

## The Sixth Form – some points worth remembering

The Sixth Form is quite unlike any previous time you have spent in school. It provides a totally different work environment from that of the lower school. You are likely to be taking three or four subjects at a significantly advanced level of study, compared to GCSE. There will be times in the day when you do not have a taught lesson, and these times are **very much your own responsibility: you must use them for your own private study**. You will be set assignments which require you to read and research on your own, and you are trusted to do this.

Bear in mind that the effort and commitment you put in to your studies is very important. What you do in these two years – and they are very short ones – determines what choices are open to you when you have finished: be it university, college, professional career path. Always remember that the better qualified you are, the more choice you have about the kinds of career open to you, and the further up the promotion ladder you can go.

So, to keep your options as wide as possible you need to be committed as soon as you begin your AS courses in September: that is when opinions are formed about you, and when you form opinions about yourself and your own potential.

Above all, Sixth Form studies will help you to become an independent learner. The skills and habits you develop now will stand you in good stead for the rest of your working life. As with any institution, there are rules to be observed and expectations on you:

- Attendance at all subject lessons is compulsory; you must be punctual.
- Attendance at 8.30am, the beginning of the school day, is compulsory.
- The Sixth Form dress code is to be adhered to and is a condition of Sixth Form membership. This must also be worn for examinations.
- Study periods during the day are to be taken in school. If you have a study period at the end of the day you may sign out and go home.
- Unless you are required for a specific purpose, permission to leave the premises at lunchtimes is usually granted **provided you have signed your name in the leave book kept in the office**.
- You may wish to use your own transport to and from School; however, this **must be discussed with the School first**.
- **Any paid work must be kept to a minimum; I would strongly discourage you from working more than ten hours per week.**
- You will be referred to as Sixth Form **Scholars** and your role is critical in the School.

### The AS and A2 Levels

At Priory School you need appropriate results at GCSE to study for A Levels in the Sixth Form. Ideally, if you have gained a B grade or above in your chosen subjects, you should be well placed, but a C grade plus a positive interest in the subject is also perfectly acceptable as a basis.

### **Which subjects to choose?**

The normal course of study means taking four subjects in the Lower Sixth, at the end of which – if successful – you finish with four passes at **AS Level**. The normal course of study then involves selecting three of those and spending your Upper Sixth year studying these through to gain the full **A2 Level** qualification. You don't need to decide whether you wish to continue with each chosen AS subject to a full A2 Level until you have received your AS Level results in the August following completion of the course and exams.

Think carefully about your choice of subjects: you may find that your choice of four to start with is an easy one to make: perhaps you have a clear idea of three which fit together – say, Maths, Physics and Chemistry – but would like to choose something completely different and refreshing for your fourth subject: say, English or Art. Whatever your thoughts, do discuss with your tutors and listen to advice from subject tutors, the Head of the Sixth Form or the Principal. Our main aim is to make sure that you are comfortable with the courses you have chosen. It is an important choice for you to make, after all.

Naturally, you should select subjects which you think you will do well in when it comes to final grades: you need to bear in mind the university, college and career options you may wish to pursue beyond school, so check your proposed courses against these plans. On the other hand, you may not necessarily have a clear further study or career option in mind and you may wish to select your subjects simply on the basis of you liking for them. That's fine.

### **How assessed?**

A Level subjects are assessed by external examinations at the end of the two-year course. Some students undertaking AS study from September 2017 follow the new specifications for A Level but individual subject tutors are available to give further advice and guidance on this. Some AS subjects have modules which are assessed in June of the Lower Sixth year, although this system of assessment ceases at the end of the academic year 2017. There is no need to worry too much about the details at this stage – what matters is that good working habits are developed from the start.

**Authorised by the Principal, Mr E J Matyjaszek  
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