

Dear Parent/ Carer,

We are so pleased that so many of you were able to attend our first Y12 Welcome Webinar last week and hope that you found it useful!

There is no recording available, but we have produced the **attached FAQ document** which covers the content of the webinar and answers some common questions that were raised.

I'd now like to draw your attention to this series of parent/ carer webinars provided by the Wandsworth Education Wellbeing Service (EWS) which is a part of the South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS trust. To view further event details and descriptions, and to book on to any of the webinars, please follow the link to the [Eventbrite collection](#).

There are sessions approaching on:

- Mental Health during the teenage years
- Understanding and supporting teen sleep
- Supporting your teen to cope with exams
- Screen time, social media and gaming – what parents need to know
- Conflict, communication and compromise – the teen years
- Health habits in teenagers with Autism

The EWS also provide free 1:1 early help support programmes for young people to support with emerging anxiety or low mood. Please do contact us if you feel your child could benefit from this provision.

Finally, we are looking forward to meeting you in person on **Thursday 1st October** for our Form Tutor Parents' Evening which will run from **5-7pm**. Please refer to my previous letter for further details.

If you would like to get in touch with us, please email InfoYear12@graveney.wandsworth.sch.uk and we will be pleased to assist you with your query.

With my very best wishes,

Mr Z Kazi

Deputy Director of Sixth Form

Parent/Carer Webinars

Secondary Schedule 26/27

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Mental Health during the teenage years

Understanding and supporting teen sleep

Supporting your teen to cope with exams (Years 11-13)

Screen time, social media and gaming - what parents need to know

Conflict, communication and compromise - the teen years

Healthy habits in teenagers with Autism

Managing exam and assignment stress (Years 7-10)

We also provide free 1:1 early help support programmes for young people to support with anxiety or low mood. Speak to your school to find out more.

Year 12 Parents' Welcome

Frequently Asked Questions

Welcome to Graveney Sixth Form. We are delighted that your child has joined us and hope that this FAQ provides a useful overview of what to expect during Year 12, how we support students, and how you can support your child at home.

Getting Settled into Sixth Form

Will my child settle in if they are new to Graveney?

Yes. Although Graveney Sixth Form is large, the majority of our Sixth Form students were not at Graveney in Year 11. Students who have been at Graveney previously are generally very welcoming, and we put a great deal of effort into helping everyone build new friendships and feel part of the Sixth Form community.

Students have already taken part in our Induction Days, including tours, assemblies, activities with their forms, ice breakers and quizzes. These opportunities continue beyond the first few days because we recognise that settling into a new environment takes time.

We also have several initiatives designed specifically to help students meet people outside their usual classes and forms including the Peer Bridge and Common Ground programmes.

Peer Bridge was set up by one of our Head Students last year, and matches up Year 12s and Year 13s to have informal chats during form time and get to know the school a bit better.

Common Ground gets two new students and two students who were previously at Graveney together who otherwise would not have had the opportunity to meet because they are not in the same classes nor in the same form.

How else are students encouraged to meet other people?

Students are buddied up within their form groups and have been sitting with their buddy since the start of term. This provides another informal opportunity to get to know someone outside their usual friendship group.

The Wider Enrichment Programme also helps students meet students from different subject classes. These weekly sessions continue throughout the year with the same group of students.

We also have a number of social and enrichment opportunities, including our Freshers' Fair. We encourage students to participate in clubs and societies, Duke of Edinburgh, Sports and Music.

At the end of the first half term, students will also have Tea and Cake mornings during form time, with mixed form groups providing another opportunity to interact with students they may not otherwise meet.

What is the Wider Enrichment Programme?

The Wider Enrichment Programme is part of our Sixth Form provision and takes place once a week.

Across Year 12, students will complete:

- Two half terms of PSHE
- One half term of Careers
- One half term of Critical Thinking

Students remain in the same group throughout the year, allowing them to build relationships with students who may be studying different subjects.

What does PSHE look like in the Sixth Form?

PSHE is an integral part of our Sixth Form provision. Alongside weekly lessons and form-time activities, we run additional drop-down days throughout the year.

These sessions are designed to provide safe spaces where students can talk, understand themselves and others better, and prepare for life beyond school.

Sessions are age-appropriate and designed through the feedback of previous cohorts of sixth form students. They cover everything from physical and mental wellbeing to consent, first aid and advocating for yourself.

Pastoral Care and Wellbeing

Who should I contact if I have a question or concern about my child?

Your child's **form tutor should normally be your first point of contact.**

Form tutors see students every day and have an important overview of how they are progressing both academically and pastorally. If they cannot answer your question directly, they will make sure that your query reaches the appropriate member of staff.

The contact details for the relevant Sixth Form staff have been provided to parents separately.

Who is responsible for Year 12?

The Sixth Form team includes:

- **Mr Simmons**, Principal linked to the Sixth Form
- **Mr Trimble**, Director of Sixth Form
- **Mr Kazi**, Deputy Director of Sixth Form
- **Ms Hayden**, Head of Year 12
- **Ms Kumi**, Deputy Head of Year 12
- Your child's **form tutor**, who is your first point of contact

What pastoral support is available?

Form tutors monitor students' academic and pastoral progress and can make referrals for additional support where appropriate, including careers guidance and wellbeing support.

Our wellbeing provision includes:

- A dedicated Wellbeing Centre
- A Sixth Form Wellbeing Officer and Mental Health Lead
- A counselling team
- Support from the NHS Education and Wellbeing Service

Further information about welfare and mental health support, including parent webinars, will be shared with parents during the year.

What should I do if my child is struggling?

Please encourage them to speak to someone rather than trying to manage difficulties on their own. They can speak to their form tutor, the Year 12 team or another trusted member of staff. Their form tutor has an important role in identifying when a student may need additional academic, pastoral or wellbeing support and can make appropriate referrals.

One of our key messages to students is that **asking for support is a strength, not a weakness**.

Academic Progress and Course Choices

What should I do if my child thinks they have chosen the wrong subjects?

Please encourage them to speak to **Ms Hayden in the Year Office as soon as possible**.

At the start of Year 12, timetables are still settling, and some students may realise that a course is not the right fit for them. We will do what we can to help students find an appropriate course.

However, there is a deadline for changes because moving onto a new course too late can leave students with a substantial amount of work to catch up on.

Our approach is simple: we want students to be studying subjects in which they have a realistic opportunity to succeed.

What if my child is struggling with a STEM subject?

Students studying AS Biology, Chemistry, Physics or Maths should be aware that these courses can represent a significant academic challenge.

We particularly encourage students and parents to speak to us if a student achieved a Grade 6 at GCSE and is finding the transition to the AS course overwhelming. Historically, students entering these courses with this GCSE profile are statistically less likely to go on to pass the AS Level.

If a student is finding the course unsuitable, it may be better to consider an alternative where they have a greater chance of achieving success.

Please speak to the Year 12 team as early as possible so that we can consider the available options.

Do students take exams at the end of Year 12?

Yes. At Graveney, all Year 12 students take **AS Level public examinations in all subjects except Philosophy, Art, Drama, Media Studies, Film Studies and Photography.**

These examinations provide an important academic benchmark and help us assess whether students have developed the knowledge and understanding required to progress successfully into Year 13.

What grade does my child need to achieve to progress into Year 13?

Students must achieve a **minimum Grade E in each AS Level course (or internal exam, where the AS is not offered)** at the end of Year 12 in order to progress into Year 13. Students studying BTEC courses must achieve a "Pass" in order to progress.

Where students are unable to pass it means they do not have the necessary foundation for successful progression into the A Level course, which is why it is important that students are on appropriate courses and seek help if they are struggling.

What happens if my child does not pass an AS Level?

If a student does not achieve the required minimum Grade E, we will discuss their options with them on results day in the summer term.

Depending on the circumstances, options may include:

- Picking up a new AS course
- Studying one of our standalone one-year qualifications
- Other appropriate pathways discussed with the student and school

The priority is to find an appropriate route that allows the student to continue making successful progress.

Monitoring Academic Progress

How will I know how my child is progressing?

There are several opportunities throughout Year 12 for parents to receive information about progress.

An **initial progress report will be shared in October**. This is an early indication of how students are getting on and will not contain grades.

There will then be a **Subject Teacher Parents' Evening in November**, which will provide an opportunity to discuss how your child is progressing in their subjects during the first term.

The **January Mid-Year Assessment** provides another important checkpoint. This will give you and your child a clearer sense of how they are progressing and highlight where further action or support may be needed.

Should I expect my child to find Year 12 more difficult than GCSE?

Yes. The transition from GCSE to A Level represents a significant step up in terms of both academic challenge and workload.

Students may not have fully experienced this yet because the first weeks of term include many induction and settling-in activities. However, the increased workload will become more apparent as the year progresses.

We want students to develop the independence and study habits they need to manage this successfully.

Independent Study and Homework

How much independent study should my child be doing?

We recommend approximately **five hours of independent study per subject per week**.

Independent study is a crucial part of Sixth Form success. Students need to develop the ability to work independently outside of their timetabled lessons rather than relying solely on classroom teaching.

Students will receive guidance and practical tips about independent study during form time.

What are the study periods on my child's timetable?

Students on three subjects have **three designated study periods each week**. Those on four have **one**.

These are compulsory sessions. Students are required to sign in to the **Sixth Form Study Centre (SFSC)** and use these periods towards their independent study hours.

Parents should encourage students to make effective use of these sessions rather than viewing them simply as free time.

How important is homework?

Homework and independent study are both important parts of Sixth Form learning.

Students should keep on top of homework and avoid allowing work to build up. Developing good routines early in Year 12 will make it much easier to manage the increased workload later in the course.

Attendance

How important is attendance in Year 12?

Attendance matters enormously.

There is a strong relationship between attendance and academic attainment. When students miss school, they do not simply miss notes or a piece of work. They miss:

- Direct teaching and instruction, and contact with their teachers
- Discussions with classmates and opportunities to ask questions
- Unique classroom experiences that cannot be replicated at home

Catching up on notes is therefore not a replacement for being present in the lesson.

Students should attend **all timetabled sessions** as required.

Can my child have medical appointments during the school day?

Wherever possible, we ask families to arrange doctors' appointments, orthodontic appointments and similar commitments outside of lesson time.

We understand that this is not always possible, but please reinforce with your child how important attendance is and encourage appointments to be scheduled outside school hours whenever you can.

Students should attend school if they have a minor headache or minor cold symptoms. However, we do ask that students stay home for at least 24 hours after experiencing diarrhoea or vomiting.

What about driving lessons, jobs and private tutoring?

We ask that job shifts, driving lessons and private tutoring are also arranged outside school hours wherever possible.

When students are in school, we want them to be able to focus fully on everything that Sixth Form has to offer, including lessons, independent study, the library, the Sixth Form Study Centre, clubs and societies.

The School Day and Timings

What time does the school day start?

Period 1 begins at 8:40am.

Students who have a Period 1 lesson should arrive approximately five minutes beforehand. It is crucial that students arrive on time. Arriving late unfairly disrupts the lesson for other students and disrupts the flow of teaching and learning. They must leave plenty of time to make their journey.

However, not every Sixth Form student will have a Period 1 session.

Does my child have to be in school at 8:40am every day?

Not necessarily.

Students are expected to be in school by the time of their **first scheduled session**.

For example:

- Period 1 → arrive by 8:40am
- Period 2 → arrive by 9:40am
- A double free before form → arrive by 11:00am

However, **all students must be in school by 11:00am each day**, because form time is a compulsory scheduled session.

Further information about form time will be provided at the Year 12 Tutor-Parents' Evening.

Are students allowed to leave the site?

While we encourage students to stay on site and use our facilities, students in the Sixth Form are permitted to leave the school site when they do not have scheduled sessions.

This means that they can attend a lesson, leave the site, and then return for their later lessons. If they finish early for the day, they are permitted to leave after their lessons are finished. It is important that if students do choose to leave the site during the day, they return in plenty of time for their lessons so that they are not late.

Where can students go if they have a free period during the day?

Students are encouraged to use the Sixth Form Study Centre or the upper floor of the library which are both exclusively for Sixth Form use, if they wish to study.

In order to purchase food, they can use the Y12 kiosk which is open throughout the day, and there are picnic benches available for them to use.

They can use the Pavillion which is a heated, covered, large space that students can use to socialise with their friends.

In instances of poor weather, we routinely open up some ground floor classrooms (usually in Red House and Bradford House) for students to use during lunchtime.

Some students also choose to use Furzedown Recreation Ground to socialise with friends, and there are some shops and cafes in nearby Moyser Road. We ask that students are mindful of the public and their use of these spaces and areas during the school day.

Arbor and Reporting Absences

How can I see my child's timetable?

Please make sure that you have downloaded and signed into the **Arbor Parent App**.

The app provides an easy way to view your child's daily timetable.

How do I report an absence?

Absences can be reported through the Arbor Parent App.

You can also contact the Attendance Office directly on 020 8682 7063 by telephone or email on sixthformattendance@graveney.wandsworth.sch.uk.

Supporting Your Child at Home

How much should I monitor my child?

Our advice is to **monitor what is happening while also giving your child appropriate space to develop their independence**.

Students are becoming increasingly independent during Sixth Form, and part of their journey is learning to take responsibility for their own organisation, studies and decisions.

Parents still have an important role to play, particularly in helping students establish good routines and noticing when they may need additional support.

How can I help my child develop good study habits?

Encourage them to establish a consistent routine and make effective use of their independent study periods.

It is particularly helpful to encourage them to:

- Keep on top of homework
- Complete regular independent study
- Attend all lessons and scheduled sessions
- Ask for help when they are struggling
- Make use of the Study Centre and other school resources
- Maintain a healthy routine outside school

Mobile Phones

What is the school's phone policy?

Graveney is a phone-free zone.

Sixth Form students can have their phones with them, but they must not walk around the school grounds visibly using them.

There are specific circumstances where phones can be used:

- **The Pavilion:** Year 12 students may use their phones in this designated social space.
- **Lessons:** A teacher may specifically allow students to use their phones for a particular learning task. Once the task is complete, the phone must be put away.

How can parents support the phone policy at home?

We would really appreciate parents reinforcing healthy phone habits at home. Whatever approach works for your family, the important thing is to establish boundaries that protect time together and reduce unnecessary phone use.

Should my child have their phone in their bedroom at night?

No, they should not. This is one of the most important messages we would like parents to take away.

Smartphones are designed to be highly engaging, and notifications from apps such as TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram and WhatsApp can easily interrupt sleep and concentration.

Even if a student says they need their phone for homework or because they use it as an alarm, it is worth considering whether the phone needs to be accessible overnight.

We strongly recommend charging phones downstairs, for example in the kitchen, or keeping them with parents overnight.

Communication Between Home and School

What should I do if I have a question or concern?

Please communicate with us.

Your child's form tutor should normally be your first point of contact. If they are unable to answer your query, they will direct you to the appropriate member of staff.

We would much rather parents contact us when they have a question or concern than allow an issue to develop without communication.

What are the key things I should remember as a Year 12 parent?

Our five key messages are:

1. Attendance matters.

Make sure your child attends all timetabled sessions and understands the impact that attendance has on their learning.

2. Independent study is key.

Encourage your child to establish good study habits and complete the recommended independent study.

3. Encourage your child to ask for pastoral support.

If they are struggling academically, socially, emotionally or with their wellbeing, encourage them to speak to someone.

4. Please communicate with us.

Your child's form tutor is your first point of contact, and we are here to help.

5. Keep an eye on sleep, nutrition and phone use.

These everyday habits can have a significant impact on wellbeing, concentration and academic success.

What Happens Next?

When is the next Year 12 parents' event?

The next opportunity to meet with us in person is the **Year 12 Tutor-Parents' Evening on Thursday 1 October**. You will be able to meet your child's form tutor and there will be a series of presentations from key staff including the Head of Year, and early information and signposting about UCAS, Next Steps and Student Finance.

We hope this FAQ provides reassurance and answers many of the questions you may have as your child begins their Sixth Form journey.

Our aim is to look after every student, help them achieve the best qualifications possible and support them in progressing successfully towards their chosen next steps.

If you have a question that is not answered here, please do not hesitate to contact us.