

GUILDFORD COUNTY SCHOOL



THE SIXTH FORM

PARENTS' HANDBOOK

2009-2010

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first edition of our **Parents' Handbook** for parents of Sixth Form students. I hope that you find it useful.

This Handbook is designed to provide you with some information which should be valuable to you in the coming months. It is intended to supplement our School Calendar, website, ParentMail and letters about specific matters rather than replace them.

We have decided to produce this guide in response to requests from parents to have more information about what is going on in the Sixth Form. It is only right that parents should be kept in the picture in this important period in their son's or daughter's education and we have done our best to keep everyone 'in the loop'; however, there is no doubt that there is room for improvement. The increased use of email as a means of contact between parents and teachers has proved valuable as has ParentMail. Reliance on 'student-post' can be hit and miss and students may sometimes bridle at the suggestion that we speak directly to parents about what is happening at school. Hence, this Handbook.

I hope that the Handbook will go some way to improving matters. I would welcome your feedback on what is provided here and suggestions for amendment or additions for the future. Please bear in mind, however, that I want to keep the document a reasonable size and whatever we produce will not be so exhaustive as to address completely the myriad of questions which inevitably arise each year.

Please don't forget to contact us if there are any points about which you are not sure. A Handbook such as this does not replace the existing channels of communication; it is designed to complement them.

Neil Smith
Head of Sixth Form

September 2009

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CONTACTS

Parents are sometimes not clear about who to contact about particular matters.

I hope that you will find the list of **contact email addresses** below helpful. Teaching staff and tutors can, of course, be contacted by telephone (**01483 504089**) but this is not always easy to achieve, even at break-time or lunch-time, and written telephone messages can easily go astray. Bearing this in mind, please feel free to use email if you so wish.

We aim to respond initially within 48 hours but detailed responses, requiring the gathering of specific detailed information, may take longer.

<p>Head of Sixth Form</p> <p>nsmith@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk</p>	<p>For any matters affecting our Sixth Form students but please direct routine matters to teachers or tutors.</p>
<p>Sixth Form tutors</p> <p>Lower Sixth tutors, 2009-2010 abosco-reid@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk adaniels@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk mcarter@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk sgrammel@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk jkahwa@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk</p> <p>Upper Sixth tutors, 2009-2010 abaker@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk kbednarczyk@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk rdavison@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk jgibbs@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk jhoughton@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk gstaton@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk</p>	<p>For routine matters affecting students in their tutor groups – explanations for absence, queries over academic progress, student welfare</p> <p>Sixth Form tutors and tutor groups for 2009-2010 are</p> <p>Mrs A Bosco-Reid L6ABR Mr A Daniels L6AD Mr M Carter L6MJC Mrs S Grammel L6SG Miss J Kahwa L6JK Mrs A Baker U6AB Mrs K Bednarczyk U6KB Mrs R Davison U6RD Mrs J Gibbs U6JG Mr J Houghton U6JH Mrs G Staton U6JH (with Mr Houghton until Nov 2009)</p>
<p>Teaching Staff</p> <p>Staff email addresses are constructed by adding the first initial and surname to @guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk (eg nsmith@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk; mcheesman@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk; agarside@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk)</p> <p>If you have difficulty contacting anyone, please let Mr Smith or a Sixth Form tutor know. We will simply forward your email to the appropriate person.</p>	<p>For matters related to progress on courses and other academic matters.</p> <p>Please copy emails to the appropriate Sixth Form tutor.</p>
<p>Examination Department</p> <p>pselley@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk sroberts@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk</p>	<p>For Examination matters, eg entries, timetables, examination dates, publication of results, enquiries on results, costs of entries, re-marks and so on.</p>
<p>EMA matters</p> <p>vwebb@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk</p>	<p>For any EMA queries, eg applications, payments</p>

ParentMail

We are increasingly developing the use of ParentMail to alert Sixth Form parents to important dates and events in the Sixth Form Calendar.

If you are not signed up for Parent Mail and would like to join, please contact Mrs Jane Foord-Divers in our School Office (**jfoord-divers@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk**)

Do we have your email address?

It is useful to us if we have your email address. If you would like to let us have yours, please email **nsmith@guildfordcounty.surrey.sch.uk**

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

When should students be in school?

Our attendance arrangements are straightforward. Under normal circumstances, Sixth Form students are expected to be in school each day for

- morning and afternoon registration periods (but see 'attendance concessions' below).
- all timetabled lessons (not only in examination courses but also in morning tutorials).

Students are also expected to be in school

- if there is an event which the Sixth Form is required to attend (for example, special services and Year Group photographs) or if Sixth Form help is specifically required (for example, helping with tours of the school).
- for House meetings and House competitions.

What about attendance concessions?

- If a student's timetable is such that the attendance requirements seem unduly burdensome (for example, if a student has no lessons in a morning or if a student's only lesson is in period 5), students are invited to discuss concessions – ie special permission not to be in school - with their Tutor.
- However, as there are important matters covered in morning tutorial time, the opportunities for attendance concessions in the mornings are very limited. Students will be advised of what is possible by their tutors.
- Morning concessions will not be granted to any Lower Sixth students in the first term.
- Students whose lessons finish in the morning may agree with their tutors that they can go off-site and not to attend the afternoon registration period,

When is registration?

- On each day (apart from Thursday), students should be in registration rooms **no later than 0840**.
- On **Thursday** each week, registration is usually later than normal (0900) because of progress interviews arranged at the start of the day.
- Occasionally, progress interviews will be held on Fridays. On these occasions, registration will be at 0910. Tutors will advise students of what is required.
- For Upper Sixth students only, there will often be an additional progress interview session each Tuesday at the start of day and registration is at 0900.
- Students should be in registration rooms **no later than 1325** for afternoon registration.

Are students expected to be in school in non-lesson time?

Not necessarily. If a student's lessons are finished for the day, the student can go home. Students are also free to go out of school when they do not have a lesson. However, students are encouraged to regard non-lesson time as **study time**. Although, under normal circumstances, non-lesson time is available for students to manage themselves, it is expected that a substantial amount of this time will be spent on private study.

Students may be required to be in school when they do not have lessons, for example

- students may be expected to attend meetings in non-lesson time (for example, with your tutor, subject staff, Head of Sixth Form or Headteacher);
- students may be asked to take tours or help in some other ways;
- students may be required to attend Sixth Form or school events (such as Carol Service, House Competitions and Sports Days);
- students may be directed to stay in school and do some school work on courses.

Note: The school day runs from 0835 until 1530 and **students must not assume** that they can make out-of-school commitments in non-lesson time. Students should not arrange out-of-school activities (such as driving lessons, private coaching or work experience) in non-lesson time without first checking with their tutor or me that the arrangement will not conflict with a school commitment.

What should students do if they are not able to come to school?

All absences must be explained promptly.

- If an absence is **unavoidable** (for example, because of illness or because of an emergency at home), the student (or a parent) should telephone the school **on the day of the absence** to let us know what has happened. An email to the appropriate tutor is perfectly acceptable.
- Students should bring, on their return to school, **a brief note from parents addressed to their tutor**. The note should simply specify the date of the absence and the reason for it.

What do students need to do if an absence is known in advance?

Some absences can be foreseen (for example, interviews for employment or for university or college places, driving tests). If a student knows about an absence in advance, the student must let his tutor know **well in advance of the absence in writing**. It is also courteous for students to let their teachers know if they will miss lessons.

If the absence is significantly more than a day, eg if a student wishes to organise work experience or hope to go on a residential courses during term-time, the student should discuss the proposal with the Head of Sixth Form first and certainly before making a commitment. **Students should submit requests for leave of absence in writing. Letters should be addressed to tutors.**

Students should do their best not to make **medical or dental appointments** during timetabled lessons or to coincide with special occasions. We will normally expect such appointments to be made outside the school day.

What requests for absence are normally approved?

- medical or dental appointments which could not be arranged outside school or college hours
- a religious holiday
- a visit to a university for an open day or for interview
- a career-related interview
- an appointment with a Connexions adviser, although these should normally be scheduled to avoid disruption to studies
- a work experience placement which is integral to the course
- participation in a significant extra-curricular activity (check this with your tutor!)
- attendance at a funeral
- serious disruption to your usual mode of transport (eg railway strike), which makes it not practical to get to school
- driving test

Of course, the above is not exhaustive and we need to consider the frequency of such absences.

What requests for absence are normally not approved?

- Holidays in term-time
- part-time work during the school day
- leisure activities
- birthdays or other similar celebrations
- baby-sitting younger siblings or others
- shopping
- driving lessons

A day off for Mr Bear – but this will not be authorised in term-time.



What should students do if they fall ill during the School Day?

If a student feels ill in school, they should call at the School Office and then go to the Medical Room. If the student is not well enough to stay in school, any Sixth Form tutor will give permission for the student to go home, or arrange for the student to be taken home. Under normal circumstances, all effort will be made to contact parents to let them know what has happened.

Students who feel ill should not go home without permission from a Sixth Form tutor or Head of Sixth Form. It is important that we ascertain whether the student is fit to travel home independently and whether it is desirable to contact parents.

What about taking holidays in term-time?

Students are not expected to take holidays during term-time. Students cannot afford to miss lessons, particularly when courses and teaching time are so short. You should be aware that that courses only last approximately thirty weeks, including revision time. Each year some students go on holiday during term-time and this often poses problems over work.

If a family hopes to go on holiday during term-time, students should discuss their proposal with the Head of Sixth Form and bring a request in writing from parents. As you will understand, we cannot authorise holidays in term-time.

Holidays in term-time may be superficially attractive but students must remember the importance of the courses which they are following and the potential impact of the holiday on progress.

Parents sometimes look to organise family holidays after the AS examinations in June or July. Please remember that A2 teaching starts immediately after the AS examinations are over and the next few weeks is a time when the foundations of A2 courses are laid.

Are the attendance requirements different for EMA students?

No, but the consequences of failure to achieve 100% attendance may be financially costly in the short term. Payment of the EMA is based on 100% attendance; failure to achieve this will mean the loss of weekly payments unless the absence is authorised.

SIGNING-OUT ARRANGEMENTS

Can a student leave the school site during the school day?

Yes. If a student has no lessons or other commitments during the school day, the student is normally allowed to leave the school premises. Students are required to sign out in the Signing-Out folder (when is kept in the entrance to the Sixth Form Centre) when they leave and sign in on their return.

As a guide, students are advised not stay out longer than a period. If they are spending a lot of free time out of school, they are probably not working as you should and are heading for trouble.

The Signing-Out arrangements, of course, do not apply to special occasions and meetings.

Can the signing-out privilege be revoked?

Yes. Signing-out is a **privilege NOT a right**. This privilege may be removed if students are not working as they should. Students are allowed to sign-out as long as their work is progressing satisfactorily and as long as they are not required for any other purpose. If you have concerns about the signing-out arrangements for you child, please discuss this with your child's future.

STUDY GUIDELINES

I have heard that there is a big leap from GCSE work to advanced level work. Do Lower Sixth students find it easy to settle to AS level work?

The simple answer is that some students do and some don't. Advanced level work is different from GCSE and the gap is often most apparent early on in Mathematics, the Sciences and Modern Languages. Some students focus on their work from the very first day of their courses; others take longer to settle. Those students who settle quickly to their courses stand a much better chance of managing the gap.

All students starting AS level courses face the daunting challenge of having to do academic work again after a long lay-off. The vast majority of students will have done little, if any, academic work since early June. All students have to make a determined effort with their new courses if they are to settle quickly and make progress.

My son did very well at GCSE but is struggling with AS level courses. What has gone wrong?

This is not easy to say. Every case is different. We would need to investigate to see what the source of the problem is. In this case, it is a good idea to contact your son's tutor or subject teachers. Appointments to discuss the difficulty can easily be arranged.

When are students given advice on how to study?

Throughout their time in the Sixth Form. Although we hope that students will benefit broadly from being in the Sixth Form, the central reason why they are here is to follow their courses successfully and achieve creditable examination results. Students are given guidance at the outset on how to be a successful student by subject teachers and by Sixth Form tutors in the tutorial programme. Experience shows that some students settle quickly into what is required and others take much longer. Advice on how to study is given formally and informally in the Lower Sixth Form and in the Upper Sixth Form. As you will understand, understatement, repetition and reinforcement of advice is often required!

Interestingly, universities and colleges are increasingly running courses on study skills for their students to enable them to cope with life in higher education. This reflects the fact that some students still find it hard to discipline themselves to serious study on entering university and that, more generally, students need a 'top up'. You may be interested to go into a university website and follow the links to 'student support' to see what is on offer.

What are we trying to achieve in our work on study skills?

Underpinning work on study skills lies our aim to make our students **independent learners**. One of the 'key skills' which universities value and employers find highly desirable is the ability to manage your own learning to improve your performance. Universities do not want to have to resort to 'spoon-feeding' their students; those students who can take charge of their learning and be proactive and structured in their approach are those who settle most quickly and have an advantage over those who do not really know how to study. Employers look for employees with initiative and the ability to work independently to improve their knowledge and skills. The transition from being a Sixth Form student in a school or college to the world of higher education or the world of work can be very challenging, not least of all in the demands which it places on students to manage their learning.

What topics are covered in our advice on how to study?

Topics covered include:

- Time Management
- Planning
- Where to study
- Organising files and study materials
- Taking notes, writing essays
- Using a library
- The importance of a rolling programme of regular revision

How much time should students spend on their school work each week?

As a general guide, we tell AS students that they should spend **at least four hours a week (per course)** studying outside lessons. GCSE students should spend about three-four hours a week per course. Of course, more time should be devoted to studies as examinations get closer.

Thus, a student who is following four AS levels should be doing at least sixteen hours a week outside lessons. If a student is to achieve this, they are looking at about three hours a day (Monday-Thursday) and four/six hours over the weekend.

A2 students are advised that about **six hours' study time per course** is what they should aim for as a minimum if they are to make expected progress.

This study time should be 'quality' study time. Realistically, most of this will be done outside the school day. There are lots of distractions in school and unless the student has the self-discipline to work in the Study Room or in the Library, 'quality' may well not be achieved. Of course, this self-discipline also applies to effective study at home.

When you look at these guidelines, you will immediately see the implication for recreation and the part-time job.

If you have any questions over study matters, please contact a Sixth Form tutor.

My daughter seems to have do very little work at home. Why is this?

It is unlikely that work is not set, but it may be that the student has no urgent, pressing work to do as work is sometimes set in some courses over a longer period than at GCSE. Nevertheless, students should only occasionally have little work to do at home. If a student normally does little work at home, it is likely that the student is in danger of under-achievement. If this is the case, you should contact subject teachers or your daughter's tutor who will investigate the matter.

There is always something that can be done, even if not set as a specific task – reading around the course, 'rolling' revision.

My son does not seem to know what is required of him in his school work? What can I do to help?

I hope this set of notes will give you some ideas. All students were issued – at the start of their time in the Sixth Form - with a Student Handbook, full of ideas about how to achieve well on courses – you could ask your son to look at the Handbook and take note of the issues raised there. It may well be best to get in touch with one of us and we will meet with you and your son to discuss how he might be helped.

My son seems terribly disorganized. His notes seem to lie everywhere in his bedroom and his filing system is non-existent. What can we do?

It is sometimes challenging being the parent of a Sixth Form student, particularly – but not exclusively - of a male. Please remember that whatever you do may be seen as 'interfering with his independence and right to self-expression'. A file or two left conspicuously in the bedroom may cause a stirring of conscience - but it may not. It may be useful for you to talk to us and we could then work together to give gentle encouragement.



‘STUDENTS NEED MAPS’

Early in each academic year, Sixth Form students are encouraged to **look ahead** so that they have a clear idea of what is expected of them. The following are important points to note.

- **The AS, A2 and GCSE courses last about two terms.** Courses have to be largely finished by the start of the summer term. AS and GCSE examinations start in mid-May. A2 written examinations start in the first week of June. Orals, practicals, music, drama and art examinations take place in early May. When students talk about the ‘year’, they can easily misjudge what they have to do and can easily be caught out. The ‘year’ flies by.
- In planning their work, students should take into account **planned interruptions** to the school year and their consequent commitments. For example, House activities are a valuable part to our Sixth Form provision and naturally cut into the time set aside in the academic year. If students are involved in major house activities, they must make sure that they keep a focus on their academic work.
- Students need to be aware of the inevitable **out-of-school distractions** and put them in perspective so that they are still able to manage their workload – part-time jobs, ‘partying/clubbing’ running Young Enterprise companies, and (in the case of the Upper Sixth) a seemingly endless run of 18th birthday celebrations.

There are particular **milestones** which students should bear in mind.

➤ **The Autumn Term**

This is a period when **solid foundations** need to be laid for all courses. By the Christmas break, teachers aim to be somewhere around half-way through the courses. Upper Sixth students who are re-taking in January need to work on their AS re-takes alongside their A2 studies throughout this term; it is a mistake to leave this until the Christmas break. Lower Sixth students have the challenge of House Drama in this term and this needs careful management.

Poor performance in the Autumn Term will inevitably raise questions about whether students should be entered for examinations.

➤ **The Christmas/New Year break**

This is a notoriously difficult time for students to manage. The distractions of Christmas and New Year festivities, coupled often with extra demands arising from part-time jobs (extra shifts to manage sales and stock-taking), can leave students in a sorry state by the start of the Spring Term. Of course, this is a particularly challenging period for anyone with examinations in January.

➤ **The Spring Term**

Entries for the summer examinations are made in early January.

January is a very testing time for Upper Sixth students who are re-taking. This is the month of re-takes and yet A2 courses continue.

Although all students should be undertaking a programme of on-going revision as courses progress, this is not always the case; serious revision ought to start in the second half of the Spring Term and certainly by the Easter break at the very latest. It is a mistake to leave serious revision until the start of the summer term.

If students are really serious about their examinations, they should be setting aside their part-time jobs no later than the Easter break or at the very least cutting their hours.

➤ **The Summer Term**

The start of the Summer Term will be largely for last minute teaching and revision sessions. Orals, practicals and examinations in music, drama and art will be under way in early May.

A2 courses start after the completion of the AS examinations, usually in the second week of June.

A2 examinations finish at the end of June or in the first day or so of July.

SIXTH FORM DRESS

How are students expected to dress?

We do not have a uniform in the Sixth Form. We expect Sixth Form students to be reasonably tidily dressed. Students are advised that, in choosing their clothes, they should use their common sense and avoid the tatty and the bizarre. They are reminded that the school is a place of work, not recreation and advised that, if they are concerned about the acceptability of particular clothes, err on the side of caution.

The heat of the summer has to be managed carefully and students are advised to dress sensibly – but not for the beach. Flip-flops should not be worn for health and safety reasons.

What about dress for special occasions?

We have some special occasions each year, such as the Carol Service, Awards Evening and Open Evenings.

Girls should wear a black skirt and a white blouse on these official occasions. Smart trousers (but not jeans) are perfectly acceptable. Boys should wear a white shirt and tie, plain dark trousers and a dark plain jacket or blazer, or dark suit.

PAID EMPLOYMENT

What guidance do we give about paid part-time employment?

Many students have part-time jobs. There is nothing inherently wrong with taking a part-time job as long as the student is sensible over hours of paid work and give priority to their school work. If the job jeopardises progress in school work, the job should go or the hours which should be reduced. Students are told that they have important decisions to make on what is sensible, bearing in mind that they are supposed to be full-time students.

Students are told clearly that they should not regularly work in paid employment on week nights and that working both Saturday and Sunday is a mistake. We can only advise. Sadly, some students ignore this advice. Students are often attracted by the idea of earning money but they can easily fail to appreciate that a part-time job commitment can have a major impact on their ability to cope effectively with the demands of their Sixth Form courses. Tiredness after late night shifts or after a whole weekend working in a shop are recipes for underachievement on courses.

Employers often place particular demands on students at busy times of the year, for example, in the Christmas/New Year break when sales and stock-taking are all too common. Students can easily get into difficulties at this time. We hope that parents will support us in encouraging students to keep their hours in perspective even though this can become an area of debate and disagreement.

Students are advised to look ahead, not just at the examination period, but also at the weeks preceding the examinations, and plan how they are going to manage the increased pressures in this period alongside paid employment.

Can students take paid employment during the school day?

Students are not normally allowed to take paid employment during the school day unless they are classified as part-time students. The only part-time students in the Sixth Form are the occasional third year Sixth Form student who is following an additional course having completed A2 courses and examinations.

EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE (EMA)

How does my child apply for an EMA?

All you need to know about the EMA scheme, including how to apply is on the following website <http://ema.direct.gov.uk/>. www.direct.gov.uk/ema_apply should lead you straight into the EMA application website.

How do we manage EMA in school?

Weekly EMA payments are triggered by **full attendance**, in accordance with the school's attendance requirements. Bonuses are paid to reflect at least satisfactory progress in courses. **Mrs Webb** is our EMA Administrator and manages the EMA arrangements in school.

Each week, Mrs Webb issues EMA students with blank copies of their timetable. The student has the responsibility of obtaining teachers' signatures to indicate that he has attended the lessons in that particular week. The student should also obtain the signature of his tutor to show that he has attended registration as required. Students take the completed timetables to Mrs Webb who will authorize payment if the student has attended registration and all timetabled lessons, including tutorial.

One administrative problem that sometimes raises its head is that students do not submit their signed timetables promptly, sometimes over half a term late and in a virtually indecipherable mess. I have agreed with Mrs Webb that such late submissions run the risk of being rejected. It is expected that forms will be submitted within a month of the due date.

Bonuses are agreed by reference to the series of reports on the students. The payment of bonuses is dependent on students making at least satisfactory progress on their courses, including sitting the terminal examinations.

Although Mrs Webb will advise students and be as helpful as possible, it is each student's responsibility to follow the procedures which we have established for claiming weekly payments and the bonuses.

REPORTS and MEETINGS

When can I expect to have a report on how my son/daughter is doing?

We have a well developed formal reports schedule for Sixth Form students. Interim Reports, containing grades which indicate commitment, targets and progress, are normally issued just before the half-term break in October and just before the end of term in December. Full Reports with detailed comments from teachers are issued towards the end of the Spring Term.

Are their Parents' Meetings in the Sixth Form?

➤ **Sixth Form Consultation Meeting**

The annual formal opportunity for parents to come to school to discuss the progress of their sons and daughters is normally held towards the end of the first half of the Spring Term. The Sixth Form Consultation Meeting replaces the traditional Parents' Meeting but it is more than a change of name. The Parents' Meeting in the main school has been naturally focused on parents and there has been an invitation to students to attend with their parents, if they wish. The Sixth Form Consultation Meeting is designed to encourage more students to attend. Letters are still sent to parents advertising the meeting but they also include a specific invitation to students too. Interviews may involve teacher and parent or teacher, parent and student. There is also the option for students to come to the meeting to see their teachers themselves, should their parents not wish to attend.

➤ **Informal Consultations Evenings**

These are also regular opportunities for parents to come to meet the Head of Sixth Form to discuss the progress of their children. They are normally held once each half-term, on a Wednesday evening from 5.30 pm to 6.30 pm. No appointments are necessary; however, it is helpful to know in advance if parents are attending, particularly if academic progress is going to be discussed. Advance notice will enable us to gather information from subject teachers.

➤ **Other opportunities**

If you would like to come and discuss matters with the Head of Sixth Form, a tutor or a subject teacher, please let us know and we will arrange a meeting as soon as possible.

HIGHER EDUCATION GUIDANCE

What support do students have over applying to university or college?

Lots. I have summarised below some of the main parts of our programme and important dates related to making applications. It is important to note that, while there is a schedule of guidance on Higher Education in tutorial sessions and special events, the routine contact with tutors, on a daily basis or in the more formal rolling programme of progress interviews, is of paramount importance throughout the Sixth Form years. We encourage students to keep tutors abreast of their plans.

Lower Sixth

1 Spring Term

Of course, to an extent, guidance begins as soon as students choose advanced level courses in Year Eleven and at the beginning of the Lower Sixth Form year. More formal guidance begins in the Spring Term of the Lower Sixth year.

- In January, the idea of applying for places in Higher Education is launched.
- Students have the opportunity to complete Centigrade questionnaires. Discussions of Centigrade Profiles with Tutors continue throughout the year.
- Talks on aspects of Higher Education and how to apply.
- Students are made aware of the higher education resources available in the Careers Room and encouraged to make the best use of them.
- Students are given guidance on Open Days.
- Students interested in applying to Oxford and Cambridge are briefed on the two universities and the differences between them. They usually have the opportunity to attend an Oxford and Cambridge Admissions Tutors' afternoon at the Royal Grammar School.
- Students have the opportunity to attend the annual UCAS Higher Education Convention at the University of Surrey.

2 Summer Term (June/July)

- Explanation of the UCAS system and launch of the UCAS **Apply**.
- A talk on the 'Year Off' (given by the Head of Sixth Form).
- Predicted grades are available from subject staff (these grades are reviewed and, if necessary, revised after the publication of AS results and are available to students in September)

Upper Sixth

The **Autumn Term** sees applications discussed with Tutors and finally submitted. There is then an on-going dialogue between students and Tutors (and Head of Sixth Form and other staff, as necessary) on the progress of applications. There is also specific guidance given on particular topics. The Autumn Term looks something like this:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1 September | Start of UCAS application period. |
| September | Oxbridge candidates, potential medics, dentists and vets work on their applications with the Head of Sixth Form in the first weeks of term |
| September | Advice on writing a UCAS Personal Statement |
| September | Higher Education: Student Financial Support Arrangements |
| September | Advice on procedures after the submission of applications |

15 October	Deadline for Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science applications
November	Advice on Interviews
December	Target date for Foundation course applications (students should discuss this with Art and Textiles teachers)
15 January	Deadline for receipt of applications by UCAS (later for some Art applicants).

In the **Spring Term**, there is normally lots of discussion on responses from universities and colleges and on making decisions on which offers to hold. There is also considerable guidance on many aspects of being a student. The Tutorial programme itself is normally shaped as follows:

February	Common problems facing students in Higher Education: discussion
February	Accommodation 1: General ideas Accommodation 2: Landlord and Tenant (Rights and Responsibilities)
February	Money Management
April	Collection of Results/After Results

You may also wish to note the following:

1. After the publication of advanced level examinations

Our support of our students does not finish with the advanced level examinations. Sometimes students change their minds about what they want to do after the examinations and we are available to discuss new plans and any difficulties which may arise. Of course, following the publication of the advanced level results, we will help where we can if grades are not as students might have expected.

2. Re-applying (or applying freshly after having left school)

Sometimes students re-apply because they have done better than they had hoped or because their results were disappointing. Sometimes students simply change their plans. Some students may apply for the first time. We are happy to help those students who have left the County School to find places in higher education.

There is no difficulty in our providing help in the completion of applications or in writing references. Of course, we will give what advice and support we can to help students make sensible choices and effective applications. Students should apply using UCAS Apply and make an appointment to discuss their application with the Head of Sixth Form.



THE SCHOOL DAY

The shape of the start of the day for the Sixth Form is as follows:

	Registration	Activity 0845 >	Lesson 1
Monday	0840	Tutorial (or Assembly/Meeting)	0905
Tuesday (L6)	0840	Tutorial (Business)	0905
Tuesday (U6)	0900	Progress Interviews	0905
Wednesday	0840	'Long' Tutorial	0915
Thursday	0840 0900	Tutorial (If there are Progress Interviews)	0905
Friday	0840 0910	'Long' Tutorial (If there are Progress Interviews)	0915

Please note

- the adjusted times on Thursdays and Fridays to enable Progress Interviews to take place
- the difference between the L6 and U6 on Tuesday mornings – we have yet to decide whether the year groups will be harmonized from the Spring Term 2010

Lesson times

Period 1	0905
Period 2	1005
Break	1105
Period 3	1125
Lunch	1225

Registration	1325
Period 4	1330
Period 5	1430

Wednesday and Friday Mornings

There are slightly different timings for Wednesday and Friday mornings. Thus,

Period 1	0915
Period 2	1010
Break	1105
Period 3	1125
Lunch	1225

Twilight lessons

Some courses may have lessons timetabled for **1530 to 1630**. Please note that attendance at these sessions is not optional.

SIXTH FORM LEARNING AGREEMENT

On entry into the Sixth Form students are required to sign a Learning Agreement, a copy of which is below. It is designed simply to ensure that, from the outset, students understand what is expected of them.

Student's Name: (please print)
--

This Agreement sets out briefly the school's responsibility to its Sixth Form students and the Student's acknowledgement of his/her responsibilities for his/her own progress.

The School's commitment

The school will provide students with the best possible teaching, learning opportunities and personal guidance. We commit ourselves to preparing students thoroughly for their examinations by providing well-devised lessons and appropriate assignments which will be marked regularly and constructively. We will encourage all our students to achieve as well as they can and we will keep them informed about their progress by informal discussions and more formal progress interviews.

Students who are concerned about any aspect of the provision have the right to bring their dissatisfaction to the attention of the Head of Sixth Form who will deal with any concerns promptly and sensitively.

Student's Declaration

- I have read the Student Handbook and am aware of the requirements set out for Sixth Form students;
- I agree that I will attend school in accordance with the requirements set out in the Student Handbook;
- I agree to provide reasons for any absence which I may have in accordance with the requirements set out in the Student Handbook;
- I agree to work well on my courses and keep up-to-date with all assignments set by my teachers;
- If I know in advance that I am going to miss a lesson, I shall let my subject teachers know before the lesson in question;
- I accept that, if I make unsatisfactory progress on my courses or if my attendance at lessons causes concern, I may not be entered for my examinations;
- I accept that, if I miss timetabled lessons without good reason or if I fail to hand in work on time and complete it to a satisfactory standard, my teachers may recommend that I be withdrawn from my course (or courses);
- I accept that, if I fail to conform to Sixth Form requirements on attendance and work as outlined in the Student Handbook, I may have my courses discontinued and be required to leave the Sixth Form.

I understand that this Agreement will be placed on my file and may be referred to at any time during my Sixth Form career at Guildford County School.

Student's signature:	Print:	Date:
Tutor's signature:	Print:	Date:

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY: 2009-2010

A full Parents' Calendar will be published at the start of the Autumn Term.

Term Dates 2009-2010

- Autumn
- Half-Term
- Spring
- Half-Term
- Summer
- Half-Term

Thursday 3 September - Friday 18 December
Monday 26 October – Friday 30 October
Tuesday 5th January - Wednesday 31 March
Monday 15 February – Friday 19 February
Tuesday 20 April - Thursday 22 July
Monday 31 May – Friday 4 June

Additional school closures

- CPD Days (school closed)
- May Bank Holiday

25 September 2009
19 April 2010
3 May 2010

Reports and Consultation meetings

- Issue of Reports
- Informal Consultations (1730-1830)

You do not need an appointment but please, if you want specific information, let me know in advance.

- Consultation Evening

Interim 22 October 2009
Interim 17 December 2009
Full 26 March 2010
16 September 2009
18 November 2009
20 January 2010
17 March 2010
16 June 2010
28 January 2010

Examination matters ***

- Start of Study Leave

AS students 17 May 2010
A2 students 7 June 2010



There is no blanket study leave for the **January series** of public examinations. Students are normally allowed to take a half-day study leave before an examination for preparation; they should agree this with their tutor.

The January series starts on 7 January and finishes on 5 February. Personal timetables will be published in the Autumn Term.

- Start of A2 Teaching
- Publication of GCE Examination Results (March)
- Publication of GCE Examination Results (August)
- Publication of GCSE Examination Results (August)

14 June 2010
11 March 2010 (hard copy on 18 March)
19 August 2010
26 August 2010

Higher Education Matters

- UCAS Application period
- Higher Education Evening for Parents

1 September 2009 – 15 January 2010
29 March 2010

Events

- Sponsored Walk
- House Drama
- Awards Evening
- 'Into the Sixth Form' Evening
- Fund-Raising days
- House Sports (Winter)
- House Sports (Summer)
- Sixth Form Leavers' Day
- Upper Sixth Form Dinner
- Art Soirée
- House Music
- House Public Speaking

18 September 2009
12, 13 November 2009
20 November 2009
14 January 2010
11, 12 March 2010
17 March 2010 (reserve date 24 March 2010)
1 July 2010
2 July 2010
2 July 2010
9 July 2010
15 July 2010
21 July 2010

*** These dates are based on the examination boards' provisional timetable that not be finalised until later in the Autumn term. If there are changes, we will let you know by ParentMail.