



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS

ASPIRATION INDEPENDENCE RESPECT RESILIENCE

****This document doesn't take into account Covid-19 regulations put in place by schools and the government. Please refer to updates from Ms Williams where appropriate. Clubs, areas to study and some other information in this document may be tweaked during social distancing.**

Dear Parents,

When students join the Sixth Form at Ormiston Rivers Academy, they have chosen to further their qualifications by embarking on Advanced Level Specialist Courses (A-levels).

We believe that the Sixth Form is the transition between school and university or employment where young people will be developing into mature, self-motivated and confident learners who universities and employers want in this fiercely competitive world.

We feel that students should be working with their teachers, mentors and their parents/carers on their journey towards taking full responsibility for their own learning and future career pathways. Students need to meet our expectations of attendance, punctuality and appearance and to take responsibility for their own learning in order to thrive in their time with us as they become young adults. Students are expected to play a key role in the life of the school and the community by taking leadership roles in the many enrichment opportunities which are available. Most of all, we want students to get the most from their experiences in the Sixth Form.

We are aware that, as young people gain independence, they are less likely to keep their parents informed about what is going on in school, so we hope that this guide will give you all the information that you need to assist all students to get the best out of their time in the Sixth Form by making the most of what it offers.

Mrs M. Wilkins & Miss D. Sametz

Co Heads of Sixth Form

SIXTH FORM ETHOS

The Sixth Form aims to provide our students with the opportunities and encouragement they need to reach their full potential. We will prepare them for life beyond school, ensuring that they leave us as well-rounded, confident and reflective individuals, well-prepared for the challenges ahead. We are proud of our fantastic Sixth Form and encourage our students to celebrate their successes and achievements and look back on their time here at Rivers Sixth Form as a happy and rewarding experience.

GENERAL INFORMATION

THE SCHOOL DAY

PERIOD	START TIME	END TIME
AM Registration	8.45am	9.20am
1	9.20am	10.20am
2	10.20am	11.20am
Break	11.20am	11.50am
3	11.50am	12.50pm
4	12.50pm	1.50pm
Lunch	1.50pm	2.20pm
5	2.20pm	3.20pm
6	3.20pm	4.20pm

THE SIXTH FORM CURRICULUM

All students study three subjects in the Sixth Form. Most courses have five hours of teaching per week and may be taught by one or more specialist subject teachers.

All students are issued with a printed timetable on joining the Sixth Form. This shows the teacher and room for each lesson. Students are required to attend the correct classroom for each lesson on their timetable whether this is a subject they chose to study or Supervised Study periods.

CHANGING COURSES

We take subject choices and timetabling very seriously to ensure that students get the best fit possible. During Year 11 students received considerable guidance and advice about selecting their A level choices. Year 11 students have taken part in Summer Challenges for all subjects. These tasks should give them a good understanding of what each subject they have signed up for entails. However, we know sometimes a student has a change of mind. To do this, they must follow the Final Changes guidance below.

Final Changes

If a student wants to change a course in the first few weeks of Year 12, there must be a full discussion between the student, the head of the relevant department and parents/carers. The change of course must be made by 2nd of October, after which time it is deemed to be too late to catch up on a new course. Once a decision has been made to change a subject, students must complete a form, obtainable from the Sixth Form Office, which should be returned to the Co Heads of Sixth Form, so that a new timetable can be issued.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

All students are expected to take responsibility for regular attendance and punctuality. Morning registration is from 8.50am until 9.15am for all Sixth Form students and students should be on time for this and for all of their lessons. Year 12s are expected to stay on site during the school hours to allow for an easier transition with the extra workload. Year 13s, who are up to date with their work and have good attendance will be allowed to sign in and out during their non contact periods. Students will find out more about this in Year 13. Students will require references when they leave school for higher education or employment; employers in particular take attendance into consideration when assessing applications.

Absence

If a student is absent because of illness or other unavoidable circumstances, please telephone or e-mail the school as soon as possible. If school is not notified of an absence, a truancy call will be made to the home. The school can be contacted for absences with the following methods: MyEd Messaging App, ConnectED absence line on 0845 355 8104 or the attendance line on 01621 787855.

On returning to school after an absence, students will be required to complete a return to school document issued by their mentor to be returned to the Sixth Form Team. The attendance policy should be considered at all times, and contact will start to be made for students who drop below 97%. Please refer to the attendance policy for more details.

If the absence is known in advance, a brief letter of explanation should be sent to the Sixth Form Team and mentor before the absence takes place.

Holidays

Holidays should not be taken during term time. If there are extenuating circumstances and students wish to take a holiday during term time, they must submit a holiday request form, available from Student

Reception, in advance of the holiday, for consideration by the school. Once completed and submitted, the school assesses whether this absence may be authorised or not.

It is recommended that Upper Sixth students are available in mid-August to receive their results, when the Sixth Form Team is on hand to give guidance with any issues regarding university offers.

Open Days

We encourage students to visit universities and colleges so that they can research courses and institutions and thereby make informed choices. Students can visit up to three institutions during term time. To take time off from school to do this, students need to complete the 'Open Day reply slip' which they can collect from the Sixth Form office and give it to their mentor in advance of the visit. Many universities also have Open Days on Saturdays. Parents are encouraged to accompany students; information can be found on the university websites.

Dental/Medical Appointments

Medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside lesson times and preferably after school or during holidays where possible. Where this is not practical, a note of explanation should be given to the mentor in advance.

STUDY PERIODS AND TIME MANAGEMENT

The workload increases dramatically from GCSE to A level and students need to have a practical approach to their learning. Good organisation is crucial, as is the ability to work independently, whilst seeking advice from teaching staff. Making the best use of time, both in and out of school, is part of the Post 16 learning curve.

A level courses require students to work substantially beyond lessons. Students are required to develop independent study skills of research and reading around their subjects. Students should view their time in the Sixth Form as a full time job and make their learning a priority. As a general guide, students should be studying 3-4 hours per day beyond their lessons, either in school or at home.

Students will be set homework and coursework assignments, plus revision for tests, assessments and examinations, all of which should take place outside of lessons. Students must make time to study; balancing work and relaxation is difficult at first. Our expectations are that students will work hard at school in study periods, which will make more time available for leisure pursuits outside of school hours.

Students will have mentor sessions to help them improve their time management. We encourage students to have a work-life balance which allows them to be successful in their future destinations such as university choices, apprenticeships, or employment. Often, in making the jump from GCSE to A levels, students have the wrong balance of too much social life and part time employment and this manifests itself in poor performance and results. By teaching about time management, students will better their time and cope with the vigorous demand of work that Sixth Form requires for success.

Additional Study

Independent study at home is an essential part of Sixth Form life and students are expected, as a general guideline, to complete between 4 and 5 hours of work per week, per subject. Students should use approximately 75% of their non-teaching periods in school time for independent study, supplemented by time outside of school hours to meet this requirement.

The table below details the **guidelines** for hours of study, as advised by individual departments, that Sixth Form students are expected to do **outside** of timetabled lessons. For students to achieve the top grades, more study and time will be required. Each student learns and works at a different pace and in different ways, so this might vary for each student. Please speak directly to subject teachers with any questions or concerns about what should be done during these additional study hours.

SUBJECT	YEAR 12		YEAR 13	
	To Achieve a C/B grade	To achieve A/A* grade	To Achieve a C/B grade	To achieve A/A* grade
Art	6	8	6	10-12
Biology	5	6	6	7
Chemistry	4	5	5	6
Child Development	4	5	4	5
Drama and Theatre	5	6	5	6
Engineering	4	6	6	8
English Literature	4	5	4	5
Food Science	4	5	6	8
French	5	6	6	7
Geography	5	6	5	6
Health and Social Care	5	6	5	6
History	5	6	5	6
Information Technology (IT)	4	5	5	6
Mathematics	5	6	6	7
Music Technology	3	4	4	5
Performing Arts	4	5	4	4
Physics	5	6	6	7
Sociology	5	6	5	7
Sport	4	5	4	5
Vehicle Technology	6	8	6	8

These will vary student by student but should be used as a guideline.

Enrichment Subjects:				
SUBJECT	YEAR 12		YEAR 13	
	To Achieve a C/B grade	To achieve A/A* grade	To Achieve a C/B grade	To achieve A/A* grade
Core Maths	2	4	2	4
Further Maths	4	5	5	7
Extended Project (EPQ) (1 year course)	2	3	2	3

PLACES TO STUDY

Students have a number of places to study in the school.

In subject departments – many Departments have areas made available for Sixth Form students to study. Students are encouraged to work in small groups and are welcome to wear headphones to help concentration or talk to peers for support.

The Sixth Form Area – for study that involves discussion and group work. There are some laptops available for students to use. The main common room is for **silent study only**.

Sixth Form classrooms - Timetables for each classroom will be posted on the door so students can see which periods they can go in to work quietly in small groups..

Canteen - *The canteen is always open during lesson time as an area where students can complete group work or take a snack break.*

Learning Resource Centre- *The LRC is open from 8.00am to 4.20pm for students to have access to resources including computers, laptops, and books. Subject texts and resources may be found here for students to use to support their learning. Supervised Study sessions will be timetabled in here for Sixth Formers to allow a quiet place for students to work under supervision.*

PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

We consider that it can be beneficial for students' confidence and economic well-being to have some part-time employment if they wish to do so. It can enhance team-building, social and interpersonal skills and enables students to write about the skills gained in their personal statements or on their curriculum vitae. However, too many hours of employment in the evenings plus weekends is not compatible with A level studies. Experience tells us that students get tired and do not cope with their school work as a result. We suggest that students work no more than 12 hours of part-time employment per week and not until after 4.20pm Monday - Friday.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Students often want to take advantage of work experience opportunities that will help them access some higher education courses – e.g. for medicine, education, etc and we fully support this. Students in year 12 and 13 can use their study periods after the examinations to arrange work experience or shadowing placements.

OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SIXTH FORM

The last week of the Summer term is devoted to individuals' self-development and enrichment. Students may opt to undertake a variety of experiences, such as volunteering, work placements or projects related to one or more areas of their studies. Students are given advice and support with their choices and are encouraged to challenge themselves and to engage positively in the initiative. The experience enables students to give details of the skills gained in their personal statements for university or in applications for employment.

In addition to this week, there are many enrichment opportunities for Sixth Form students to develop skills alongside those pertaining to academic studies. These include activities associated with sport, culture, enterprise, drama, volunteering, working in the community and many more. There is something for everyone and students are encouraged to get involved. Participation in these activities will build confidence and enable students to gain transferable skills both for higher education and employment. Subjects will speak to students who display strong leadership skills or potential and get them involved as student leaders. Students will be recognised by the badge they are given to wear.

Charity work

The school supports many students who would like to involve themselves in Charity work throughout the year. Interact is a charity based club which works closely with the Rotary Club to provide events for students and the community to get involved in. Many clubs within the school will also raise awareness and money for charities. In the past, they have raised money for: Jumpstart, CAMPS International expeditions, End Polio Now, RNLI, Young Minds, to name a few.

Mentoring younger students

There are many opportunities to help out younger students in a variety of academic and sporting activities. These may include helping as reading buddies, mentoring gifted and talented students and providing assistance for younger students in their lessons. Students can speak to their teachers about becoming a Student Subject Leader.

Interact

Interact at ORA is an innovative, enterprising and popular club that is based on social action that delivers support where it is needed most. Interact is lucky to be guided by the Burnham-On-Crouch Rotary Club, which is one of 1800 in the UK. As part of Interact, you will have a chance to work with the Rotary Club and tap into their wealth of knowledge and experience. But most importantly, to be treated as professional individuals and to work with professionals for a joint cause: improving the lives of people globally, nationally and locally.

Interact ORA allows you to choose as a team your choice of a local, national and international charities and volunteering to raise money in order to help them.

You will be able to achieve the next steps in creating a fairer world, whether your views are about equality, diversity or climate change, we listen, and you will be able to express your opinions and do something about it!

Even though the main benefit is to help these charities of your choice, there are other benefits too, including giving a huge advantage to UCAS Personal Statements, job applications, apprenticeship applications as you are delivering support in the heart of the community, adding value to your applications. You will also have a brilliant opportunity to network with the Rotarians who come from all walks of life and work backgrounds.

With Interact, it only takes a little bit of your time to make a huge difference. We work together, we support each other, and we celebrate success. We invite you to be part of Interact ORA.

Travel

Sixth Form students are given the opportunity to travel on a variety of trips and visits. Previously students have visited countries such as Netherlands, Belgium, Ukraine, amongst others as part of their studies or as a cultural exchange linked to languages.

Music

The music department has a modern studio which caters for a cross section of musical interests and everyone who likes to perform is welcome. There are opportunities in Choirs, Musical Theatre Performances, Bands and clubs including Music Technology.

Drama

The school puts on a musical production each year, which provides the opportunity for involvement in many aspects of that a production affords, including acting, dance, singing, lighting, sound, stage sets, make-up etc. It is a whole school, large scale production and the key roles are usually taken by the Sixth Form students.

Sport and Athletics

ORA offers a range of sporting clubs throughout the academic year. Sixth Form students will have the opportunity to get involved in participating. In the past, many have helped to run after school clubs for the lower years with coaching and officiating matches.

During Athletics season, Sixth Formers help to run the ORA Sports Day with running each event and scoring. Some strong sport leaders will also get to go to District Sports at Chelmsford Athletics Centre, and will get to help to run a sporting event.

Sixth Form Student Leadership Team

At Ormiston Rivers Academy the Sixth Form Leadership Team (SFLT) is a group of Sixth Form students who apply and interview for their roles. They each have separate responsibilities but come together as a team to make decisions and organise activities for the Sixth Form and the rest of the school.

Students in year 13 can apply to be a member of the team and use the title of Head boy/girl when applying for university, apprenticeship or work placements. Applications take place in Summer Term of Year 12.

The members of the Team are encouraged to get involved in matters pertaining to the Sixth Form and play key roles in organising events across the school.

AMENITIES

The Sixth Form has its own purpose-built Sixth Form area which is used for private study and relaxation. The Sixth Form also has its own Kitchen in this area allowing students to make tea, coffee and other hot drinks, as well as a fridge, toaster and microwave to prepare simple meals. The canteen also has a Sixth Form seating area and provides light lunches, snacks and drinks throughout the day. The canteen is open from 8.30am until 2pm and they can purchase hot food during break and lunch times. During these busy times, Sixth Formers get to skip the queue by showing their lanyard. The Sixth Form area also has a vending machine that students can purchase drinks and snacks from. This can only be used by Sixth Form students. Ball games, Frisbee and similar activities are not allowed inside and students must take responsibility for keeping the room clear of litter, the kitchen tidy, and use the bins provided. Luxuries will be revoked should students not follow the rules.

In the Summer months, when the playing fields are dry, students may relax on the field, providing they do not disturb adjacent classrooms or PE lessons. Football and other games are allowed on the field during break and lunch time, but not during their lesson times.

VEHICLES AND DRIVING LESSONS

Students may only bring a vehicle to school when they:

- Have passed the driving test
- Present insurance documents to the Sixth Form Team
- Display a valid permit

The permits are available from the Sixth Form Office and must be obtained before bringing the vehicle to school. Permits must be signed by a parent/carer of the student.

Students must park in spaces specifically designated for River Sixth Form Students. Students who use their car as transport to school cannot use car or traffic related problems as a valid excuse for lateness.

Driving lessons must not coincide with any timetabled lessons, during exams or registration periods. Learner drivers are not allowed on the school premises.

The school is not responsible for any loss or damage to a vehicle whilst it is on school premises or elsewhere.

Rivers Sixth Form works closely with Supreme Driving to allow some free driving lessons at the school for those who are over 16. These sessions run after school. Information for this will be provided on their Induction Day and posters are available in the Sixth Form common area.

EXAMINATIONS

Formal examinations take place in May and June and mock exams also take place in both years. Year 12 students sit their mock exams throughout the year and we place considerable importance upon these as an indication of how well the students are performing on their A level courses. The exams enable teachers to assess how well prepared students are to progress into Year 13 and to put in support and set targets where required.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Standards of dress and appearance should be appropriate for the business of studying and should not include styles which are extreme. If students fail to meet these standards they will be placed in the Inclusion room for the day. Dress for more formal occasions (Celebration Evening, Open Evening etc.) must be appropriate business attire.

Students must wear their Sixth Form ID badge at all times. Not only does this allow them access to and from the building but is a safeguarding concern if they are not wearing it. If a student forgets their badge, they must report immediately to the Sixth Form office to be issued with a temporary one for the day and will pay £5.00 if this needs to be replaced.

Our dress code is modern office wear and the following are not permitted:

- Short skirts, dresses or shorts - *long shorts/playsuits are allowed*
- Jeans with rips - *smart jeans are allowed*
- Flip flops or other beach footwear
- Strappy tops - shoulders need to be covered at all times
- Crop tops/low cut tops - no skin on show
- Leggings - unless worn under a dress/long top to replace tights
- Sportswear, lounge wear or jogging bottoms
- No loose hanging jewellery
- No phones out unless directed to use them
- No bright or unnatural hair dye
- No Tattoos on show

SMOKING

Ormiston Rivers Academy is a 'no smoking' site and therefore smoking is not permitted on the school premises. Students are asked to refrain from smoking on the school buses and in the immediate vicinity of the school.

STUDENT EQUIPMENT

Students in the Sixth Form must be properly equipped for lessons. We recommend that students have folders with dividers for each subject to file their notes and worksheets, as good organisation is crucial to succeeding at this level. Students are expected to buy the correct textbooks for their courses and may be required to have specialist equipment, such as a camera for Photography. This will be communicated to students by their subject teachers.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

You are encouraged to bring your own tablet or laptop device into school. As we operate a managed wifi solution on site, we have in place structured capacity to allow external devices internet connectivity. This will allow students to be able to easily upload work onto G-suite into their Google classrooms and be able to email teachers directly when needed. Users wishing to connect their device to the network should seek advice from ICT Support or the Sixth Form Team. Please be aware that wireless access is granted

to Sixth Form students only on their laptop, tablet, mobile and smartphones devices. This enables students to print from multiple devices.

Please note, the school cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to property, therefore we advise parents to obtain their own insurance cover as the school does not provide cover.

Sixth Form students are required to **read and sign the Students ICT Acceptable usage policy and adhere to the terms set out**. Inappropriate usage of the internet and devices will not be tolerated and will be dealt with by the Co Heads of Sixth Form and/or Head teacher.

MONITORING PROGRESS AND TARGET SETTING

Students are set challenging targets based on their GCSE performance when they enter the Sixth Form and subject teachers, Heads of Departments, mentors and the Sixth Form Team monitor progress against these targets. Students are also expected to monitor and evaluate their own progress and are provided with materials in form time for this purpose. Students have regular one to one reviews to discuss their progress and reports are published throughout the year. In addition to this, parents/carers and students are invited to discuss individual progress at a parents' evening.

Reports & Progress Reviews

We publish regular reports per academic year which are sent home via email. These provide the basis on which we monitor academic progress and we are able to identify strengths and underperformance, which is discussed in individual reviews with the Sixth Form Team and then followed up in the relevant subject areas. Targets are set and strategies to improve are negotiated and monitored.

Google Classrooms

This provides students, parents and carers with secure online access to work set in lessons, progress and any homework. This platform is important for improving learning in and out of the classroom and supporting students with meeting deadlines and accessing support outside of the classroom. Students will be invited into a Google classroom for each lesson they teach to help them access more resources. Parents and carers can attach an email address to this as well to oversee their progress. There is a general Sixth Form Notice Board classroom as well. This is used alongside mentor time.

Parents' Evenings

Parents' Evenings provide an opportunity to discuss a student's performance with their subject teachers. You will receive an email giving you details of the date and times of the evening and bookings for appointments can be made online.

If you have any concerns regarding your students progress at any time during the academic year, please contact the Head of Department or the subject teacher directly. The Sixth Form Team is also happy to provide assistance, support and guidance wherever possible.

Mentors

All Sixth Form mentors have experience of guiding students through Key Stage 5 and are able to give considerable support to students while supporting them with attendance during this time. All students receive advice and guidance to help them adapt to the new study skills and more independent style of learning that is expected of them in the Sixth Form. Mentors also provide guidance on time

management, career ambitions, writing personal statements and the process of applying for university and writing CVs. Students have regular informal and formal one-to-one reviews with their mentor, the outcomes of which are recorded for monitoring purposes. Targets for improving academic performance are set and reviewed.

Careers Adviser

We have established excellent links with our Careers Adviser, Mrs Brazier, who gives students impartial advice and guidance on apprenticeships and career opportunities, enabling them to make informed decisions about their future plans.

PSHE – Personal, Social, Health Education

A varied, topical programme of current issues and themes is delivered by mentors during mentor time. Outside speakers are regularly invited into school to deliver specialist talks across a wide range of subjects. This comprehensive coverage of political, economic, global, current and relevant issues is designed to help prepare students for life beyond the Sixth Form, whether it is university, apprenticeships or employment.

Further Support

Students do sometimes have issues, whether personal or related to their studies, and may need to seek advice and support. Mentors, subject teachers, Heads of Department, the Wellbeing team or the Sixth Form Team are always on hand to help. We can guide students towards specialist counsellors and can, under certain circumstances and where appropriate, refer students to external support teams.

POST-18 OPTIONS

- Upon joining the Sixth Form students are asked to consider 'What Next?' To support students in making those important decisions, the Sixth Form offers many events, which include:
- Presentations during the Spring term of Year 12 by university/college admissions tutors and employers
- A visit to UCAS Higher Education Exhibition in the Autumn term of Year 12.
- A day out of school in March to attend National Apprenticeship Show at Sandown Park
- Students are encouraged to research and visit institutions on their open days
- Students are encouraged to have a careers interview with Mrs Brazier, our Careers Adviser
- Students receive comprehensive guidance on completing the online applications via UCAS to university/higher education institutions and receive support in writing their personal statements

SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS

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sixthform@ormistonriversacademy.co.uk

Website: www.ormistonriversacademy.co.uk

Assistant Principal: Mrs H .Victory

Principal: Ms J. Williams

Co Heads of Sixth Form: Mrs M. Wilkins
Miss D. Sametz

Sixth Form Data & Admin:: Mrs C. Head