

# The South Wolds Academy & Sixth Form



## Post 16 Parent/Carer Handbook



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## 1. Welcome

Welcome to The South Wolds Academy Sixth Form. We are sure that like us you are keen to support your child through the next phase of their education. This booklet has been put together with you in mind, and it will guide you through the various stages your child will encounter over the next two years.

The decision to join The South Wolds Academy Sixth Form is a momentous step forward for any student. It is an exciting period in their education, a time in which they begin to identify the direction they wish to take. During this time they will receive guidance and support in preparation for their chosen path after Sixth Form.

## 2. A Level Reform

You will no doubt be aware that the A Level Curriculum has recently undergone governmental reform. AS and A Levels are now decoupled which means that the AS grade no longer contribute towards the A Level grade. The AS is now a stand alone qualification the only subject available at AS Level is Core Maths. Students who study for an A Level qualification will be assessed on two years of content at the end of year 2. In the main students at The South Wolds Academy and Sixth Form will study four subjects in Year 12 reducing to three in Year 13.

## 3. The Role of the Tutor

The pastoral organisation for Post 16 differs from that lower down the school. Tutors act more as a learning mentor to the student and tutor groups are smaller (approx. 15) which enables the tutor to focus on and have quality time with their tutees.

The Tutor is there to support students through their two years of Post 16 education both academically and personally. The Tutor is the first point of call for parents/carers, should you have any queries. Students will register with them every morning but should the need arise they can see them whenever necessary. Students meet every Monday morning with their Tutor for either briefing or an assembly. Attendance to these are **compulsory**. Tutors will organise fortnightly mentoring sessions with students over the year, they may wish to discuss any of the following:

- ◆ Attendance
- ◆ Tutorial programme
- ◆ Use of independent study time
- ◆ Target grades and progress towards them
- ◆ Any indicators of under achievement
- ◆ Any difficulties or problems students may have
- ◆ UCAS applications / employment

These are obviously important meetings and we expect students to attend them. Absences will be dealt with in the following way:

1. Tutor will make contact to remind student
2. If absences persist, YPL will meet with student
3. Continued absence or concern will result in tutor contacting home and meeting with parents/carers will be organised.

## 4. Assessments

At the start of each academic year students will be set subject specific target grades. These target grades are informed by GCSE results and by the national performance of the students in this subject with these grades. Teacher assessment will also play a part. Students' progress towards these target grades will be assessed regularly throughout the year. As part of this interim assessment process, data will be collated from subjects and discussed with the student and sent home to parents/carers. Individual targets will be set for students to achieve in order to continue or improve progress made. Should you wish to discuss targets or reports you can do this by emailing the tutor.

Subject teachers will assess student work and monitor progress in a variety of ways. Some A Level courses will have a coursework, practical or internally assessed component.



Year 12 internal examinations will take place at the end of the first year and students must pass at Grade D or better in three subjects order to progress onto the second year of the A Level course. A Level examinations will take place from mid May to the end of June. Provisional dates/timetables are issued as soon as they are available. Some students may need to re-sit their GCSE English/Maths in the GCSE November exam series in Year 12. For more information please see the section on Exams in this booklet.

The first opportunity for Year 12 parents/carers to find out how their child has settled into Post 16 study will be early in October when there will be a parents evening to meet with the Personal Tutor. The academy will send a brief report home at the end of the first term and a subject report in February. There will be a parents evening to meet subject teachers in May.

Of course if you have any questions or concerns regarding the progress of your child at any time we are happy to speak to you.

### 5a. Attendance

Attendance to lessons is compulsory. Students should not be leaving school for a driving lesson or to engage in part time work. It is expected that students maintain 95% record of attendance throughout the year. Doctor and dental appointments should be booked outside of school hours if at all possible.

In the event of absence, illness or a hospital appointment, students/parents/carers must contact the Attendance Officer immediately on 0115 9373506 extn. 100 or [ffrazer-hallam@southwolds.notts.sch.uk](mailto:ffrazer-hallam@southwolds.notts.sch.uk).

### 5b. Holidays

The Department for Education recently introduced changes to the 2006 Education Attendance Regulations that came into force on the 1st September 2013. The changes make it clear that schools can no longer authorise absences for family holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. As a result of this we have implemented a new attendance policy that came into effect in September 2013. In this policy we have defined the exceptional circumstances under which we will authorise term time holidays and the process by which we will do this. This policy can be found on The South Wolds website.

## 6. EPQ and CSLA

To complement the A Level programme we also offer extra qualifications which are accepted and valued by universities and employers.

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is a single piece of work requiring a high level of planning, preparation, research and independent study. The qualification is equivalent to 40% of an A Level.

This qualification is highly regarded by universities. Students who are able to write about their projects in the personal statement or interview can demonstrate very easily their passion and interest in a focussed area of independent study perhaps linked to their degree choice. The EPQ will help students to develop skills key to their success at university or work. We highly recommend that students who are thinking of applying to Higher Education should study for the EPQ qualification.

The Community Sports Leadership Award (CSLA) is a nationally recognised qualification that enables successful learners to lead groups of people in sporting activities. The qualification teaches generic leadership skills such as organisation, planning, communication and teamwork through the medium of sport. It is a fun and practical qualification with continuous assessment rather than a final exam.

Should there be an interest we can also run qualifications in First Aid and TEFL (teaching English as a Foreign language). The EPQ and CSLA are a compulsory part of Sixth Form study and students can choose to do either one or both. Both of these courses involve course costs.



## 7. Independent Study/Revision

Alongside timetabled lessons it is expected that students will engage in an additional 15 to 20 hours of independent study each week. This time should be used for revising for tests and exams, completing homework tasks, work on coursework, wider reading or consolidating what has been learned that day. Many relevant resources will be accessible through Google Classrooms.

Tutors will want to know how students are using their time and see evidence of what has been completed. Students will be given a study log which they complete electronically on a googledoc to record what they have done. This log is shared with and can be viewed online by their tutor, subject teachers and parents/carers.

Success at A Level is dependent on the students' ability to study efficiently and effectively. This is something that students can find difficult at first. You can support them at home by encouraging them to put together a study schedule each week so that their time is managed well.

During the course of each week there will be study periods, these are non-contact time periods and students are expected to use this time appropriately; undertaking research projects set, preparing for upcoming tests or exams or staying up to date with coursework. It is usual for there to be one study period allocated for each subject per week.

In the event of a subject teacher being absent, work will be set for students on Show My Homework. Subject teachers will check that work has been completed on their return.

Subject staff will often support students beyond their studies by organising revision booster sessions and intervention strategies to develop knowledge, understanding and skills. These can either be during a lunch, after school or during holidays. If you are concerned about your child's progress generally or in a specific subject please contact their tutor or subject teacher who will advise you accordingly.

## 8. Progression beyond Sixth Form

Throughout the year students will engage in a programme of events and activities that will help them make decisions about their future. This support includes university visits, making UCAS applications and writing their C.V. and letters for employment and advice on apprenticeships.

## 9. Exams

External exams are scheduled for November, May and June. Students will be given individual timetables and, with the exception of November, will also receive statements of entry. Timetables list the exams for which students have been entered, whilst statements of entry list the assessments (coursework and exams). It is important that students see their subject teacher if they believe an entry is incorrect. Times, dates and venues for exams will be posted on the Exams notice board. Students must check this in advance.

If a student is ill or unable to attend an exam, this must be reported directly to Reception prior to the start of the exam. It is not advisable for students to be on holiday at any time during term time. Missing an externally set exam for holiday purposes is not an acceptable reason for absence. Students who are absent without reasonable excuse, i.e. illness for which a doctor's note must be obtained, no grade will be awarded for the missed subject and parents/carers will be held responsible for costs incurred.

Certificates must be collected and signed for after the 30th November. Certificates may be collected by a nominated individual, provided they have written authorisation to do so. Certificates will be retained in school for two years.

## 10. Resources

The South Wolds Academy has numerous resources for both students and parents/carers and these are available via our website and via subject specific Google Classrooms.



## 11. Post 16 Bursary

On the 28th March 2011 the government announced a new 16 to 19 Bursary Fund to support the most vulnerable young people to benefit from and participate in Post 16 education and training. The bursary fund is a £180 million scheme to help young people facing financial hardship to stay in full time education.

The scheme is made up of two parts:

Those most in need will be eligible for a bursary of £1200 a year. This includes students in care, care leavers, students receiving income support and disabled students receiving both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance.

Other students who need financial support to help them stay in education or training may also be able to claim a bursary to help with the costs of transport, food, equipment or other course related costs.

The amount of funding provided nationally to schools is sufficient to allow for bursaries of £20.00 per week. This figure is based on the number of students who are eligible for free school meals in curriculum Year 11. This is one of the measures that the school has used in setting it's bursary level.

The Bursary Fund is administered by the school and the school will decide the eligibility criteria that will apply along with the requirements to be made of students regarding attendance, academic performance and conduct. Students must apply for the bursary at the start of each year of study. For further information please contact the Sixth Form Office.

## 12. Sixth Form Subscription - *improving Post 16 facilities and supporting Post 16 events*

There are currently 170 students in full time Post 16 Education at The South Wolds Academy and the Post 16 facilities provide excellent academic, pastoral and social opportunities. These facilities are used well on a daily basis and their continual upgrading and refurbishment are a constant financial drain on our resources.

Some year ago the Sixth Form Committee was faced with a long list of requirements and had no funds to address them. A ballot was held of all Sixth Form students and it was agreed to introduce an one off subscription of £20 covering the two year period of Post 16 study. This gives our funds a tremendous boost at the start of the academic year and enables us to maintain a high standard of provision for our students with both social and academic events.

We would be pleased if you were able to support us in our fundraising efforts to continue offering these provisions.

## 13. Policies

All school policies can be found on our website, [www.southwolds.co.uk](http://www.southwolds.co.uk) We would like to draw your particular attention to our policy on acceptable computer and internet use.

## 14. Contact details

Susan Aston      Year 12 Performance Leader  
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