

# Sutton Grammar School Sixth Form



# INTRODUCTION

“Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability”. Such at least was the rather optimistic view of Francis Bacon, seventeenth century scholar, courtier and all round genius. While it may not be every potential sixth form student’s view that their future studies are going to be a delight, there is certainly a clear case for suggesting that unless you have some enjoyment in what you are going to study, then it might be better not to continue with studies at all. Coming into the sixth form here, or indeed anywhere, is a choice made by you because you want to know more, you want to understand more, and you want to develop more. It is a sign that you understand the crucial value of an educated mind in shaping futures. It was Churchill – ironically not much of a success at school but an undoubtedly brilliant intellect – who told the students of Harvard that “the empires of the future are the empires of the mind”.

The choice of what to study should be made firstly from what it is that interests you. While there are some vocational necessities – the putative medic, for example, must study chemistry; the would-be physicist or engineer should have a proficiency in maths – these are pointless if they are not accompanied by a genuine interest in studying them for their own sake. What use, after all, is a doctor who despises chemistry, or an engineer with no interest in the practical applications of maths? The subject options are outlined in an accompanying booklet (helpfully titled “Subject Options” or some such, creativity never having been a strong aspect of these sort of publications). The aim of this “General Introduction” is to help guide you as to whether Sutton Grammar School Sixth form is the right place for you in its overall character and provision. It is, I admit, a rather dry document for the most part, but it has the virtue of completeness, and no student who has read this should be in any doubt as to how the sixth form here operates.

Alongside the academic A-level education, Sutton Grammar Sixth Form should also be a place which offers students the chance to develop their character and broaden their horizons, and this is done through the extra-curricular programme. I would certainly argue that the successful student is one who involves themselves in a range of non-classroom activities, whether these be helping to produce school publications, taking part in sports, drama, music, the CCF and the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, or a whole host of activities in between, ones that are often heavily dependent on sixth form support. Many of our best academic students are those who throw themselves into the wider life of the sixth form and the school, for it is they whose minds and characters refuse to be bound by the limitations of academic study alone. I hope, in sum, that you will see Sutton Grammar as an exciting and stimulating place to pursue academic studies and develop your characters, and that you will be able to reach for new and exciting personal goals, both academic and social - the opportunity to ‘seize the day’!

**Mr G Marshall**

**Head of Sixth Form**

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## SIXTH FORM AIMS

- To provide academic studies leading to A-level qualifications.
- To prepare students for university as well as their careers after full time education.
- To provide an active environment in which students can follow their interests and activities beyond studies.
- To develop a sense of personal responsibility and service to others within a community, and to instil a respect for other people, including fellow students, younger pupils and teaching and ancillary staff.
- To encourage students to look beyond the horizons of their A-level studies, to develop other interests and to question accepted 'mores' with intelligence.
- To prepare students to play a full, active and positive role in society

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## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

All students who enter the Sixth Form must meet a minimum level of overall success at GCSE. Priority will be given to students already at the school.

*[All candidates must pass at least eight GCSEs (Grades A\*-C) including English, Maths and a Science. Four of these subjects should be a minimum of a Grade A and a further two at a minimum of Grade B. (A Grade A\* or A is usually required in the subjects to be studied at A-level).] - CHANGE*

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## ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

The academic programme in the sixth form is a two-year course of study. This allows for a greater time and breadth to be employed in academic study, and also gives students the chance to properly engage in other, non-curricular activities. Games lessons are held on alternate Wednesday afternoons, with football fixtures also organised for many Saturdays. Each student will have a number of free periods for private study.

We believe that bright students are not fully stretched by only pursuing three A-levels, and so we require sixth formers at Sutton Grammar to pursue four A-levels for their two years here. We allow for some discussion about this between parents, student and teachers at the end of the L6th year if the burden appears to be too great.

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## COGITAS – EXTENDED STUDIES

In addition to the A-level programme, we also offer Year 12 students an Extended Studies programme called “Cogitas”. The aim of Cogitas is to provide breadth to students’ academic study in the sixth form. Students pursue a 4th A-level as a means of developing academic depth. However, breadth is also an important part of a student’s academic development, and that is the purpose of the Cogitas/Extended Studies.

The programme starts with one or two collective sessions, introducing the course and covering some broad aspects of study skills.

Students then have the opportunity to choose two courses from a range offered by SGS staff, which they will study across two semesters through the three terms. Each semester will run for 16 weeks. These are non-examined courses, allowing teachers to offer topics which they themselves are enthused about, and an opportunity for students to share in that interest and extend their own horizons. Amongst the courses that are currently on offer are Ancient History; Crime, Deviance and Punishment; A History of Film; and the Theory of Knowledge.

Whilst the courses do not have any formal examinations, they are nonetheless underpinned by some key principles, which students will develop and be expected to demonstrate during the course of their studies. Completion of the two semesters, whatever courses are followed, offers the opportunity for students to develop the academic richness they can write about in their university personal statements.

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## LOWER SIXTH INDUCTION

We hold an Induction Day for new Sixth Formers just before the rest of the school returns from the summer break. (The term 'new' Sixth Formers means everyone who is coming into the Lower Sixth, whether from our own Year 11, or from other schools).

The aim of the Induction Day is to introduce students to the expectations that we have for their Sixth Form career, and also to enable them to work with the members of their tutor groups, in which all students will be placed in often new mixtures of their peers.

The day includes talks from the Head of Sixth Form, Headmaster and Deputy Head, as well as a "freshers fair" in which the extra-curricular societies and activities have the chance to advertise their opportunities.

Students joining from other schools are asked to bring evidence of their GCSE grades to the Induction Day, so that they can be photocopied and placed in their school files.

Early on in the autumn term we also hold an Activity Away Day for the whole of Year 12, which has proved an excellent way of bringing everyone together and providing a lively start to everyone's 6<sup>th</sup> form careers.

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## THE SIXTH FORM CENTRE

The Sixth Form Centre is a relatively new facility on the top floor of our latest, purpose-built block. It includes a spacious common room area, two large study rooms for sixth formers (one fully equipped with computers) and a classroom. It is designed as a space for all sixth formers to congregate, socialise and work, wherever their day to day lessons take them. It will usually be open until at least 6pm, available for sixth formers who wish to work late at school.

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## TUTOR GROUPS

There are thirteen tutor groups, six for Upper Sixth and seven for Lower Sixth, but we anticipate a seventh group for the new entry of Year 12 in September 2021. Rather than remaining in classes linked to Houses, members of the Sixth Form are mixed into forms containing students from all Houses. New entrants to the school will be assigned to one of four Houses and will be expected to become involved in their own House activities.

Tutors play a key role in the Sixth Form. Apart from routine administration, he or she should be the first person students normally turn to if they need to discuss any aspect, academic or pastoral, of their time at school.

In the UCAS (university admissions) process the tutor, as well as the Head of Sixth Form, will play a very active part, advising on courses and institutions, helping students to complete their form and particularly to draft and improve the Personal Statement. Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, the tutor will draft the school's reference for the UCAS form which will be reviewed and edited by the Head of Sixth Form.

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## THE SCHOOL DAY AND WEEK

The School operates on a two week timetable – Week A and Week B. The Student Diary will indicate the appropriate week. Each school day comprises seven lessons and the timetable is the same as for the rest of the school.

08.30	Registration
08.39	Period 1
09.26	Period 2
10.13	Period 3
10.58	Break
11.20	Period 4
12.07	Period 5
12.52	Lunch
13.42	Registration/Assembly
14.03	Period 6
14.50	Period 7
15.35	Lessons end

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## REGISTRATION

All Sixth Formers are expected to register with their tutors at 8.30am and 1.42pm, regardless of the demands of their timetable. Anyone who fails to report in person to his or her tutor must, at the earliest opportunity, sign in at the School Office. **Attendance at registration and form periods, as well as assemblies, is a requirement for sixth formers here, and should be considered seriously before making applications to join us.**



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## EXEATS

Sixth Formers are expected to be on site during the first five periods of the school day, although they can leave school for the break period if they wish, as well as at lunchtime.

Any sixth former who has no afternoon lessons on a particular day may go home **after** afternoon registration provided that he or she has no other commitment and signs out on the exeat sheet.

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## PRIVATE STUDY

Pupils are expected to make good use of their free time. When Sixth Formers are not timetabled for lessons, they are expected to be engaged in Private Study in the Sixth Form Centre or the library. The Sixth Form Centre and the library are supervised, while the sixth form centre will provide a computer room for sixth formers to use at any time. Students may also use the canteen during their free periods; this is a more informal place to gather, and the canteen sells hot drinks and snacks to sixth formers throughout the day. We expect students to assume a responsible attitude towards work and the study facilities, keeping up to date with assignments and respecting the needs of others to work undisturbed.

Time management is an essential skill for sixth formers to develop. Sixth formers, like students in the rest of the school, are given compact diaries as an aid in organising their academic and other activities.

In terms of work commitments, A-level students should expect to do a great deal of their academic work outside of their lessons. A minimum suggestion would be three hours per subject per week, which should include maintaining homework commitments and pursuing wider reading.

Sutton Grammar has a long history of high academic achievers who also participate fully and get involved in other areas of school life: music, drama, sport, societies, and a full range of other activities. With good organisation sixth formers will hopefully continue to spread their wings academically and otherwise.

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## REPORTING

In order to ensure that academic progress is properly monitored and that students and parents are kept suitably informed, sixth formers will be issued with a full annual report. Every term, they will receive Sixth Form report sheets which will show their academic progress, measured against targets set according to GCSE results and a range of other assessment criteria.

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## UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS

For many Sixth Formers, their goal after A-levels is university and to that end, we invest a lot of time in the university application process. Students are encouraged to think about how to build up a profile for their reference and their Personal Statement from the start of their Lower Sixth year.

In the summer term, they will be taken through the details of the university application process, producing drafts of Personal Statements and talking through academic progress with tutors and the Head of Sixth Form. Then, in the autumn term, students apply through UCAS to the universities of their choice.

School support and advice will continue through the interview process, and right up to the receipt of exam results in the summer after A-levels, to make sure that students have the best opportunity to find the university course that suits them.

A number of very able students each year consider application to Oxford or Cambridge and departments here have built up strong expertise in their subject areas to support students in these applications.

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## COMPUTER FACILITIES

All students are entitled to use the school's computer and network facilities. Those new to the school will need to complete and sign the form relevant to the use of computers and the Internet / e-mail facilities. All students are assigned e-mail addresses.

Computers are available for use in the Library, Sixth Form Centre and IT Rooms in the Main School and the Humanities Block.

Please note that laptops and tablets can be connected to the School network with the permission of the ICT Department. Sixth formers may also use smart phones (see below).

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## CONDUCT

Smoking and the consumption of alcohol are strictly forbidden on the school premises and on the journeys to and from school. Possession or use of illegal drugs will forfeit the right of students to remain at the school.

There is no car parking space for students in the school grounds. There is very limited car parking space in the streets of Sutton so it is advisable to come to school by public transport.

Smart phones are only allowed to be used inside the Sixth Form Centre, or at the discretion of staff in lessons. Likewise, iPods and similar devices must not be worn on the school yard or during lessons.

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## PREFECT SYSTEM

Towards the middle of the Lower Sixth year, students are encouraged to apply to become prefects. They submit CVs and covering letters and from these applications, a group of Prefects, Senior Prefects and a Head Boy or Girl and Deputies will be appointed. The role of the prefects is very important within the school as they cover a range of supervision duties as well as assisting at out-of-school events.

All Sixth Formers are expected to assist in various activities at School. These include showing parents around the school on Open Evening and assisting with the two Entrance Examinations in November, one of which is usually held on a Saturday.

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## EXTRA – CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Sixth Formers are encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities. These include sports - Sixth Formers field up to six football teams for matches against other schools on Wednesdays and Saturdays – STEM activities, music and drama. Sixth Formers are involved in the publication of the school magazine, the *Suttonian*. Mentoring is an invaluable way of sharing knowledge with younger pupils who are struggling in a given topic, whilst members of the Lower Sixth are also given the chance to volunteer to assist form tutors as form prefects. Sixth Formers are also involved in PE assistance with younger students and often establish new extra-curricular groups. There is always room for Sixth Formers to develop new activities and opportunities as well – a successful House Dodgeball competition came about through sixth form leadership.

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## THE SIXTH FORM DRESS CODE

**For all Sixth Form students there is currently a smart business dress code of suit and tie or jacket/blazer and tie for boys, and the smart equivalent for girls. The determination of smartness and appropriateness is made by senior staff, and the points below are guidelines only. It is worth noting that we keep dress code requirements under review so these may be subject to some change before September 2021.**

<b>BOYS</b>	<b>GIRLS</b>
Suit or tailored jacket/trousers and tie in sober colours	Dark skirt, trousers or dress with a jacket.
Buttoned shirt, plain coloured, with collar. Top button to be done up.	Skirts and dresses should be of an appropriate length (eg not too short; knee length or just above the knee). Top or blouse which must not be low-cut or reveal midriff.
Smart shoes in black or brown; trainers or similar are not permitted	Smart shoes in black or brown; trainers or similar are not permitted
No jewellery is permitted, other than a discreet stud in either ear	No jewellery is permitted, other than a discreet stud in either ear
Plain, non-patterned jumpers or cardigans permitted, but not as replacement for the jacket.	Plain, non-patterned jumpers or cardigans permitted, but not as replacement for the jacket.
Hair should be tidy, clean and not too short or dyed. Boys are expected to be clean shaven, but may wear beards if tidy and close-shaven.	Hair should be tidy, clean and not too short or dyed.

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## ATTENDANCE POLICY

The two essential principles of Sixth Form attendance are as follows:

- 100% attendance throughout the academic year
- Attendance at all lessons on time

These rules apply to all students. All students should know that potential employers are very interested in good attendance records when they ask for references.

Certain absences may be authorised. You need to apply for authorised absence in advance before taking time off. The following list gives some of the more common reasons that would be considered acceptable:

- Medical appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours eg hospital appointments which are supported by an appointment card.
- Religious festival.
- Visit to university open day (up to a maximum of 2), or an interview at the invitation of the university.
- Appointment with a careers advisor – but these should normally be scheduled to avoid disruption to your studies.
- Participation in significant extra curricular activity eg drama or sport at a regional or national level.
- Attendance at a court hearing.
- Attendance at the funeral of a relative or close friend.
- A driving test (but not driving lessons).
- An approved educational activity related to your course eg a field trip.
- Study leave prior to and during examinations.

This list is not intended to be prescriptive, and the school will want to take account of the inherent reasonableness of any case, the number of absences

taken by any one individual, repetitions of the same excuse, and whether the excuse is backed up with evidence.

The school recognises that on certain occasions you may not be able to attend through circumstances that are beyond your control. These absences may be treated as authorised if you notify the school on the first day of your absence.

Such circumstances might be:-

- Emergency situation of a family member eg sudden severe illness
- Transport problems.
- Emergency dental or doctor's appointment.
- Short periods of sickness, supported by a parent's letter or medical certificate. If a regular pattern of sickness emerges, then it will be necessary to discuss this with your form tutor and the head of sixth form.

Certain absences will always be treated as unauthorised. Examples include:-

- Part time work
- Leisure activities
- Birthdays
- Babysitting younger siblings
- Driving lessons

**All students should be aware that poor attendance can ultimately result in being asked to leave the Sixth Form altogether.**

All students must attend all their lessons on time. Attendance is also required at registration, tutorial time, assembly, Cogitas lessons, and all timetabled sessions.