



**DHSB Sixth Form**

**Parents' Supporting Success 2024-25**

## Dear Parent / Carer

We have enjoyed welcoming our new students and following another set of excellent results this summer everyone here at DHSB is excited about the new academic year ahead.

Included in this handbook are several updates for the start of the year. Please remember to access our [website](#) on the [Parents and Students](#) page where you will find everything you need including links to [MCAS](#) and folders with copies of school letters, documents and policies. Also the [school calendar](#) for important dates.

Mr Roberts would also encourage you to view our [School Development Plan](#) for this year. These are a result of a consultation with students, staff and parents during the summer term and following the review of the achievements of last year. He will be keeping you updated regularly on our progress towards these priorities in an extended version of the [Head's Blog](#) once each half term. You can view this at any time via the [website](#).

## Introduction and Ethos

This handbook has been written to help parents and carers have a clearer understanding of the procedures, approaches and expectations of Devonport High School for Boys Sixth Form, with a view to maximising student achievement and managing the transition to Sixth Form smoothly.

DHSB values its Sixth Form students very highly and places great value on the contribution that each individual student makes to the school community as a whole. The school believes that it is the good working relationship between parents/carers, students and staff that will help guide students' development to realise their full potential; academically, socially and emotionally.

We aim to develop independent, ambitious and successful individuals who set themselves high expectations and achieve or even exceed their potential. We have a clear focus on preparing students for life after Sixth Form. Whether they choose university or employment, students are given careers guidance and are thoroughly prepared to make effective applications.

Throughout their time with us, we closely monitor their progress and personalise the support that they need in order to achieve their full potential, through target setting, learning conversations and the behaviour for learning policy.

We seek to develop the whole individual and foster a strong sense of community, providing opportunities to pursue ambitions, interests and passions and develop skills and talents, celebrate personal and academic achievements and encouraging students to contribute and make a difference.

Students are also expected to take on wider responsibilities by making a contribution to the wider community of the school and the city. We are conscious of the paid work and team and elite sport commitments that some of our students have at the end of the school day so Prefect roles are generally within school hours (though there may be some exceptions such as Saturday 11+ events). There are numerous opportunities for our students to develop leadership skills within school hours and our curriculum is designed to encourage academic and personal growth.

We strive to provide an environment in which students experience the right balance of independence and supportive guidance. We challenge Sixth Form students to take responsibility and exercise leadership for themselves and their own learning.

Life in the Sixth Form is different to that in the lower school. Alongside their increasing maturity, students are expected to take increased responsibility for their learning and the management of their time.

We realise that new Sixth Form students will take time to settle in and there are various ways in which we support them to do this.

## Attendance

Please see our [Sixth Form Attendance Code of Conduct](#) for full information.

- **100% attendance is compulsory for ALL timetabled sessions and lessons, Tutorials, E-Time and morning registrations.** If guided self study is permitted (after January mock exams for Yr12 this requirement will exclude those morning registrations immediately before offsite guided self-study periods).
- Registration will be taken in tutor bases for assembly / tutorial sessions.
- We now have a system in place for reporting attendance concerns to parents/carers and students. Parents and students will receive an email alert which can also be viewed on MCAS.
- We strongly advise that parents/carers regularly check their child's attendance via My Child At School (MCAS). <https://www.mychildatschool.com/MCAS/MCSParentLogin> (School ID: 12277).
- For any planned absence please complete a [Leave of Absence form](#) and return to the Sixth Form Office.

## Behaviour, Attendance and Emotional Wellbeing (BAE) - Monitoring

Form tutors and the Sixth Form leadership team review every student's emotional wellbeing as determined by: conversations with colleagues, interactions throughout the term, behaviour commendations and loggings, attendance statistics or any known needs relating to family circumstances. These half termly audits enable the Sixth Form leadership team to look after individuals, mediate where necessary and direct internal and external resources as appropriate. Our aim is for students to thrive and to grow in confidence, resilience and maturity. Please do share information that may be relevant with the Sixth Form Office ([sixthform@dhsb.org](mailto:sixthform@dhsb.org)) so that we understand the context of a young person. It is not uncommon for significant changes and trials to be experienced at this age/ stage of schooling and we want to offer just the right amount and kind of support and understanding from the school community through such challenging periods.

**Personal growth:** *In all that we do, our aim is for our young people to thrive and succeed in whatever they set out to achieve and also to contribute positively in the communities in which they live and work now and in the future. As a whole community common goals of respect, tolerance, integrity and personal responsibility are paramount.*

### Learning Agreements

In line with DfE regulations, all state school students will be expected to sign and complete a [Learning Agreement](#) at the start of term which confirms their learning aims (full timetable). This document must be held in the Sixth Form Office. Any changes throughout the year have to be recorded on this important document.

**Home Study Arrangements** *(always under review in line with DfE regulations).*

**In recognition of their growing maturity and ability to take responsibility for their own learning, students who have demonstrated a strong capacity for independent learning will be offered the privilege of 'Guided self-study leave' from March of year 12. Y12 students may choose to study at home at times when they have a block of non-contact periods. Such offsite Independent study will be offered to students who demonstrate investment and competence in learning in the periodic independent study reviews which take place each term. This will only be authorised for students gaining a minimum commitment grade of a B. Students who have not yet developed these skills will remain onsite.**

**The E option block schedule which includes a Monday period 3 and 4 is not voluntary! Attendance for Morning Tutorials, the Enrichment curriculum and any appointments made by your child's tutor, is compulsory.**

## **Target Setting and use of FFT**

Targets give students something to aim for, should be realistic and challenging, yet attainable. At DHSB we base our target grades on FFT targets.

FFT is linked to the Fischer family trust. It provides data and analyses to all schools in England and Wales. The estimates we receive are used by teachers to inform the setting of ambitious and aspirational targets for students. FFT does not make predictions. It shows that a student has a certain level of ability and that, in previous years x % of students with similar level of ability got this grade. Given this information, it is not unreasonable to expect this individual student to get this grade and this may be used as a target setting tool. FFT does not produce targets. Estimates simply say 'if what happened in tests and exams last year was mirrored this year, these are the most likely outcomes. Every student is unique so individual targets are based on a whole range of information - including a student's personal circumstances, their teacher's knowledge of them, their performance in school tests, their own aspirations and the support they've received at home. FFT estimates are only one element of this. Target grades (alongside end of year exam performance) form the basis for reporting UCAS predicted grades.

## **Contact**

DHSB main reception:           01752 208787  
DHSB Sixth Form Office:       01752 206173  
email Sixth Form Office:       [sixthform@dhsb.org](mailto:sixthform@dhsb.org)  
Website:                           [www.dhsb.org](http://www.dhsb.org)

## **Dress code**

Sixth Form students are role models for the rest of the School and are required to uphold and embody the standards expected of them. Students in the Sixth Form must maintain consistently appropriate personal standards of uniform. Failure to uphold a good standard of uniform will have consequences. We believe that it should not be too difficult for students to make the correct choices having chosen a school with a clear uniform policy.

## **Enrichment Curriculum (Option block E)**

Each year I remind parents that attendance for this is compulsory (students often confuse parents about what is expected!). E Time is part of the timetabled curriculum. The 'E' time registration and whole periods are valued for their contribution to the development of the school community and for the personal development of our 'soon to be independent' young people.

Through the enrichment curriculum we aim to encourage students to reflect on multidisciplinary fields and also some of the most pressing global issues of our times – global inequalities and global justice, climate and environmental change, war and peace, global health, finance crises, gender-based equalities, intolerance, discrimination and political change alongside developing an appreciation of culture and the arts and an ability to listen critically and communicate their ideas. Our mission is to generate knowledge and understanding that can make a difference, for a fairer, safer, more sustainable and more inclusive world. We will encourage our students to participate fully and to make the most of opportunities for lively debate so that their understanding has been deepened and

widened and such that specialist interests are integrated and students are equipped to gather evidence to support their viewpoints.

The programme is supported where possible by guest speakers. We run an in-house 'Question time' event once each half term and invite the students to sit on the panel or contribute opinions and questions through the twitter hashtag from their seats in the audience. Some students will sign up to complete an additional qualification: The Extended Project ([EPQ/WJEC](#)) and may use this time to complete work on their project or meet with their supervisors. Occasionally our students will be notified, in advance, that they are released to supervised study in the learning commons or Sixth Form centre. We encourage all of our students to extend and enrich their studies through wider reading and some may decide to use this time to work on an aspect of the suggested super-curriculum as outlined in the [Sixth Form Handbook](#) such as a Mooc (Massive open online course) see [www.futurelearn.com](http://www.futurelearn.com) for example.

## **Homework, Handbooks, Revision and MCAS**

### **Homework - Bromcom**

We have an established and effective online system in Bromcom which students can access and are expected to use regularly.

### **Handbooks**

The [Sixth Form Handbooks](#) (found on the school website under 'Sixth Form') offer access to information and guidelines about how we work together in the Sixth Form.

### **Revision**

Exams and independent revision are a big part of life in sixth form. You can support your child in this by accessing our [Revision Revolution](#) page on the School Life section of the school website. This page has lots of general revision tips as well as links to revision sites and advice for individual subjects.

### **My Child at School (MCAS)**

My Child at School ([MCAS](#)) is a portal enabling parents/carers to view their child's academic performance and information in real-time via a web browser [www.mychildatschool.com](http://www.mychildatschool.com) or via a mobile app which can be downloaded onto an Android or Apple mobile device. MCAS is also the online payment system for student uniform, meals, resources and trips.

This facility allows exclusive access to your child's attendance, timetable and classes at any time. It also provides useful information about the school such as the academic calendar and announcements. Documents and letters will also be published via the MCAS portal.

- We strongly advise that parents/carers regularly check their child's attendance via [MCAS](#)

## **Maximising potential in the Sixth Form**

Through a combination of research evidence and experience, we have compiled the typical characteristics of students who enjoy the highest success in the Sixth Form (in terms of grade outcomes and progression). It is not meant to be prescriptive as each student is an individual, but can be used as a guide to monitor student effectiveness.

### **Typical characteristics of the successful Sixth Form student include:**

- Attendance at ALL timetabled sessions and lessons is 100%
- Completes a minimum of [5 hours of independent study](#) (guidance here) for each subject studied per week. Where this is not directed by the teacher, students read around the subject, revise and consolidate understanding independently.
- Shares evidence of their Independent study with subject tutors.
- Works no more than 10 hours in paid/voluntary employment.

- Has a goal, knows what they want to do and is proactive in ensuring that they are doing what is needed to achieve their goal. Invests time in setting goals and researching strategies.
- Is effective at time management – uses their planner, to-do lists and timetables in order to prioritise work, meet deadlines and stay on top of work.
- Is organised and always attends lessons fully prepared – paper, pens, equipment etc.
- Engages with teachers and tutors – asks questions and is clear about how to raise their achievement.
- Engage with parents about their learning – what they are studying, how they're doing, what they are planning to do to improve.
- Uses peers to improve their own learning and study habits through discussion and collaborative working.
- Uses effective revision strategies (e.g. visual methods, practice papers, collaborative working) and employs them throughout the year, not just prior to examinations.
- Enjoys a healthy work-life balance – devotes time to other pursuits, hobbies, social activities.

## **Preparation for Next steps**

### **Unifrog**

In keeping with our commitment to provide students with outstanding careers guidance and tailored support when choosing their next step after school, we use [Unifrog](#); an award-winning, online careers platform. All students have access to this platform.

Unifrog brings into one place every undergraduate university course, apprenticeship, and college course in the UK, as well as other opportunities, such as School Leaver Programmes, MOOCs and every college at Oxford and Cambridge. This makes it easy for students to compare and choose the best university courses, apprenticeships or further education courses for them. They can also explore exciting opportunities further afield by looking at English taught undergraduate programmes available in Europe and the USA. Additionally, the platform helps students successfully apply for these opportunities by using Unifrog to write their personal statement, applications and CVs and guiding them through the process, allowing teachers to give live feedback.

Students access the platform by clicking a link in their welcome email, where they create a password and can begin using the platform. They login to Unifrog using their email address and password and they can do so from any computer, tablet or smartphone. We would encourage you to use the platform with your child so you can support them through the process of deciding their next step.

You will receive a parent login so that you can use Unifrog as if you were a student yourself, allowing you to truly support your child.

### **Preparation for University**

Approximately 80% of our Leavers go on to University. All University applications take place through [UCAS](#) (University and Colleges Admissions Service). Preparation for University application begins in Year 12. Students have the WEX / WRL week in November and the HEIR week in June, in addition to tutorial activities to support the consideration of their courses and completion of the personal statement. Parents will be invited to a UCAS information evening in the spring term which outlines the application process and student finance. All students will be asked to assess their aspirations and where they stand in meeting the entry requirements. In light of this analysis, tutors will assist students in setting realistic, attainable targets to help them to make successful applications.

Students should make sure they choose at least one course for which they will anticipate comfortably meeting a typical grade offer (Universities typically make offers in UCAS points). Sixth Form tutors are very experienced in the UCAS application process. They will support and guide throughout the application process and compile the information required to write a testimonial to accompany the application.

Students capable of successful application to Oxbridge and or Medicine / Dentistry / Veterinary science are given additional support with their applications and are invited to attend lunchtime study groups. Those students in receipt of bursaries / income support, and who are first generation from their family to attend university, may also be eligible to apply to Sutton Trust Summer Schools.

Students must make sure that they are ready to complete the UCAS application process when they return in Year 13. They will need to have registered on the UCAS Apply site, using the buzzword provided by their tutor.

There is a parents' section on the site, [www.ucas.ac.uk/parents](http://www.ucas.ac.uk/parents) with access to a range of information and guides and you can sign up for free newsletters and a parent guide.

There are a lot of very competitive courses besides the obvious ones. These include English, history, psychology, physiotherapy and law. Subject teachers and form tutors are able to advise students on the portfolio of evidence and skills that they should develop to include in such applications.

### **Preparation for those not going to University ([NGTU](#))**

A growing number of students seek to take up school leaver programmes or Apprenticeships including degree level apprenticeships. Whilst the main Enrichment programme provides guidance in applications, where to look, how to approach interviews and aptitude tests, the Deputy Head of Sixth (Progression) supports students who sign up to this group with mock interviews and any preparatory steps that are not covered by the main schedule. Alumni are always keen to reach out and assist students following routes similar to their own too and we like to facilitate these wider connections. The Unifrog and Ucas platforms along with termly Apprenticeship bulletins emailed home, are all good sources.

Please see the links [here](#) to the KS5 Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHEE) Curriculum Journey maps that we offer to students through the next two years and also [KS5 FAQs](#).

Thank you for working with us to help our young people thrive and become the best versions of themselves.



Sharon Davidson

Assistant Head - Post 16



*Cover artwork supplied by GCSE and A Level DHSB Art students.*