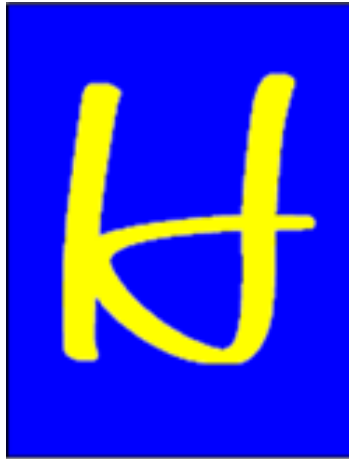




Sixth Form Handbook

Contents

1. Welcome
2. Timetable and the sixth form day
3. Academic progress & reporting
4. Independent study and private study
5. Student wellbeing
6. Anti-Bullying
7. Attendance and punctuality
8. Dress code
9. Mobile phones and digital devices
10. Student parking
11. Student code of conduct
12. Behaviours and rewards
13. Home-Sixth Form agreement
14. Essential study skills
15. Exam preparation
16. PSHCE, Careers, Sport and Extracurricular Activities

Introduction to Heathlands School Sixth Form

It gives us great pleasure to welcome you to Heathlands School Sixth Form. Our aim is for you to continue to become the best you can be and 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.

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 in sixth form.

The success you have achieved at GCSE provides you with a solid foundation for entering sixth form. In sixth form you will need to develop self organisation skills, a greater depth of independent study and good time management.

Timetable and the school day.

Similar to your previous experience in school you will have a form tutor. Your form tutor will be your main point of contact for any issues arising. Registration is an important part of the sixth form day, every student is required to attend registration at 8.45am when at Heathlands. On days that your first lesson is at Marlborough you will register with the CSW. You are able to enter the Heathlands Sixth form area after 8am.

You will have an individual timetable which outlines your timetabled lessons, independent study sessions and specific enrichment activities.

You are expected to attend all timetabled lessons and utilise independent study sessions effectively to support your studies.

You are free to leave the school site at lunch but must ensure that you return on-time ready for afternoon lessons. Lateness due to traffic, being in the town, etc. are not reasons that will be accepted for poor punctuality. All students must sign in and out at both the Heathlands and Marlborough campus.

Students who do not have a timetabled lesson or activity periods in the afternoon are permitted to leave the school site for the purpose of self-supported, off-site study as long as they meet the criteria listed below.

- Attendance – attendance must remain over 95%.
- Punctuality – must not be subject to a monitoring programme for punctuality. Students need to recognise that punctuality is not just in the morning but also to individual lessons.
- Attainment – must not be subject to a monitoring programme for attainment.
- Behaviour & Conduct – must not be subject to a monitoring programme for behaviour or conduct.
- Independent study & Homework – must not be subject to a monitoring programme for independent study.

Academic reporting and progress.

Heathlands School prides itself on our student focussed provision and this approach continues into sixth form. Throughout this handbook you will see how we prepare you to make the transition from GCSE to A Levels and the continuation of the school's high expectations.

Your teachers will track your attainment and progress in a number of ways and using a range of assessment methods. This will include your assessed work in lessons, independent work, in-lesson assessments, mock exams, and the completion of practical work.

Your parents/carers/home will receive sixth form reports at set points within the year. These reports will detail your attainment, predicted grade for UCAS and your attitude to learning. These grades shouldn't ever come as a surprise to you as your teacher will regularly feedback back to you on your attainment, progress and contribution to your own learning.

We also provide a parent consultation evening once a year; one in year 12 and one in year 13. These appointments are an important and valuable opportunity to discuss progress and explore areas relating to your A-Level study.

Targets that are set will be attainable and measurable so that progress is clearly measured.

Independent and private study.

Sixth form is a huge step up from year 11 and not always easy. You will encounter unfamiliar situations; take on roles that you may not have considered previously, and tackle work that is more advanced and demanding. Being in the sixth form will provide you with many opportunities to develop skills, self-confidence and provide you with ample chances to take responsibilities. It will provide you with many academic skills, one of which is learning how to become a good independent learner.

Independent study skills are increasingly important when studying A levels. You will not achieve your potential if you do not put in the work outside of the lesson. Your assessments will frequently ask you to apply your subject knowledge to unfamiliar contexts and it is difficult, if not impossible, to do this if you have not taken the time to extend your understanding independently. Wider reading will be set and there is an expectation to use independent study time to answer key questions that you will be set by each subject, each week.

At KS5 there is greater expectation for you to 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 you want to learn, for example, reading the learning outcomes in modules.
2. identifying how you are going to learn, for example, individual study, working with a friend, asking for help.
3. managing time, stress and other commitments.
4. using a wide range of learning opportunities and resources.

Communication.

Heathlands follows a Total Communication philosophy, this includes British Sign Language (BSL), Signed Supported English (SSE) and spoken English. Your lessons will be accessible in BSL at both Heathlands and Marlborough.

At Heathlands, lessons will be delivered directly from Teachers of the Deaf. At Marlborough this will be through a Communication Support Worker (CSW). The CSW is a respected education professional and will support during lessons. Outside of lessons you may be able to book a time with the CSW to go through lesson vocabulary, this will be dependent on availability.

Tips for learning through a CSW:

- Do not be afraid to ask the teacher to pause if the CSW needs to catch up
- Ask peers to put their hands up rather than shouting out
- Think about the skills learnt in communication time for communicating with students out of lessons.
- If there is a problem with a CSW discuss it with the co-head teachers.

Speech and Language

Speech and Language therapy is available to all sixth formers and can be arranged in discussion with your form tutor.

Student wellbeing.

We believe strongly that positive emotional wellbeing and mental wellness are not only crucial in enabling you to feel happy and fulfilled, but also in enabling you to thrive and flourish during your time at school. Students who enjoy positive mental health and wellbeing are better able to cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fulfil their own potential and make a contribution to their wider community.

We advocate the balance of studying and personal time and therefore advise students to consider prioritising their study time during the school day to ensure that there are opportunities to engage in part-time work and finding time to relax and spend time with family and friends.

Students should look out for our wellbeing events and take notice of the tips we promote to supporting wellbeing and being proactive with supporting positive mental health.

Students should never feel like they are alone, especially at this time where the transition to adulthood, whilst exciting, is potentially going to be unsettling.

Anti-bullying.

For full details of our commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging, we invite all students to read our Anti-Bullying policy.

We commit to creating a culture where we support protected characteristics and inclusion as a whole. This charter is designed to communicate the values and commitments that Heathlands (students and staff) pledge our responsibility to achieve.

Attendance and punctuality.

Upon enrolling to study at Heathlands Sixth Form you are making the commitment to full time study.

All students are required to attend sixth form Monday – Friday, 8.45am-12.15pm unless there are specific timetable agreements dependant on attendance, progress and travel.

All students' attendance is recorded and monitored.

In the context of our sixth form, attendance includes:

- All morning registration sessions (8.45am-9.00am) and assemblies dependant on the timetable.
- All timetabled lessons
- All timetabled enrichment programmes
- All assessment and examination periods
- Other notified events and times

There is significant research that links strong attendance with high academic output and preparedness for future destinations.

Attendance rate	Actions	Consequence
95%	No actions	NA
Below 95%	Attendance monitoring Parents / carers notified	Temporary removal of off-site study until improvement in attendance is seen.
Below 90%	Attendance monitoring Meeting with parents to discuss attendance and impact.	Temporary removal of off-site study until improvement of attendance is seen.

		Compulsory study support sessions identified.
Below 80%	Attendance monitoring	Temporary removal of off-site study until substantial and consistent improvement of attendance is seen. Compulsory study support sessions identified

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 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.

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 record this on Arbor. It is then *your responsibility* to ensure that you find out what you have missed from the lesson and get the work caught up on. Students are accountable and responsible for their learning. Being regularly late to lessons or activities should not impact other students in the class. 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.

Absence reporting.

We appreciate that at times, absence is unavoidable and also there are certain circumstances where you will need to be absent.

All absences should be notified at the earliest possible time by email to the school office admin@heathlands.herts.sch.uk and to Marlborough School if you have a lesson there that day: G.Battams@marlborough.herts.sch.uk. All absences should be reported on the same day.

For planned absences such as appointments or interviews please email admin@heathlands.herts.sch.uk prior to the 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.

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

Dress Code

In line with our commitment to equality, diversity, 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.

Students should ensure that clothing and/or personal appearance is appropriate and will not cause offence to others. Students are required to dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans. If clothing has wording or pictures on it, this should not be offensive.

Students should dress in a manner where they feel comfortable and are 'study ready' allowing them to feel confident, inclusive and allow for the best experience of studying at Sixth Form. Students should also ensure that they are able to maintain adequate modesty.

Within this context, please note the following:

- Clothing should not be excessively transparent, thus lacking in modesty.
- Shorts/ skirts/ dresses should be no shorter than 10cm above the knee (or no shorter than your own fingertips held by your sides.)
- There should be an unbroken line of clothing from shoulder to mid-thigh.
- Footwear should be secure and not pose a health and safety risk.
- Casual t-shirts or 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.
- Student identity badges and lanyards **MUST** be worn at all times in line with our safeguarding policy.
- Jewellery should be appropriate and not excessive, in line with health and safety guidance.
- Piercings should be appropriate for the school environment and these should not be excessive.
- Tattoos and other body art should be appropriate. Students are reminded that it is against the law to tattoo a person who is under the age of 18.

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.

Mobile phones and 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.

We enforce the following expectations of mobile phone use.

- Sixth form students can use their mobile phones whilst in the sixth form area only and outside of the school grounds.
- Sixth form students are not permitted to use their mobile phones in the main school building, including the library and dining room nor in the school grounds.
- Mobile phones must not be used during lessons unless authorised and directed by staff for the purpose of a learning activity.

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.

Students should be aware of the school's policy of acceptable use and are reminded that inappropriate use of a mobile phone or digital device will form part of the school behaviour policy where criminal action may be taken.

Student Parking.

Sixth form students who pass their driving test and wish to drive to school will need to park cars off site as parking is limited on site.

Students are prohibited from eating, smoking, sitting in or loitering around the cars parked during school hours.

Any student who is unwell and deemed to be unsafe to drive will have to find an alternative mode of transport home.

Whilst using your vehicle to travel to and from school you will use the following code of conduct:

- I will ensure that my vehicle is insured, taxed, has a valid MOT (if applicable), and is roadworthy and I will present evidence of this when requested.
- I will respect the provisions of the Highway Code at all times, as well as legal and other provisions affecting drivers and passengers.

Student 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>

Code of Conduct

We believe in encouraging 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, 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 that is polite and respectful.
3. Be positive advocates and ambassadors of the school, whether this is onsite or offsite. Instances of misconduct off school site on a sixth form activity or elsewhere, which brings discredit upon the school may be treated as if it 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. Dress in an appropriate manner, in line with the sixth form dress code.

7. Use mobile and digital devices in line with guidance.
8. Smoking, e-cigarettes and vapes are not permitted anywhere on the school site.
9. 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.
10. Students bring in their own property at their own risk.
11. 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.
12. Students are not permitted to have food delivered to the school or to bring fast-food (i.e., McDonalds, Nando's, etc.) onto the school site. This is due to promoting a healthy lifestyle and nutrition.
13. Participate actively and to the best of their ability in lessons and in the general life of the sixth form.
14. Attend punctually and attend all required activities including enrichment, supported learning sessions and compulsory workshops.
15. Complete assignments and independent study to the best of their ability and ensure that they are submitted as requested, by the stated deadlines.
16. Do not cause a distraction to others or disrupt the teaching and learning of the school and sixth form.
17. Adhere to the attendance policy including not taking personal appointments, paid work, or holiday during term times.
18. Seek permission from the Co-Head teachers before making use of any school logo or any other publicity material.
19. Seek permission from the Co-Head teachers before broadcasting or publishing information about the school, or members of the school and sixth form community. This also includes social media.

Positive Behaviours and Rewards.

It is the school policy to recognise, acknowledge and reward individual achievements by students. The following are 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 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 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 a scholarship award worth £50.
- Celebrated on the schools' social media.
- Recognition in assemblies and form time.

Home school agreement.

We are committed to ensuring that all students achieve their full potential through having access to the highest quality of education, a diverse and enriching provision to support our young people to develop as well-rounded individuals, and to fulfil their wider aspirations of a happy, healthy and successful future.

To 'unlock potential for life' the school values and promotes a tri-part commitment and agreement involving the student, parents/carers and the school. We have the highest expectations of both work and behaviour, and this document outlines the specific systems we have in place and the responsibilities we share as part of the school.

Overall expectations:

We expect you to challenge yourself to make the best possible progress and achieve the best outcomes you are capable of.

We expect you to use your time effectively in lessons by organising your notes, being fully equipped and prepared and taking an active part in the lesson.

We expect you to respond quickly and positively to feedback provided by your teachers on specific pieces of work.

We expect you to complete all homework and independent learning tasks to the best of your ability.

We expect you to adhere to all deadlines.

We expect you to engage in wider reading and research to enhance and deepen your subject knowledge.

We expect you to attend sixth form and all your lessons every day and be punctual to all your lessons.

We expect you to arrive at school dressed in an appropriate way adhering to the sixth form dress code.

We expect you to be actively involved in positive role modelling and supporting the wider school community and maintaining the high standards of behaviour.

Our commitment to excellence means that you can expect from us:

- Challenging, well-planned and stimulating lessons.
- Support, help and guidance with any difficulties you may be facing.
- Regular homework and independent study activities.
- Clear lines of communication with teachers.
- Work will be marked and assessed in a timely fashion and feedback provided that helps you improve.
- Practical, non-judgemental, individualised support from staff.
- Designated spaces to enable you to focus on completing your work.
- A comprehensive, extra-curricular programme that gives you opportunities to develop your skills and experiences outside the classroom
- Provision and enrichment outside of qualifications, for personal development that enable you to develop your skill set and character
- We will endeavour to treat you as a responsible, sensible young person.

We are committed to building a culture of mutual respect, adult responsibility, honesty and ambition. If you work hard, persevere, show respect for your teachers, your peers and the school facilities, we will support you in everything you do.

Study Skills.

You should make a point of discussing the most effective use of your study periods with your subject teachers, as they, of course, 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.

Tips for effective studying:

- Turn your notifications off on your mobile.
- 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.

Exams.

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

- Pull the whole course together (get a syllabus and do not compartmentalise information).
- Start revising early.
- Try to keep a revision timetable.
- Change revision topics regularly but ensure thorough revision of all areas.
- Revise actively by summarising notes onto cards or into diagrams.
- Revise in approximately 45 minute sessions.
- Practise past questions and papers.
- Try to think up likely exam questions for yourself
- Talk about the material you are revising.

As Exam Day Approaches:

- Revise during the day so that your mind is used to working in examination hours.
- If anxiety sets in, talk to parents/teachers.
- Check examination arrangements.

On the day:

- Arrive in good time.
- Don't let other candidates disturb you.
- Make sure you have the necessary equipment for the exam (black pen, pencil, ruler, rubber, calculator, books)

In the Exam:

- Keep calm at all times
- Read the instructions on the front page.
- Read the questions carefully.
- 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.

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 breathing methods 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, breathe 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 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?

PSHCE, Careers, Sport and Extracurricular Activities

The timetable includes directed time linked to PSHCE and Sport, students are expected to attend these lessons. There are opportunities to be involved in sixth form sport at Marlborough. The directed time will cover PSHCE and Careers, students will follow the KS5 PSHE curriculum (topics will include: Careers, Finance, Relationships and Sex Education, Physical and Mental Health).

In year 12 students are expected to be involved with Community Service and Volunteering Projects. Students are expected to give back to the school and local community and staff will be able to support them in setting up suitable activities individually, as well as organising larger group projects.

Staff will support the students in preparing for their next steps with a full programme of careers events, which will include information regarding procedures for UCAS and Apprenticeship applications. Students will have 1:1 guidance interviews from qualified Careers Advisors and are expected to attend a work experience placement at the end of Year 12.

Students should build a portfolio of evidence relating to their work and volunteering experiences to document their activities. They are encouraged to attend university open days and employer organised events to gather as much information as they can about their options.