



PARENTAL GUIDE

TO SIXTH FORM



CHOOSE TO SUCCEED

NRA SIXTH FORM

Effective partnership between home and school, based on good communications, is a basic ingredient in the recipe for success. Add to this the sharing of high expectations and we can be sure that great things will be achieved.

Students have chosen to return to the Sixth Form. There is an assumption that they wish to study further and gain additional qualifications; there is an expectation that they will work and behave in such a way as to realise their ambitions. However, close monitoring and support is still vital. The Sixth Form makes new demands on students and they must learn to come to terms with new freedoms and new responsibilities.

Good communications are essential. We hope that the information in this guide helps.

If you have any concerns about your son or daughter, please do not hesitate to contact their personal tutor or one of the team immediately.

BALANCE

Inevitably at this age students are performing a delicate juggling act, desperately trying to keep three balls in the air: work, outside jobs, and a vigorous social life. The key to academic success is the effective balancing of these three spheres. Often, when students look to drop subjects or to drop out entirely, they do so not because they lack the ability to complete their chosen courses but because they have failed to maintain the right balance between the academic, social and employment spheres of their lives. Here lies an important monitoring role for parents, ensuring that a good balance is maintained. We hope that you will keep us informed should you have concerns about the limited or excessive nature of studying being done by your son/daughter in their 'free' time during the day or evening.

MONITORING PROGRESS

Reporting to parents takes place through Parent Subject Consultation Evenings and reports to parents throughout the year.

CAREERS/PROGRESSION

Careers advice and guidance are available from the Head of Sixth Form and Information Advice and Guidance Co-ordinator (currently Mr White and Mrs Morrell respectively).

For students who are contemplating applying to University or Colleges of Higher and Further Education considerable guidance is available. There is an information session on applications and grants in late Spring. Students are also encouraged to attend University Open Days and Higher Education Fairs.

We also have a full complement of specialist books and prospectuses, and a series of presentations for students considering not only university application but also application to further education and work. Students are encouraged to attend careers fairs and practical workshops on such aspects as preparing CVs and writing application letters.

STUDY

We have dedicated study facilities in the Academy which are designed for students to use when they are not timetabled. The College block has two computer suites for the exclusive use of Sixth Form students plus a silent study room.

Sixth Form students need to use non-timetabled lessons and home study very effectively in order to manage their work load. The AS level is a two term sprint and the use of non-contact time for study is critical. It is vital for students to be well organised, methodical and in school for the majority of their time if they are to be successful.

The precise amount required will depend very much on the nature of the course. However, no student will be able to do well without a strong commitment to further study. It is also particularly important that students read around their subject. Subject teachers will give advice as to what is required or recommended. Generally, we would recommend that each two hours of classroom time is followed up by one hour of study out of class.

ENRICHMENT

It is increasingly clear that employers and universities expect students to offer elements of achievement, responsibility and commitment beyond mere attendance at classes. We strongly recommend that students look to present a broad range of experience, including community responsibility and work placements. The Academy offers a range of opportunities and we encourage all students to make the most of them.

DRESS CODE (from September 2011)

In the Sixth Form, substantial freedom of choice of clothes is given in recognition of the more adult status of Sixth Formers, but we expect our students to be dressed in a sensible and presentable manner.

As we expect Sixth Formers to be coming to work, we think it reasonable that they come dressed suitably; casual leisure wear, therefore, is discouraged and specifically sleeveless or strappy tops and Bermuda style shorts should not be worn at any time. Skirts should be a sensible length and for health and safety reasons, flip flops are not acceptable. (This dress code also applies to staff for the same reason.)

PART TIME EMPLOYMENT

Students must be particularly careful about the amount of time committed to outside jobs. This must not be allowed to get in the way of studies. Students must learn to balance the short-term attractions of additional finance against the long-term advantages of good grades. The national average number of hours spent by Sixth Formers in part time work is 9-12 hours per week during term time. Longer hours may significantly lower a student's attainment.

The potential conflict of interest between part-time employment and study is becoming a matter of national concern. It is vital that students and parents understand that once the 12 hours per week limit is passed, students will begin to significantly under-perform.

This continues to be a critical issue and parents have a key responsibility in limiting the amount of time spent in part time work to a reasonable level. There is a direct link between under-performance and excessive employments.

Students are not permitted to carry out part time work during College hours.

WHAT HAPPENS IF? WHAT SHOULD I KNOW?

Absence

- If known in advance (e.g. doctor's appointment), students must complete a blue slip available from the Sixth Form office for it to be authorized.
- If unexpected – telephone message on the day to the Sixth Form office 01376 515756.
- If longer than three days – written absence note from parent/guardian to the Sixth Form office.

Registration

- Students are expected to attend all registration sessions.
- If students leave the site temporarily they must sign out and in in the Sixth Form block.

Holiday

Holiday forms are available from the Sixth Form office or from Student Services (Attendance Officer).

Study/Progress concerns

Contact the tutor immediately.

Bus pass

Students should contact the Sixth Form office.

Communication

All students have their own pigeon hole where information and work is communicated to them. This will include examination information. If parents do not receive key information, contact the tutor immediately. The Academy website contains copies of all letters home, newsletters, exam dates etc. www.newrickstonesacademy.org

Examinations

Some Year 12 and 13 students will have external examinations in a 3-week period at the beginning of January and all Year 12 students will have external examinations in the 5-week period beginning one week before the Whitsun half term. Year 13 examinations usually start a week later; however practical exams are often timetabled earlier.

Course changes

If students wish to amend their programmes, they must have parental support; the Sixth Form office has a particular form for this purpose which must be signed by a parent/carer.

In subjects where there might be difficulties, we would expect parents/carers and subject teachers to discuss the issues before any decisions are made.

No course change can occur without consultation first with the subject teacher and second with the Head of Sixth Form.

No changes are permitted after the end of September of Year 12.

All other matters

Contact your son/daughter's tutor or the Head of Sixth Form if the tutor is not available.

Attendance

Students are electronically registered for all timetabled lessons, registration and assemblies. Poor attendance i.e. falling below 90%, is a serious matter and has potential for exclusion from courses. It is absolutely vital at this level that attendance to all timetabled commitments is at a consistently high level.

As with too much part-time employment, weak attendance leads inevitably to loss of motivation and major under-performance.

Over the course of the year, we would expect over 90% class attendance to be the norm. Students who fail to meet this level are identified early and strategies put in place to help them improve.

EMA

From September 2011, EMA will be replaced with a new bursary scheme. If the student is aged between 16 and 19 years and faces financial hardship while in full time education, they may receive a bursary.

The Sixth Form will be responsible for awarding bursaries to students. For most bursaries, we will decide on the amount, when it is paid and whether it is linked to behaviour or attendance, except for those most in need.

EMA arrangements for 2010/11

If a student currently receives EMA, they will receive weekly EMA payments for the rest of the 2010/2011 academic year while they are studying. To receive payments they need to meet the standards of behaviour, effort and attendance laid out in the EMA agreement. This is the agreement they signed when they first applied for EMA.

EMA arrangements for 2011/12

Students will receive payments while they study in 2011/12 if:

- They first applied for EMA in 2009/2010 (they will receive the same weekly payment)
- They first applied for EMA in 2010/2011 and receive the maximum EMA payment of £30 (reduced to £20 per week in 2011/2012)

If the student is in care or on income support, their weekly EMA payments will be replaced with a guaranteed bursary of £1,200 per year from September 2011.

All other students agreed between 16 and 19 who face financial hardship can apply for a bursary directly through the Sixth Form.

For further details please see www.direct.gov.uk

Non completion of courses

If students choose to withdraw themselves from courses after they have been registered for examinations and fees have been paid on their behalf, Academy policy is that these examination registration fees are reimbursed to the Academy, and no future references will be offered until this, and formal leaving procedures, have been completed.

Leaving the Academy

There is a formal leaving form which needs to be completed prior to departure, involving return of all books and equipment and obtaining staff signatures. No reference or record of achievement is issued unless this is done. Forms for leaving the Academy Sixth Form are available from the Sixth Form Office. Any student who is considering leaving must discuss their concerns with the Head of Sixth Form

Arrangements with Maltings Academy

We currently offer courses in partnership with Maltings Academy. Where a student chooses a course at Maltings transport is, in most cases, arranged and paid for by New Rickstones Academy.

May 2011