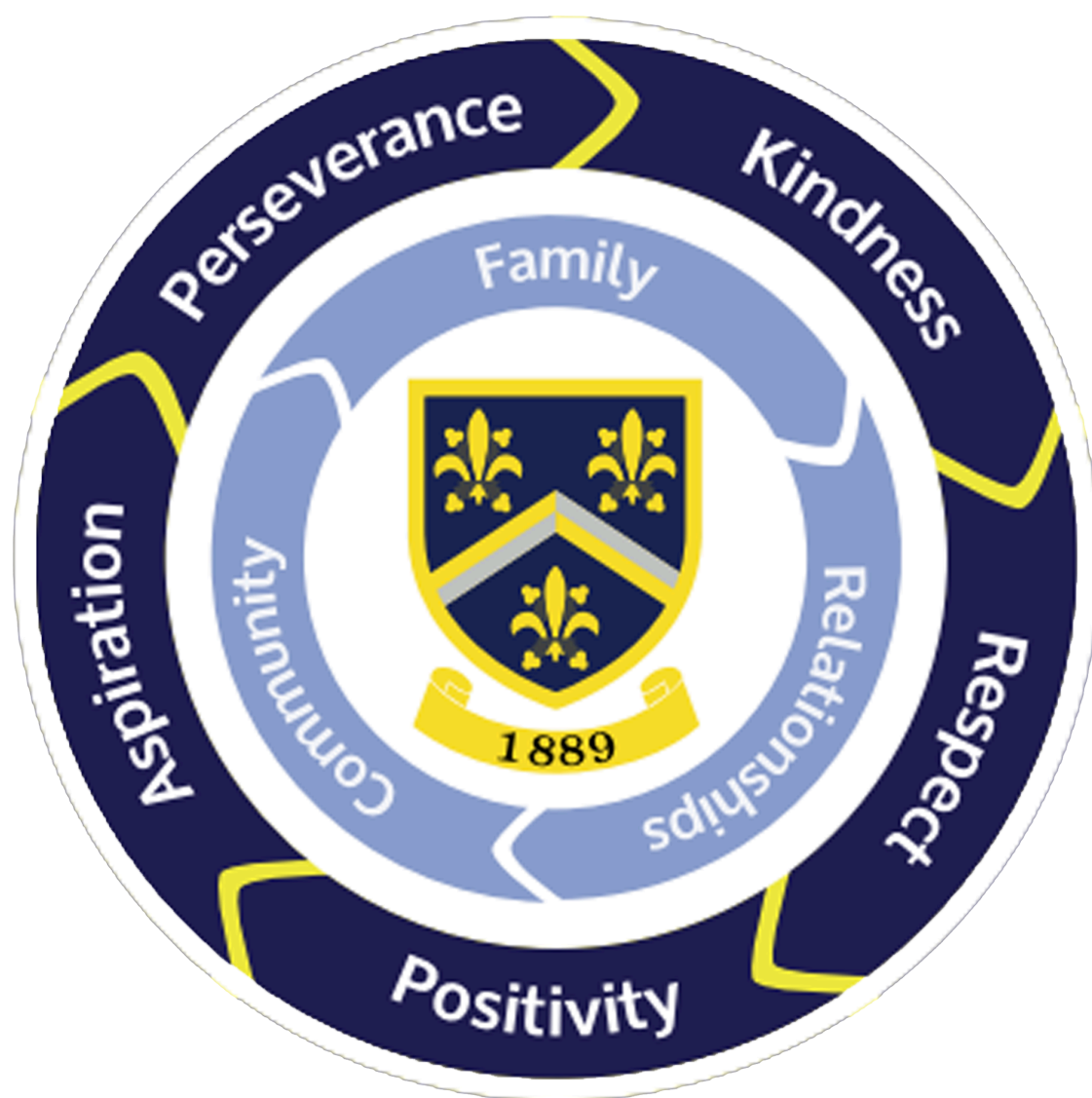


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Introduction to Hitchin Girls' School Sixth Form

It gives us great pleasure to welcome you to Hitchin Girls' Sixth Form. Our aim is for you to make the most of the exciting and diverse opportunities on offer so you lay strong foundations for success in your future life, be it at university, apprenticeship, in the world of work and beyond. As a member of the Hitchin Consortium we are able to offer our students access to a wide range of courses. Hitchin Girls' School Sixth Form has a reputation for excellence in all areas; its wide choice of subjects, very good academic results and enrichment and leadership opportunities.

Life in the Sixth Form differs from that of the school and by being a sixth former you will enjoy unique experiences, opportunities and responsibilities. We hope that this handbook provides you with a useful overview of what to expect and so that you make the most out of your time with us.

The success you have achieved at GCSE provides you with a solid foundation for being prepared for entering sixth form but you should also be aware that whilst you will need to develop the skills to be independent, dedicated with a devotion of time to A-Level study. The time you dedicated to study at GCSE will not be enough for you to experience success at A-Level. You have much to gain from being part of the inclusive and enriching life of sixth form; you will however, need to have an open-mind as you will be provided with opportunities that will stretch and challenge you.

Our aim is that each individual student will have the opportunity to attain their full academic potential, whilst benefiting from and belonging to a caring and supportive community.

Central to your sixth form experience will be establishing a successful partnership with the sixth form team who include your form tutor and your subject teachers. We all want what is best for you, so if you do encounter problems at any stage during your time in the sixth form, talk to one of us. Don't wait!

Welcome from the Director of Sixth Form

It gives me great pleasure in welcoming you to Hitchin Girls' Sixth Form where everything we do is designed to provide you with the very best opportunity to achieve your goals and aspirations, preparing you not only for a professional world but as an individual with a sense of character and purpose.

I am proud to be the Director of Sixth Form at Hitchin Girls' School and I pride myself on fully embracing inclusiveness; central to my ethos is ensuring that all young people can succeed and thrive whilst being in a safe and supportive environment.

We know that education doesn't stop when a student leaves the classroom, therefore we value parental involvement and genuinely put relationships at the heart of everything we do.

I believe that every student and parent/carer is entitled to expect the Sixth Form that they have chosen to provide a first-rate education, and we shoulder this responsibility profoundly, with pride and determination.

In choosing Hitchin Girls' School Sixth Form you will be selecting a Sixth Form that offers its students a bright and exciting future, a Sixth Form that understands that every student is unique and a Sixth Form that will not just prepare our students for their next steps but stay with them for life.

If you ever need any help or support or you have any concerns or suggestions for improvement, then please do not hesitate to contact me directly or talk to the KS5 team – we want to hear from you.

Who is in the Sixth Form

Director of Sixth Form

Ms. T. Stojko - tina.stojko@hgs.herts.sch.uk

Head of Year 12

Mrs. E. Taylor - emma.taylor@hgs.herts.sch.uk

Head of Year 13

Ms. T. Pottage - theresa.pottage@hgs.herts.sch.uk

6th Form Administrator

Mrs. K. Purmessur - kirstie.purmessur@hgs.herts.sch.uk

Sixth Form Pastoral Assistant

Mrs. T. Hankin - trudy.hankin@hgs.herts.sch.uk

Examinations Officer

Mr. S. Palmer - exams@hgs.herts.sch.uk

Year 12 and 13 Tutors

12SF1: Mrs. E. Foster

12SF2: Miss. J. Pearson

12SF3: Mr. J. Buckridge

12SF4: Ms. K. Pateman (Mon/Tue/Wed) and Mrs. N. Bunker (Thurs/Fri)

12SF5: Ms. S. Mani

12SF6: Mrs. E. Symeou

12SF7: Mr. J. Dellar

13SF1: Miss. K. Hobbiger

13SF2: Mrs. S. Labinjo

13SF3: Mrs. W. Li and Mr. F. Walters (Wed only)

13SF4: Miss. R. Chowdury

13SF5: Mr. S. Hanse

13SF6: Mrs. S. Wallace

13SF7: Mr. M. Lynn

Other key contacts within HGS

Careers

Careers coordinator: Ms Stojko tina.stojko@hgs.herts.sch.uk

Careers advice: Clare Townsend clare.townsend@hgs.herts.sch.uk

Heads of Year and Heads of House

Ms. C. Gunns	Year 7
Mrs. K. Rowe	Year 8
Miss. E. De Wild	Year 9
Mrs. B. Tarbutton	Year 10
Mr. A. Jackson	Year 11
Mrs. E. Taylor	Year 12
Ms. T. Pottage	Year 13
Miss. S. Benmoussa	Austen House
Miss. E. Romain	Bronte House
Mr. S. Wright	Curie House
Miss. K. Mills	Frank House
Mr. S. Clifford	Jewel House
Mr. D. Crowther	Pankhurst House
Miss. R. Blaker	Rosa House
Miss. A. Wells	Teresa House

Consortium Key Contacts

Consortium coordinator

Mrs. E. Leigh - elaine.leigh@hgs.hert.sch.uk

Consortium Administrator

Mrs. A. Johnson - alison.johnson@hgs.herts.sch.uk

Hitchin Boys' School (HBS)

Tel: 01462 432181

Head of Sixth Form: Mrs. E. Christou

Heads of Years 12 & 13: Mr. D. Goring & Mr. M. Wilson

Headteacher: Mr. T. Bennett

Exams Officer: Mrs. L. Grouse

Sixth Form Administrators: Mrs. E. Lewis (am)

Mrs. C. Hope (pm)

The Priory School (TPS)

Tel: 01462 622300

Head of Sixth Form: Mrs. S. Hadaway

Heads of Years 12 & 13: Mr. A. Carr & Mr. N. Wright

Headteacher: Mr. G. Edwards

Exams Officer: Mrs. J. Cane

KS5 Manager: Mrs.E. Shipp

The Consortium Council

HBS Head Boy:	Jamie Timms
HBS Deputies:	Ethan Soanes and Elias Thomas
HGS Head Girl:	Bibi Winter
HGS Deputies:	Kelcie Beyioku and Leyla Shibli
TPS Head Students:	Alana Cheevers and Neve Howard-Minott
TPS Deputies:	Ruby Deane, Sara Glafche and Florence Smith

Sixth Form Student Leadership Team

Head Girl: Bibi Winter

Deputy Head Girls: Kelcie Beyioku and Leyla Shibli

Austen House		Bronte House	
House Captain	Sophie Barker	House Captain	Martha Wiseman
Deputy House Captain	Sanaa Rehman	Deputy House Captain	Zahra Qadri
Health and Sports Prefect	Hannah Cundell	Health and Sports Prefect	Harriet Utting
Curie House		Pankhurst House	
House Captain	Scarlett Lait	House Captain	Ribhya Singh
Deputy House Captain	Eva Edwards	Deputy House Captain	Mathilda Start
Health and Sports Prefect	Emily Carlyle	Health and Sports Prefect	Emma Peel-Blasco
Frank House		Jewel House	
House Captain	Julia Massey	House Captain	Tasneem Ahmed
Deputy House Captain	Evelyn Atkinson	Deputy House Captain	Venumi Gunatunga
Health and Sports Prefect	Evette Frempong-Osei	Health and Sports Prefect	Enya King
Rosa House		Teresa House	
House Captain	Shifa Faruqi	House Captain	Emily Lange
Deputy House Captain	Alice Green	Deputy House Captain	Leila Atkinson
Health and Sports Prefect	Abigail Manson	Health and Sports Prefect	Kirsten Morley

Timetable and Sixth Form Day

Form Time	8.40 - 9.10
Period 1	9.10 - 10.10
Period 2	10.10 - 11.10
Break	11.10 - 11.40
Period 3	11.40 - 12.40
Lunch	12.40 - 1.30
Period 4	1.30 - 2.30
Period 5	2.30 - 3.30

Each student is assigned to a form and has a form tutor who you will register with daily. There are currently seven form tutor groups in Year 12 and seven in Year 13. Tutor time forms part of our personal development programme and is used to deliver a range of activities to support students within sixth form and their post 18 options.

Each student has one formal individual interview with their tutor each term to monitor their progress - we refer to this as a one to one. Records of these discussions are kept which may highlight the provision of any further support or specific strategies agreed.

Registration is a compulsory part of the sixth form day where every student is required to attend at 8.40am in their registration form class. Every other week students will have an extended assembly during period 1 on a Monday. Students may enter the sixth form building no earlier than 8.15 am. Form tutors will start registration at 8.40am.

Students that have lessons period 1 at either Hitchin Boys' School or The Priory School, you may go straight there for Period 1 and not attend registration at Hitchin Girls' School. All students are expected to attend whole school services/events as directed by the Headteacher/Director of Sixth Form.

Students can access their individual timetables on google calendar which outlines their lessons, independent study sessions and some specific personal development activities. Students are expected to attend all timetabled lessons and utilise independent study sessions effectively to support their studies.

We have a wide personal development programme which includes planned assemblies and lessons and is also supplemented by workshops provided by outside providers. These focus on developing students' knowledge and skills to be a successful Sixth form student and in preparing them for their post 18 options and life after sixth form.

Lateness due to traffic, being in the village, etc. are not reasons that will be accepted for poor punctuality. Students who do not meet the criteria below may be placed on supervised study for their independent study sessions and register in the common room for those sessions.

Reporting Absences

We appreciate that at times, absence is unavoidable and also there are certain circumstances where you will need to be absent at short notice. At Hitchin Girls' School Sixth Form we promote accountability and responsibility and therefore request that you and your parent(s)/carer(s) follow our absence process to avoid difficult conversations about your attendance.

All absences should be notified before 8:40 am, to the sixth form office, either by submitting the form [Report a 6th Form Absence](#), or calling 01462 621300. In the event of an unexpected absence this should be reported on the same day. For planned absences such as appointments or interviews please complete a Pink Planned Absence Form and show evidence, prior to attending your appointment. All absences will be recorded as unauthorised unless we have been notified of a valid reason.

Authorised absences where possible need to be requested at least 48 hours in advance.

Any student's absence that does not follow these procedures will be marked as unauthorised and sanctions will be set accordingly. Students with unexplained N marks on the register will be emailed and given 48 hours to respond. Failure to respond will result in the mark N mark being turned to an unauthorised absence and detentions set in line with our behaviour policy. Once a detention is set it cannot be removed.

Type of Appointment	Action required
Medical/dental appointments	Please submit an Pink Planned Absence Form to sixth form staff, although wherever possible appointments should not be made during timetabled lessons. Supporting evidence of the appointment will be required.
Regular/scheduled medical/dental appointments that occur at the same	Please ensure that the sixth form office has details of this with supporting medical evidence i.e., consultant letter, CAHMS letter, etc.
Driving Test	Pink Planned Absence Form should be submitted to sixth form staff. Please note absences for driving theory tests are not permitted even in 'free' periods.
Recognised religious holidays Please submit a Planned Absence Form. Auditions /University Interviews/ University Open Days	Please submit a Pink Planned Absence Form.
Job Interviews	Only in the case of full time employment and please submit a Pink Planned Absence Form. Please try to avoid timetabled lessons.
Funerals	Please submit a Pink Planned Absence Form or a

	letter/email from home.
Occasional extra-curricular activity giving significant personal achievement, including field trips and visits related to areas of study; sports	Parents email the Director of Sixth Form or head of year to request permission. Once permission is granted students can inform their form tutor and teachers of any timetabled lessons you will miss.
Unpaid work experience placement relative to course	Please submit a Pink Planned Absence Form and speak to the Director of Sixth Form.
If in doubt complete a Pink Planned Absence Form	

Attendance and Punctuality

Upon enrolling to study at Hitchin Girls' School Sixth Form you are making the commitment to full time study and an important condition of ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) funding that secures your place at the sixth form, is meeting attendance requirements. All students are required to attend sixth form Monday – Friday, 8.40am -3.30pm irrespective of study periods during these times.

All students' attendance is recorded and monitored and we are accountable for accurate reporting. In the context of our sixth form, attendance includes:

- All morning registration sessions (8.40am - 9.10am) and assemblies
- All timetabled lessons
- All timetabled enrichment programmes (EPQ, Core Maths, etc)
- All timetables personal development sessions.
- All assessment and examination periods
- Other notified events such as workshops, assemblies and whole school activities.

There is significant research that links strong attendance with high academic output and preparedness for future destinations. Hitchin Girls' School Sixth Form provides diverse and exciting opportunities for students and we encourage all our students to participate within them. The two years you have with us will go very quickly and there is a lot to gain from maintaining strong attendance. We also enjoy seeing you around the school and engaging in the range of activities and opportunities on offer. If you want to become more involved, just ask us.

As previously stated, attendance is monitored on a daily basis and as part of our safeguarding policy, we react to absences immediately. As part of attendance monitoring we will intervene where attendance and absence becomes a concern. We hope that we do not need to initiate this process however, please carefully read and understand the following absence procedure:

Absence rate*:	Actions:	Consequences:
95%	No action required	Not applicable.
Below 95%	Conversation with form tutor and check in with home	Flagged for monitoring
Below 90%	Stage one of the attendance process	Green letter sent home and placed on supervised study for some study periods - to be determined by the Head of year.
Continued poor attendance of below 85%	Stage two of the attendance process	Amber letter sent home, student placed on full supervised study.
Continued poor attendance following red letter or attendance below 80%	Stage three of the attendance process	Students and parents will have a meeting with HOY and DOS and an action plan will be drawn up.
Unauthorised attendance for 20 consecutive days	Student withdrawn from sixth form	Student removed from roll

Absences that are not accepted and will be recorded as unauthorised:

- Holidays – holidays during term-time are unauthorised
- Part or full time work which is not part of the student's programme of study
- Leisure activities or pursuits
- Birthdays or similar celebrations
- Babysitting younger siblings or the care of family pets/animals
- Driving Lessons and theory lessons
- Tiredness due to social activities or impact of employment

Absence must always be explained and the school is accountable for reporting this accurately. Although you may reach 18yrs old whilst enrolled with us, it is part of our duty of care and statutory requirements that we request absence to be communicated by your parent(s)/carer(s). Absences that are not reported in this manner will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. Please also be advised that if you are absent from sixth form, your parent(s)/carer(s) will be notified and contact with home may be required.

Persistence absence or where absence trends have been identified will lead to formal absence investigation being initiated where your parent(s)/carer(s) will be required to attend a meeting to discuss the reasons behind this.

Should there be further concerns, this will be referred to the Director of Sixth Form where a comprehensive review of your curriculum is undertaken and our attendance policy followed.

Please ensure that all absences are reported to the sixth form and that medical evidence is provided where necessary.

We advocate effective and regular communication to help resolve attendance and absence issues and would prefer to work positively with students and their parent(s)/carer(s) to prevent any action being required.

Illness during the day

If you are too ill to stay at school, you must see the Sixth Form Administrator to gain permission for you to go home, your parents will be contacted and your register will be updated. If the Sixth Form Administrator is not available you will need to speak to a member of the main office so they can contact home and update the registers.

Open days, courses, summer school

Please note that a maximum of **3** days may be taken as Open Days for university visits. These may be attended only with the agreement of the Director of Sixth form and your subject teachers.

Part time jobs

Many students in the Sixth Form have part time jobs. Care should be taken that the hours worked are not excessive and students **are NOT permitted to work during the school day**. Recent educational research has shown that students working two or more shifts per week slip two grades below their predicted grades in their 'A' level examinations.

All departures from the school premises must be recorded in sign in/out pad in sixth form.

Punctuality is more than just 'turning up on time', it is a sign of respect as well as assisting in the development of organisational and independence skills. We expect students in the Sixth Form to recognise that excellent attendance is essential to maximise their academic potential. Consistent and punctual attendance are qualities highly valued by employers and references often ask for comments regarding a student's attendance and punctuality record.

Students are expected to attend sixth form every day. Excellent attendance supports learning, enabling students to follow sequences of lessons and access support from their teachers. Students will also have time to practise the skills their teacher wants them to learn. Where students fall into the habit of irregular attendance, their work will suffer. We understand that sometimes there are barriers and challenges outside of school, but we expect students to make their attendance at school a priority. Students should only take time off if they are too unwell to attend if there is a major family emergency or a bereavement; reasons for absence such as; minding the house, looking after younger sisters or brothers and driving lessons are not acceptable.

Punctuality is equally important to success. By not attending at the start of lessons, students will miss important parts of the curriculum and put themselves at a disadvantage. Punctuality is an important quality, which all students should cultivate as it is an essential component of being successful in the workplace environment.

What happens if I am late to lessons?

If you are more than 5 minutes late to a lesson without a reasonable reason or if you are regularly late to lessons or activities, your teacher will issue a 'late on the system' and the number of minutes late will be recorded. Students will be set detentions if they exceed 60 minutes late in a term and may be placed on a monitoring programme. where you will be required to undertake self-study. Being regularly late to lessons or activities should not impact other students in the class. If you are regularly late or very late to a lesson your teacher may ask you to report to the sixth form office and complete the work in the study centre. This will be followed up with a conversation with your HOY.

Punctuality is monitored on a regular basis. Patterns and trends will result in students being spoken to about their punctuality which will result in a monitoring programme being used to help support students in improving their time keeping or to explore what support may be required to help improve punctuality.

Attendance – attendance must remain over 95%.

Punctuality – Students need to recognise that punctuality is not just in the morning but also to lessons.

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Attendance concerns:	Attendance drops below 90% Green letter sent home. Student discussion with the form tutor. Students placed on Supervised study for part of their study periods.	No improvement in attendance after 4 weeks of receiving the green letter. Amber letter sent home, student discussion with HOY and placed on full time supervised study	No improvement in attendance after 4 weeks of receiving the amber letter. Red letter sent home, parental meeting with DOS and HOY and student	Students with unauthorised absence for more than 20 days will be withdrawn from 6th form.

Academic Progress and Reporting

Concerns regarding students attainment in one or more subjects will be placed on supervised study and expected to work in the common room. This will be determined through communication with the subject tutor and reviews of progress checks.

Behaviour & Conduct – failure to meet our expectations regarding behaviour can result in students being issued a detention and/or placed on supervised study. Our behaviour policy is outlined in the whole school policy on the website. [HGS Policies Page](#)

We have several formal points where we check and report on students' progress with home. Concerns raised at these points will be followed up through departments. Where concerns are raised about student progress students can be placed on supervised study.

Year 12 progress checks	October Initial Review	Progress Check 1	Progress Check 2	Mock Exam and Progress Check 3
Year 13 progress checks	N/A	Progress Check 4	January Mock Exam	Progress Check 5
If subject or behaviour concerns are raised:	Students seek out subject teacher/s for advice on how to improve. Students put on supervised study for 5 periods per week.	If no progress has been made from the last review the student must discuss their progress with the subject HOD and will be put on Supervised Study for all study periods. HOY will call home.	If no progress has been made from the last review the student will have a meeting with HOY and an action plan will be drawn up. Students will remain on supervised study. A HOD parent meeting will be held at the discretion of the HOD.	If no progress has been made from the last review the student and parents will have a meeting with HOY and DOS and an action plan will be drawn up.

Note - All students will have a 1:1 meeting with their tutor after each progress check throughout the two years. Subject teachers will give a comment on the report regarding students' engagement with learning. Students with positive reports will receive reward points. Students flagged as a concern may be placed on supervised study. Students regularly picking up consequences through the school behaviour system will also be placed on supervised study. Students will be removed from supervised study at the discretion of the HOY/DOS/HOD.

Vespa Programme

Success at A-level requires a specific mindset and depends on your habits, routines, attitudes and approaches to study. At Hitchin Girls' School Sixth Form we use the VESPA programme to help students achieve the mind-set that sets students up for success.

VESPA stands for Vision, Effort, Systems, Practice and Attitude.

There has been a lot of research conducted into the mindset of A-Level students and the VESPA concept is the result of two contemporary, forward-thinking educationalists putting all of this research into practice. Many sixth forms and colleges have adopted this model and it has proven success. VESPA draws extensively on academic research and classroom experience to develop a system that supports student learning, helping every learner become the best they can be.

The five ideas of VESPA are:

VISION The degree to which a student knows what they want to achieve

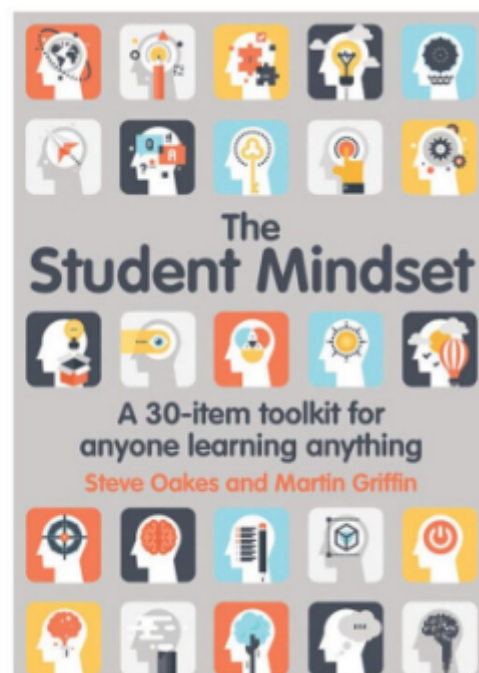
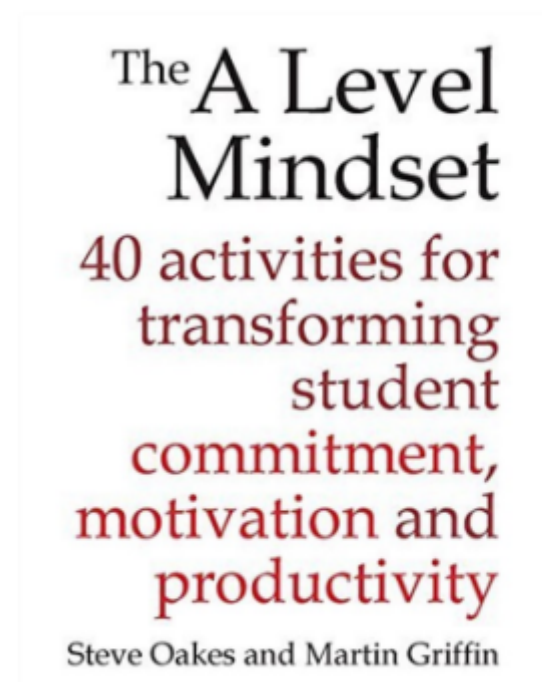
EFFORT The number of hours proactive independent study a student is willing to do

SYSTEMS The level to which the student organises their learning resources

PRACTICE The level to which a student commits to practising and developing their skills

ATTITUDE The way a student responds constructively to setbacks

At Hitchin Girls' School Sixth Form you will see the VESPA model being employed at various times. Some of the VESPA work is obvious, such as registration activities and VESPA events. At other times VESPA will be more discreet and embedded into your lessons by your teachers. Because VESPA is personal to you, you should be aware that it is very much a 'what you put in, you get out' type of concept.



Registration Programme

The registration programme is designed to enhance students' wider learning, personal development and contribution to the wider school community.

The activities are carefully planned to encourage all of our students to participate and to be proactive citizens and members of the school and local community.

The programme will change throughout the year depending on the foci. Some examples of weekly activities in form time are outlined below.

Monday	Assembly - guest speaker
Tuesday	Preparing for Interviews Students practise using the STAR approach to answering interview questions.
Wednesday	MOOC Presentations Students present what they have learnt whilst undertaken their MOOC
Thursday	Weekly Review A weekly opportunity to reflect on content of the week just gone for each subject
Friday	Quiz

Monday	Assembly - guest speaker
Tuesday	UCAS Working on the draft of their UCAS and getting tutor feedback.
Wednesday	Weekly Mediation Online meditation session to support students' wellbeing.
Thursday	Weekly Review A weekly opportunity to reflect on content of the week just gone for each subject
Friday	Quiz

Independent Study and Private Study

Sixth form will be hugely important and not always easy. Students will encounter unfamiliar situations; take on roles that may not have been considered previously, and tackle work that is more advanced and demanding. The sixth form will provide students with many opportunities to develop skills, self-confidence and provide students with ample chances to take responsibilities. It will provide students with many academic skills, one of which is teaching them how to become a good independent learner.

Independent study skills have become increasingly important as A level and other level 3 specifications have changed. Students will not achieve their potential if they do not put in the work outside of the lessons. Assessment frequently asks students to apply their subject knowledge to unfamiliar contexts and it is difficult, if not impossible, to do this if they have not taken the time to extend your understanding independently. Wider reading is essential to help students expand their knowledge beyond what is delivered in the classroom and in the set texts. Data tells us that the students who achieve their potential and who gain the highest marks are those who take the greatest responsibility for their own progress. This independence of approach is an area that all students should strive to improve, building on strategies that they have started to develop for GCSE. At KS5 there is greater expectation that students develop independent skills and knowledge to underpin those learnt in class.

Independent learners are motivated to learn. They accept responsibility for their own learning and have the confidence to approach others for help if they need it. Independent learners manage their learning processes effectively. This includes:

1. Identifying what they want to learn, for example, reading the learning
2. Outcomes in the module handbook
3. Identifying how they are going to learn, for example, individual study,
4. Working with a friend, asking for help
5. Managing time, stress and other commitments
6. Using a wide range of learning opportunities and resources
7. Adapting the learning process to make use of new opportunities

Students finding it difficult to manage their study time will be offered support from our KS5 pastoral lead. This will include helping with formulating study plans, timetables and identifying specific resources to help students. Individual departments also run Sixth Form support sessions and will invite students to attend should they be struggling in their subject.

There is a student study guide to give more tips and advice on how to manage workload and utilise independent study time.

The sixth form building and facilities have been designed specifically to accommodate sixth form students exclusively. Students are invited to make use of the facilities that are on offer and be aware of other students and staff around them to ensure that they make the most out of their independent and private study periods.

The sixth form building has a dedicated study area where the space is designed to facilitate peaceful study to aid concentration. We promote silent study in this area where the expectations are that students do not disturb others in this space. When available students are also able to use the library and the lower school hall.

Students Wellbeing and Healthy Lifestyles

What?	Who?	Why?	When?	Where?	How?
Safeguarding	Any member of staff.	Any concerns about an issue/safeguarding for yourself or others	All week	All areas of the school	In person, email, report to the 6th for the team.
Pastoral	Mrs Hankin	A few examples of what you might wish to talk about include organisation, anxiety, depression, friendships, home, well being.	All week	Pastoral Hub and Sixth form office,	In person or send an email request. *
Form Tutors	Various across year 12 and 13	Study, life balance, stress, exams, general coaching	Monday - Friday	Form Room	In person, email
UCAS Advice	DOS, HOY, Subject teachers	Application process, interviews, starting the UCAS application			
Careers Advice	Careers team	Work experience, post 18 options, applying for apprenticeships.	Designated appointments, or requests for appointments via HOY. during apprenticeship breakfast.	Careers office/common room	In person or via email
Questions around attendance	Mrs Purmessur	Various such as planned absence or missing marks	All week	6th form office	In person or via email

*Students can refer themselves directly or via their form tutor: pastoral@hgs.herts.sch.uk. They will be offered a time to meet with Mrs Hankin during a private study period. Students are able to access help as a one-off, or regular fortnightly meetings.

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

For full details of our commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging, we invite students to read our full Equality Information and Objectives Policy.

[HGS Policies Page](#)

This charter is designed to communicate the values and commitments that we, the whole sixth form community (students and staff), pledge our responsibility to achieve.

Our 10 commitments:

1. Equity - We believe in fairness of opportunity and experience to support positive outcomes for all.
2. Responsibility – Our sixth form ensures that everyone has a responsibility and is accountable for their actions.
3. Belonging – Our sixth form believes that everyone belongs here; everyone is welcomed to our community.
4. Wellbeing – We care about people's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.
5. Voice – all members of our community have the right to have a voice and contribute to our sixth form.
6. Respect - To treat all members of our community with respect, both as individuals and communities.
7. Value – our sixth form values the social and cultural capital that diversity brings to our community so that everyone feels valued.
8. Support – we recognise the value of supporting each other so that everyone can reach their potential.
9. Empowerment – we believe in empowering people to stand up for themselves and each other.
10. Representation – Ensure that minority members of our sixth form community are represented through greater representation.

Anti Bullying

Full details of our Anti Bullying Policy can be found using the policy link above.

At Hitchin Girls' School we believe that everybody at Hitchin Girls' School has the right to feel welcome, safe, happy and supported and should be free from all forms of unkind/hurtful behaviour, discrimination, harassment and bullying.

We seek to create an environment in which all members of the school treat each other with kindness and respect, are tolerant and celebrate diversity.

As sixth formers you are role models within the school and you are encouraged to display and uphold the school's five core values - positivity, aspiration, perseverance, kindness and respect. We are a telling school which means that anyone who knows or suspects bullying is happening has a responsibility to report it.

Full details of our anti bullying policy can be found on the website [HGS Policies Page](#)

Sixth Form Dress Code

In line with our commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging charter, we believe in giving young people in our sixth form, the opportunity for expression and individual character. We do also need to outline that as we are located within a school environment, students should appreciate that dressing appropriately for the school and sixth form environment shows that you are committed to working with the school and sixth form values and wish to be considered as a young adult with the aspirations for success.

Sixth Form tutors will ensure that you are dressed appropriately for sixth form and the school environment; if they consider you are dressed inappropriately they will refer you to the HOY/Director of Sixth Form who may send you home to change. In most instances students will be spoken to first, re-occurrence will result in students being sent home to change. Further re-occurrences will result in formal consequences and sanctions which we hope will not be required.

Our dress code is outlined below.

A skirt, dress or trouser suit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jackets are a compulsory part of the uniform.• The suit can be worn with their own choice of shirt or top in any colour, but without logos.• Skirts must be of a reasonable length for work.
Shoes or boots	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shoes or boots may be worn but no 'Ugg' style boots, plimsolls or trainers will be accepted.
Jewellery, make-up and hair	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students can have only one face piercing visible. This is a single nose piercing and students may only wear a stud.• Hair and make-up should be worn in natural colours.
Lanyard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students must wear their House lanyard at all times when on the school site as a safeguarding measure unless directed otherwise by a member of staff.

Please note the following:

- Denim or jean style trousers/ skirts or indeed any other items of clothing made of this material should not be worn.
- Leggings or combats
- Clothing should not be excessively transparent, thus lacking in modesty.
- Cropped or Spaghetti strapped tops
- Footwear should be secure and not pose a health and safety risk.
- Casual t-shirts with slogans should not be worn.
- Hoodies are not allowed to be worn once at Sixth Form or in the main building. They can be worn as part of warm clothing to and from Sixth Form only.
- Stretch tube skirts, combat style trousers and leggings are not acceptable.
- No Ugg Style boots, plimsolls (including Converse and Vans) or trainers.
- No extreme hair colours - natural colours and highlights only.

It is appreciated that you may want to express your personality and individuality as a young adult. We hope that you can see that our dress code does not prevent this; however, extremities or challenges to the level of acceptability will not be tolerated. Please speak to a member of the sixth form team if you require clarification before purchasing your clothes for sixth form.

Mobile Phones and Digital Devices

We appreciate that mobile phones are a large part of life and that young people will want to use their mobile phones whilst at sixth form. Mobile phones can support learning however, they can also cause a distraction to both the user and other people. Students should consider how they use their mobile phone so that they do not disturb others or be required to leave the phone in the care of the sixth form team.

We enforce the following expectations of mobile phone use at Hitchin Girls' School Sixth Form. They are simple and straight-forward so there is no confusion on where students can/cannot use their phones:

1. Sixth form students can use their mobile phones whilst in the sixth form block during and break and lunchtime.
2. Sixth form students are not permitted to use their mobile phones in the main school building, lower block, science block, PE areas, woodside, music block, the canteen spaces and other outside spaces.
3. Mobile phones must not be used during lessons unless authorised and directed by staff for the purpose of a learning activity.

We respectfully ask that students working in the study area of the sixth form block have their phone notifications switched to silent and use headphones. This is out of courtesy to other students in the quiet study area.

What do I do if I need to take an important phone call?

We appreciate that sixth form students become more independent and also are responsible for organising and arranging appointments, interviews, etc. If a student has a scheduled telephone call or is expecting to receive a telephone call during a lesson and it cannot be avoided, then the student is responsible for informing the member of staff and to request to step out of the lesson in which to take the call. If the call is of a sensitive nature then the student should request to take the call outside of the building.

Please try to schedule calls outside of lesson times and planned activities. Sixth Form students who use their phone elsewhere in the school will have it confiscated. It can be collected from the office at the end of the day. Repeated instances of non-compliance with this policy will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Students are free to use personal digital devices that are appropriate to their studies, which may include subject specific devices. Students should be aware of the school's policy of acceptable use and are reminded that inappropriate use of a mobile or digital device will form part of the school behaviour policy. We therefore promote mature and sensible use of mobile phones and digital devices.

What happens if I lose my mobile and/or digital device?

Hitchin Girls' School and the Sixth Form will not be held responsible for any loss or damage to any personal equipment including mobile phones and other digital devices.

Driving and Parking

We advocate and encourage our students to lead healthy and active lifestyles and as such, we promote travelling to the sixth form on foot or by cycling where possible. We do however, appreciate that some students come from surrounding villages and therefore this may not be possible or appropriate.

Sixth form students who pass their driving are welcome to drive to school but please note there is no student parking on the school grounds. Students caught parking on the school grounds will be sanctioned.

Please note that:

- **Driving lessons must not** be booked during the school day as the school day is for study.
- **Theory Exam must not be** booked during the school day.
- **Driving Exam** can be booked during the school day. Students will need to complete a Pink Planned Absence form which is signed by subject staff, tutors and Director of Sixth Form

For many years we have worked with Hertfordshire services to promote road safety and the Learn to Live programme features in the year 12 personal development programme. In addition to this you may find the links below helpful.

Safer driving websites:

<https://www.think.gov.uk/>

<https://www.brake.org.uk/get-involved/take-action/mybrake/knowledge-centre/young-drivers>

<https://www.herts.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/rs/road-safety/>

<https://www.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/rs/road-safety/young-inexperienced-drivers/>

<https://www.theaa.com/driving-school/driving-lessons/road-safety>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code/annex-8-safety-code-for-new-drivers>

<https://www.firststop.co.uk/blog/top-tips-for-new-drivers>

<https://www.wearemarmalade.co.uk/driver-hub/driving-tips/the-first-time-driving-alone>

Driving On Your Own For The First Time | Learn to drive: Expert skills

Student Code of Conduct

At Hitchin Girls' School Sixth Form we believe in encouraging our students to be mature, respectable, young adults. We want to promote an environment and culture of 'expectations' rather than having a long list of rules and 'you must not'; however, it is important that we set the standards of expectation through a student code of conduct.

1. Show consideration and respect for others and for the school and sixth form environment.
2. Talk to all students, staff, visitors and members of the local community with respect and behave at all times, in an appropriate and courteous manner. Use language in written and verbal communications that is polite and respectful.
3. Be positive advocates and ambassadors of the school and sixth form, whether this is onsite or not. Instances of misconduct off the sixth form site on a sixth form activity or elsewhere, which brings discredit upon the sixth form or school may be treated as if they had taken place on the school site; this also applies to behaviour on social media.
4. Adhere to the school policies and be aware of the level of responsibility and accountability.
5. When using social media, behave in a courteous and honest way, respecting the privacy and feeling of others at all times; avoiding the use of names, contact details or images of other students, staff or visitors without their prior permission.
6. Be aware of meeting the legal obligations to the use of online and social media.
7. Dress in an appropriate manner, in line with the sixth form dress code.
8. Use mobile and digital devices in line with the school policy.
9. Smoking, e-cigarettes, energy drinks and vapes are not permitted anywhere on the school and sixth form site.
10. Equipment belonging to the school or sixth form must not be removed from the school site. Damage to property will be recovered when intentional, malicious or due to reckless behaviour.
11. Students bring in their own property at their own risk.
12. Students are not to have in possession; weapons or anything that can be used as an offensive weapon, alcohol, controlled (illegal) substances. Students are reminded that possession of these items could be reported to the police.
13. Students are not permitted to have food delivered to the school.
14. Participate actively and to the best of their ability in lessons and in the general life of the sixth form.
15. Attend punctually and attend all required activities including enrichment, supported learning sessions and compulsory workshops.
16. Complete assignments and independent study to the best of their ability and ensure that they are submitted as requested, by the stated deadlines.
17. Do not cause a distraction to others or disrupt the teaching and learning of the school and sixth form.
18. Adhere to the attendance policy of the sixth form including not taking personal appointments, paid work, or holiday during term times.
19. Seek permission from the Headteacher before making use of any school or sixth form logo or any other publicity material.
20. Seek permission from the Headteacher before broadcasting or publishing information about the sixth form or school, or members of the school and sixth form community. This also includes social media.
21. Abide by all school and sixth form policies and expectations.

Full details of our behaviour policy can be found on the website. [HGS Policies Page](#)

Positive Behaviours

Praise, encouragement and recognition of achievement, contribution and positive behaviours are central to our philosophy. This is done through positive reinforcement, strong role modelling and affirmation, using recognition and rewards where appropriate.

It is the school policy to recognise, acknowledge and reward individual achievements by students.

The following are some examples of areas considered to be worthy of individual recognition:

- Consistently improved standards of work
- Good or outstanding pieces of work
- Attainment or progress in one or more subjects
- Effort in class and/or for homework
- Outstanding effort for achievement in extracurricular activities
- Service to the sixth form, the school or local community
- Consistently improved attendance and punctuality

The sixth form will use the following methods of recognising positive behaviours:

- Recognition points reinforced within the lesson through teacher discussion and positive language reinforcement
- Contact home via telephone or email
- Inclusion in the school newsletter
- Sixth Form students can nominate their peers for the Ellie Swanton Awards
- Passport to Post 18 Celebration
- Termly celebration assemblies and certificates
- Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards for Volunteering
- Celebrated on our social media channels
- Recognition in assemblies and form time.
- Headteacher Awards

Consequences of Undesirable Behaviours

The list of consequences presented here is not exhaustive and students are reminded of their adherence to the school policy for behaviour and other associated policies (acceptable use, etc.). The consequences listed here are in relation to common, daily behaviour and conduct of the sixth form community. Just because something is not listed explicitly here, does not mean that there are no consequences associated. It should also be recognised that different situations may have individual circumstances and therefore, the Director of Sixth Form may enforce different actions to be taken.

Full details of the Behaviour for Learning policy can be found on our website.

[HGS Policies Page](#)

Category	If this behaviour occurs....	The consequences are...	Which could result in.....
Attendance to Sixth Form	Student attendance falls below 90%.	Attendance drops below 90% Green letter sent home. Student discussion with the form tutor. Students placed on Supervised study for part of their study periods.	Escalation to stage 2 if no improvement made.
	Student attendance falls below 85%.	No improvement in attendance after 4 weeks of receiving the green letter. Amber letter sent home, student discussion with HOY and placed on full time supervised study,	Escalation to stage 3 if no improvement made.
	Student attendance falls below 80%.	No improvement in attendance after 4 weeks of receiving the amber letter. Red letter sent home, parental meeting with DOS and HOY and student	Review of curriculum.
	Student is absent for more than 20 days consecutively with no medical.	Student is withdrawn from the sixth form.	NA
Student misses form time or lessons	Student misses form.	A detention is set.	Student placed on supervised study
	Student misses a lesson.	A detention set and the student is notified. Tutor follows up with the student.	Further monitoring and supervised study if patterns continue.
	Students miss several lessons or C2 detention in a day.	C3 detention is issued and supervised study is placed on the timetable. Head of Year conversation with students.	Students escalate up the behaviour ladders.
	Student attendance becomes a significant concern due to repeated failure to attend lessons.	HOY meet with parents and students to set targets. Supervised study in place and potentially further sanctions.	Students continue to evaluate up the behaviour ladder.
	Student attendance to lessons is sporadic.	Parents invited in for a meeting with DOS	Review of the curriculum.

Category	If this behaviour occurs....	The consequences are...	Which could result in.....
Behaviour & Conduct	Refer to the behaviour policy on the school website. HGS Policies Page		
Dress Code	Failure to wear lanyard	Behaviour logged on the system	Moving to supervised study
	Repeated failure to wear lanyard	Placed on supervised study	
	Breach of the dress code	1st offence Tutor speaks to the student and records as per the behaviour system. Email sent home to parents.	2nd breach of dress code student may be required to go home to get changed. If this is not possible, the student may be required to remain in the sixth form centre and placed on supervised study.
	Breach of dress code 2nd offence	2nd breach of dress code student may be required to go home to get changed. If this is not possible, the student may be required to remain in the sixth form centre and placed on supervised study. Full Time supervised study and daily reporting for uniform check.	
	Purposeful non-compliance with the sixth form dress code.	Student to meet with HOY and Director of sixth form.	Full Time supervised study and daily reporting for uniform check.
Homework	Failure to complete homework / coursework / meet deadline.	1st occurrence—extension provided if appropriate. Record on the school system. Teachers may contact home depending on the significance of the deadline.	Supervised study if work is not completed.
	Homework / coursework / deadlines not being met.	Continue to record on the system. Placed on supervised study. HOD contacts home.	Could result in full time supervised study.
	Persistent failure to complete homework/coursework/d deadlines.	Placed on full time supervised study. Continue to log on the system. HOY contacts home.	Review of the students curriculum with the Director of Sixth Form
	Significant concerns as to completion of homework/coursework and disregard of deadlines.	Parents and students meeting with HOY and Director of Sixth form.	Where there is no progress, escalation to the intention review for personalised curriculum.
Mobile Phones	Not following mobile phone and digital devices policy.	Confiscation of device until the end of the school day and detention set.	Having to hand in the phone for two weeks to the office.

Category	If this behaviour occurs....	The consequences are...	Which could result in.....
Parking on school site	Students parking on site	Asked to move the vehicle and C2 detention issued	Lead onto a C3 for further violations of the no parking on site rule.
	Repeated parking on site	C3 detention issued Parents contacted by the Head of Year.	Lead to moving up the consequence ladder in line with the school behaviour policy.
	Disregard of the rule for no parking on site.	Escalation up the consequence ladder and parents contacted by the Director of 6h form.	Further movement up the behaviour ladder and possible meeting with parents.
Punctuality	Student is unreasonable late (more than 5mins) - first time.	Students sign in the sixth form entrance. Tutor speaks to the student.	Disregard could result in student being sent to report to the sixth form office.
	Student is unreasonably late - after 1st occasion	Teacher logs minutes on the system and reports students to HOY.	Could result in a detention and follow up with HOY regarding the importance of punctuality to lessons and student accountability.
	Students are excessively late to lessons for no valid reason.	Student is not permitted in the lesson and the class teacher sends the student to the sixth form office. The student is responsible for completing study work recognising accountability. Detention is set for missing the lesson.	Could be placed on supervised study if the pattern continues. Can also result in escalating up the behaviour ladder for failure to create behaviour and take accountability.
	Student punctuality is a significant concern	Students are placed on supervised study and home are contacted.	Continued failure to address the issue and take accountability will result in a parental meeting with HOY and director of sixth form for a curriculum review.
	Study has no regard for punctuality and is consistently late for lessons.	Parents invited in for a meeting with HOY and Director of Sixth Form.	Curriculum review.

Communication Expectation

We commit ourselves to creating positive relationships between our stakeholders to ensure that at all times, the student is placed centre of what we do and recognises the challenges that come with communication methods. This charter is designed to communicate the values and commitments that we, the whole sixth form community (students and staff), pledge our responsibility to achieve.

The following commitments have been agreed through student voice, collaboration between the student and staff body, and in partnership with parents and carers.

Our commitments:

1. **Effective** - It is always our aim to communicate with stakeholders in the most effective manner using the most appropriate communication channel.
2. **Timely** - We recognise that communication in the modern world is so much easier with digital devices commonplace and that time is often an important factor in many circumstances. We commit to dealing with enquiries in a timely manner whilst also highlighting that with teaching comes unavoidable constraints and may cause delays.
3. **Sensitive** - Communication should be sensitive and understanding of circumstances.
4. **Understanding** - integrating and working in synergy with stakeholders to achieve positive health and wellbeing.
5. **Respectful** - Communication between all stakeholders should seek to establish respectful, fair, open and professional relationships.
6. **Consistent** - Communication channels should be consistent so that it aids clarity and is easily accessible when sourcing information.
7. **Wellbeing** - We recognise the importance of timely communication and also the boundaries of expectations of responding to communication. The wellbeing of stakeholders should be considered when engaging in communication.
8. **Professional** - Communication should always address people in an appropriate manner, in a courtesy that would be expected in return.

Issue		Who should I contact
Attendance	Illness, missing a lesson, appointments	Mrs Purmesur - ensuring that for planned absence the Pink Planned Absence Form is completed and signed and evidence provided.
N mark on the register	Students will be contacted by Mrs Purmessur to notify them they have an N mark.	Students need to reply to Mrs Purmessur within 48 hours of being notified. Failure to resolve the N mark will result in it being recorded as an unauthorised absence and a detention issued accordingly.
Pastoral Concern	Well being issue such as stress, medical concern or managing workload	Tutor, Head of Year/Director of Sixth form or Pastoral support. Mrs Hankin is the designated 6th form pastoral support person although other members of the team are able to assist in her absence/she is not available.
Subject concern	Struggling in a subject or more general subject concerns	Class teacher or Head of Department.
Consortium concern	Problems with transport, lessons etc	Contact the Director of Sixth Form at HGS who will contact Heads of Sixth form and relevant staff members.

Monitoring Programmes - Supervised Study

We want all our students to thrive and succeed and we are committed to supporting all our students to achieve academic success at the same time as a positive student experience. We recognise that at times, some students may require some support and guidance, whether this is in regards to their academic attainment and progress, or within a pastoral and wellbeing context.

Whilst we advocate accountability and responsibility, we sometimes need to support students by placing them on a monitoring programme.

Supervised studies are not necessarily about sanctions or punishments, they should be viewed as the sixth form's way of assisting you with difficulties or challenges you might be facing or ensuring that you are given support in meeting the expectations of the sixth form. When placed onto a monitoring programme, you may find that we identify specific areas to work on through contact with your teachers and you will be asked to keep a record of your activities in these periods.. These will be tailored to your needs and ensure that you can get the most out of your sixth form experience. It is also an opportunity to highlight anything that you need from us—it is a two-way conversation (three if your parent(s)/carer(s) are in attendance).

There are three clear stages involved with a monitoring programme in five different areas:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Academic
- Homework & Deadlines/Submissions
- Pastoral (Behaviour & Conduct)

Where there is a wellbeing concern or where a student identifies that they require wellbeing support, the Head of Pastoral will meet with the student. We deal with these situations discreetly and sensitively. Students are reminded however of our duty of care and legal obligation to follow up any concerns with regards to safeguarding in line with the whole-school safeguarding policy.



Home - Sixth Form Agreement

All students will sign a contract at the start of the academic year which will start with what they can expect as a student and our expectations of them. It says:

HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL SIXTH FORM WILL OFFER ME AS A STUDENT:

- Personal development
- The highest possible quality of teaching and learning
- A wide range of course choices, provided through our Consortium
- An ethos based on learning, achievement, aspiration and student responsibility
- Access to Sixth Form Common Room and other study spaces
- Access to sports and other enrichment activities facilities
- Involvement in community service activities within school, such as mentoring, to help develop leadership and interpersonal skills
- Access to careers advice
- Guidance to Post-18 opportunities
- Individual tutor mentoring sessions to support academic progress
- Close monitoring of personal wellbeing and access to support where needed
- Cover work set when staff are absent and monitored by department
- Recognition and reward for effort and progress
- Support and strategies to ensure progress is made towards target grades
- Social events to balance the academic demands of the Sixth Form

I AGREE TO FULFIL THE FOLLOWING EXPECTATIONS FOR THE DURATION OF MY TIME IN THE SIXTH FORM:

- I understand that I must meet the expectations set out in this contract
- I will ensure a high level of attendance and punctuality. Where there may be problems with this I will inform my tutor and appropriate members of staff in advance
- I will abide by the Sixth Form dress code
- I realise that this Sixth Form has a positive work ethic and that I must arrive at each lesson fully prepared with the correct equipment and with all work up to date
- I will complete work to a high standard and to specified deadlines. Where there are likely to be problems, I will see my tutor and the relevant members of staff in advance
- All work submitted will be my own work or clearly referenced and cited
- I understand that I may leave the site and that I must always sign out when I leave and in on my return
- I will abide by the Sixth Form rules on behaviour, serving as a role model for students in lower years
- I understand that study periods are to be used to focus on the demands of the courses that I have chosen to study. Therefore, in these periods I am to be actively study in a designated area and will observe a positive work ethos in the designated study areas during lesson times
- I will respect the fabric of the Common Room. I will do my part to ensure that all areas remain litter free
- I understand that I may listen to music with headphones at school but only in the Common Room and other designating study areas during break or lunchtime
- I understand that I may only use a mobile phone in the Common Room and other designated study areas at break or lunchtime
- I will abide by the guidelines given in the Student Handbook. If I do not fulfil the expectations indicated, I may expect one or more of the following sanctions to be applied: withdrawal of study leave; placed on a 'Behaviour for Learning progress card'; a verbal warning; a written warning; a letter to my parent(s)/carer(s); suspension from the Sixth Form for a specified period; permanent exclusion from the Sixth Form

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Essential Study Skills

You should make a point of discussing the most effective use of your study periods with your subject teachers as they are the people best placed to give you advice. Some of the most effective general strategies include:

- Maintain a well organised, logical subject folder for each of your subjects. Even practical subjects need to have a folder as you will need to take down tutorial notes for example.
- Going over your lesson notes, organising them and where possible building upon them through further research around topic areas.
- Getting ahead of yourself (especially with regards to coursework) and starting to complete work set that day.
- Doing extension work, (extra exercises or questions) in the areas you find most difficult.
- Reading through the teacher's comments on marked work and writing detailed student responses which will benefit your future progress.
- Carrying out additional reading (journals, newspapers, case studies, the internet) around your academic subjects.
- Completing past papers.
- Writing essay plans.
- Completing project work.
- Working on practical work which we appreciate is time consuming.

We do encourage you to stay on site beyond the 'normal' school day to make the most of the sixth form study facilities.

Tips for effective studying:

- Turn your notifications off on your mobile.
- Only you can say if listening to music whilst you study is either helpful or a distraction.
- Ensure that you have all the equipment and resources you need.
- Be brave in telling your friends and people around you that you are studying and need concentration.
- Have water and constantly hydrate the brain. **DO NOT USE ENERGY DRINKS!**
- Plan your study time across all your subjects and prioritise deadlines.
- Take breaks where you can get fresh air and natural light.
- If studying for a long period, plan a walk half way to give your brain a rest.
- Consider whether you need a 'study buddy' as sometimes you can save time and be more efficient.
- Be realistic with your study sessions—don't over plan what you want to cover.
- If you are feeling overwhelmed or worried about something, speak to someone. It may feel like the hardest thing to do but it is often the quickest and most effective way of reducing the stress or anxiety it is causing.

Exam Preparation & Review

Exam preparation is different from revision. The following tips should help you prepare for the exams which are published in advance.

Preparing for Exams

- Pull the whole course together (get a syllabus and do not compartmentalise information).
- Start revising early enough (i.e. months before the exam!)
- Try to keep a revision timetable.
- Change revision topics regularly to avoid boredom (but ensure thorough revision of all areas!)
- Revise actively by summarising notes onto cards or into diagrams; (don't stare blankly at your notes or copy out repetitively!).
- Revise in approximately 45 minute sessions (...your attention span!).
- Practise past questions and papers.
- Try to think up likely exam questions for yourself (but beware of question spotting!).
- Talk about the material you are revising (bore parents, friends, relatives, etc).

As Exam Day Approaches

- Ease off your revision (you need to be mentally alert for the exam, not a walking zombie!).
- Revise during the day so that your mind is used to working in examination hours. You must be at your most alert at 9am not 11.30pm!
- If anxiety sets in, talk to parents/tutors. (Breathing exercises, meditation or a GP may help.)
- Check examination arrangements (twice!) – time, place, etc.

On the day:

- Don't attempt any last minute revision, it will only disturb your carefully stored ideas.
- Arrive in good time.
- Don't let other candidates disturb you. Remain aloof if you need to.
- Make sure you have the necessary equipment for the exam (black pen, pencil, ruler, rubber, calculator, books!)

In the Exam Itself

- Keep calm at all times
- Read the instructions on the front page.
- Read the questions.
- Read the instructions (again) and find the questions you have prepared for.

As you tackle a question:

- Examine the wording carefully
- Take the time to plan your answer before you start writing - Everything you write should be relevant to the specific question asked.
- Write legibly and in a clear style using relevant terminology.
- Express complex ideas in short sentences.
- Structure essays with an introduction, a logically developed argument and a conclusion which all answer the question set.

Following your exams it is really good practice to review how they went. Many students prepare for exams but fail to review in a detailed way; they see a grade and that's it. Simply put, self-reflection is the act of taking time to think, meditate and evaluate your behaviours, motivations, and performance.

Self-reflecting on your exam performance, regardless of whether you passed or failed, encourages critical thinking about how you approached the task. It helps you consider what worked well for you in the exam process and what didn't, and how you can approach this task differently in the future. By reflecting on your exam performance and experience, you will gather valuable information to help you grow and develop as a learner.

The key is to not get too fixated on your grade. Look beyond your grade. Muster the courage to look at and/or listen to the teacher's feedback.

Effective questions for reflection

Exam preparation

- What learning strategies were most/least helpful?
- How do you learn best?
- Were you deep learning or surface learning?
- Did you use all the resources available to you?
- How realistic was your study schedule?
- When do you know you have really learned a topic?

Exam performance

- Did you have enough time to answer all the questions in the exam?
- Which topics or subjects were you least/most confident answering?
- How did you feel during the exam?
- Did you use any stress management techniques?
- What did you learn from this exam?

Future exams

- What study strategies will you continue using in the future?
- What changes do you need to make?
- What have you learned from this experience?
- Who can support you going forward?

On the next page you will find some further areas for you to reflect on. These are common themes that students often say they experience—you're not alone if you experience one, some or all of these!

Addressing common reflections

There are often common themes that come up for students after they have reflected on their exam preparation and performance:

Time management

Exams are designed to be completed within a given time frame. Finishing an exam too early can be as big a red flag as not completing it. You might have accidentally skipped a question or misread a requirement.

However, a more common mistake students make is spending too long on one question. You might have been confident about the subject matter and written too much. It's important to remember that, no matter how much information you can give on a topic, once your time is up, you must move on to the next question.

A good solution for this is to answer the easy questions first. This will build your confidence in time management. You can go back to the difficult questions later in the exam. When time starts running out, you can get flustered and make mistakes. Slow down, take a deep breath and use positive self-talk. Tell yourself you can do this — and then do it.

Misinterpreting a question

Students often say they misread a question or they misinterpreted what was being asked of them in the exam.

During your next exam, take deep breaths when you think you have gone awry. You can get a lot of clarity by taking just 20 seconds to breathe deeply.

It's smart to highlight the key words in the question and look out for the word "and" in a question requirement. In one question requirement, there might be two questions and you don't want to miss an opportunity to gain full points.

Stress and anxiety

It is very natural and very common to feel a little stressed or anxious coming up to or during an exam. Because of this, students often say their "mind went blank" during the exam.

For your next exam, be prepared to calm your nerves. Practice breath work before the exam and it will come naturally to you during the exam.

A simple method is to breathe in deeply for four seconds, hold for four seconds, breath out for four seconds and hold for four seconds. By doing this simple exercise, it will calm your nerves and help you focus.

If your stress levels are very high, be sure to talk to someone in your support network or a professional as they can help you with some relaxation techniques or give you some advice to ease anxiety.

After reflecting on your exam performance and experience, make an action plan for your next exam. Consider the following questions.

- What is your goal for your next exam?
- What study/learning strategies are you going to put in place?
- What study/learning strategies need to be changed or abandoned to achieve your goal?

Final note

Self-reflection can come easily to some and not so easily to others. However, even if you're in the latter category, it is still worth trying it out as it really can improve your performance, engagement, and motivation.

Careers Information and Guidance

As a school we have a statutory and moral duty to provide students with careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG). Our careers strategy (CEIAG) is interwoven into all areas of our curriculum but most notably in our personal development programme of study and fulfils the eight Gatsby Career Benchmarks, which are:

- A stable careers programme
- Learning from career and labour market information
- Linking curriculum learning to careers
- Encounters with employers and employees
- Experiences of workplaces
- Encounters with further and higher education
- Personal guidance

As a school Hitchin Girls' School aims to create and promote an inclusive climate, which enables equal opportunity and access to careers education, information, advice and guidance for all students, giving them a clearer idea of the routes to jobs and careers they may find engaging and rewarding. Our aim is for students to receive high-quality, unbiased, professional and appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance, so that students can make reasoned and rational choices, as they prepare to leave Hitchin Girls' School, about their next stage in life, whether it be further education, the world of work or an apprenticeship. This is in addition to having a great curriculum and the ability to demonstrate great character traits, particularly self-regulation; stickability; and empathy, which will support them in being well-rounded people who can flourish in their future lives and careers.

Our careers strategy is wide-ranging and can be seen in a variety of areas in the official curriculum, and in many areas of our personal development framework. Core teaching of careers education takes place within the form time, lessons, workshop and assemblies. And also within subject areas where key links are within the curriculum time and are taught by all teachers.

Access to employers, employees, businesses and enterprises, colleges and universities are through a series of speaker programmes linking to subject lessons, drop-down lessons and assemblies, our yearly careers fair, and trips and visits to various sites.

Employer Information:

In Year 12 all students will have a week of work experience, which students record using our Unifrog package - a complete destinations platform. Additional opportunities are sought out for students such as employability skills workshops, university summer school programmes and taster days, and there are several career information points around the school, with the main area being the library.

All students have access to a variety of careers interviews from varying sources, including at least one from an external impartial provider. These take place at key transition points for all students, but also where there is considered an additional need.

Supporting SEND Needs at HGS

Hitchin Girls' School School and Sixth Form have a warm and welcoming Learning Support Department (LSD) who go the extra mile to support our students, whether they have significant long term needs or short term difficulties which are presenting a barrier to their learning.

All students have the ability to learn and should be equally valued. Inclusion is most likely to be achieved when their diversity is recognised and regarded positively. All staff at Hitchin Girls' School are responsible for inclusion.

Students are entitled to receive a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. We recognise that appropriate advice, support and resources are required to achieve this for some students in the mainstream curriculum.

All students and their parents/carers are entitled to be treated with respect and have their views taken into account.

The aim of inclusion is to consider the structure, teaching approaches, student grouping and use of support so that they respond to the needs of all students. Special educational provision at Hitchin Girls' School is underpinned by high quality teaching in the classroom. High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will meet the individual needs of the majority of young people. The value placed on strong relationships with students is a key part of this approach to teaching. Teachers are expected to build respectful and nurturing relationships to develop our students. Hitchin Girls' School is dedicated to providing learning experiences for all students where there are no limits to achievements. This is done within a diverse and safe environment where all members of the school community are valued and respected.

The SEND lead will meet identified students where appropriate to discuss their attainment, progress, and identify any barriers to their learning. These meetings will identify where adjustments can be made to help students feel happy and secure in the learning environment as well as supporting them with independent study skills.

Parents and students can speak to the SENCO, Mrs Laura Cole, or the Assistant SENCO, Miss Alison Lennon or email (admin@hgs.herts.sch.uk)

Students transferring to HGS in the Sixth Form have induction days and taster lessons. Information is shared with other schools within the consortium if a student has lessons at one of the other consortium schools.

For further details please see the HGS policies page. [HGS Policies Page](#)

Student Support and Services

We would like to signpost you to some services that you may find useful. If you feel that these do not meet your needs, talk to us. We can provide support and signposting for many diverse areas. In crisis and needing advice and support urgently but it's not an emergency: To make a referral or talk about an urgent mental health problem please call the Single Point of Access (SPA) team who will triage your call for more targeted support.

8am – 7pm 24/7 365 days a year
0800 6444 101

Sandbox is an NHS funded service to support Young People in Hertfordshire with their Mental Health. It provides access to a wealth of resources and materials and you can sign up for an assessment for NHS funded therapy (either 1:1 therapy or a digital online course). Sign up at sandbox.mindler.co.uk

Samaritans 24/7 365 days a year
Call 116 123 Free from any phone.

Shout – If you would prefer not to talk but would like some confidential mental health support via a text based conversation. 24/7 service.
Text SHOUT to 85258

Switchboard If you identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender 10am – 10pm
0300 330 0630 or use their webchat service switchboard.lgbt
All operators identify as LGBT+

National Suicide Prevention Helpline. A supportive listening service to anyone with thoughts of suicide. 6pm – Midnight daily.
0800 689 5652

First Steps ED for help and support in connection with eating disorders.
Firststepsed.co.uk

Herts Young Carers – supporting young carers in Hertfordshire.
Carersinherts.org.uk

Herts Young Homeless – for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Hertfordshire.
hyh.org.uk

FRANK—Honest information about drugs
0300 1236600
Text 82111
Email: frank@talktofrank.com
www.talktofrank.com

Bursaries

Do not let financial hardship or personal financial difficulty be a barrier to your learning or prevent you from taking opportunities. The 16-19 Bursary Fund provides financial assistance to students whose personal circumstances may present a challenge. The Bursary is financial assistance for students while they are studying at Hitchin Girls' School Sixth Form, especially if they have qualified for free school meals or pupil premium funding in the past.

The Bursary Fund has 2 elements:

Full Bursary

You could get up to £1,200 if at least one of the following applies:

- you're in or recently left local authority care
- you get Income Support or Universal Credit because you're financially supporting yourself or someone who is
- dependent on you and living with you.
- you get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in your name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or
- Universal Credit
- you get Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in your name and either ESA or Universal Credit

Discretionary Bursary

The school will use its discretion to make awards in ways that best fit the needs and circumstances of identified students. These awards will always be targeted to students facing financial barriers to participation such as costs to transport, school meals, books and educational equipment.

Eligibility:

- A student must be aged under 19 on 31st August in the academic year in which they start their programme of study. In general, bursaries will only be paid to students in Year 12 and 13.
- The most vulnerable young people will be eligible for a Bursary at Level A of at least £1200 per annum. The sixth form will need appropriate evidence of all eligible students in this category. This typically might include a letter setting out the benefits to which the young person is entitled and written confirmation of the young person's current or previous looked-after status from the Local Authority or appropriate care service.
- Students who are eligible for support under Level B bursaries will likely include those students entitled to free school meals and those where there is evidence of families receiving additional forms of income support.
- In all cases, the sixth form team will use discretion in recommending students for individual financial support.

Such recommendations will take into account changing family or other personal circumstances and will be responsive to all needs including those which may only be temporary.

- Students must have their own bank account.

*IMPORTANT - Funding does not automatically continue into Yr13 from Yr12

To access the application form please go to the bursary page of the sixth form website.

[HGS Sixth Form Bursary](#)

Assessment and Exams

Students are required to attend all assessments and examinations as part of the school assessment and examinations calendar which is published on the school website. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) publishes their regulations for the execution of public exams.

This document outlines Hitchin Girls' School Sixth Form policy relating to internal assessments organised internally by the centre. Yr12 and Yr13 mock exam periods are published by the school in September and exam timetables detailing dates and times for individual subjects are issued to students in advance (no less than two school weeks prior to examinations) by the examinations officer.

In Yr12 students will sit trial exams in June and in Yr13 students will sit mock exams in January.

Attendance to these exams are an important element of tracking progress and allow subject areas and the sixth form team to provide intervention where required. Attendance is therefore compulsory and is closely monitored by subject leaders and the examinations officer.

Results of mock examinations are used to inform predicted grades required for UCAS and other post-18 applications such as apprenticeships. In the absence of trial examination results, teachers will use assessment data that is available to them from half term assessment and other assessment data.

Trial examinations are the most accurate way in which to assess students' attainment due to the replication of the conditions and environment of final examinations of Yr13. Unless supported with evidence or meeting criteria for special consideration, students who do not attend mock examinations will not automatically be provided with rescheduled examinations.

Internal trial exams and assessment papers are constructed using past papers provided by the examination boards or constructed by the subject leader. There is a limit to the amount of past papers which can be used for trial examinations and which are reserved for examination preparation in lessons. Additionally, students should not be at an unfair advantage through being aware of the contents of an examination paper which has been sat by peers in the same assessment period.

Application for special consideration must be submitted to the Director of Sixth form no more than 24 hours of the assessment taking place unless the sixth form team are aware of extenuating circumstances that would prevent contact being made. These circumstances are extremely rare.

Special consideration criteria:

Special consideration is given to a candidate who has temporarily experienced illness, injury or some other event outside of their control at the time of the assessment. It is applied when the issue or event has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment. (taken from JCQ guidance)

Students will be eligible for special consideration if they meet one or more of the following circumstances:

- Temporary illness* or accident/injury at the time of the assessment
- Bereavement at the time of the assessment

- Domestic crisis arising at the time of assessment
- Participation in a significant event at a national or international level at the time of assessment e.g., representing their country. Application for this to be made to the Headteacher in advance of the event.
- Attendance required at an official hearing or where this is directed by authorities i.e., court case or an inquest.

*Temporary illness under these circumstances relate to those which are diagnosed by a medical professional and whereby attendance to the assessment would exacerbate the condition or pose a risk to the student or others. Common cold, hay fever, headaches, etc. do not constitute temporary illnesses.

Absence for a trial exam under these conditions must be made in writing to the Director of Sixth form and include their Head of Year.

Students will not be eligible for special consideration if preparation for, or performance in the assessment is affected by:

- Long term illness or other difficulties during the course affecting revision, unless the illness has worsened (medical evidence would be required)
- Bereavement occurs more than 1 month prior to the assessment, unless an anniversary has been reached at the time of assessment.
- Domestic inconvenience such as moving house.
- The consequences of taking alcohol or recreational drugs.
- The consequences of disobeying the centre's internal regulations.
- A current complaint made to the sixth form relating to quality of teaching, staff shortage, or alike.
- Misreading the timetable regarding date, time or location of the assessment.
- Taking an unauthorised holiday or absence. Only the headteacher/Director of Sixth Form can authorise absence.

If special consideration has been granted by the sixth form, a rescheduled trial examination date will be provided. If further absence is experienced, students will not be provided with any further rescheduled assessments.

Students who have access arrangements will receive these for their trial assessments and will be provided with support in order to prepare for the assessments. The sixth form team will work closely with the learning support department to ensure that students with these arrangements are informed in advance.

Any student and/or parent/carer who feels adjustments are required due to specific circumstances, i.e., practical assessments, etc. should contact the SENCO to discuss requests.

Important—The sixth form reserves the right to charge for examinations and resits where the student fails without good reason, to sit the examination for which institution has paid, with a reasonable reason has not been provided.

Students attaining a U grade in the year 12 or 13 mock exams will be expected to undertake a resit. **Students in year 12 will not be able to continue a subject into year 13 if they do not achieve an E grade or higher in the resit.**

Hitchin Consortium Procedures for UCAS Predicted Grades

When a student applies to University through UCAS, their school is asked to give predicted grades in order that Universities are best able to establish the suitability of the student to their chosen courses. We are writing to confirm the procedures that will be used across the Hitchin Consortium for predicting UCAS grades for our current Year 12 students.

It is essential that we predict grades that we feel are a true reflection of each student's ability and potential. We adopt an honest and evidence-based approach to this process, whereby attainment and progress in Year 12 is the main indicator of future performance.

The teachers of each subject decide the predicted grades for their students, as they know them best. They will use their professional judgement and experience of making UCAS predictions and may consider some or all of the following factors:

- Results of Year 12 half-termly assessments (HTA's)
- Results of Year 12 Mock Examinations
- Grades awarded in progress reports
- General attitude to learning and commitment
- Performance in homework assignments
- The student's drive and passion for the subject

Teachers will not base their predictions on student or parent wishes, what the student needs to get into a particular course, or on students' promises to work harder.

We have a professional and moral responsibility to ensure that the student has realistic expectations with regards to their abilities, whilst still remaining motivational and aspirational. University admission tutors build up a knowledge of the accuracy of a particular school's predictions. If the school becomes known for over-predicting, then future applications are put at a disadvantage.

Teachers will input their predicted grades along with their comments for the student's UCAS reference at the end of the summer term and will complete a final review in the autumn term. These are recorded on Unifrog, a common platform across the three schools that have been used for a number of years.

If a student feels that a particular predicted grade is not a true reflection of their ability or what they may achieve at the end of Year 13, then they can ask for the grade to be reviewed by providing a letter of appeal and completed proforma to the Director of Sixth Form at least 10 working days before the UCAS deadline, to enable staff to respond.

The letter should outline the reasons why they think the predicted grade is not a fair assessment of what they may achieve. The Director of Sixth Form will then consult with the subject teaching staff, following which a final decision will be made as to whether or not the grade should be increased. The Director of Sixth Form will respond in writing within 10 working days of receiving the request to review predictions and offer the student has an opportunity to meet to discuss the outcome.

Industry advice is that competition for places are high so early applications are advised. Universities do not wait until the deadline before releasing their offers. All students are encouraged to have a genuine insurance offer choice where entry requirements are lower than their first choice.

We have in place a programme of activities and interactions through our Sixth Form Enrichment slots or Careers Advice offer and all students will be guided and assisted through their post-18 option choices.

The proforma will be posted on the google classroom along with this information towards the end of year 12 and will be communicated with parents.