

SCGSG SIXTH FORM

HANDBOOK

The next two years are an exciting time for you to research areas of interest and work towards your future. We are here to ensure that you can reach your potential and have the information that you need to plan your next steps.

In this booklet, you will find lots of practical information along with some top tips written by SCGSG students in Year 12 and Year 13.

If you have any further questions, please ask a member of the sixth form team.

STUDYING AT SCGSG

In Year 12, students are expected to take three core subjects, usually with 10 hours of lesson time for each. You will also have a 'How to?' lesson every week to provide key skills for lifelong learning. This leaves you with a number of study periods on your timetable, which should be used for independent study, completing homework or further research.

Outside of lessons, students are expected to complete 15 hours of study per week, some of which can be done in school and some at home. This will include homework and/or revision for assessments, but crucially it must also incorporate consolidation of classroom learning.

THE SCHOOL DAY

8.40	Arrival at school
8.55 – 9.15	Registration/Assembly – arrivals after 8.55 are marked as late
9.15 – 10.15	Period 1
10.15 – 10.30	Break Time
10.30 – 11.30	Period 2
11.30 – 12.30	Period 3
12.30 – 13.20	Lunch Time
13.20 – 14.20	Period 5
14.20 – 15.20	Period 6

Year 12 assemblies are usually on Monday mornings. On those days, you should go straight to the Hub and sit with your form (you do not have to go to your form room). Your form tutor will meet you at the Hub to take the register. Assembly will start at 8.55.

STUDY PERIODS

In addition to lessons, students in the sixth form are timetabled to attend a number of designated study periods, which are designed to help you to manage your workload.

Study periods take place in one of the following three locations, as specified on your school timetable: the Hub, the library mezzanine, and supervised classrooms. Your time during these sessions should be spent on individual study – making notes, reviewing content, completing homework, revising content, reading ahead, or practising exam questions.

You will be expected to work silently in the library and supervised classrooms, and in the latter you will not have access to technology, so it is important to plan ahead and have everything that you need to use the time effectively.

INDEPENDENT LEARNING – ABI

Within your A-level studies, you will be expected to complete private study and extra reading to complement what you learn in school, providing you with useful independent study and research skills for the future. Typically, for each hour that you spend in lessons, you should complete an hour of independent study; if you take 3 subjects, you may be asked to complete 30 hours of private study a fortnight. I know that this sounds overwhelming and a little daunting; however, you have study periods within your timetable to help you balance your time. In general, someone taking 3 subjects will have around 16 study periods within school, which can be used to complete private study and homework. Each fortnight, you will likely have 4 library/mezzanine sessions, 4 supervised study sessions (which are technology-free), and the rest of the time is for independent study in the Hub. I would recommend using your study periods well and completing as much work as possible within school, as it will allow you to take time for yourself when you are at home.

BEING ORGANISED – SUMAYA

One of the biggest differences between sixth form and lower years is that you'll now have study periods integrated into your timetable. With this freedom also comes the responsibility to use them wisely so here are my top tips to help you do that:

Find your rhythm. We all work with different patterns. Maybe you prefer to work on one subject per hour or, if not, you may prefer to spend 20 minutes on each subject during the hour. You may even want to spend half an hour on homework and the other half on private study and further research to aid your understanding. Take the time to experiment with different things to see what works best for you.

Study buddies. It can be great studying with friends, keeping each other motivated and navigating through tricky topics together, but you must also be aware of when you might be distracting each other. To keep focused, tell each other the 2-3 tasks that you hope to have achieved by the end of your study period. By voicing your tasks you're much more likely to get them done.

Prioritise. What work needs to be done during your silent study sessions? Make sure you plan to get the work that doesn't require technology done then, as you won't have access to it in these sessions. Make the most of the textbooks and subject guides in the library during library study sessions and the laptops in the sixth form space during your other study periods (laptops are also available in the library).

PRIVILEGE

Following the autumn half-term break, you will have the option to designate one day per week when you would like to leave school at 14.30 rather than the normal time of 15.30. Of course, you cannot choose a day when you have a lesson timetabled for Period 6, but the sixth form team will try to be flexible with your study periods to suit your preference.

Privilege remains conditional on you following the school code of behaviour, e.g. arriving to school on time, following the dress code, meeting deadlines, etc. and will be removed at the discretion of the sixth form team.

SIXTH FORM DRESS CODE

Sixth formers are expected to attend school in smart and business-like wear, as follows:

- Jacket: smart and no longer than hip-length.
- Skirt or dress: smart and business-like, not tight-fitting; no more than 10cm above the top of the knee; no longer than ankle length.
- Trousers: smart and business-like, not tight-fitting.
- Blouse or top: smart and business-like, not tight-fitting.
- Shoes: smart black, grey or navy shoes. Smart boots are allowed.
- Tights: black, grey, navy or natural.
- Cardigans and jumpers: an additional item to a jacket, in black, grey or navy.
- Jewellery, make up and nail varnish: smart, modest and appropriate for a formal environment. The only piercings allowed are for earrings and clear nose studs.
- Dress scarves are allowed to be worn inside (consider safety in practical lessons).
- Hair colour should be on the natural hair colour spectrum, i.e. bright or vivid colours and contrast are not.
- If head scarves are worn, they should be smart.

Uniform aspects which are not allowed:

- Vest tops, crop tops or any strappy tops
- Hoodies and any other hooded tops
- Logos or messages on tops
- Clothing made from lacy material, denim or leather
- Leggings, jeggings or tight-fitting low slung trousers
- Shorts
- Footwear: trainers, canvas material, sandals, mules, flip flops, Ugg boots or similar.

COATS are not to be worn during the day around school.

Our minimum expectation is professional wear so other items may be deemed inappropriate. Form tutors will check students' attire regularly and if it is not in accordance with the above, they will refer the issue to the sixth form team. Infringement of the dress code will lead to disciplinary action, which may include written warnings, being loaned appropriate items of clothing from school and being sent home to rectify the issue. The Head of Sixth Form's decision is final.

BEING PREPARED

To be successful in your A-levels, it is important that you are well prepared at the start of Year 12, and for that reason you will be expected to complete summer work in each subject. Once your studies have begun, you will need to be proactive and diligent in making sure that you keep your notes well organised, with separate folders for individual subjects and topics. You will be expected to have a planner/diary in which to record tasks and deadlines, etc. In addition, it is important that you are well equipped for lessons, e.g. A4 files, dividers, lined paper, highlighter pens, post-its, plastic wallets, biros, USB, pencils, ruler, calculator, etc.

SUMMER WORK – MOLLY

Before you begin Year 12, summer work will be set to help bridge the gap between Year 11 and sixth form and provide insight into what you might expect from your Alevels. For example, for my English summer work we researched Aristotle's theories on tragedy. Not only was this fascinating to learn about but it also provided me with useful knowledge and skills that I could use in my essays throughout Year 12.

EQUIPMENT – TIA

To succeed in sixth form, you have to be organised and this starts with having the right equipment. You will need to purchase a planner/diary of your choice to record your homework, deadlines, trips and events. You will need your standard stationery that you've no doubt had in your pencil case throughout school (scissors, glue, pens, pencils, ruler, highlighters, rubber, etc.). If you are taking a science or maths A-level, you will also need the correct calculator. You will benefit greatly by building up your revision as soon as possible so have the equipment you need for this ready, whether this is A3 paper, flash cards, colouring crayons... whatever works for you! You will definitely need a good filing system and this for me is ring binders with poly-pockets and dividers (to split different topics up for when I come back to revise). You will also need refill pads or notebooks to make your notes during lessons to put into your folders. Some subjects encourage exercise books to keep everything together, but if so you will be provided with one at school.

LESSONS – JODIE

At A-level, you will be studying fewer subjects but in a lot more depth; there's a lot of content to learn, so lessons often move at a fast pace. To give yourself the best chance in a lesson, it is important to be prepared, so make sure you have read through your notes from the previous lesson and have everything you need. Learning how to take notes and keep them organised for yourself is also good preparation for life after sixth form. Class sizes are smaller at A-level, which is good because it means teachers can spend time helping individuals when they need it. You will typically have two teachers per subject, so you can ask either of them to explain if there's anything you don't understand.

STUDY SUPPORT

Subject departments offer lots of support outside of lessons. Teachers are happy to meet with students to help them to improve areas of weakness or to consolidate their progress, all of which is carefully monitored through homework and regular assessments.

Mrs Willis is available as an Independent Learning Adviser to assist students in an academic context, such as with study/revision techniques, time management, organisation, etc. We can also pair a Year 12 student with a Year 13 mentor to offer peer-to-peer learning.

Wanting our students to do their best in the sixth form, we know that it is important for you to spend time learning the study skills needed. Our 'How to?' sessions focus on helping with this transition, particularly with regard to independent learning, note-taking, research skills, and how to plan and structure essays.

AIMING HIGH

Are you aiming for an A/A* grade? An A* is awarded to a student who has achieved above 90% in their A-level examinations. Here is a list of ways to make this a possibility:

- Keep your work organised. Your work needs to be arranged into separate topics and kept up-to-date. Make sure it follows the sequence of the specification so it is easy for you to find relevant information when you need it.
- Read through your notes and textbook before the lesson. This will mean that you are ready for the next stage in the sequence of teaching with previous information fresh and clear in your mind.
- Read through your notes and textbook after the lesson. This will consolidate your learning, helping to ensure you fully understand the topic as well as identify any areas where you need to seek clarification.
- Ask for help. You can ask in person or email your teachers with any questions – if you do this promptly, it will make your learning more efficient and save you a lot of hassle when you come to revise for examinations.
- Be organised with homework. You need to complete homework to develop your understanding and also to check your knowledge; stay organised with it by recording the details of what you need to do somewhere safe (i.e. your planner).
- Make sure that you catch up on any missed work. Missing work through absence will affect your understanding in subsequent lessons. It is your responsibility to ensure that you find out what you missed and complete any work that needs to be done.
- Revise in advance of assessments and use them to develop your exam technique. Assessments and mock examinations are the best way to gauge your progress; preparing for them seriously and trying your best will provide you with the most reliable indication of where you are doing well and what you need to work on.
- Read around and beyond the specification. Be proactive by finding out information and completing tasks beyond the minimum of your homework. Ask your teachers for recommendations and undertake your own research.

- Look for relevant workshops/lectures and seek relevant work experience. Follow up suggestions from your teachers and the sixth form team, and look for yourself for opportunities from universities, businesses, hospitals, etc.

THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

There are lots of opportunities to mentor or volunteer with programmes in school for younger students. Examples include the Literacy Enhancement Programme which involves weekly meetings with one student for reading practice and personalised learning support. Many of our sixth form students also choose to run clubs and societies. These include subject clubs, societies focused on preparing for a particular career (e.g. MedSoc), and recreational societies such as Zumba and Hama Beads Club.

The current Prefect team has over 40 members, demonstrating the value that we place in student leadership. We have leading Senior Student Ambassadors and Senior Prefects who focus on different projects such as transition, school forum, our House system, character and wellbeing, and a creative curriculum. The application process for these positions opens in the spring of Year 12.

POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY – PIPPA

Sixth form is a great opportunity to develop your leadership skills, as you can run your own clubs and create your own ideas for school events. An excellent way to get involved with this is by applying to be a Senior Ambassador or Prefect in Year 12. As a Senior Ambassador you would be responsible for coming up with and running your own events, and supporting whole-school activities by liaising with the Senior Leadership Team. Prefects are part of a team and work together to come up with ideas and host events. Not only is this a great way to meet people and support the school, but it also demonstrates lots of skills such as teamwork and time management that are ideal for CVs and personal statements.

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES – RAISA

Sixth form will bring with it academic pressures so getting involved in the number of clubs and societies that SCGSG has on offer is extremely worthwhile. Whether it is joining a sports or arts-based society, student forum or a mentoring scheme to take your focus away from the classroom, or even leading a new society that you are passionate about, SCGSG sixth form has something for everyone. Getting involved in an extra-curricular activity will allow you to develop a work-life balance and expose you to situations where you can develop the skills that are necessary to demonstrate in higher education applications and that are so important for life beyond school.

SUPPORTING SCHOOL EVENTS – JESS

Sixth form is a great time for getting involved with the events throughout school. Many roles are available during both years, from greeting students at progress evenings to helping backstage at the annual productions. Each role develops different skills vital for the future, combining a mixture of communication skills (e.g. whilst talking to new students and their parents) and organisational skills (e.g. when it comes to working your study around rehearsals and shows). Operating alongside multiple subject departments also opens up new opportunities that can only be accessed in sixth form such as more technical roles for house events and the wholeschool production every spring.

SUPER-CURRICULAR

The term “super-curricular” describes the kinds of things you might do if you are passionate about a particular career/sector/subject and want to develop your understanding further. This type of academic enrichment involves you accessing material and seeking opportunities that are of a higher difficulty level than A-level and are additional to your regular studies.

Examples include attending lectures at universities, reading academic articles or books (e.g. *New Scientist*), attending masterclasses or workshops, undertaking independent research or organising relevant work experience. These actions demonstrate a clear passion and interest beyond the curriculum and thus that a student really wants to pursue this pathway.

Within school, we give you a head start in your super-curricular pursuits by inviting guest speakers from university, business, and key sectors such as charities and healthcare. We encourage you to organise work experience for a specified week in the school calendar, and we regularly advertise a wide range of summer schools, events and experience days.

WORK EXPERIENCE – ELLIE

Work experience is particularly useful to provide a greater understanding into a career path and an insight into the roles and responsibilities involved. It is an opportunity to sample career options and confirm your interest or encourage research into other routes. This can then help to inform your degree/apprenticeship choices and provide valuable content for a personal statement, as you are able to provide evidence for your interest in a subject or occupation. As well as this, it is a chance for you to further develop transferable skills such as communication, problem solving and teamwork.

PREPARING FOR YOUR NEXT STEPS

During your time in sixth form, we will help you to explore the various pathways that are available to you upon leaving school. We aim to give all students the full range of options – from applying to university, school leavers’ programmes and apprenticeships to travelling or entering the world of work – and we discuss these options openly so that you are able to make an informed decision about your next steps.

Over the two years in sixth form, ‘How to?’ lessons cover topics such as school leavers’ programmes, apprenticeships, student finance and budgeting, the UCAS application process, writing personal statements, and preparing for interviews. In addition, you can also make appointments to speak with our independent careers advisor in school.

APPRENTICESHIPS – ABI

After school, an apprenticeship is one of the many options available to you. If you choose this route, a great place to start is to go to company open days, evenings or online sessions to discover more options (just like you would do with universities). It is important to undertake work experience to see what the job entails, which will allow you to judge whether you would enjoy it. Similarly, putting your CV together and starting to search for roles will allow you to feel prepared and have a plan for the future. The application process is different for each role and organisation, so understanding the procedure for your apprenticeship is fundamental for success.

WRITING A PERSONAL STATEMENT – HAJIRAH

Personal statements may seem daunting at first, but they can be broken down into more manageable sections. Here are some top tips to make the process easier:

- Your first draft will not be your last draft – you’ll constantly edit and tweak it so don’t worry if it is not perfect to begin with.
- Keep track of interesting things that you want to include in your statement – books or articles you’ve read, work experience, volunteering, evidence of your soft skills, etc.
- Try not to use clichéd phrases like “ever since I was a child I...” or “I’ve always wanted to...” – they are overused and tend to not be true, which can lead to some credibility issues.
- Do your introduction and conclusion last – it is easier to get the main bulk of your personal statement done first, and then you can add a small paragraph at the start and end.
- Don’t worry too much about the word and line limit – focus on getting your ideas down first, and then you can edit it with the help of your teachers.

SCGSG has a strong track record in supporting applications for competitive universities and courses, with a dedicated member of staff – Mrs Farrell – overseeing students’ preparation for “early entry” applications (i.e. for medicine, dentistry or veterinary sciences at any university, or any course at the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge). This support includes one-to-one guidance with the personal statement, assistance with preparation for admissions tests, and multiple practice interviews, whether it be in the MMI format popular with medical schools or the tuition-style format used at Oxford/Cambridge. Support of this kind is equally available to all students, whatever the choice of course or pathway. For instance, in recent years the SCGSG sixth form team has helped a number of students join prestigious apprenticeship programmes with leading companies in the media and industry, as well as draw on the expertise of our alumnae network in providing practice interviews with leading figures in their field. We pride ourselves on helping our students to pursue their individual goals.

APPLYING FOR “EARLY ENTRY” COURSES – HAFSAH

Applying for an “early entry” course means that you need to have your personal statement prepared much earlier and possibly take entrance exams as well. These courses are extremely competitive and universities look for academically skilled, well-rounded individuals who stand out. You can start to prepare by seeking work experience, contacting current students, doctors, dentists, etc. for advice, and looking for opportunities such as webinars; this will enable you to learn about the day-to-day life of a student. Most “early entry” courses require some sort of entrance exam, so familiarise yourself with the structure of these exams and the type of questions that come up. A lot of opportunities are sent to schools first to share with students so checking emails regularly is vital. Emailing teachers with any questions, worries or concerns you have will also help, since teachers have so much experience with successful students receiving offers.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

In addition to the facilities available to all year groups such as the school library and the ILC (Independent Learning Centre), sixth form students enjoy their own dedicated social and study spaces in the sixth form area as well as reserved space in the library mezzanine and exclusive-use laptops in the Hub.

Lockers are available for sixth formers and can be found in the sixth form common room and in the corridors near to the biology and physics labs. Keys can be obtained from Su.

STUDY SPACES – LOUISE

The spaces available to sixth formers at SCSGS allow for quiet, independent study and also provide a great place to be social. The common room is a place to relax and socialise with friends as well as a space to work that is separate from the main school. There are some smaller rooms to work in along the sixth form corridor, as well as a computer room and kitchen that is for sixth form use only! If you are looking for a quiet space to work, the mezzanine in the library is perfect, with access to laptops and textbooks to use for your studies. The dining hall and the Hub are also great spaces to work: they have large tables and access to laptops, and make a nice place to work with friends!

THE CANTEEN - LIPIKA

The canteen, consisting of the dining hall and the Hub, is a spacious place which allows pupils to relax at lunch and break times. As sixth formers, we have the privilege to skip the long queues to have access to the wide variety of food choices. At break time, the canteen offers a selection of fresh fruit, breakfast muffins, croissants, and pains au chocolat (which are quite delicious). As well as this, there is a choice of hot beverages to warm you up on cold days. The lunch menu differs from day to day but there is always a vegetarian and vegan option. Some days a hot food option may not feel appealing, so there is a range of sandwiches you could try. Not only this; sixth form students are also able to use the kitchen in the common room, like perhaps making a nice cup of tea to aid the hard work.

LAPTOPS AND COMPUTERS – MYA

From using computers in economics when researching current key data to making LEGO movies about mitosis in biology on iPads, technology plays a large part in sixth form life at SCSGS. Within the school environment, there's a wide range of technology available to sixth formers. In the social space, there are over 30 laptops for students to use during their study periods. Additionally, sixth formers have access to their own computer room within the sixth form block, which provides a focused environment for students to work in. If you prefer to work on your own laptop or tablet, you are more than welcome to bring it in – provided it is used appropriately.

PASTORAL SUPPORT

In the sixth form office, we operate an open door policy where all four members of staff are truly committed to supporting each individual to achieve their potential.

All students have settling in meetings in the first few weeks of Year 12 to help with their transition, and you are welcome to request similar meetings later in the year or at the start of Year 13 to discuss your next steps and plans for after sixth form.

With a range of expertise in the team, there is always someone available to talk to and it is this which will make a difference to your two years of study. We are best able to support students when we understand them, and this is something we value and work by.

In addition to the sixth form team, students receive support and guidance from their form tutors. Form tutors see their form every day and have the time to build a relationship with each of their students, offering advice and acting as a familiar point of contact.

We also have a range of speakers and charities that we work with to ensure students are provided with a wealth of information and advice outside of academic work.

FORM TIME – KATIE

In Year 12, students are placed into one of six form groups under six colours: red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple. Assemblies are usually on a Monday morning, so we don't have form time. On the other days, we have Votes for Schools, global awareness, wellbeing activities and structured form times. Global awareness is where we sign up on a specific day and present something that we've found interesting in the news to share. It's interesting to see everyone's views on the news. Our structured form times have included topics such as sign language, applications and interviews, and finance – with sign language being a big favourite in my form.

16-19 BURSARY

The Bursary Fund has four levels relating to household income and students who are eligible for Free School Meals. It exists to offer financial support to those who require it, such as with the purchase of textbooks, revision guides and stationery or payments for school travel or educational trips. Students may also consider using this assistance for journal subscriptions and other educational purposes. Payments are made directly into students' bank accounts and additional money can also be applied for.

Regular meetings with the sixth form team ensure that the appropriate support is always in place, with the financial assistance further complemented by a range of external mentoring and networking opportunities. We assist students in identifying and applying for access courses at university, and support with the additional paperwork that is required as part of the university application process.

If anyone finds themselves in difficult circumstances, we are able to provide assistance from the Hardship Fund and we would always encourage information to be shared with school.

In Year 13, if thoughts move to university, all students should be aware that criteria for support differs. Additional financial support exists for households with income below approximately £42,000 and for students who are the first generation to go to university or live in postcodes with a low progression to higher education. Universities offer a wide range of scholarships, grants, bursaries and support which are individual to each institution.

RULES AND PROCEDURES

There is no access to the main school building, including the sixth form area, until after 8.00. "Beeping in and out" when arriving and leaving the school site is essential due to fire regulations. All students must "beep in" using their security card as soon as they arrive to school, which should be before 8.50; any students arriving after 8.50 must go to the main reception and give a reason as to their late arrival. Any students leaving school during the day must have cleared the absence with a member of the sixth form team and "beep out" in the main reception, giving a reason on the machine.

The Canteen is open before school (until 8.45), during break time, and during lunch time; payment is via a cashless system on your security card, which you can top up using one of the machines in school (using coins and/or notes) or online through the school website.

Homework is communicated to students via Show My Homework; it is your responsibility to keep track of your tasks and deadlines, and manage your workload accordingly. If deadlines are missed, this may result in a referral to the sixth form team for further action to be taken.

The school building is a mobile-free site. Students in Years 7-11 receive a detention if their mobile phone is out, even at lunch time; the only exception is that phones may be used in the dining hall and the Hub before the start of school. It is important, therefore, that sixth formers set a positive example; you have the privilege to use your mobile phone in the sixth form area, and your own device may also be used during study periods (not including those in supervised classrooms) for academic purposes only, i.e. research or checking Show My Homework. Appropriate use does not include social media or phone calls. Occasionally, a teacher may allow you to use your phone for a specific purpose during a lesson, but this is only permitted after teacher instruction.

Permission for all known absences must be obtained in advance using the appropriate form obtainable from the school website:

- Green form – for all non-holiday absences such as medical appointments, interviews, masterclasses, open days, music examinations, driving tests, close family funerals or anything else education related. These may be agreed with the form tutor.
- Pink form – for holidays, religious festivals, family celebrations or anything sportrelated. These can only be authorised by the Headteacher. The form must be submitted initially to the Head of Sixth Form to sign two weeks in advance; it is then passed to the Headteacher for formal permission to be granted. Note: holiday requests during term time are not normally authorised.
- Blue form – for work experience or placements. These must be submitted to the Head of Sixth Form at least one week in advance. No overseas work experience will be approved during term time. Up to one week of work experience can be approved in each academic year of the sixth form.

If you are absent due to illness, a letter from a parent/carer is needed to explain your absence. This must be given to your form tutor on the first day you return to school. A phone call on the day of your absence is helpful, too. However, this does not replace the need for a letter explaining the absence, as we must have an explanation in writing. All absences must be accounted for.