

## Cheshire College South & West

**A Level Student Handbook** 

### Welcome

### **Dear Students**

Welcome to A Levels at Cheshire College. We hope you will be very happy here, and that you will have both a profitable and enjoyable time. Certainly, you will have every opportunity to achieve the very best you are capable of in academic terms, and a wealth of opportunities also to enable you to develop as a whole person during this final stage of your education.

We hope you will also take advantage of the many opportunities you will have to serve the wider community, and to develop your role as our future leaders in a changing world.

As you can see the next two years will be very challenging and you will be making many important decisions. Remember: whatever you do, aspire to the very best you can. Give your whole heart and mind to these crucial years.

### OUR CURRICULUM

At Cheshire College we are proud of our curriculum. We believe that that it not only offers the broadest range of A level subjects available locally, but that we seek to offer opportunities for personal, moral and social development that are unrivalled. We truly seek to educate the whole person and it is our aspiration that each and every young person who leaves here is ready for their next steps and who has a genuine sense of who they are and their potential to make a positive impact on those around them.

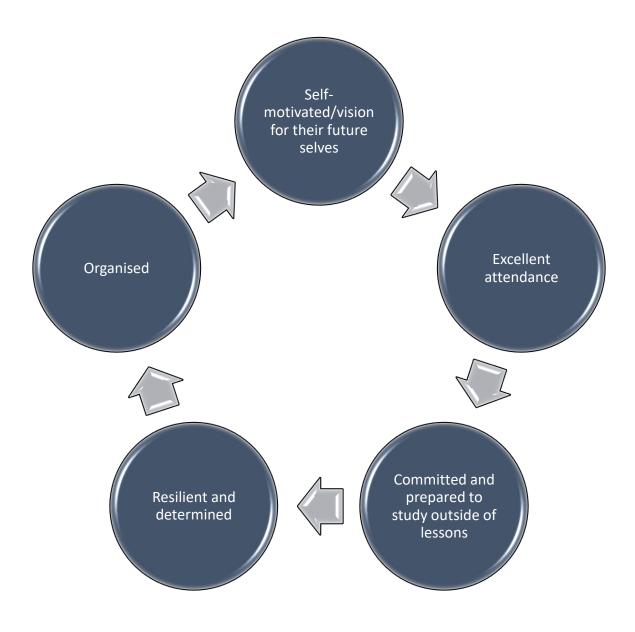
Most students will study 3 A Levels for two years, although there is the potential to study 4 for the most able. You may change your choices, and think carefully about this, within the first half-term of your time at college. Please speak to me if you would like to do this.

You will also have one Tutorial period each week which will support you in your journey through college and prepare you for your next steps. There is an extensive programme of careers support and guidance throughout both years to assist you in your vision for the future, whether it be at university or in the world of work. In addition, there will be opportunities to undertake work experience, the Extended Project Qualification, service to our community and beyond.

There is no doubt that A Levels are challenging, but they are an incredibly exciting time of personal growth and development. It is a journey we share together.

Rob Latham Assistant Director – A Levels

### **Successful A Level Student Characteristics**



### **Standards and Expectations**

Now you are a member of the College community, your lecturers will encourage a greater degree of maturity and independence from you and expect to be able to treat you as a young adult, preparing you for your future in the professional workplace. As such, you will need to develop good working habits, be committed to your studies, and maintain an excellent record of attendance and punctuality.

You will be aiming to meet or exceed your target grades. In order to do this, you must expect to:

- Maintain a good attendance rate (95% or above)
- Allocate 90% of your personal study periods for work to support your A Levels.
- ➤ Develop a routine of matching study in lessons with the same time of study outside of lessons approximately 5 hours per subject per week.
- Meet all your deadlines, communicate with your teachers honestly and at the earliest opportunity if you are having problems.
- ➤ Be curious ask questions in lessons, read around your subject.

Asking a question is not a mark of ignorance, but a sign of an active, curious mind – essential for a successful A Level student.

### Guidance

You will be following a rigorous programme of A Level study which should challenge you. If you're not finding anything difficult – you're not doing anything challenging enough!

So, what should you do if you are finding your workload too much, or struggling with a particular topic?

### DO NOT:

- Leave it to the last minute.
- Avoid your lecturer.
- Hope the problem will go away.
- Convince yourself that your lecturer will be satisfied if you hand in a half-hearted piece of work.

### An effective is to:

- Speak to your lecturer ahead of the deadline to get specific help where necessary.
- Ask your tutor to help you organise your workload.
- Ask questions in lessons.
- Review your notes at home to consolidate and to pick out questions for the next lesson.

### Asking questions is not a sign of ignorance, but the sign of an active mind.

As you work in smaller groups and spend more time in your A Level Departments, you can build solid relationships with your teachers based on mutual respect. Good communication is essential, as well as an important life skill and sign of maturity. Your teachers will respect sincerity and whole-hearted effort more than perfect grades.

### Studying at A Level

Your A Levels will challenge you in several ways and a significant factor in your success will be to develop the right approach to your use of time outside lessons; at home and during study periods. There will be a period of transition whilst you adapt to this and we will support you in your development of these skills, but ultimately it will be up to you to take on board the advice given and act upon it.

During your first weeks you will be introduced to some key basic study skills and approaches to study that will be central to success. This may take a little time to refine, but it must be a priority to do so – your success at A Level is dependent upon it.

Alongside this your teachers in each of your subjects will help you to understand how best to work outside of lessons, including how to study beyond your homework. We would strongly recommend a minimum of 15 hours of independent study each week and it is essential that you allocate these across your subjects so you can maintain progress in all of them, as ultimately, your next steps will depend upon you being successful across the board.

If you are in difficulty with a subject the first person to speak to is your subject teacher. They have the expertise to help and are willing to do so, provided you are willing to speak to them. If you would like help beyond the lesson, then go to the **intervention** sessions run by your subject teachers. **Please be aware that if your teachers ask you to go to interventions then you must take it upon yourself to go.** 

You will have a number of study periods. If you use these effectively you will build a strong platform for success. You must plan for which of these you will use for studying each of your subjects and you must aim to use most of them. We do not run supervised study but if you choose to use your study periods in the common room not engaged proactively, you will be choosing a lower A Level grade at the end of the course. The best place to study will be the LRC, although you can choose to study at home if that is more effective.

### **Support Structure and Well-Being:**

As a Cheshire College student you will be part of our community. It is mutually supportive, hard-working and sincere. The health and well-being of all of our students lie at the heart of everything we do.

It is of central importance to recognise that our well-being begins looking after ourselves. Everyone is different, but we all need to find ways which work for us and some of these are listed on the next page. When we are faced with challenges, as we inevitably will be, then we will be in a much better place to deal with them.

There are extensive structures in place to support people when they face challenges in their lives, be they academic or personal; these are explained below and summarised in the diagram on the following page.

Subject 'intervention' sessions — each department supports students through lunch time sessions which can be accessed by students when they need support. These are an essential part of how we assist you and are the main way in which you will gain additional help/advice outside of lessons from your subject teachers. You may be required to attend, but you should always take responsibility to go if you are facing challenges with your studies.

- Your lecturer/subject teacher ask questions in lessons or, for a specific individual query at the end of a session or through MS Teams.
- Your PDT can help with organisation and study planning, as well as giving advice concerning examinations, re-sits/re-marks where necessary. You should also keep your PDT informed if there are any circumstances outside college which may be affecting your performance. When you come to apply for university or career programmes, your PDT will also help you research and write your application. In most cases, your PDT will also write your final reference.
- You can make an appointment to see me about any aspect of College life; your study habits, subject choices, future plans, or any problems you are experiencing which may affect your study. Equally, I will request a meeting with you if he or she is concerned about your effort, progress or attendance. My office is room W318.
- > Our Student Hub and Well-being Hub are always available to help with any pastoral, careers or well-being related questions, help or support.
- Some Sixth Form students may also benefit from the services of our professional counsellor. Appointments are confidential, and usually arranged by your PDT.

# Promoting your own well-being

Getting 7 to 8 hours of sleep every night

Sign-up to one of the enrichment activities

Eating a healthy balanced diet

Organising your time so that there is a work/life balance

Taking regular exercise

Taking time out, reading, listening to music, being with friends

Meditation/relaxation/mindfulness

Making the best use of on line resources, such as the Mind charity

Talking to your teachers

## College Based Support

Guidance from your PDT

Appointment with our counsellor

Support from the Student or Well-Being Hubs - 01244 656401

Guidance from the Assistant Director for A Levels

**Academic Coaching** 

Appointment with our Careers advisors.

Our Learning Support Team

### External support

Referral to CAMHS and support offered directly by CAMHS

https://www.mymind. org.uk/

Young Minds national mental health charity

Kooth On-line Counselling

Appointment with your GP

Organisations such as Mind or The Samaritans run free helplines

### Academic Support and Individual Plans (SMART Targets)

There can be no doubt that A Levels are challenging and we will always endeavour to support students through the challenges they face. It may be necessary to adopt a more formal and co-ordinated approach if a student is finding the challenges are over-whelming. In order to give us the best possible picture about how a student is progressing and what support may be necessary, your lecturers, PDT or myself will use Pro-Monitor, which you and your parent/carer will be able to see, to record concerns and the help given/recommended.

You may be given SMART targets to work towards and which will support you to get back on-track. These may be related to work or attendance.

### What happens if you fall behind in your work in an individual subject?

It is always better to be proactive if you find yourself struggling, and to use the support structure above to get back on track.

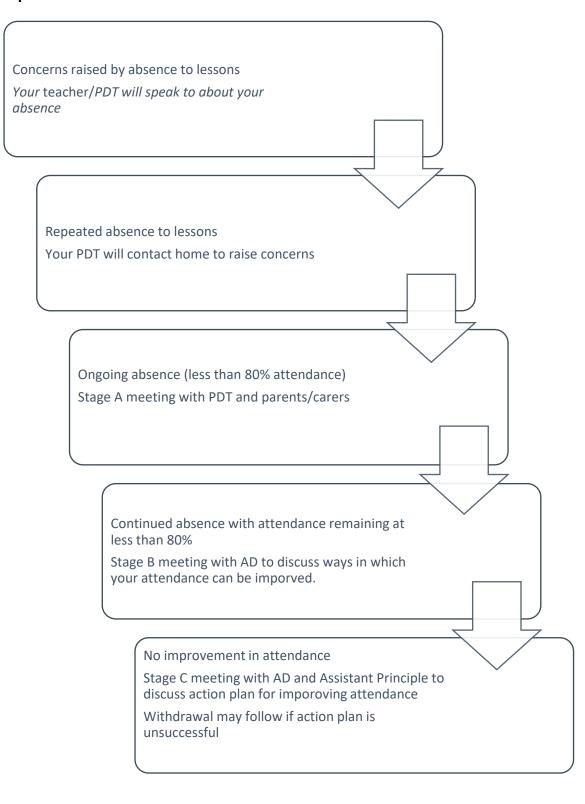
If your teachers raise a concern about your effort or progress, you may be required to complete short-term immediate action, such as a LRC sign-in during your study day or study periods. In the case of piece of work outstanding, your teacher can insist that you spend a specific study period signed into the LRC to complete it. At this stage, your parents/carers could also be contacted to enlist their support.

Moreover, attendance, punctuality and reliability are prioritised by Higher Education Institutions and employers. Often, we are asked to specify an attendance percentage in a reference and, in most cases, anything below 90% would raise concerns.

Therefore, you need to

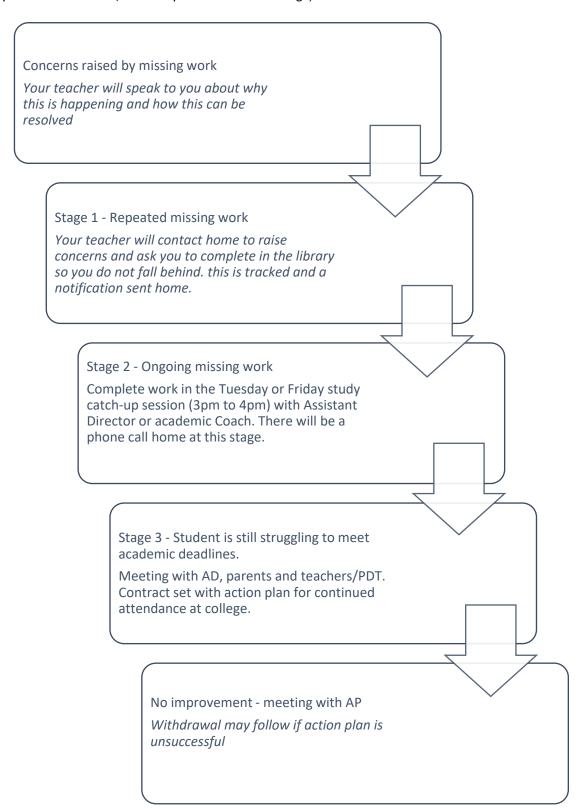
- Be on time (for those who drive their own cars- TRAFFIC / LATE is not a valid excuse)
- Provide written reasons for legitimate late arrivals and absences completing a 'late form' when arriving at your lesson.
- Organise medical appointments and driving lessons/tests outside lesson time

### **Repeated Absence Procedure**



### **Structures to Support Students**

It is expected that nearly all students who begin in Year 12 will continue and complete their A Levels in Year 13. However, there are times when students may fall behind with work and there is a structure in place to support students to ensure they get back on-track (the same process will be used for unacceptable conduct in college).



### The Shape of the College Day

9.00 – 10.45	Lesson I
10.45 – 12.15	Period 2 (Monday, Wednesday and Thursday)
10.45 – 12.30	Period 2 (Tuesday and Friday)
12.15 – 1.00	Lunch (Monday, Wednesday and Thursday)
12.30 – 1.15	Lunch (Tuesday and Friday)
1.00 – 2.30	Period 3 (Monday, Wednesday and Thursday)
1.15 – 2.45	Period 3 (Tuesday and Friday)
2.30 – 4.00	Period 4 (Monday, Wednesday and Thursday)
2.45 – 4.00	Intervention (Tuesday and Friday)

At the beginning of the year, you will be issued with your own personal timetable for the subjects that you have chosen. As well as these subjects you have I period per week of tutorial with your PDT, which is a compulsory session.

You will notice that you have non-timetabled lessons. These are for personal and individual study. Please use your time in these lessons wisely. You cannot expect to do well unless you use some of these lessons for research and additional study.

### The Learning Resource Centre (The LRC)

The LRC offers a wide range of books and journals to support particular courses. You can also access our extensive range of online resources and digital information in the form of e-books, e-journals and more. Please call in to talk to the LRC team or message via Teams if you have any questions or would like help or support.

### **Finance**

### The 16-19 Bursary Fund

This fund provides financial support to help 16-18 year old students remain in education.

### **Discretionary Bursary**

Students can also apply for a discretionary bursary if they enrolled on a course at the age of 16-18 and are continuing on the same course now that they're aged 19 or over. Or if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

There are two types of this kind of bursary:

- An Enhanced Bursary
   Up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups e.g. aged 16-18 years who are in care, care leavers, on income support or universal credit in their own name or in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payments
- 2. Discretionary Bursary Based on Household Income Funds awarded to meet the individual needs of students where the household income is £35,000 or less. For example, this bursary would be provided to help with the cost of transport, meals, books, trips and College equipment.

### Download guidance notes

Further information about this can be found at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund/eligibility">www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund/eligibility</a>.

Students aged between 16-18 years old may be eligible for a free meal every day that they're on Campus throughout their studies.

If you have any questions about transport to and from college, include access to our free transport, please contact out travel advisers in the Student Hub.

### **Transportation**

Our students travel to College from Cheshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Merseyside, North Wales and beyond.

We have an Eco Travel plan which aims to reduce traffic volume, encourage cycling and walking and provide opportunities for access to public and contracted vehicles. As part of this sustainable plan, we offer FREE transport for all full-time students aged 16-18 living over one mile from the Campus where their course is delivered.

There are three different options available depending on your home location:

- 3. College Coach Service (Crewe Campus only)
- 4. Public Transport
- 5. County Council Transport

For students aged under 19 years old where a College Coach service exists, this is the only service that the College will subsidise.

Take a look at the bus routes and times on our website or at the Student Hub.

To find out if there is a service available to suit you, get in touch with one of our College Transport Offices based at the Hub or call 01270 654654.

### **Cycling to College**

The College encourages staff and students who live within three miles of their Campus to maximise their environmental friendliness by cycling to college. We have plenty of secure cycle storage and cycle racks. There are also changing and drying facilities in the Sports department to enable cyclists to change before going to class.

### Part-time Work

A national survey has pointed out that serious and well-motivated students can manage 8 to 10 hours paid employment per week without this affecting their final A2 grades. However, the study pointed out that beyond this there is an INCREASING DETERIORATION IN PERFORMANCE as a result of additional hours of paid work.

Every student will enhance her learning by doing between twelve and eighteen hours of private study each week. It is therefore very difficult to try to combine a full-time course with a time-consuming job.

PLAY SMART – keep part-time jobs low – it really pays in the long run!

### **Student Guidance for Higher Education / Employment**

This is done through: -

- Tutorial Period Programme
- UCAS Information Evening
- The Careers Team
- Higher Education Convention

Futures Programme

### **Scholars Programme**

The Scholars Programme is delivered by a specialist Oxbridge Team who together provide a unique programme for Cheshire College - South & West. This programme is designed for any student who desires to be an 'Early Applicant', in that they want to study at Oxbridge, or wish to study medicine, dentistry or veterinary sciences.

Key features of the programme include:

- Students on the Scholars programme will be able to access funding to support bespoke enrichment
- Oxford Partnership programme in the Humanities, Languages and Sciences
- Oxbridge coaching for competitive courses in Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary subjects

- Preparation for the Admissions Test and interviews
- Online resources
- Dedicated Oxbridge Room

Students will receive specialist I-2-I support from industry experts to assist them through these competitive applications. It is a rigorous and challenging process and we have designed a programme to reflect this and enable students to showcase the best of their abilities.

### Entry requirements:

- Minimum of eight Grade 7-9 GCSEs (including English & maths)
- Application form
- Interview panel

This programme is delivered by Holly Jones (Futures Supervisor) from October — February of the students' first year, and then Deborah Leake (University Admissions) for the rest of the study programme.

This programme takes place on the A-Level study day. Poor attendance to either this programme or main academic programmes will mean removal from the Scholars Programme.

In corporation with Pembroke College, University of Oxford, CCSW is a Hub Co-Ordinator for OxNet. OxNet is an Access initiative between participating colleges at the University of Oxford, other Higher Education institutions and a national network of 'Hub' secondary schools/colleges in West London, the North West and North East of England, who work with multiple 'Link' schools in their respective areas, existing in long-term strategic relationships.

OxNet runs five <u>academic programmes</u> which are offered to Year 12 pupils across our target regions. Participation in one of the year-long OxNet programmes includes a variety of <u>academic events</u>, such as: a Study Skills Day, a 6-week Seminar Series, an Easter Essay Competition, a Summer School, and a Twilight Talks series.

- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Philosophy and World Religions
- English
- Science
- Languages

### **Honours Programme**

The Honours Programme is the programme for learners who aspire to high-level employment and apprenticeships, and places at universities such as the prestigious Russell Group. The Russell Group represents 24 leading UK universities that maintain:

- The very best research
- An outstanding teaching and learning experience
- Unrivalled links with business and the public sector

The programme is delivered in 4 5-week blocks throughout the first year of the Level 3 qualification. Students will learn academic skills, network with industry experts and academics, gain hands-on experience in their chosen field, and receive bespoke support to help them achieve their goals. After each block, students will reflect on what they have learnt and will come away with a unique award that will make them stand out in any application.

Students will have the opportunity to specialise in one of four pathways that best reflect their aspirations. There will be times throughout the programme when students will just interact with an activity designed specifically for their pathway.

- **Aspiring Leader** (for those pursuing careers in leadership and management, or studying subjects such as business or economics)
- Aspiring Creator (for those pursuing careers in the performance, visual or creative arts)
- Aspiring Scientist (for those wanting to study a STEM subject)
- **Aspiring Academic** (for those wanting to study the humanities, social sciences, or liberal arts, or wanting to pursue a career in law or teaching)

The programme has specialist academic support from teachers, as well as bringing in cocurricular activities to support learning outside of the classroom. Learners on this strand will be aiming towards, or have the potential to attend Russell Group Universities, and will be accessible by learners starting any Level 3 course.

This programme is delivered by Holly Jones (Futures Supervisor) in partnership with universities and employers.

This programme takes place on the A-Level study day. Poor attendance to either this programme or main academic programmes will mean removal from the Honours Programme.

### **Uni Ready Programme**

A 3-week programme for second years to prepare them for university. It will run 3 times in the spring and summer term.

- Week I Student Finance and Budgeting
- Week 2 First Term Survival
- Week 3 Results Day and Clearing

This programme is delivered by Holly Jones (Futures Supervisor) but has been designed in collaboration with Higher Horizons.

### Raising Aspirations Programme

This encompasses all of the destination-based activities that take place across all 3 campuses. The aim of these activities are to raise aspirations and prepare students for their next steps. These are predominantly HE-focussed, but also cover:

- Apprenticeships (including degree apprenticeships)
- Employment
- Gap years

Activities include (but are not limited to):

- Talks from universities.
- Careers workshops.
- Open days and taster days/university trips.
- Study skills programmes.
- Partnership with the Sutton Trust and their summer schools.
- IAG talks.
- Alumni talks.
- Guest lectures and workshops.
- Aspiring Professionals Programme with the Social Mobility Foundation.
- University and Apprenticeship Fairs.

- UCAS support this is delivered by Deborah Leake (University Admissions Co-Ordinator).
  - o Personal statement surgeries (partnering universities will also support).
  - o I-I guidance.
  - Support and training for staff.

### North-West Science Network

In partnership with Corpus Christi College, University of Oxford, CCSW are a Hub Lead for the North-West Science Network. This outreach activity aims to engage Year 12 students from the Northwest with research-level science and scientists, and is designed to further equip them to make informed choices in relation to higher education, and to support them in their application and entry into university. Events take place across the year both locally and in Oxford.

The purpose of NWSN is not necessarily to get students to go to Oxford, but to pursue STEM subjects at higher education more generally. Activities include:

- Launch Event and Lecture
- Twilight Talks
- Maths in Science Workshops
- Summer School

This is a free access scheme and has a focus of encouraging students from a WP background.

### **FAQs**

### WHAT IF I HAVE A MEDICAL APPOINTMENT?

Please remember your time in college is precious. Whenever possible, please attend medical and dental appointments **OUTSIDE** of College Hours. Unnecessary absences will affect your studies.

### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM ILL DURING THE COLLEGE DAY

There are occasions when you may feel unwell during the college day. The important thing to do is to go to the Student Hub to let us know. They will be able to contact home and make sure you are safe.

### WHAT SHALL I DO IF I NEED TO ABSENT FROM COLLEGE?

The importance of regular attendance throughout A Levels cannot be emphasised enough. Missed lessons can never be retrieved.

It is expected that students at this level are not absent due to relatively minor ailments. However, if you are unavoidably absent from college, please can you contact your PDT to explain why.

Please note that punctuality and attendance are crucial for success at A Level.

### WHAT DO I DO IF I WANT TO CHANGE SUBJECTS?

Nobody expects you to study a subject you do not enjoy. However, you must make sure you give yourself time to settle down. Things could be very different when you have had time to get used to a different routine.

- Talk to your PDT, your Subject Teachers and your Parents/Carers. They may be able to offer you some help.
- If after a reasonable period of time you still want to make a change, you should see Rob Latham to investigate possible subject groups to change to, and to fill-in the appropriate form.
- You will then be asked to attend a subject change panel so that the head of the
  department you are seeking a move can understand you request and reasons for the
  swap. You will also attend a subject change panel if you wish to swap between A Level
  subjects.
- Do not stop going to lessons in the subject you wish to give up, before your completed form has been returned.

### **Subject Changes**

The final deadline for an application to change subjects is the final day of the first half term. We would recommend changing earlier, as catching-up with missed work is a significant task. Applications for subject changes beyond this date cannot be considered as the level of work needed to catch up would prove to be too challenging.

If you need to change from one course to another (A Level to BTEC), this must be done by I Ith October.

### **Term Dates (2023 to 2024)**

### Half term I

Monday 4th September 2023 to Friday 20th October 2023

### Half term 2

Monday 30th October 2023 to Friday 22nd December 2023

### Half term 3

Tuesday 9th January 2024 to Friday 16th February 2024

### Half term 4

Monday 26th February 2024 to Thursday 28th March 2024

### Half term 5

Monday 15th April 2024 to Friday 24th May 2024

### Half term 6

Monday 3rd June 2024 to Friday 28th June 2024

### **Assessment Dates**

Please see on following pages dates of key assessments.

		Assessments	Assessments	
	Controlled Assessments	AI	A2	Coursework
September				Geography A2 Introduction/hypotheses rationale - 29th September
				English A2 15th September commentary draft due in for checking (summer homework)
				History A2 Completed plan - 8th September
				A2 8th September Project proposal final submission due in for checking (summer homework)
October				Geography A2 Methodology - 20 <sup>th</sup> October
				History A2 2000 words - 20th October 2023
				English A2 By October half term - final submission of creative piece and commentary
				Graphics A2 By October half term – Project research, ideas generation and visual developments check.
			A2 MAP4	Media A2 By October half term – First draft submission
November		AI MAPI		PE A2 24th November - performing video evidence for their chosen sport
	AI w/b 18th December (4xICT rooms) A2 w/b 11th December (4xICT			
December	rooms)			Geography A2 Data presentation and analysis - Ist December
				History A2 Source and Historian analysis - 8th December 2023
				English A2 8th December - Introductory sections of Language Investigation due in for checking.
				Graphics A2 8th December – Visual developments, experiments, and final concept Project Feedback.
				Media A2 11th December – Final submission
January			A2 Mocks TBC	History A2 By 26th Jan - Analysis sections of Investigation due in for checking
				Fashion and textiles A2 31st January Submission of 'Personal Investigation (component 1)' project to include, completed sketch book, Toile and Finished garment
				Photography A2 31st January Submission of 'Personal Investigation (component 1)' project
				Fine art A1 and A2 31st January Component 1 Personal Investigation- 60%
				Graphics A2 31st January – Personal Investigation Project Submission, including Essay.
February		AI MAP2		Geography A2 Conclusions and Evaluation - Feb half term (Monday after)
				History A2 Full Draft - 16th February 2023

				PE A2 23rd February - competition logs for their chosen sport
				PE A2 29th February preparation for the EAPI presentations
				Fashion and Textiles A1 2nd February Submission of 'project 1' to include- Completed sketch book, Toile and Finished garment
				Photography A1 2nd February Submission of 'project 1'.
				Drama A1 9th February Drama and Theatre coursework
				A1 Graphics - End of Skills Development Project Feb half term (Monday after)
March	w/b 18th March (4xICT rooms)			English By mid-March/Easter - final submission of full investigation
				History A2 29th March 2023 Final submission
			A2 MAP6 TBC	PE A2 w/b 4th March - EAPI actual presentations
April	w/b 22 <sup>nd</sup> April (4xICT rooms) I <sup>st</sup> week back after Easter			Fashion and textiles A2 I5-hour practical exam to take place after Easter, Dates, TBC.
				Photography A2 15-hour practical exam to take place after Easter, Dates, TBC.
Мау		AI MAP3		Graphics A1 3rd May- Submission of Mock Exam
				Fashion A2 10th May Submission of 'Exam (ESA)' project to include, completed sketch book, Toile and Finished garment
				Graphics A2 10th May – Externally Set Assignment Submission
				Photography A2 10th May Submission of 'Exam (ESA)' project
				Fashion A1 24th May Submission of 'Mock exam' project to include- Completed sketch book, Toile and Finished garment
				Photography A1 24th May Submission of 'Mock exam' project
				Fine Art A1 and A2 2nd May Component 2 Externally set assignment - 40%
June				Geography A1 CRF form 30th June - proposal submitted and approved
				English A1 23rd June creative piece draft due in for checking
				Fashion A1 23rd June- Personal Investigation Project proposal ideas/ Ist draft
				Media A1:23rd June – Submission of coursework evidence. All images to be uploaded and partially completed cross-media production.