

St Mary's Catholic High School Sixth Form Information Evening

Live, Love and Learn in the Light of Christ



'Students are proud to be members of this school. Their enjoyment is evidenced by what they told inspectors and by their high levels of attendance. This is also reflected in the extremely high proportion of students who stay on in to the Sixth Form' Ofsted Report

School Contacts

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Form Teachers

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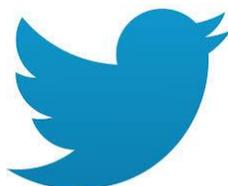
Mr C Bradley Assistant Headteacher cbradley@stmaryschesterfield.org.uk
(Sixth Form)

For administration issues please contact Mrs Hogan.

For pastoral issues and student welfare please contact the Form teacher in the first instance for routine matters then Head of Year for more significant concerns or information sharing.

For more serious concerns, contact the Assistant Headteacher (Sixth Form).

Communication: please use the school app to check for communication from school. (We are trying to reduce the use of paper.) The **My Ed** app is available now for both Apple iOS and Android devices and can be found on either the Apple App Store or on Google Play by searching for **My Ed** or scan the QR code below to access the download page.



For Sixth Form Twitter please follow:

[@Vivastmarys](https://twitter.com/Vivastmarys)

Introduction to Sixth Form for Parents 2nd October 2018

Introductions to Tutors

Please introduce yourself to your son/daughters tutor from 6pm in the Sixth Form Centre (VIVA).

Programme

6.30	Welcome and Introduction	Drama Hall
6.40	An Overview of Sixth Form Life	Drama Hall
7.00	Workshop A, B, C D (see below)	Sixth Form Centre (VIVA)/ Ryan Block
7.25	Workshop A, B, C, D (see below)	Sixth Form Centre (VIVA)/ Ryan Block
7.45	Changes in Sixth Form Qualifications and top tips	Drama Hall
8.00	End of Programme	

Sixth Form staff will stay around afterwards to answer any of your individual questions.

Workshops (led by members of the School Council)

Rooms: S2-4: Head out of the Drama Hall, around the old Admin block (at the bottom of the pedestrian drive) to the Sixth Form Centre. Head up two flights of stairs to the corridor with rooms S2-4.

Rooms: R1 and R2: Head across to the block with the main school reception and enter at the wooden side door. Turn left into the silent study area and R1 and R2 are on the left.

You can attend two of these four workshops.

A: Room S2 Keeping Organised and Reducing Stress

Good organisation is a key element to success at A level and a little bit of help from you can make a big difference. Our students give you tips to take away and use with your son or daughter. They will also give advice about how they handle the stressful 'crunch' times.

B: Room S4 Getting Involved and Taking on Responsibility

There are many good projects that can be taken on in Sixth Form. They are very useful for widening friendships and for building confidence, and they are important for developing a good CV. Hear about how they work and what is available from our Year 13 students.

C: Room R1 University Preparation

What needs doing and when? You will be invited to an evening on university applications in May but this session gives you an outline of the procedures and a student view from those who are making applications now.

D: Room R2 What I Wish I Knew a Year Ago

Our Year 13 students reflect on what worked for them and what they wished they had done differently. Instant wisdom! This session might help you to steer your son or daughter successfully through Year 12.

Good night. I hope you found the evening useful. I am always interested in your views, please let me know what you valued and any suggestions for improvements - you have my contact details. Mr C Bradley

A PERSONAL OUTLINE OF SIXTH FORM

YEAR 12

September

All is well hopefully. Watch out for students worrying about subject choice. Remember, students can make changes in the first month.

First opportunities offered, such as Young Enterprise, Buddy Reading, Engineering Scheme, House Captains.

Engineering Scheme, Young Enterprise scheme.	Y12 students must be here for full days (exceptions: Fri pm /vol work Wed pm).
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October

Work hits hard. You should see your son/daughter needing to work most of the evenings and most of a day at weekend. Friday night/all day Saturday resting (or part time job) is sensible.

Look out for – GCSE Awards Evening 8 November.	Danger Signs: Little or no work done at home. Unfocussed work at home (distractions eg Social Media).
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November

Watch out for 'The Wall'. Not all students hit it. Remember that this is a natural part of adapting to harder, pacier work. Give TLC and encourage students not to make rash decisions when tired. Call us if you think it is more worrying than this.

"The Wall"	Danger Signs: Taking days off (to catch up or because it is a 'light' day). Not doing at least 2 ½ hrs work most nights saying "I get my work done at school".
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December

Nearly past the most tricky bit. Grit your teeth and get them to the holiday.

Retreat should help: 10-14 December. Real highlight, life-changing for some.

Responsibility Groups/Societies advertised. Everyone should take on one of these projects – they bring confidence, new friends and a brilliant CV.

Look out for – First Report by end of December. Responsibility Groups/Societies advertised.	Danger Signs: Part-time jobs on weekday evenings. Employers increasing hours up to Christmas Son/daughter at home during the day saying there are no lessons / some lessons cancelled.
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January

Students are refreshed and should be starting to adjust to work at Advanced level.

Responsibility Groups start up. Really interesting projects for students to get their teeth into.

Look out for –

Parents Evening 16 January.

IT Examination – Unit 2.

January/February

Spanish Language exchange and German trip to Berlin. Brilliant experiences.

February

Students need to knuckle back down.	Danger Signs – Little work done in ½ term break. Reluctance to re-engage after ½ term.
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March

Coursework bites hard for those with high coursework content. Exams looming but still in the distance. Stressful. Give more TLC. Exams looming can be a worry. Definitely a 'crunch point' as staff push for revision whilst still setting usual work.

Look out for – second report by end March.	Danger Signs – stress of coursework. Disappointing school report.
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Easter Break

Revision essential: We strongly recommend 9-10 full 'school days' eg do school hours Mon-Fri each week and rest at weekends. Poor revision now will lead to certain underperformance in internal exams.

We can arrange for revision in school.	Danger Signs – not doing a large revision programme in Easter break.
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May

Exam week. 13 – 17 May. Internal exams are very important. Low grades in these exams are a cause for concern and resits may be necessary at the start of July to allow transition to Year 13.

Look out for – IT Assessment - Practical Higher Education Evening for parents – 20 May (after exam week).	Danger Signs – holidays taken now, in term time, when starting A2 study – disastrous!
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June and July

A lovely time in Sixth Form. Holidays are near and exams are over. We start looking at Post 18 options. We elect a new school council from Year 12 students.

A time to get going with university preparation. Research courses, go on open days (but no more than three in school time this half term). Internal exam results.

'Extended Project' advertised, worth ½ A level. Completed in Summer holidays and September to December.	Danger Signs – UCAS application: first factual sections not completed by end of term.
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July

Resit day 1 July.	Any U grades MUST resit.
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Advice available before the summer if there are concerns.

YEAR 13

September

Look out for – Returning with low grades. Entrance tests (increasing numbers of these).	Danger Signs – Disappointing Internal exams, not keen to get going again. Medics and others who haven't planned UK CAT or BMAT & other tests.
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Hope to see a renewed energy in students who see this as THE YEAR to do their best. Students get study leave, allowing them to work at home if they have a large block of free time, but only with your and our agreement. Many students do not take study leave.

Predicted grades start to be given to students. Remember these are open for discussion.

University application season opens. Early applications are needed for medicine, dentistry, veterinary science and all Oxford/Cambridge courses – end of the month is the internal deadline. UCAS (early application only) deadline is mid October.

Look out for – Predicted grades given to students. Oxbridge and Medicine/Veterinary University deadline end of September.	Danger signs – Nothing happening on uni applications (can do a bit each week). Not discussed predicted grades with you.
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October

Students visit universities and get university offers. We start to work intensely with those looking for employment after Sixth Form.

Look out for – Interview Practice opportunities. Careers. Life Skills.	Danger signs – still little happening on UCAS application. Son/daughter not doing a little each week – contact us.
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November

Possibility of a mini WALL but most students move through unaided (though very tired again).

Look out for – Final deadline UCAS application is end November. Report out this month. Parents Evening - November.	Danger signs – Rejections from UCAS – tell us. Disappointing school report.
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End of the month is the final internal deadline for applying to university.

December

More hard work. Responsibilities end as well as PE and Work Experience as Year 13 narrow their focus on the run up to final exams. Oxford and Cambridge interviews.

January

EPQ final submission.

IT Examination – Unit 1.

February and March

Many courses finish their content and early revision begins. Although new harder specifications, harder to predict end of courses.

EPQ presentations.

You get the Student Finance package with its horrible on-line forms to fill out!

Look out for – Year 13 reports February. IT Assessment – Practical, March.	Danger signs – Absences, saying it is easier to revise/work at home.
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Easter

Big revision time.

Another 9-10 full days needed.	Danger signs – lack of revision
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May and June

Leaver's arrangements.

Exams.

July

Another of those lovely long summers.

August

Results. We are there to support students very closely. Key staff on hand to check universities and jobs are lined up.

Introduction to Sixth Form Evening for Parents: Our 'Top Tips'

Advice to parents from our parents

1. **Ensure high attendance.** One of the biggest factors in underachievement is a poor attendance. Declining attendance (one day every now and again becoming two days every other week...) is a sure sign a student is soon to 'crash'. Students get very tired and sometimes even a little run down - especially in the Autumn term after a cold. They should still try to struggle in. Missing work only adds to the drain on their energy. If your son/daughter ever says: "it is not worth me going in today and I can get more done at home....", then do not accept this, it is a sign that something is going wrong. Ring school. Please do not book holidays during term time – they are a disaster for students and always make them fall heavily behind, outweighing any benefits of the rest.
2. **Help you son/daughter to get into good routines.** For most students, week nights are for school work. Don't be afraid to insist that he/she stays in Sunday through to Thursday evening (with the very odd exception). Many students adopt this pattern successfully and many parents insist on it. Typically students should be working around three hours per evening and further time at weekend. (A very common and successful pattern is to work most of the evening for Monday - Thursday, take Friday evening off and most of Saturday – perhaps for a part time job – and then return to school work Sunday afternoon and evening.) Students with a large programme will have to do more than this, as will students seeking high grades for high demand courses. If you are told that all homework has been done during the day (eg in free periods) or you see only an hour or less being done in the evening – underachievement or failure is just around the corner. Homework might have been 'completed' but it will have been completed superficially. Ring school.
3. **Restrict working on part-time jobs** to Friday nights and/or one day at weekend. About 6 - 8 hours per week will do no harm and can help to increase confidence and independence. Working in the week, especially on a couple of evenings leads to overtiredness and lack of concentration in school. A lot of homework is set in sixth form and students who do part-time work in the evenings scabble about in their free periods trying to rush essays or copy other students' work.
4. **Help provide all your son/daughter's stationery needs.** Simple things like buying him/her a dozen ring-binder folders, providing a new pad of paper at regular intervals, checking that he/she has the school planner and uses it will really help. A lot of success at A level is keeping organised. We see students piling everything into one folder and then not being able to find information for a test. We see students regularly grabbing bits of file paper from friends, some of it not hole-punched and not fitting in folders. The result is chaos and an inability to access vital information they need. 'Post-its' can help for writing down deadlines. A set of dividers to keep topics separate can make all the difference.
5. **Dates for your diary.** Make a note of parent's evenings and school reports, these are detailed in the materials we have given you.
6. **Get involved.** Sixth Formers can be notorious for keeping adults (including you) at arm's length. Do take an interest in their studies. How are they doing in tests (a regular guide to success of students), do they need taking to a university to have a look round on a Saturday?
7. **Contact school if you have any worries about your son or daughter's progress.** You do not have to wait until reports are issued or a parents evening is organised. The school office can print off your son/daughters attendance record. Tutors or Head of Year can get a quick impression of how work is going. Do you know your son/daughter's teacher's names? Form tutor? Head of Year? Assistant Headteacher responsible for Sixth Form? All are willing to talk to you and help. Who is it best to talk to for any particular problem?

8. **Help with careers planning.** Applying to university is a big step. Get your son/daughter to do a little each week and to update you on Unifrog. (They all will have one or more little gaps in their timetable. Each week suggest a little more is done). University application can be done in lots of little steps. Registering with UCAS takes 20 minutes and you do not need to know what courses you want to take. Filling in your qualifications or school history each take 30 minutes. For students not going to university we have a careers advisor in school giving impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) as well as alternative Post 18 inputs from May of Year 12 onwards. Contact Dr E Dando directly should you have further questions.

9. **Get informed.** Attend parent's evenings. Come to evenings like this. Watch out for the Higher Education Information evening in May. Visit websites such as www.ucas.com, and keep asking about Unifrog, open days and careers provision in school.

10. **Watch out for 'pressure points'.** Commonly the first one happens in November of Year 12 when students can feel overwhelmed by the pressure of work. This will be made worse if your son/daughter has been off school because of illness. For most it is students adjusting to a higher pace and volume of work. It generally passes as students make that transition. But sometimes it doesn't and maybe too much has been taken on. The next likely pressure point is when coursework subjects make big demands of students. Again you may just need to grit your teeth and keep him/her going. Remember that coursework will reduce the exam burden later in the year. The next might be Easter. This is when students should be really getting going on revision. Some will put off revision. Help them start their routine. Clearly the next is when on study leave. A lot of support will help here. We get a lot of students who at some time or other feel that everything is too much (and maybe they think they ought to leave) but we see them coming out the other side successfully.

Homework Getting Done at School or in a Short Time in the Evening?

- Homework generally should take 2 ½ to 3 hours per night and an extra day session at the weekends. Students on 4 A levels and/or wanting to pursue high demand courses at university will often spend longer than this.
- Homework which is virtually all done at school will be superficial and has probably been completed alongside other students – not thought out individually.
This pattern always leads to underachievement.
- In addition to set homework tasks, there are always ‘independent learning tasks’ to be undertaken. These are what bring high success at A level. If homework is not taking very long, some of the suggestions below should be used.

Suggestions for Independent Learning Tasks or How to do ‘Smart Learning’

Get organised. File day-to-day work into individual teacher/subject folders which are labelled up with topic headings.

Summarise a finished topic on one side of A4. This helps retention of ideas, strengthens understanding and ‘smart learning’ – learning as you go along.

Revise for the next test. Revising well as you go along makes you absorb the material, builds strong foundations and increases confidence in class.

Read the previous lesson notes for any subject you have the next day. Put your notes away and write down, or say aloud, what were the key ideas being put across. Helps understanding, retention and makes you ready for new material.

Re-write an essay due in later that week. An essay that is getting handed in after one draft will be superficial. Re-drafting polishes up your work and, again, makes you remember key points for longer.

Do one extra question from your text book. Pick a difficult question and attempt it. See your teacher about it the next day – shows your interest and the discussion develops understanding.

Read around the subject. This is a common suggestion at A level. It means read ahead in your book, read another book or article relating to the topic (your teachers can suggest or provide these). Google a topic related to your class work.

Read a quality newspaper or professional magazine with a section on areas related to your possible careers. Make notes – paper/electronically. This helps your general progress but also develops your broader intelligence.

Make sure you always have an extension task on the go. Your teachers will probably give these out automatically or ask for them. This makes you work above A level standard which, in turn, makes getting high grades much more likely.

General Advice for Homework

- Think about it deeply rather than rushing it or doing it superficially. Ask for clarification over any points you are not fully confident about.
- Do homework on your own. Doing it alongside friends subtly props you up a little for each piece of work, making you less strong when you face a test or exam. For people who generally do well but fall down in exams, this is the most common cause.
- Do homework in a focussed way. It is better to concentrate fully for an hour than stretch a task over two hours whilst dipping in and out of TV, phone use, Facebook etc.
- **Remember, school is available to you after lessons end (it rarely closes before 8pm). Two hours done at school with no distractions can be worth 3 hours+ at home. Some students do all of their work this way.**

'Supercurricular' activities

BBC
RADIO



92-95 FM

- Reading books, magazines & newspapers
- Online news sources (e.g. BBC News online, CNN online, Al Jazeera online)
- Foreign newspapers for modern languages (e.g. Le Monde, El Pais, Sueddeutsche Zeitung)
- Free online lectures & courses, e.g. www.futurelearn.com and www.coursera.org
- University summer schools (Oxford UNIQ Summer School), taster days
- Competitions & projects
- Debating societies, book clubs, discussion groups
- Relevant experiences, e.g. work experience, volunteering, visiting museums/libraries/exhibitions, finding out about your local area



- Suggested reading and resources: www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses/suggested-reading-and-resources
- Oxford podcasts: www.ox.ac.uk/itunes-u
- staircase12.univ.ox.ac.uk
- www.myheplus.com
- TED talks: www.ted.com
- BBC Radio 4- 'In Our Time' programme (www.bbc.co.uk/radio4)
- <http://i-want-to-study-engineering.org/>
- History Today magazine (www.historytoday.com)
- New Scientist magazine (www.newscientist.com)
- Nature magazine (www.nature.com)
- British Medical Journal (www.bmj.com)
- Explore (<https://explore.org/>)
- Oxford Science Blog <http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/science-blog>
- Oxford Arts blog <http://www.ox.ac.uk/news/arts-blog>
- The Economist <http://www.economist.com>
- +Plus magazine <https://plus.maths.org/content>
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