



RUSKIN
A PRIORY ACADEMY

Sixth Form
Student and Parent
Handbook
2023-2024



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Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to The Priory Ruskin Academy Sixth Form.

We are rightly proud of our Sixth Form.

We have a dedicated team of staff looking after the Sixth Form, providing students with the guidance and advice they need in order to make decisions about their future. There are also many opportunities for students to gain valuable skills and experiences on top of their A level and Vocational courses which allow them to compete for places in the difficult job and university market places.

This handbook is designed to give parents and students sound advice on how to make the transition from Year 11 to Sixth Form successfully and prepare you for the challenges that lie ahead. Parts of this guide are written directly to the student, parts for the parent, but it is all good advice.

Advanced Level study is challenging but highly rewarding and we aim to help students fulfil their potential during their two years in the Sixth Form.

We look forward to welcoming you in September.

The Sixth Form Team

Sixth Form Values

The Sixth Form offers a wide range of successful courses and we are offering an increasing variety of extra-curricular activities for students to get involved in beyond their academic studies. This includes the Key Stage 5 Priory Priory Award (Formerly the Key Stage 5 Baccalaureate)

Being a Sixth Former carries with it a status within the Academy community; you can be a Student Senior Prefect, Student Head of House or a Learning Mentor for younger students. You dress differently. You have the wonderful new Pavilion as a base for your studies. More so than ever before, you can tailor your programme of study to suit your specific needs.

As with so much in life, when you have status you have responsibility. The Sixth Formers at The Priory Ruskin Academy are our most senior students and we expect them to be outstanding role models for younger year groups to look up to and respect.

All of our students are expected to uphold the following standards which build on the Priory Federation's values of:

Wisdom: Aim for academic excellence that goes far beyond your core subjects.

Curiosity: The challenge of learning new things and challenging yourself to develop and grow.

Generosity: The natural desire to help others; to be exemplary role models for younger students.

Courage: The challenge of pushing yourself to succeed whilst valuing individual talents and group endeavour.

Passion: A genuine thirst for knowledge and improvement; that values education as life-long process.

The Sixth Form Pledge

In order to achieve these high aims and make the most of your time in the Sixth Form, we expect students to:

1. Have the highest expectations for what they can achieve at the Academy and beyond.
2. Commit to being an outstanding role-model for younger students around the Academy.
3. Uphold the standards of dress and appearance required of all Sixth Formers.
4. Respect the health, safety and happiness of everybody in the Academy community.
5. Achieve a high attendance record - anything below 97% could be a cause for concern in registration and lessons.
6. Focus on learning, making all lessons count and using study periods purposefully, e.g. Wider reading, completing independent study tasks.
7. Prepare thoroughly for applying to university, apprenticeships or employment through research, work experience and contributing to Sixth Form life.
8. Commit to completing the Key Stage 5 Priory Award.
9. Take responsibility for the upkeep of the Academy, Sixth Form and wider areas.
10. Use the support provided by the Academy when unsure of the next steps to take.
11. Ensure that you communicate appropriately and in a professional manner with staff and students.

Parent Signature:

Student Signature:

The Sixth Form Team

Whenever you make important decisions in life, you will benefit from the help, support and advice of others who have experience of what you are going through. Here at Ruskin we have a very experienced team of staff to help you through every aspect of Sixth Form life.

We will support students by:

- Interviewing you in order to make sure that you make the right choices upon entry to the Sixth Form.
- Providing non-teaching support staff who will monitor and support your progress in each subject and during study periods.
- Providing help and guidance with applications to university, including which universities and courses to choose, how to write personal statements, support in completing the UCAS form and interview practice should you require it.
- Providing additional preparation advice sessions for those applying to Oxford, Cambridge, or studying for Medical, Veterinary and Dentistry degrees.
- Providing help with looking for Apprenticeships and employment which start after Year 13.
- Providing a stimulating and rewarding Sixth Form experience including a formal Enrichment programme on Wednesday afternoons.

The Sixth Form Team are:

- Mr A Cairns – Assistant Head Teacher: Sixth Form
- Mrs S Cipieres – Deputy Head Pastoral
- Mr S Finch – Deputy Head Standards
- Miss C Johnson – Pastoral Manager: Attendance and Study
- Mr G Porter – Sixth Form Pastoral Manager: Pastoral Care
- Miss L Clare: Pastoral Manager: Enrichment
- Mrs J Scholefield – UCAS Coordinator, EPQ and Moocs
- A team of seven Form Tutors
- Mrs Jane Jackson: Independent Learning Co-ordinator
- Miss L Pexton – Careers
- Mr R Johnston – Careers

Life in the Sixth Form

As a member of the Sixth Form you are a senior student of the Academy. As part of the Academy community you will be able to use all of the facilities that we provide for students and benefit from all of the support which we have to offer.

Our Sixth Formers are expected to use those valuable skills and values learned in the lower school. You will be expected to:

- Take learning and achieving seriously and recognise the value of experiences and qualifications.
- Maintain a smart business like dress code in line with the ethos of the Academy.
- Move around the Academy in an orderly way.
- Speak to other members of the Academy community in a respectful manner.
- Treat the Academy site with respect.

How will your senior status in the Academy be recognised? You will:

- Have the chance to specialise in subject areas that are of interest to you.
- Have timetabled study periods during the day.
- Have dedicated facilities available only to you during the day.
- Have the chance to assume positions of authority in the Academy community, such as being Head Boy/Girl, as a Senior Student.
- Take on a senior role within your form group.

The Academy Day

The Academy day begins at 8.50am and ALL students are expected to be in at that time for registration. Year 12 students will be in House tutor groups, working towards their KS5 Priory Award. In Year 13 specialist tutors relay important information, such as exam timetables and UCAS information as well as mentoring you through your time in the Sixth Form and collecting valuable information on you to use in your references for university and employment in addition to a comprehensive Personal Development programme.

8.50am -9.15am –Registration

9.20am -10.20am –Lesson One

10.20am -11.20am –Lesson Two

11.20am -11.40am –Break

11.40am -12.40pm –Lesson Three

12.40pm -1.20pm –Lunch

1.20pm -2.20pm –Lesson Four

2.20pm -3.20pm –Lesson Five

Life in the Sixth Form

What will I study?

(See p9 for advice on how to choose courses)

Students will study 3 A Levels/or BTEC level 3/or a combination of BTEC and A Level totalling 15 hours taught lessons per week.

A further 8 hours of timetabled study provision will be allocated.

2 periods of enrichment will be timetabled on a Wednesday afternoon.

What is the Priory Award (Formerly Key stage 5 Priory Award)

Three parts: Gaining three Level 3 qualifications. Completing 120 hours of enrichment activities, and completing a short project that will be presented to your form.

This is endorsed by Lincolnshire employers and higher education institutions. It makes you part of the Ruskin community rather than just an individual student.

Sixth Form Independent Study

Our new Sixth Form Centre, The Pavilion, is now open offering state of the art facilities. Students are expected to study in their Independent study periods – attendance will be monitored with consequences for those who fail to meet this minimum requirement.

It is expected, that students take full responsibility for the upkeep of the Centre and are respectful to all in areas in the Pavilion.

The Sixth Form canteen is open from 10.20 am – 1.30 pm where students can buy a range of hot and cold food and drinks. There is also access to the various outside spaces and sports facilities the Academy offers as part of the Academy's extra-curricular provision.

With this freedom comes a responsibility to ensure sixth form conduct is mature and considerate and does not cause disruption to the rest of the Academy community. If a Sixth Form Student is working anywhere within the Academy they should adhere to the Academy's expectations.

Attendance

To ensure you meet your full potential whilst in our 6th form, we have a very strict policy on attendance and punctuality which is crucial to your success.

Year 12

- Attendance target for each student = 97%.
- You are to be in your designated tutor time by 8.50am.
- If you arrive later than 8.50am you will be classed as late, and receive a late mark.
- Sanctions are put in place to those students who are late (See punctuality sanctions poster).
- If you are going to be late for genuine reasons it is your responsibility to inform a member of the pastoral team.
- Year 12 students are expected to be in the Academy for the full day (8.55 – 15.20) and attend all of their lessons.
- During study periods you are required to 'sign in' each period in the Pavilion.
- If your teacher is not going to be present for your lesson, you need to make sure you 'sign in' for your lesson in the Pavilion.

Life in the Sixth Form

- Any day you are ill, it is your parent's responsibility to inform the Academy before the start of the day with the reason why. Any non-explained absence will be 'unauthorised'.
- A message home will be sent by the pastoral team, every time you are not registered within school at the start of the day.
- Students will be able to leave the Academy site for lunch time 12.40-13.20 but must sign out and sign back in.
- Any student leaving site for an appointment must sign out.

Year 13

- Attendance target = 97%
- Year 13 students will attend their 6th form tutor time in Pav block.
- You are expected to register no later than 8.55am.
- If you arrive later than 8.55am you will be classed as late, and receive a late mark.
- Sanctions are put in place to those students who are late (See punctuality sanctions poster)
- If you are going to be late for genuine reasons it is your responsibility to inform a member of the pastoral team.
- Year 13 students will be allowed to leave site Period 5, providing they have an excellent attendance record, good progress check, no areas for concern in any subject and have no timetabled lessons Period 5. All students must get a present mark period 4.
- Any student leaving site for an appointment must sign out.

Absences

All unavoidable instances of absence (i.e. sickness/hospital appointments etc) must be reported to the Academy Attendance Officer by phone by 9am at the latest. This is not to be communicated via email.

You are expected to be caught up with all work missed by the next lesson and to ensure that you have carefully checked Show My Homework where appropriate. This may require you to communicate with teachers via e-mail to obtain any work needed.

Attendance is monitored every day by the pastoral team and attendance to lessons is reported during every progress check to parents in the termly reports. Anything below 97% could be regarded as a concern. Universities and employers are increasingly interested in absence figures.

Failure to attend lessons without authorised permission from appropriate members of staff will be treated as truancy. This may result in phone calls home, meetings with staff members, the Sixth form team and yourself. Persistent issues will result in the schools behaviour policy be followed which would potentially have more serious consequences.

In line with Government policy, students are not allowed to take holiday during term time. No holiday requests can be authorised.

Driving Lessons (in Year 12)

If a student wants to learn to drive, they may be able to arrange driving lessons during school time. We ask that students use the following procedures to apply for time out of school:

1. Students should not book driving lessons during curriculum time.
2. Find a suitable free period in the timetable and allocate that as your driving hour.
3. Obtain permission from the Head of Sixth Form.
4. If the Head of Sixth Form is happy that this will not impact upon your studies then permission will be granted.
5. In all circumstances students must sign out before leaving the site.

You must not leave the site for driving lessons before permission has been granted.

Standards of Dress for Sixth Form Students

In The Priory Federation of Academies Trust, we aim to create a purposeful working environment. The Sixth Form is a place of work and we should dress accordingly. As part of this approach we expect all members of the Sixth Form Community to wear clothing which supports this ethos. **This is a traditional uniform policy and it is this way in order to prepare you for the rigors and traditions of working life and as such the emphasis is on a smart appearance.**

The following advice will be of assistance to you:

All students are expected to wear business attire suitable for the work place. This may include a traditional suit with matching jacket and trousers, a shirt and tie and plain shoes. Additionally students may wear a suit with a matching skirt or dress. If students choose to wear a skirt, this should be worn at an appropriate length for a business environment.

- All jackets must have long sleeves which are not rolled up.
- Shoes should be sensible and appropriate for a work environment.
- Jewellery is to be kept to a minimum.
- Extreme hairstyles are not permitted.
- Tattoos must not be visible.
-

Staff will issue behaviour points, via SIMS, for anyone not following the policy above. Persistent failure to follow the policy will result in sanctions such as detentions, after school detentions and where appropriate a change in the dress code could be enforced.

If there is any debate over an item of clothing/jewellery etc the Head of Sixth Form/ Headteacher's decision on the matter will be final.

Choosing Appropriate Subjects

Your GCSE grades mean that you are potentially a Level 3 student, but the gap between GCSE and A levels is huge and every year some students really struggle to bridge it.

September is very much a probationary month and if there are subjects that are not appropriate it may be possible to make some changes, however this must be agreed with the Head of Sixth Form and associated staff. General things to consider:

- Choose subjects you have a passion for.
- Link the subjects to what you think you might like to study at university and career aims.
- Do not be afraid to ask for advice.
- Don't just do subjects because who your friends are or you like the teacher!
- Level 3 BTECs have exactly the same status as A levels; are accepted by 92% of universities and are suited to students who prefer a mix of coursework and exams rather than just exams.

University Application

You will be guided on this formally from the summer of Y12 by your specialist Sixth Form tutors and the UCAS Coordinator. However, you should be thinking about what and where you want to study much earlier, and researching university websites. Alternatively, if you have decided that university is not for you, you need to let us know so that we can provide apprenticeship guidance. Appointments can be made with Mrs Scholefield at any stage of Y12 to begin planning for applications.

We will identify students who will guide towards application to the Russell Group Universities, (the recognised best group of universities.) A list of Russell Group universities is on the next page.

Some students will be made Unconditional offers by non-Russell Group institutions. This is dangerous as it does not encourage hard work in the final months of sixth form, and is a very poor preparation for the demands of higher education. The less prestigious universities make these offers because they want the tuition fees from as many students as possible in a very competitive environment. Our expectations are based around hard work and those that do not heed this will be subject to the academy disciplinary procedure being followed.

Which universities are in the Russell Group?

Russell group universities are elite universities, please be aware that these establishments may be looking for specific subject areas to be studied and for achievement to be high. We recommend speaking with the Sixth Form team and your teachers about requirements for courses at these institutions.

Russell Group	
University of Birmingham	University of Manchester
University of Bristol	Newcastle University
University of Cambridge	University of Nottingham
Cardiff University	University of Oxford
Durham University	Queen Mary University of London
University of Edinburgh	Queen's University Belfast
University of Glasgow	University of Sheffield
Imperial College London	University of Southampton
King's College London	University College London
University of Leeds	University of Warwick
University of Liverpool	University of York
London School of Economics and Politics	

Study in the Sixth Form

Getting Started

First and foremost, you need to be aware that studying will take different approaches based on the courses you are studying. For example Art may recommend different techniques to History. It is always best to speak with your teacher about the most appropriate way of working independently within this subject area.

Organise yourself! Even though you do fewer subjects now, the volume of work will increase rapidly.

- You will often be required to work from ring binder folders – have plentiful supplies of paper, dividers, staplers and hole punches at home
- Buy a bag that is big enough to carry text books and a ring binder file
- Take a ring binder file to school – keep lesson notes and handouts in that for a short time then transfer to a subject specific file at home, keeping notes in the right order!
- Use a lever arch file for each subject to store notes and materials
- You will need a black biro for all of your exams

Independent learning

You are now responsible for things going right as well as wrong! A levels can only be passed successfully if you commit time to study out of lessons. You should aim for at least one hour of independent study for each taught lesson you have, so about 15 hours of study each week. **This equates to a 30 hour working week- still less than the adult world of work.**

The main difference between learning at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form is the amount of learning and study you are expected to do on your own. This does not mean without guidance from your teachers, they will provide you with direction and support in what and how to study; it does mean that you will have to commit time and resources to working on your own.

1. Students can find this aspect difficult at first.
2. Motivating yourself when exams and coursework deadlines seem far away can be tough, but remember that the pressure increases nearer those deadlines.
3. Speak with Teaching Staff or any Senior Student Leaders to overcome any minor concerns.

Study in the Sixth Form

Time management

You should never find yourself with 'nothing to do'! It can feel like juggling when you have coursework deadlines, driving lessons, a part-time job and family and friend commitments to maintain.

- Prioritise your work – using a planner/organised schedule will help you recognise the key deadlines that are coming up.
- Do not wait until the last minute, do a little work towards far off deadlines each day to reduce the pressure on yourself.
- Use your Sixth Form Student Planner carefully.
- Use the time you have available to you in school productively to reduce pressure on your time out of school. Appropriate study space will be provided to allow you to achieve this.

Part-time jobs can give you valuable skills, experience, independence and, of course, money. It is an occasional issue that some students try to do too many hours in their job and end up getting behind with their Sixth Form studies. Also, you may be put under pressure in some jobs to work longer hours over Christmas or bank holidays (for example).

Use of independent study time

All Sixth Form students are expected to utilise the designated Sixth Form study area. We recognise that by Year 13 students have a well-developed understanding of their study needs and allow them to go home Period 5 if they are fully up to date with their work, Priory Award and have no issues for concern in any subject areas. This is a privilege available to Year 13 only.

When in supervised study you should use your time productively. It is valuable time which could be used to do some of the following tasks:

1. Complete class notes or tasks set by teachers, such as essays, notes or problem solving exercises.
2. Engage in further reading around the subject by bringing library or other books to study sessions.
3. Make revision cards or other revision aids for use in the run up to examinations.
4. Plan answers to examination questions using the examination papers available from your subject teachers.
5. Research essays or other tasks set by teachers.
6. Read novels and other books which support the learning in the subject and a quality daily newspaper; 'The Guardian' and 'Independent' have free online access, along with BBC News.

If you are still in doubt, please ask your teachers for specific tasks/ advice on how to use your study time more productively.

Summary for Parents/Carers

1. Students are expected in their Tutor Group by 8.50am every day.
2. Students must be prepared for the day ahead: correctly dressed, with files and books as required by subjects.
3. Progress Checks will be sent home three times a year in Y12 and Y13.
4. Year 12 students may not go home during the day. Year 13 students are allowed to go home if they are fully up to date with their work, have completed the Priory Award and have a fully signed Study Pass.
5. Arrange medical appointments for outside Academy hours where possible – attendance figures to lessons will be commented on in references to universities/ employers.
6. Any absences will require a telephone call from parents to the Academy Attendance Officer by 9am. Holidays during term time cannot be recorded as authorised absence, but we should be notified.
7. Students in Sixth Form may arrange driving lessons during the Academy day but only during study periods and should not arrange these during timetabled lessons and when prior permission from the Head of Sixth Form has been sought.
8. GCSE results are sent to the universities when the student applies and predicted grades at the start of Year 13 are used for UCAS.
9. Applications to university should be made by December of Year 13.
10. Y12 will take mock exams in the summer term. Parents will be invited in to progress meeting where these exams have highlighted cause for concern. In Y13 mocks are taken in January/February with external exams in June. These will be high pressure times for students.

How you can support students ?

We feel this advice to be appropriate:

1. Keep track of absences and help minimise these where possible.
2. Monitor progress check grades – these tell you what the staff think they are likely to achieve and will indicate how they are doing in the Academy. If you do not receive these grades please inform us as soon as possible.
3. Contact the Academy if you have any questions or concerns at all.
4. Obtain from a copy of their timetable and the name of their form tutor.
5. Keep a close eye on how they are coping during the high pressure times of the year.

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