



Parent's Handbook
2010-2011

Introduction

As the parent or guardian of a sixth form student, this booklet has been designed with your particular needs in mind.

The College places high value on your involvement and we are aware that a number of items of useful information and guidance provided to students within College are also of use and importance to parents.

At the start of each academic year, every student is familiarised with a Student Handbook found on the web-site, www.ems.hartlepool.sch.uk. This gives information on all aspects of sixth form life and work and as such is an invaluable source of reference. It is the first port of call for anyone wishing sixth form information.

The College prospectus also provides much basic information on individual subjects and you will also receive termly newsletters and other regular despatches while your son or daughter is enrolled at College.

The Parents' Handbook aims to bring some essential information to your notice and provide you with your own guide to sixth form. It is by no means comprehensive and if you wish further details or clarification, you may wish to ring the college.

Please contact me if you need advice, or if there is an issue that you wish to discuss.

Dr Martine Crilley
Head of Sixth Form
English Martyrs Sixth Form College

College details

Address: Catcote Road
Hartlepool
Postcode: TS25 4HA
Telephone Number: 01429 273790
Fax Number: 01429 273998
Email: ems@hartlepool.sch.uk

School Type: Voluntary Aided School; Specialist Arts College

Age Range: 11 – 18

Character: Comprehensive

Date of Foundation: 1973

Hours of Business: (Term Time)

0800-1630 (the School Office will be open during these times)

Hours of Business: (Holiday Time)

0900-1600 (the School Office will be open during these times)

The College Year 2010-11

Autumn Term 2010

School opens Wednesday 1 September (Y7 and Year 12)

Thursday 2 September – Remainder of School

School closes Thursday 21 October

School opens Monday 1 November

School closes Friday 17 December

Spring Term 2011

School opens Tuesday 4 January

School closes Friday 18 February

School opens Monday 28 February

School closes Friday 15 April

Summer Term 2011

School opens Tuesday 3 May

School closes Friday 27 May

School opens Monday 6 June

School closes Friday 15 July

Important Dates

Year 12 Information Evening Monday 6 September
Sixth Form Retreat Thursday 14 – Friday 15 October
Performance Review - Friday 26 November 2010

Parents' Evenings

Year 12 - Wednesday 8 December 2010
Year 13 - Tuesday 30 November 2010

UCAS Applications

Year 13 – 1 November 2010

School deadline for receipt of completed UCAS forms*

*NB School does not guarantee submission of any forms received after this date to meet final UCAS deadline date.

UCAS Deadline Dates

15 October 2010 - All applications to Oxford or Cambridge universities and for all courses in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science.

15 January 2011 - All Route A applicants

Mid March – Applicants without offers can apply through UCASEXTRA.

A level Results Day – Thursday 18th August 2011

Members of Staff for 2010/11

Pastoral Staff for the Sixth Form

Head of Sixth Form - Dr M Crilley
Head of Year 12 - Mr D Riddle
Head of Year 13 - Mr S Wardle

Leadership Group

Head Teacher - Mr M Lee
Deputy Head Teachers - Mr J Linden, Mr P McMahon
Assistant Head Teachers - Mrs L Ward, Mrs A Sanderson, Mrs M Chapman, Mr D Stewart
Head of Upper School - Mr J Devenney
Head of Lower School - Mrs P Clark

Student Handbook

This can be accessed through the school internet

w.w.ems@hartlepool.sch.uk/sixthform. The Handbook comprehensively covers all aspects of sixth form life

Student Planner

Every student in College is provided with a Planner. This is a valuable tool in helping them to plan time and work.

Parent/College Contact

We welcome your involvement as parents/guardians in the life of the College and the opportunity to work with you towards the success of our students. If we have concerns about your daughter's/son's progress, we will certainly wish to discuss this with you and, where necessary, will contact you to arrange a meeting.

If you wish to discuss anything with us, please contact Dr Crilley.

While your daughter/son is studying at College, you will receive progress reviews or reports each year. We issue one report per year for all students and this is distributed in April. We will invite you to a regular pattern of parents' consultation evenings: one in December for Year 13 parents and one in December for Year 12 parents. We also keep in touch with you through our termly newsletter.

If you feel unhappy with the service that we offer, please get in touch with us to share your concerns. If the matter is serious and you wish to raise a formal complaint, you should initially contact Dr Crilley.

Timetable

The timetable is designed to provide students with as much flexibility as possible. Students will be invited to attend for interview immediately after their GCSE results and will negotiate individual programmes of study in consultation with a senior member of staff. This timetable may well be different from every other student in the College.

In year 12 it is expected that students will embark either on a programme of four AS levels; a double award applied A level and two other AS levels or a one-year BTEC certificate programme. In addition, all students are strongly recommended to attend re-sit GCSE classes in English, Mathematics or Science, if they have not gained pass grades in Year 11.

Students will also be expected to attend one lesson of General Studies per week and one lesson of MET (Morals, Ethics and Theology).

The college day is divided into four teaching blocks with a morning break of 15 minutes and a 40 minute lunch hour. Most students will have some non-contact time each day during which they work either in the library, sixth form study room or in the common room.

Some teaching options are available during the lunch break and after College. This applies particularly to revision teaching, clubs and recreational activities and extra curricular involvements.

Value Added

Statistically, the best single indicator of how a student will perform at AS and A Level is their achievement at GCSE. A number of organisations have developed systems to enable schools and colleges to analyse AS/A Level value-added performance relative to GCSE.

The GCSE results of each student can be converted to an average GCSE score by giving a score of 8 for an A* grade to a score of 1 for a grade G. An average GCSE score of 5.5 therefore indicates that a student's average GCSE is half way between a grade C and a grade B. This type of data is used in systems such as ALIS (A Level Information System) allowing this College to take into account the relative GCSE ability of students and find out how our students performed at AS/A Level, relative to other sixth form colleges. It also allows us to identify which students have over-achieved and which have under-achieved at AS/A Level and to predict realistic target AS/A Level performance levels for new students in College.

In fact, overall and in a vast majority of individual student cases this College's 'Value Added' measures are better than the national average. Grades at GCSE and AS/A cannot be directly compared. The national average data illustrates that students who average a grade C at GCSE will need to 'overachieve' in order to get better than a D/E grade at AS/A Level. Further it predicts that students who achieve grade A or A* at GCSE should not automatically assume that they will achieve grade As at A or AS Level.

Progression from Year 12 to Year 13

In order for students to progress from an AS course to an A Level course they will need to achieve a pass at grade E in their AS Level examination. Students will also need to demonstrate satisfactory attendance (minimum 85%), and commitment. It is essential that students attend College from mid June to the end of the summer term [15 July in 2011]. Because of the choices made after AS examinations, students may be in different teaching groups for A Level.

Tutorial Programme

Every student in the College is a member of a tutor group and, as a member of that group, participates in the Tutorial Programme as part of their programme of study. This means attendance at PSHE on Friday mornings.

External Examinations

A and AS Level subjects are assessed in modules, with two or three being taken in Y12 and again in Y13. Depending on choice of subjects, students may take public examinations in the January and the summer of Y12 (typically one exam

module in the winter and the remaining module or modules in the summer) with a similar pattern being followed in Y13.

AS and A Level modules can be re-taken but the College will only pay for the examination entry fee for the first attempt.

'Cashing in' AS module grades

Students are advised to seek guidance on decisions relating to certification (or 'accepting' or 'cashing in' or 'declining') of AS modular grades from specific subject staff or the relevant Heads of Department or Subject. Guidance will be available during enrolment in August/September of each year and Senior Tutors/Personal Tutors will also advise.

The College will automatically 'accept' all AS/A Level pass grades and decline all non-pass grades for students, unless those students inform the College by the required dates that they wish to make an alternative instruction to the exam board.

Payment for Examinations

Provided students have attended College regularly and worked to the best of their ability, they will take their examinations free of charge. Parents will be notified if attendance and/or work are less than satisfactory and, in some cases, a charge may be made for entry to examinations. In addition, it is normal College Policy to allow one re-sit unit exam per subject without charge. Any additional re-sits will incur a charge of approximately £11 per exam.

Mobile Phones

During exam periods students should be encouraged to leave their phones at home. Students are not allowed to have their phones in the exam hall.

Careers Information and the Connexions service

The College has a well-resourced Careers/Connexions Library, which is open for student use during the College working day. Advice and guidance takes place on a one-to-one basis during Thursday mornings and students can arrange to have a careers interview at any point during their time in sixth form.

Individual appointments to see a Personal Adviser can be made at the sixth form office. Students' primary access to Careers education is through the Tutorial Programme.

One-year BTEC students are carefully guided through the year, with all students undertaking an individual guidance interview. All options after College are addressed including employment, returning to College and other FE options.

For AS and A level students there is a comprehensive programme, guiding students through the recruitment processes for Employment and Higher Education.

Pastoral Matters and Discipline

Pastoral Care in College

We wish to work closely with parents to ensure the success and well being of our students. The College maintains a strong commitment to the support and guidance of the individual student, primarily via the Personal Tutor with the support of senior staff. In addition, Beverley Scaife, Learning Mentor, meets with individual students by appointment on a basis of self-referral.

Communication with Parents

In a complex organisation it is very important that there should be good communication. Parents are kept informed of events in a variety of ways. A Sixth Form newsletter is produced every term and copies are given to all students. The newsletter aims to keep students and parents informed about what is going on in the College. Other letters may be used to update parents or to inform them of particular events or developments, profiles, careers.

If particular problems occur during a student's time in College, parents will generally be contacted by telephone or letter as appropriate.

Use of Non-contact Time

All students in the College will find that they have a certain number of lessons when they are not timetabled for classes. These "non-contact periods" offer them a chance to organise their own work and to study in College. The College provides a number of areas for private study, primarily the library and a dedicated sixth form study room. Practical subjects also provide areas for students to continue with their own work or to practise outside lesson times.

If a student has a non-contact period at the end of the day and no further commitments, he/she may go home early, with the agreement of the form tutor.

Part Time Work

We recognise that many students have part-time jobs and may gain personal and financial benefit from them. However, research shows that 5 hours part time work per week damages A level grades to the extent of one UCAS point per subject. Part time work should not conflict with studies and definitely must not be undertaken during college hours. We strongly advise students not to undertake paid work on Monday to Thursday evenings in order to minimise the impact on academic work.

Trips and Visits

A range of educational and recreational visits is offered for which your consent is required. A consent form is issued at the beginning of the academic year and parents are requested to complete this and return it to college via their sons/daughters.

The College will keep costs to a minimum. Parents will be informed of any trip or visit, regardless of the age of the student, and students are expected to make up any missed work.

Attendance and Absence

All students are expected to attend registration at 8.55 am every day. This is the major point of contact for Personal Tutors and is the main route used for College communications. Absences are checked regularly and students who fail to attend registration either through absence from College or lateness to College can expect their parents to be contacted.

If students are absent we ask the student or their parent to telephone the College before 10 am. The College is a full time establishment and students are required to attend every week day for registration and to attend all timetabled lessons. Absence must always be explained. Prolonged absence or unexplained absence will involve contact with parents and can result in discontinuation of a student's programme of study. The minimum attendance required is 85% and students must account for any unexplained absence.

Absence from College, when known in advance, should be notified to Mrs Rutherford in the Sixth Form office and students should complete a green Application for Authorised Absence slip and get each teacher whose lesson they will miss to sign it before handing in to Diane **before** they are absent.

Accepted Absences

- Observation of a religious holiday. Application must be made in advance.
- Genuine sickness. Phone College by 10 am at the latest. On your return to college you will need to call into the Attendance Office to complete an Application for Authorised Absence Form.
- Driving test. Bring to the Attendance Office in advance the letter from the test centre confirming time and date.
- Work Experience which is an integral part of the course and for which you do not receive a wage. Confirmation from the subject teacher is needed in advance.
- Medical appointments which cannot be made outside lesson time.
- University Open Day visit or interview. Bring to the Attendance Office the interview letter or dates of Open Days (up to a maximum of 4 visits).
- Job Interview. Bring to the Attendance Office in advance the letter from your prospective employer.

- Interview with Connexions adviser. Bring to the Attendance Office in advance the appointment card or letter.
- Interviews with college staff. Bring to the Attendance Office in advance a note from the relevant person.
- Study leave and exams – in accordance with College policy.
- Funeral
- Lessons cancelled for any reason.
- An emergency situation involving a family member or another person for whom the student has caring responsibilities.
- Absences outside these categories: decisions will be made about these by the EMA officer, if applicable.

Some examples of absences which will not be authorised:

- Sixth Form students **may not** take holidays during term time as these will not be authorised.
- Looking after siblings
- Work
- Birthday celebrations
- Shopping
- Driving lessons
- Leisure activities.

EMA – Educational Maintenance Allowance

EMA is a weekly payment intended to cover costs such as travel, books and equipment needed whilst at College. This scheme provides support to help students stay in learning and to reduce the pressure to work too many part-time hours in paid employment. It pays up to £30 a week (depending on family income) with bonuses at various times.

Who is eligible for EMA?

UK students who have with a family income of under £30,810 are entitled. Full details are in the application pack which was given out to year 11 in school. Packs are also available from College.

What are the conditions on attendance?

Attendance is monitored at all lessons, assemblies, PSE and registration sessions at College. To qualify for the weekly payment the student must have no unauthorised absences. Details of what constitutes authorised absence have already been discussed. Details of an individual's weekly attendance record can be obtained from Mrs. Rutherford in the Attendance Office.

How is it paid?

We notify the EMA central agency each Tuesday with details of attendance from the previous week. Payment is made each Friday into the student's bank account, so an account must have been set up at a bank. Payments do not affect any other benefits received.

What if there is an error?

We operate a support service in College and the electronic registration system gives quick and easy feedback on attendance. It is the student's responsibility to have any absences appropriately authorised so they must produce the appointment letters or notes from parents/guardians as already discussed.

Absences are unauthorised unless proven otherwise. We will correct any errors as promptly as possible.

What needs to be given to College?

Applications are made to the central EMA agency using the application form.

The College will need to sign the Contract Part 1 (Notice of Entitlement) form which the EMA agency will send you and Contract Part 2 (College) form which will be provided at Enrolment. Payment cannot be authorised unless these contracts are signed.

Holidays during Term Time

Sixth Form students' programmes are demanding and the time available to prepare for AS and A Levels is relatively short (around 30 weeks). Because of this, students **may** not take holidays during term time and will not be authorised. If students require leave of absence during term time this request must be supported by parents. It will also involve consultation with Head of Sixth Form and the completion of a Holiday Request Form.

It should be noted that all Year 12 students will be expected to return to College in mid June after their examinations and that teaching for A Level courses will be scheduled for the mid-June to July period. It will be a condition of progression into Year 13 that students attend these lessons and satisfactorily complete the work.

Returning to College

Students joining the College for a one year BTEC course are entitled to reapply to College to study an AS Level programme. Academic achievements, potential and interest, together with the proven level of commitment to study, will be assessed when senior staff make decisions.

Students who have taken an A Level programme and wish to return to College to repeat some A Level modules, possibly in combination with some new AS or A Level courses, can apply to do so. The application procedure normally takes place in mid/late August or early September. The programme usually lasts for one further year of study and is at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form.

Prior to their return to college, all BTEC students and any students who have experienced difficulties or have had concerns raised by their teachers are interviewed by a member of the sixth form management team immediately after the A level results in August in order to advise them on their future courses.

What we expect of Students

As well as appreciating student rights and opportunities, it is important that students have a clear understanding of our requirements, which will enable them to make a success of their time with us. We therefore expect that all students will:

- Accept responsibility for their own learning and academic progress with the support of their Tutor and subject tutors.
- Complete all set work to their best ability and by the required date, as well as giving appropriate time to background study, wider research and examination revision.
- Attend punctually all designated activities and explain any absences.
- Maintain an acceptable, courteous standard of behaviour at College and while engaged in activities associated with the College.
- Ensure that their behaviour and attitude never have a detrimental effect on the academic progress of other students.
- Follow the College Equal Opportunities Policy with regard to all students, members of staff and College visitors.
- Abide by the College policies including those on Health and Safety, Illegal Substances, Smoking and Consumption of Alcohol and never knowingly endanger the health and physical well being of others.
- Respect and thus help to maintain the condition of the College buildings, property and general environment.
- Abide by any code of conduct issued during a College trip or visit.
- Follow any instructions and guidelines issued by the College.

Students should accept as necessary any appropriate actions taken by the College if the above conditions are not fulfilled. Such action will obviously depend on the nature of the transgression and is likely to involve discussion with parents/guardians. A severe breach of discipline may result in students being dismissed from College for a given period or being permanently required to leave the College.

Illegal Substances

No one is allowed to consume or possess illegal substances on College premises, or at any stage during the College timetabled day whether on or off site. Any student found using or dealing in illegal substances will be suspended pending an investigation, as a result of which the student may be asked to leave the College. The police will be informed according to our legal obligations.

Smoking

In the interests of hygiene and the health of all, smoking is not otherwise permitted within College buildings or any other part of the College site.

Dismissals

The College is committed to the provision of first class learning opportunities for all students. It may be necessary, in a very limited number of cases, to either temporarily or permanently dismiss a student from the College as part of the College disciplinary procedure. This would normally follow discussion with student and parents, but the College will act in the best interests of all students and staff at the College.

College Environment

From September 2006, students attending the College have had the benefit of new, first class specialist sixth form accommodation and facilities. In the interests of the whole College community, we request and expect students to maintain high standards of care for the physical environment at all times. In particular we ask students to observe restrictions regarding consumption of food and drink outside of designated areas and that students do not bring chewing gum to College.

College students have set high standards of care for their environment in the past. In instances where students do not take due care of the College environment, it is College policy that individual students and their parents will be asked to pay for any repairs or corrective action necessary.

Dress Code

The Dress Code for sixth form students was introduced after extensive consultation with students, staff, parents and governors. The code is appreciated by students and the College expects students to adhere to its agreed provisos.

Students' dress should be:

- ✓ Inoffensive
- ✓ Clean
- ✓ Appropriate within an organisation which has students aged from 11 to 18 years.
- ✓ Appropriate to a working environment
- ✓ Appropriately smart if the occasions demands it eg Awards Night

The following specific points should be noted:

1. Hairstyles must not be extreme and must be in natural colours.
2. Outside coats must not be worn in lessons.
3. Hats must not be worn in College.
4. Students must not display any visible body piercing with the exception of ear piercing.
5. Slogans or logos which cause offence e.g. FCUK, must not be worn.

6. See-through tops, vest tops, crop-tops, low cut tops – none of these should be worn.
7. Students should not wear very short skirts or low slung trousers which are too revealing.
8. No shorts or three-quarter length trousers for male students.
9. N.B. Top and trousers/skirt must meet when a student is standing still and upright!

If students fail to conform to this Dress Code, they will be referred, initially, to the appropriate Head of Year. After a warning about any infringement of the Dress Code, students may be sent home. If rules continue to be flouted, students will be referred to the Head of Sixth Form who has a range of sanctions available, including exclusion.

Students will have the right to appeal to the Head teacher.

Insurance

Students are covered for accidental injury whilst at College or on a College sponsored activity. Further cover is automatically taken when a trip is organised. Details of cover are available on request.

Students and parents are advised to ensure they have personal insurance arrangements for personal property. All students can be issued with a locker; it is their responsibility to look after the key.

Transport

The College works with Hartlepool Borough Council and with local public transport providers to obtain concessionary transport rates for students attending the College. Details are made available to students at the beginning of the academic year.

Catering in College

Food and drink are available from the Bistro in the Common Room. Meals and snacks are of good quality and are good value for money when compared to other local options. Vending machines for snacks and drinks are also available throughout the day in the Common Room. The College is committed to promoting healthy eating.

Contacting students

In an emergency, students may be contacted via the College switchboard [01429 273790]. It should be stressed that this provision is made for **emergency use** only and whilst every effort will be made to contact the student as speedily as possible we cannot guarantee to be able to relay a message.

Security

Lockers are available in College, on a first come basis, for the storage of inexpensive personal property. A charge of £10 is made, returnable on presentation of the key. Students are advised not to leave expensive items in their lockers. If students do need to bring items of particular value into College they are advised to ask staff to help them arrange safekeeping. All exit doors can be opened from INSIDE but entrances are limited. Visitors to College go through a signing in procedure.

Visiting and Safeguarding

All visitors to College must sign in at the main reception and they will then be accompanied to the sixth form centre by a receptionist.

First Aid

The College has several members of staff who are qualified First Aiders. Students who are feeling unwell may seek assistance from any member of staff, from the general office or from Mrs Braithwaite in the main school block. Students leaving the College because of illness should inform relevant staff by the use of the green absence slip, available outside the common room.

Safety Procedures

The College has a full set of safety rules and procedures. Students are instructed to follow these rules and in an emergency to follow the instructions of members of staff. In the event of a fire or any other emergency, a bell will ring continuously and everyone will be asked to leave the building immediately using the nearest exit. Fire practices take place at regular intervals.

Parking for Parents

Parking availability can be limited during college hours. At social events, cars can generally be parked on site. There will be limited parking available for any parents at Parents' Evenings or Open Evenings. If specific parents or visitors have mobility difficulties they should contact the College in advance and special arrangements will be made.

Parking for Students

Unfortunately due to the lack of car parking spaces there are no spaces available for sixth form students. They may park in the parking bays on the main road if necessary. They are not allowed to drive on the school site at any time.