

Parent Handbook

# Hinchingbrooke Sixth Form

Excellence in Everything

### Sixth Form Guidance Team

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### Wellbeing

Your child's wellbeing is of the utmost importance to us and we have a range of systems and staff in school to support students throughout their time with us. The following pages have some guidance which parents may find useful at home.

Category	Service	Information	Website	
All	CAMHS	Downloadable PDF self-help guides	<u>CAMHS</u>	
All	CHUMS	Downloadable information on mind- fulness, self-harm, sleep, low mood and more	CHUMS	
All	On My Mind	Self-care strategies	On My Mind	
Anxiety and NHS depression		Mental wellbeing, audio guides in- cluding anxiety, depression, low con- fidence and sleep issues	NHS – Wellbeing Audio Guides	
Meditation Headspace		Understanding types of meditation	<u>Headspace</u>	
Self-harm	Harmless	Downloadable resources offering awareness, help and support	<u>Harmless</u>	
All Mental Health	Combined Minds (part of STEM)	Free app to help families and friends provide mental health support	Combined Minds	
Anxiety	Clear Fear (part of STEM)	Free app to help children and young people manage symptoms of anxiety	<u>Clear Fear</u>	
Sleep	Sleep Sounds	Create or use pre-created sounds to support sleep	Sleep Sounds	
Positivity	What's Up	Use the positive and negative habit tracker to maintain good habits	What's Up	
Bereavement	STARS	Bereavement support, self-referral	Talk to Stars	
Exam stress	Samaritans	Support for exam stress and coping strategies	<u>Samaritans</u>	
Crisis	NHS	24 hour support for anyone in mental health crisis	111, option 2	
Mental health	Anna Freud Centre	Advice for parents on how to have conversations about mental health with your child	Tips for talking for parents and carers	

### **Smoking and vaping**

You must be over 18 to buy tobacco products in the UK. Students are not permitted to smoke (including e-cigarettes) on site and in the immediate vicinity of the school (e.g. car park). We can signpost support and advice on how to stop smoking. <a href="NHS - under 18s guide to quitting smoking.">NHS - under 18s guide to quitting smoking.</a> Vaping is not permitted anywhere on the school site, including car parks.

### **Alcohol and drugs**

We aim to enable students to make informed choices by increasing their knowledge and providing opportunities for them to explore their own and others' attitudes. To protect the safety and well-being of all students and staff, drugs must not be possessed or bought, sold, or otherwise obtained on the school premises or during the working day, including when pupils are on school visits. We will carry out random searches for such substances to keep the student community safe. We teach about the effects of drugs and alcohol through our PSHCE programme, and we can signpost support for students.

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### Staying hydrated

The teenage body is made up of around 60% water. Not drinking enough water reduces productivity, both mentally and physically, and symptoms can include tiredness, confusion, reduced energy levels and the temptation to snack when not actually hungry (thirst is often mistaken for hunger).

#### Have water on hand at all times

The best way to make sure your child is drinking enough is to ensure they have water on hand at all times – at their desk, in bottles in their bag when on the go, and served alongside food. Plain water is ideal, but to add interest, use natural ingredients to give flavour – such as cucumber, lemon, lime, orange, tangerine, mint or ginger.

#### Other drinks

Natural fruit juices are great, but can be high in natural sugar, so why not dilute them? Herbal teas or honey with a dash of lemon offer hot, caffeine free alternatives. Limit your child's fizzy drink intake – whether calorie controlled or not, including energy drinks. They are all unhealthy if drunk in large quantities.

### Eight glasses a day

Health experts recommend all adults to drink two or more litres of water a day. This equates to roughly eight 250ml glasses.











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Caffeine affects us in different ways, and different people are more sensitive to it than others. On average, adults shouldn't consume more than 400mg of caffeine a day and adolescents should have much less.

#### Caffeine consumption

Caffeine is present in coffee, tea, energy drinks and chocolate so keep an eye on how much of these your child consumes. Energy shots are often very high in caffeine and a firm favourite with teens. Drinks with high caffeine (more than 150mg per litre) need to show this on the label, although it is not always clear – and it doesn't apply to drinks bought in coffee shops. Lots of products high in caffeine are available in health food shops which can give the impression that they're good for wellbeing but, like many things, can be harmful if taken in large quantities.

#### Coffee

If your child regularly drinks one or two cups of coffee each day, it's absolutely fine to continue this, even during exam time, as their body will be used to it. What's not good is introducing changes, so they shouldn't start drinking a cup of coffee or two during revision periods to help keep them alert if this is not something they do regularly.

## Sleep z Z Z

Sleep is an essential element for optimum health, so make sure your child is getting enough rest. Teenagers need a lot of sleep given the huge changes taking place in their bodies – somewhere between eight and ten hours each night. Tempting though it may be for them to revise into the small hours, they will be much better off putting work aside and settling down for an early night. Work backwards! If they have to get up at 7.00 am, then they need to be asleep by 11.00 pm – which probably means being in bed much earlier.

#### Mobiles, screens and sleep

Getting enough sleep can be severely impaired by ready access to a 24/7 online community via their phones such as Instagram, Snapchat, Tumbir, WhatsApp and other messaging services, not to mention their compulsion to play games and catch up with box sets late into the night.

To combat this you may want to minimise the number of screens they have in the bedroom, encourage them to have at least 30 mins screen-free time before settling down to sleep and get them to use night screen settings in the evening to reduce glare (white light on bright screens prevent sleepiness). Phones should be set to silent at bedtime so that sleep is not interrupted by regular pinging with alerts and messages.

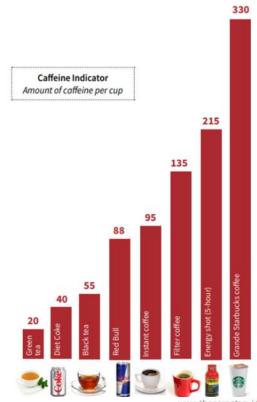
#### Energy shots and drinks

Energy shots can be deceptive as they are tiny in quantity but often packed with caffeine - for example a 60 ml shot can contain around 200mg of caffeine. Likewise, many energy drinks don't necessarily have huge percentages of caffeine, but they are served in large volumes (half litre bottles) so the amount of caffeine your child is drinking is a lot (160mg of caffeine in a can of Monster), whereas a small glass of the same product would be fine. Most supermarkets and high street stores have banned sales of energy drinks to

#### Effects of caffeine

under 16s.

Too much caffeine can result in loss of sleep, loss of energy, low mood and low concentration – the opposite of what's needed to revise well. Caffeine is also long lasting, so drinking caffeine-high drinks in the afternoon can still impact on your child's ability to sleep that night. It's an absolute no to drinking coffee (or other caffeine fuelled drinks) late in the evening to try and overcome tiredness and revise into the night.



www.theparentsguideto.co.uk Featured in The Parents Guide to Exam Revision

#### Other ways to minimise phone time

Create rules for the whole family – such as no phones at the table during mealtimes, no phones before school, no phones after 9:00 pm. If you do this, it's important you're consistent (don't set a bad example by ignoring the rule if it doesn't suit you). Establish rewards for appropriate phone use and penalties for inappropriate use.

Importantly, have conversations with your teen about using mobiles sensibly at times when neither of you are tired nor emotional. This will avoid heated discussions or rows and you're much more likely to reach a compromise that suits you both.

#### A bedtime routine

Creating a "bedtime" routine, such as switching the phone to silent, putting it away 30 minutes before bed, taking a bath, having a hot drink and dimming the lights can all help calm the mind and prepare it

Sticking to a similar routine every night signals to the body that it is time for bed and helps it switch off so try to get your child into the habit of doing the same things before bed and going to sleep at a similar time (especially on week nights).

#### Avoid lie-ins

At the other end of the day, try to set a routine so they get up at a similar time each morning and, hard though it may be, try to limit lie-ins at the weekend to just an extra hour or so in bed. Long lie-ins disrupt their sleeping rhythm, making it harder for them to go to sleep at an appropriate time on Sunday night and consequently, making it harder for them to wake up on time on Monday mornings.

Where possible, bedtimes and get-up times should be similar from one day to the next allowing the body to synch to a regular cycle. Make plans for weekend mornings so they have a reason to get up if there aren't activities they can do through school or if they aren't inclined to organise anything themselves.



### Useful links

NHS Live Well Guide Sleep Council UK

### **Exam anxiety**

It's perfectly natural for your child to be worried about taking exams and how they will perform – you might even be a little worried too! In small doses, anxiety can be a good thing: helping your child to focus, get motivated to study and even recall answers they were unaware they'd learnt.

Prolonged periods or bouts of intense anxiety may have a negative impact, but there are lots of ways you can help them manage this anxiety and use routines to help keep them calm. If you haven't introduced them to some of these techniques already, we've included some suggestions.

However, in some cases there can be times when anxiety reaches exceptional levels and professional support is required. How can you tell the difference?



### Signs of anxiety and stress

It's good to be aware of the signs of anxiety and stress so you can watch out for them. A change in behaviour for a day or two might be nothing to worry about, but if you notice a regular change, then it's usually a sign that something is wrong. Some of the more common signs of anxiety include:

- Losing interest in things they've previously enjoyed;
- Behaving in the opposite way to usual quiet children can become very chatty, chatty children can get withdrawn;
- Being grumpy and irritable;
- Lots of headaches and digestive problems (stomach aches, diarrhoea, constipation, vomiting etc):
- Worrying all the time, this can show itself in only picturing negative outcomes (what if I fail, I'm going to fail, I can't do this);
- Talking over and over the same concern and being unable to either stop thinking about it or to find relief;
- Physical symptoms (sweaty palms, shaking, fast heartbeat, aching muscles);
- · Restlessness and being unable to stay still;
- Inability to concentrate (such as taking in what's happening in a TV programme);
- · Panic attacks;
- Not sleeping.

Remember to keep perspective. If they have had several late nights, they are likely to be tired and this increases irritability. If they've been exercising, they might have aching muscles. If they've just mot omeet you, they'll have a fast heart rate. Individual or a short-term combination of the symptoms are normal.



### How you can help

If you notice your child is suffering, it's time to help them. That doesn't always mean you stepping in (that could add to the anxiety) although it's good to let them know you've noticed something's wrong and give them a chance to talk to you if they want to. Avoid broaching the subject in front of others, this could make them feel embarrassed or inadequate and make them feel worse (they might think they are doing a job good of hiding it). Don't forget, the aim isn't to eliminate anxiety but to teach them how to manage it.

There are two ways to help. Encourage them to take part in an activity that will provide a distraction so they stop thinking about whatever is making them anxious. Giving the brain some time out from worrying can help obtain a better perspective later.

Physical activities – It doesn't matter what activity - dancing, football, swimming, walking – so long as it's something they enjoy, gets their endorphins flowing and requires focus so the mind is concentrating on something different. Team games are great, as connectivity and communications with others is restorative.

Music – Music has an amazing ability to transport you to a different time and place. Anything that evokes positive memories and experiences is a good thing. To reduce anxiety, it's better to listen to relaxing and calming music rather than something that stimulates.

Talking – it may not be to you! A sibling, grandparent, family friend or friend at school or perhaps a charity chatline. Expressing worries out loud can sometimes make them feel less significant than when they're playing on loop in the mind. Talking aloud also encourages finding their own solutions – prompts

such as 'what would need to happen to make you feel better', can help them reframe to seeking solutions rather than dwelling on troubles.

Avoiding stimulants – bright lights, loud music, caffeine, sugar, alcohol, too much excitement (a thrilling computer game, exciting movie) can all promote adrenaline production and increase feelings of anxiety, so these are best avoided.

Reducing lighting (have dimmable lights or table lamps in the bedroom) also helps to increase feelings of calm and can help prepare for sleep.





The second way to help is to provide an opportunity for them to learn some proven techniques which help reduce anxiety. It's a really good idea for your child to practise some of these methods when they're not anxious, so they can familiarise themselves with the approaches and get comfortable with the experience and how it makes them feel. Then, should anxiety strike, it's something they're relaxed about doing. Regularly practising relaxation techniques helps keep anxiety at bay too. Some good choices are:

Mindfulness with meditation, breathing techniques, visualisation or yoga. Anxiety can induce rapid, shallow breathing which encourages the heart to beat faster to try and compensate for lack of oxygen. Learning slow breathing and how to take deep breaths has an immediate physical effect and is particularly useful in preventing anxiety escalating. Meditation, visualisation and yoga all encourage positive breathing techniques.

Apps like Headspace can be loaded on the phone so your child readily has help to hand in any place at any time. Practising yoga regularly has been proven to improve the heart rate as well as physical strength. Meditation transports the mind to a completely different place and experience. There are many different types of meditation including auditory (describing experiences) and visual (looking at something). These activities can be done in short or long bursts and alone or in groups, which makes them ideal to put into practise when on the go or needing a ready tool when nerves strike.

Herbs and smells – For centuries we've used herbs and smells to invoke different atmospheres. Essential oils can be burnt in diffusers, added to baths, placed on candles, mixed with water as a spritz or poured on a tissue (great for on the go and to pop in a pocket) and are inexpensive to buy. Some useful staples are: lemon (promotes concentration and calming); lavender (reduces stress and can help sleep), jasmine (uplifting and calming), peppermint (invigorating so helps to clear the mind) and rosemary (acts as a pick-me-up).

Herbal teas are a great caffeine free hot drink and, as well as benefiting from the smell, the herbs work within the system too. Try camomile, peppermint, lavender or lemon balm.



### Where to get support

Professional support includes more than counsellors and psychiatrists (although both these approaches can be helpful). There's a range of professional options available including:

- Teachers at school both in an academic capacity to help understand subjects better, as tutors to help create better ways of working outside school and pastoral experts who can help with emotional issues;
- Some schools have an independent counsellor available with whom your children can talk in confidence (i.e. they will not relay the information to the school);
- Peer support networks these can be very helpful as speaking to someone of

- a similar age can sometimes feel easier than speaking to an adult, or speaking to someone just slightly older, who has more recently been through a similar experience can be very reassuring,
- Charities most now offer both online and telephone support. This anonymity (i.e. not being face-to-face) can make talking over problems and worries easier.

#### Too much anxiety

If your child is showing several signs of anxiety on a regular basis (several days each week) over a prolonged period of time (several weeks) then do seek help from external support services and a good place to start might be visiting your GP.



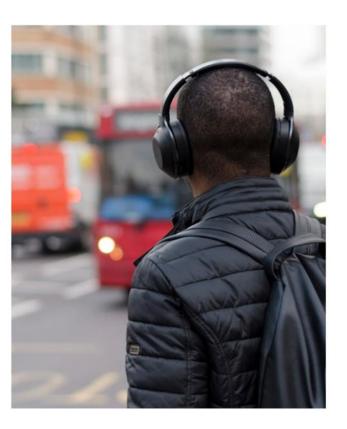














year

25yrs

### Life after Sixth Form

It's never too early for students to start thinking about what they want to do after Sixth Form. It doesn't matter whether they have a fixed plan or not but it's good to find out what options they have. This helps them to tailor their supra-curricular activities into those that would be most beneficial to their chosen aspiration. The following websites are a good place to start for guidance at home. We run tutorials through Year 12 on post-18 options and we have a CEIAG adviser in school whom students can access via a referral from their tutor.

Later in the year we will share a timeline with all the relevant dates and deadlines for UCAS applications. It is important that students appreciate that these deadlines are externally set and they must be met. It is in the students' best interests to make early applications which is why we start the post-18 process in Year 12. For job and apprenticeships applications there is no set deadline; applications won't open until at the Autumn term of Year 13 but it is important to be aware that these are also highly competitive and some applications deadlines will be in during the Autumn. We share regular updates of apprenticeship/job opportunities with students throughout the year.

### Thinking about university?

UCAS (Universities and Colleges Application Service) www.ucas.com

Russell Group Informed Choices website <a href="https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/">https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/</a>

This can be useful for looking up potential degree subjects based on your Sixth Form subjects.

LMI for all <a href="http://www.lmiforall.org.uk/widget/">http://www.lmiforall.org.uk/widget/</a>

This gives lots of information about jobs such as potential salary, typical working hours etc

National Careers Service <a href="https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/">https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/</a>

Unistats <u>www.unistats.com</u>

Enables you to compare similar courses at different universities

TheWayUp! <a href="https://www.thewayup.co.uk/">https://www.thewayup.co.uk/</a>

An innovative game that helps students make better, more informed choices about their future

Think Uni https://www.thinkuni.org/

ThinkUni is your own digital assistant to help you find the universities most suited to you and also see what your future earnings could look like

Prospects <a href="https://www.prospects.ac.uk/">https://www.prospects.ac.uk/</a>

### Thinking about apprenticeships and employment?

Government apprenticeship website <a href="www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships">www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships</a>
Government apprenticeship opportunities website <a href="www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship">www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship</a>
School Leaver Jobs <a href="www.allaboutschoolleavers.co.uk">www.allaboutschoolleavers.co.uk</a>

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

Online apprenticeships guide that offers you advice on how to become an apprentice, find traineeships, college courses or work experience

www.ucas.com/apprenticeships-in-the-uk

National Careers Service <a href="https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/">https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/</a>

### Life after Sixth Form

Below is a guide of points you may wish to discuss with your child during conversations about post-18 aspirations:

### If planning to apply to university

- What are the reasons for your decision to go to university?
- What course do you wish to follow at university?
- Are you finding it difficult to choose what you want to do? What are your considerations when trying to make up your mind about post-18 options/courses?
- How are you planning to choose universities?
  What are the benefits/problems associated
  with choosing a university a long way from
  home? Do you want to be in a big city or a
  smaller town? What other factors need to be
  considered when choosing the location of a
  university?
- Where can you get advice about universities/ courses? Have you looked at the UCAS website? Have you spoken to subject teachers?
- Are your choices of university appropriate for the grades you are achieving?
- How can you make your application stand out from other applications for places on your chosen course?
- When are there Open Days for universities?
- When should we visit universities?
- What are the deadlines for UCAS forms to be

### If planning to apply for jobs/apprenticeships

- What are the reasons for your decision not to go to university?
- What job/apprenticeship/training will you do?
- Are you finding it difficult to choose what you want to do? What are your considerations when trying to make up your mind about post-18 options/courses?
- How do you apply for jobs/apprenticeships?
- Where can you get advice about courses/ apprenticeships? Have you registered with apprenticeship and job websites? Have you spoken to subject teachers? Have you asked for an appointment with the school's Career Advisor?
- How can you make your application stand out from other applications for places in your chosen apprenticeship/job? Could you find any relevant work experience or shadowing?

### Learning Agreement

At the start of each academic year we ask all students to sign and agree to our Learning Agreement which outlines our expectations and standards. Below is a copy of the learning agreement your child has signed.

We are delighted to welcome you to Hinchingbrooke Sixth Form. We hope that you find the next year to be exciting, challenging and positive and we will work hard to make sure you enjoy your time with us. At the same time, we have high standards and strive for *Excellence in Everything*. It is important that we all adhere to these standards so that you can get the most from Sixth Form and so that you are prepared for the next stage in your life. So that your experience can be as successful as possible and our standards remain high, please read and sign the following Sixth Form Learner Agreement which outlines our expectations of our students

-We ask that you respect the House and its grounds as part of our local heritage. Report any problems/breakages immediately to your SSO

#### Code of conduct

- -You should be polite, kind and respectful to fellow students, staff and visitors
- -You must attend **all** of your lessons, tutor periods, private study sessions, assemblies and any other event that is organised for you. The Enrichment Programme is an essential feature of your time with us and we expect all year 12 students to attend these sessions
- -You must come to all of your lessons, **on time** and prepared to work. All work needs to be submitted by the deadline, and you should take responsibility for your independent learning
- -Please use the working environment appropriately. Respect those who want to work, as well as our resources
- -Your phones must be put away, unless your teacher has let you use them in the classroom for research purposes
- -You must not bring hot/cold drinks or food into the classroom
- -You should not smoke or 'vape' anywhere onsite nor near the school premises. If you are seen vaping, or are suspect of vaping, you will be sanctioned as per the school's policy

We recognise that many Sixth Form students choose to take part-time paid employment whilst pursuing their academic

<u>Sanctions for breaching the Code of Conduct</u>- From September 2022, the Sixth Form will be using the ARBOR system to keep a record of student conduct, punctuality, homework submission and dress (see below). There are staged sanctions applicable to the whole school, including the Sixth Form, to uphold our standards. Your tutor will provide more information.

### Part-time employment

We recognise that many Sixth Form students choose to take part-time paid employment whilst pursuing their academic studies. The demands of academic work must take priority over employment commitments at all times. In addition No paid employment can be carried out during school hours

We also recommend that students should work no more than 12 hours per week during term time (ie one full day and one evening)

If you we feel that your employment is adversely affecting your progress at Sixth Form, we will ask that you reduce your hours. If you feel under pressure from your employer, we are happy to contact your employer and discuss this with them.

#### Safeguarding

Hinchingbrooke School has over 2000 adults and children on-site during the school day. To safeguard you, your fellow students and staff, we expect you to

-Wear your lanyard everywhere, all of the time. If you forget your lanyard, please report to your year office to collect a temporary lanyard, which must be returned at the end of the school day. You will be asked for something in exchange for the lanyard (eg your phone). Should you lose your lanyard, it must be replaced at a cost of £2. Failing to wear your lanyard will be reported on ARBOR.

### Learning Agreement

Please be aware the CCTV operates in school and in the House at all times.

If you leave during the day due to sickness, you must tell your SSO who will contact one of your parents to let them know. If you leave during the school day because you have a non-contact period, please do so via the gate at reception, swiping out with your card to do so.

#### Dress code

Hinchingbrooke School is a place of study and work for adults and children. Therefore we expect students to dress appropriately for this environment and set the standard for younger students around the school site. As well as wearing your lanyard, we ask for

- no wearing of clothes that consistently reveal underwear or large amounts of flesh
- no see-through clothes not also accompanied by a skirt, shirt or shorts
- no hats or hoods to be worn inside
- no ripped clothing
- no joggers or sports leggings (plain leggings only)
- no items of clothing advocating or celebrating illegal acts, drugs etc

We ask all of our staff to remind Sixth Formers who are not dressed appropriately of our expectations and we make the final decision about what is classed as appropriate or inappropriate dress. Students who persist in not dressing according to our standards will be asked to go home to change.

### Parking permits

Parking permits are administered by Mr Ian Oliver, Estate Manager at ACES Academies Trust. Please contact Mr Oliver for further information. Please note that spot checks are carried out and fines issued for cars which are parked on our premises without a permit.

### **Absences**

We expect full attendance to lessons and all other activities, including Enrichment, PSHE and Private Study. However, we do recognise that people occasionally get ill or need time off.

### Unplanned absences (eg illness, sudden emergencies, travel disruption

Ask your <u>parent or carer</u> to phone school reception and follow the instructions for the option to leave a message with the Sixth Form team before **9am** on the day of any unexpected absence. The message should include name, form and reason for absence. The student should also email their tutor and teachers to request the work they are missing. It is the student's responsibility to make sure gaps in their learning are filled after an absence.

You should avoid making appointments for the doctor or dentist during timetabled lessons as far as possible, however we

### Planned absences (eg hospital appointments, open days)

realise that it is difficult at the moment get appointments and will use our discretion as to whether your appointment is authorised. Please email <a href="mailto:sixthform@hbk.acesmat.uk">sixthform@hbk.acesmat.uk</a> evidence of the appointment before the date and ensure that you let your teacher know and catch up on work you have missed.

Absences for hospital appointments, Open Days etc must be authorised prior to the day of absence and will be at the discretion of the Sixth Form Team. Please see your SSO to organise this. You should explain to your teacher that you are going to be absent, and make sure you catch up with missed work.

### Learning Agreement

Please provide a Medical Certificate for absences of more than 7 consecutive school days.

Driving lessons or theory tests MUST NOT be organised during a timetabled lesson. Practical Driving tests during lesson time will be authorised.

Holidays taken during term-time will not be authorised, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

All other planned absences (family occasions and other appointments) will be considered on a case-by –case basis.

#### Finally, please note

- If you are away for more than 20 consecutive school days without a reasonable explanation or communication with us, we have to take you off roll
- We reserve the right not to pay exam entry for any student whose attendance falls below 85% without a reasonable explanation
- If your attendance falls below 85% without reasonable explanation we reserve the right to remove your place in Sixth Form.
- We reserve the right to revoke your place in the Sixth Form if, despite our interventions and support, you display a
  pattern of low attendance and/or frequent breaches of the Code of Conduct and/or ongoing concerns about your
  commitment to your subjects (eg not handing in homework, poor attitude to learning). This can happen at any time
  during your time with us.

I confirm that I have read, understand and agree to the terms of the Sixth Form Learning Agreement

Name			
Form			
Signature		 -	
Date	_		

