

# Year 12 Parent Information



## Welcome to Malmesbury Sixth Form

### Dear Parents,

We hope that the information provided here goes some way to affirming that your son/daughter has made the best possible choice in selecting Malmesbury School for their Post-16 education. We pride ourselves on nurturing a happy, caring and excellent community of young adults and we will always support your child with any issues they may have or any aspirations that they wish to achieve.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us as the relationship between parent and school remains as important as it has always been. They may appear to be older and wiser, but your Sixth Form child will undoubtedly need some guidance and support from us and you at some point!



**Sarah Haines**



**Andy Backwell**



**Jon Brown**



**Ziska Dodd**

### Dear Sixth-Former,

We are really pleased that you have decided to continue your education by studying in Malmesbury School Sixth Form. We would like to welcome you to, what we all believe, is a school community with a strong academic record and an excellent track record of support and care.

You will find that the Sixth Form has a lot to offer. We all believe that you are not just studying for your examinations but you are also developing life skills that will be invaluable should you choose to further your study at university, follow an apprenticeship or go straight into employment.

We hope that you enjoy your time with us and make the most of every opportunity available. Remember that you are not on your own. Aside from your peers we have an excellent teaching and support staff. Do not be afraid to seek help and guidance.

Finally, we would like to wish you the very best with your future studies and aspirations.

**Mr Backwell (Head of 6<sup>th</sup> Form), Mrs Haines (Assistant Headteacher KS5), Jon Brown (Excellence Programme) and Ziska Dodd (Academic Leader).**

## **Useful Contact Information**

School absence line : 01666 829759

School Reception : 01666 829700 / [mailin@malmesbury.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:mailin@malmesbury.wilts.sch.uk)

Andy Backwell – Head of 6<sup>th</sup> Form [abackwell@malmesbury.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:abackwell@malmesbury.wilts.sch.uk)

Sarah Haines – Assistant Headteacher i/c KS5 [shaines@malmesbury.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:shaines@malmesbury.wilts.sch.uk)

Jon Brown – Curriculum Leader for The Excellence Programme [BrownJ@malmesbury.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:BrownJ@malmesbury.wilts.sch.uk)

Ziska Dodd – Academic Leader Year 12 [zdodd@malmesbury.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:zdodd@malmesbury.wilts.sch.uk)

## **September 2010 - Covid working arrangements for Sixth Form**

Sixth Form are in their own bubble and zone. Both year groups have access to their common room as well as other dedicated study spaces around the school. Students are expected to wear masks on school corridors and in the common room when queuing for food. We also have a study room that is dedicated to vulnerable students or students with vulnerable families (SF3), where masks are compulsory.

### **Attendance**

Attendance at all lessons is a compulsory requirement for all students; this includes all additional, compulsory events. If a student is absent from school for authorised reasons, (illness, medical appointment, driving test, interview, open day visit etc.) then a letter written by a parent or guardian needs to be passed to Student Services so that reliable attendance records can be maintained.

Alternatively, a parent or guardian could phone the school absence line on 01666 829759 and leave a message.

In addition to full attendance in lessons, we expect all sixth form students to be present in the Year Group Assembly during Week 1 (although this is not currently running) and the Extended Tutor Time (Friday Week 2). This includes all students who have a study free immediately after these sessions.

It is also an expectation that students use the 'Signing In and Out' system if they leave the school site and when they return at any point during the school day. In September there will be three card-based registration devices (one at Student Services, one in the sixth form and one on the lower street by Humanities). It is essential that the school knows if a student is on the premises or not.



## **The Sixth Form Offer**

Normally our students opt to study A levels but there is also the opportunity to study other Level 3 qualifications such as Food Science Level 3 Diploma and Financial Capability Level 3 Diploma.

### **A Levels**

A Levels are nationally recognised, Level 3 qualification that are normally studied over a two-year period. The most popular option for students, and the one most of the universities would regard as being the 'standard' model, is to take 3 A Levels. Some of our students continue with four A Level subjects. Most Degree and Higher-Level Apprenticeships still use A levels as benchmark for assessing suitability.

## **The Excellence Programme**

The Excellence Programme is designed to develop students more fully and provide them with a unique set of opportunities and transferable skills.

It is important that students see themselves as more than just a set of exam grades, and whilst it is recognised that many students will be aspiring to highly competitive university courses and employment opportunities they should develop a range of interpersonal skills, pursue interests, engage in healthy activities but also take time out to destress and enjoy themselves.

In September we will be offering the following optional courses to all Year 12s and encouraging students to take at least one:

- Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) Level 3 (worth half an A Level) The EPQ is widely recognised by universities because of the research and presentation skills involved. A student either writes an extended essay of about 5,000 words or creates a product with an accompanying shorter essay of about 1,000 words. Training in research and presentation skills is provided by the course supervisor with the option to visit Southampton University Research Library.
- Core Maths (worth the equivalent of an AS Level)
- Financial Capability (Certificate = AS Level; Diploma = A Level)
- Recreational Sport (basketball, yoga, fitness classes, football etc.)
- Film Studies (AS level)
- Conversational French and Spanish and Russian for beginners

In recent years students have received lower grade or alternative grade offers from universities if they have studied the Diploma in Finance or the EPQ. Both contain approaches to study that the universities like- for example, the research skills developed in the EPQ are highly valued.

We run a dedicated group to provide information and support with applications to Oxbridge, medicine, dentistry and veterinary studies. Students applying to these highly competitive courses are identified early and are invited to join a group tailored to support their application. This group meets regularly to discuss and share research and experiences as well as receive specific help with their personal statements and interviews.

This support continues throughout the autumn of Year 13 with specific 1:1 support with the personal statement and also discussion of potential entrance exams and the Cambridge SAQ. Students are encouraged to seek work experience, where appropriate. For medics and dentists this includes local practices or hospitals, but students are also advised to seek care home experience to broaden their approaches working with patients and their close family, as well as understanding the logistical/financial implications of running care facilities. Potential vets organise experience with local practices but have also worked at nearby zoos and animal collections. All applicants receive a mock interview from an Oxford professor prior to the 'real' thing.

## **Tutorial Programme**

As well as morning registration, students have a fortnightly one-hour tutorial. Tutors deliver a varied programme including study skills, sexual and mental health, politics and careers.

Students will also have a regular one-to-one meeting with their tutor to talk about their progress, next steps and other pastoral issues.

## **Sixth-Form Advocacy**

We actively encourage students to engage in a range of other activities. At the heart of this is our advocacy programme. Universities and employers alike want students who have developed a range of inter-personal skills and demonstrate their potential as leaders. The Advocacy programme provides a great opportunity to develop these whilst contributing to the school and wider community.

As part of the advocacy programme, students in Year 12 are expected to commit time to one of the following enrichment opportunities:

- Academic Mentor – for example working to support students in lower year groups within their subject lessons such as science.
- Pastoral Mentor - our sixth form students receive Peer Mentor training and go on to work with lower year group students as Peer Mentors, Paired Readers, helping out at The Maths Breakfast Club or in Learning Support
- School and community activities. Many of our students opt to help out running sports clubs, sometimes providing coaching to younger students, running after school clubs in science as well as contributing to the local community in support of the elderly at the Tuesday club.

A full explanation of the Sixth Form Advocacy Scheme will be provided in the first tutorial. A student's contribution as an advocate will be tracked and monitored during Year 12. At the end of the year students will be nominated for advocate awards. In addition, a report summarizing the contribution by each student is submitted to the form tutor with the expectation that this information is used in the UCAS or employment reference.



# **Beyond the Curriculum**

## **Work Shadowing**

There is an expectation that all students organize a period of work shadowing. This is usually for two days at the beginning of July, but students should discuss extensions to this time, with the Head of Sixth Form, if the opportunity arises.

Work Shadowing is not the same as Work Experience and allows students to participate in a wider, more appropriate range of opportunities. In recent years this has involved shadowing a stage director at the RSC in Stratford, a Neurosurgeon at GWH or PHD Tutor at Bristol University.

## **Enrichment**

There are plenty of opportunities that students can get involved with throughout their time in the Sixth Form. Here is a selection of some of the things that ran last year. A similar programme is planned this year although this is subject to Covid restrictions:

## **Duke of Edinburgh Award**

Students are encouraged to participate in the Silver and Gold Award.

## **Sport**

Sixth Form Rugby – Student team Partook in the NATWEST Cup for Sixth forms and Colleges.

Sixth Form Football – Were training once a week and organizing fixtures with local clubs.

Inter-form competition – A highly competitive set of competitions; firstly, between Year 12 tutor groups, the winners playing Year 1. Arranged for football, volleyball and Rounders.

Sixth form water polo – including fixtures.

Involvement in whole school clubs such as Fencing, Eventing and Triathlon

## **Trips**

- Social trips – including Rugby (last year was Bristol vs Bath) and Theatre
- Subject related trips – Geography residential to Dorset, History trip to Germany etc
- Student Union Social – social activities organized by the head students e.g. ice skating and Christmas quiz
- Visit to Merton College Oxford
- Visit to the UCAS Convention – UWE - Bristol
- Access to Bristol – every university offers an ‘Access’ course. These are subject specific and highly competitive. Every year some of our students are selected to attend a six-week course at

the University of Bristol. They receive tailor made lectures and tutorials as well as laboratory experience (where appropriate). Successful completion of the course guarantees an interview or contextual offer



## Guest Speakers

Last year's programme included:

- University speakers – Bristol University (Personal Statement Workshop) and Cambridge University talk
- Guest lectures – Khmer rouge survivor
- Political speakers – All main local political parties
- Gap Year talk
- Apprenticeship talk
- Mental health speakers
- Dyson Engineers leading into the Robotics Workshop
- Local Economist of the Year Award

## 16-19 Bursary

This is a nationally available bursary of up to £1200 that is available to support eligible students. It is 'Means Tested' based on home circumstances, but the bursary is paid directly to the student and can be used to support the purchase of educational material, books and revision guides, visits, trips and transport. Please speak to the Head of Sixth Form

## Expectations and Attitudes

Sixth Form students are entering the final phase of their school life. They are preparing for life at university or employment and remain role models for young students. Whilst it is essential that they enjoy their time in the sixth form they still need to conduct themselves in a professional way. Students should:

- Attend all lessons, tutorial sessions, assemblies etc. and be on time
- Prepare for lessons and meet deadlines
- Be positive, interested and willing to learn
- Take responsibility for their own learning and contribute
- Be aware of their role in the school and set an example
- Get involved outside of lessons

## Behaviour

Most students maintain exceptionally high standards during their time in the sixth form, however, for some the new levels of freedom and responsibility require higher levels of self-discipline than some students find easy to apply. We track and monitor students closely to help ensure high standards of attainment, attendance and effort are maintained across all subjects.

A 'cause for concern' report is usually sent, by the teacher, to the Head of Faculty, Head of Sixth Form or Academic Leader if a pattern of poor work ethic, progress or attendance is identified within a subject or subjects. The response is one of support and the tone of any conversation will be to establish the nature of the problem and provide appropriate advice or guidance. Usually the issue resolves itself quickly but it should be noted that the student may face an exclusion should an attendance or behaviour problem persist and it is apparent that the student is making no effort to deal with their problems in a constructive way. When a student is excluded a letter is sent home to parents/guardians identifying the cause for concern.

Further sanctions are available to the school, at any time, should the student fail to meet the appropriate expectations as a member of the sixth form:

- A student may be required to work under supervision, in the library, for a fixed number of their study periods
- A student can have all sixth form privileges removed for a fixed time period. If this should occur the student will not be allowed into the sixth form common room nor will he/she be entitled to 'free' periods (unless he/she has a pre-booked driving lesson that cannot be changed at short

notice). During free/study periods the student should report to the Inclusions Room and will be required to study

- In extreme cases a student will be required to spend the fixed period of time in the Inclusions Room. Staff will provide work to ensure that the student maintains his/her studies. The student will work in supervised conditions
- A further meeting can be arranged with the student to issue an IBP (Individual Behaviour Plan)
- A Governors' Panel Meeting can be arranged to review the student's behaviour and to make recommendations for the future

## Holidays

Holidays during the school term are **strongly discouraged**, however, if an absence is to be authorized, students must fill in a **holiday form** which can be obtained from Student Services. Following an absence, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with any work that has been missed.

*I would also like to take this opportunity to point out that the school is a no-smoking site, and sixth form students are not permitted to smoke anywhere on the school grounds.*

## Communicating Student Progress

Effective learning partnerships are dependent on good communication between parents, students and teaching staff, and there are many opportunities for communication throughout the academic year.

### Parent Evenings

A Virtual **Year 12 Tutor Evening** will be held on **12<sup>th</sup> November 2020**. This will be an opportunity for parents to meet their child's tutor, discuss targets and progress. This is not a subject specific evening.

**A Full Parent's Evening will be held on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021** – this provides parents and guardians with the opportunity to discuss progress and targets with all subject teachers. Each appointment is scheduled for 10 minutes.

In addition, consultation surgeries provide parents/guardians and teachers with additional opportunities to discuss student progress in key areas. They provide a good opportunity to follow up previously identified concerns and targets etc. These are however understandably postponed until further notice so we would urge parents who have any concerns to email subject teachers.

## Reports

The **Interim Report** is a quick view report that provides an overview of a student's achievements in their studies. The focus of each report will be the student progress towards their Target Grade, and their Effort.

Each student receives a **Structured Annual (Full) Report** which elaborates on specific achievements and targets. It is also likely to include some discussion on current achievement and target grades as well as providing guidance and targets for improvement.

Students are encouraged to share the contents of this report with their parents. Reports are made available to Year 12 on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

Reports are expected to be released to students on the following dates:

***26<sup>th</sup> November 2020 - interim report***

***11<sup>th</sup> March 2021 - interim report***

***21<sup>st</sup> July 2021 - full report***

## Reporting Definitions

### Current Achievement Grade

A grade at A-level which reflects the student's current performance. Key assessments, coursework assignments, module examinations and mock examinations are all taken into consideration. It is likely this grade will change during a student's time in the Sixth Form.

### Target Grade

An aspirational grade which we hope students will work towards during their time in the Sixth Form. It is generated from a student's average GCSE score when compared to students across the country of similar ability together with our knowledge of the student. This grade is unlikely to change during a student's time in the Sixth Form and if target grade data is completely reliable, this is the grade a student should end up with at the end of the course provided they put in the required effort and make expected progress. On occasion, a student's current achievement grade can exceed their target grade, which indicates a student exceeding initial expectations. It is normal to increase the grade at this point.

It is acknowledged that students can be initially disappointed with a low target grade and it should be stated: target grades should not be regarded as limiting. Many of our students go on to exceed their target grade in the final exams.

## Monitoring Progress

Your son/daughter will have selected a range of A-levels to study in Year 12, usually in three subjects. It is expected that students continue to study their chosen subjects in Year 13.

Students make their final subject choices after receiving their GCSE results. It is essential that students are studying the right A level subjects that reflect their aspirations and their ability.

Students will be given the first six weeks of their Autumn Term in Year 12 to ensure that they are on the right courses; it is understood that students may struggle with the demands of A Levels in the first instance. The expectation is that they work proactively with their teachers in order to make progress - discussions should include strategies for success. Students will not be able to drop an A Level once the 'Six Week Window' has passed.

The main role of the Academic Leader for the year group is to track and monitor student progress. It is expected that they will initiate a learning conversation with any student who is struggling with the A level subjects. There are various checkpoints for student progress throughout the year, these are normally coordinated to coincide with the release of student reports.

At report point 1, students who are identified as being 'Needs Improvement' in 2 or more subjects or gaining a U grade in at least one subject, will have a learning conversation with a member of the 6<sup>th</sup> Form team and suitable interventions will be put in place. It is the expectation that any student with a U grade will have a Parents' Consultation appointment with the class teacher.

At report points 2 and 3, any student who gains two successive U grades in a subject or is 3 grades adrift from target, may be subject to an Academic Panel in which recommendations for future options and support are made. The Academic Panel Meeting is with the student, parents, class teacher, Academic Leader, Head of 6<sup>th</sup> Form and SLT member as appropriate.

The vast majority of students continue to study A Levels in Year 13 and leave the Sixth Form with full A level qualifications; however, some students' circumstances result in them leaving at the end of Year 12. The main reason for leaving is to take advantage of new employment/apprenticeship opportunities.

## Applying to University

A **Higher Education Information Evening** occurs late in the summer term for Year 12 students and their parents. This evening gives an opportunity to gain an insight into higher education and, also covers the important area of the financial implications for students.

UCAS stands for University and College Admissions Service and its website is [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) The UCAS website contains a central hub with lots of information on applications, links to universities and alternatives such as apprenticeships, gap years and volunteer work.

Normally, students start their university research in Year 12. Some of tutor period time is assigned to the university application progress in Year 12 and Year 13. Students in Year 12 research areas of interest and short list institutions and courses.

Around March in Year 12 students can visit the UCAS Convention at UWE in Bristol. We are hoping to arrange this virtually this academic year unless the government guidelines allow us to make this trip.

In Year 13, students complete the online application process and prepare for possible interviews and university life.

The two major components of the form are the personal statement and the reference.

**The personal statement** is the big opportunity for students to support their application to university. It needs to be relevant to the university courses for which the student is applying. Students are given a lot of support with writing this by their tutor and the Head of Sixth Form, but additional support includes a **Personal Statement Workshop with Bristol University**.

**The reference** is completed by the student's form tutor using information supplied by subject teachers. This will also contain the student's predicted grades.

Applications need to be completed by 15<sup>th</sup> January however the school deadline for UCAS is 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Students applying to Oxford, Cambridge, veterinary, medicine and dentistry courses need to complete their application before the 15<sup>th</sup> October. It is our strong advice that all other students complete their application by mid-November at the latest.

It is highly likely that students applying for the 15<sup>th</sup> October deadline will be interviewed. All students will be provided with the opportunity to have a 'mock' interview prior to the real thing.

Some courses e.g. medicine/law, at some universities, require students to sit additional entry tests early in Year 13 and it is important that a student's research is thorough so that such implications are identified early in the application process.

Whilst many students progress onto degree level courses it is understood that this option isn't the one that every student chooses. For some, leaving the Sixth Form takes them onto the first steps of finding employment. The school has a dedicated **Careers Advisor (Sarah Griffin)** who provides career advice and guidance. Students can attend a drop-in surgery or arrange for a specific referral via their tutor or the Head of Sixth Form.

## Communication

Students are encouraged to regularly check the Microsoft Team for Malmesbury Sixth Form – the team constantly update this with messages, careers information and university opportunities. In the event of another school closure, this will be method of communicating with the whole year group.

