

Stephen Perse

— Cambridge —



Stephen Perse Cambridge Sixth Form
Student Handbook

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Key contacts

You should contact your Tutor in the first instance about any issues.

More serious pastoral concerns should be addressed to the Head of Pastoral Care in the Sixth Form, Mrs Denise Hammersley (dha@stephenperse.com)

Sixth Form staff	
Head	Mr Stephen Ward (sjw@stephenperse.com)
Senior Deputy Head	Ms Abbey Jones (aj@stephenperse.com)
Deputy Head Academic	Mr James Gazet (to follow)
Deputy Head Co-curricular	Mrs Jenny McLeod (to follow)
Deputy Head Data, Assessment, Calendar	Mrs Gill Dambaza (gd@stephenperse.com)
Head of Sixth Form	Mrs Jacqueline Paris (jap@stephenperse.com)
Head of Pastoral (Sixth Form), Head of Boarding	Mrs Denise Hammersley (dha@stephenperse.com)
Head of Guidance and Careers	Dr Allison Curry (acu@stephenperse.com)
Sixth Form Office Manager	Mrs Kirsty Carter (sixthform@stephenperse.com)



Introduction



Whether new to the school or continuing from Year 11, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the Stephen Perse Cambridge Sixth Form.

The Sixth Form is very much a part of the wider school community and as such our Year 12 and Year 13 students are role models for those further down the school. I very much hope you will want to get involved with our mentoring programme to help support younger students either academically or pastorally, or to put yourself forward for one of the many formal leadership positions open to sixth formers, from leading clubs, societies or committees, to being Head of School.

Although the main Sixth Form site is separate from the Senior School site, the two are so close that they are largely treated as part of the same campus. You will find yourself moving regularly between the two sites for lessons, co-curricular activities, assemblies, and we have a number of opportunities for the whole school to come together, such as whole-school assemblies in the Sports Hall, House events, Sports Day and the Carol Service.

I hope you take advantage of the many opportunities that will come your way over the next couple of years and am sure that your experiences in the Sixth Form will prepare you for the next steps in your life beyond school, whatever they may be.

With best wishes

Mr Ward
Head

Welcome from the Head of Sixth Form



A very warm welcome to the Stephen Perse Cambridge Sixth Form. These next two years of academic study will help to prepare you for your onward journey to university and the wider world beyond. We hope that you will make the most of the excellent academic opportunities here at the Sixth Form, as well as the many enrichment opportunities available.

Understandably, the transition to Sixth Form can feel like a daunting experience at first - new subjects, new academic challenges, new people, and new environments. However, we are a small and friendly school community and we want you to know that there are always plenty of people you can turn to for advice and support, including your tutors, teachers and members of the Sixth Form leadership team.

This handbook is intended to provide you with an overview of life at the Stephen Perse Cambridge Sixth Form and to offer you some practical tips as you settle into the first term. Please take time to read this handbook and let us know if there is anything else you would like to know.

We wish you an enjoyable Sixth Form experience and a happy two years with us!

Best wishes

Mrs Paris
Head of Sixth Form

Academic overview

Sixth Form study can feel like a big step up and quite different from your current programme of GCSEs or equivalent. You will be studying a much narrower range of subjects than previously and this will be intense and fast paced. In addition to your A Levels you will also be developing your academic skills through a range of other activities. These include the option to choose the Extended Project Qualification or research project and the compulsory Introduction to Knowledge course. These are each described further on in this section.

A Levels

A Levels are not easy, but they are an opportunity to explore a subject in much more depth than you have done previously. They provide the chance to demonstrate intellectual curiosity, to question, to make connections and evaluate information. You will have to work hard and do far more outside of lessons than you have done previously. One of the most difficult aspects of A Level study is recognising that you can't 'learn' it all; although there will be plenty of material that will need to be learnt! The focus at A Level is much more on developing your conceptual understanding and the application of knowledge.

As a Sixth Form student, you will be expected to work independently and to take more ownership of your studies. This means that you need to take responsibility for organising your work; ensure that deadlines are met and regularly check your school email account. It also means taking the initiative to communicate with your Tutor and subject teachers if you require further support or advice - they are here to help you.

You will start the year studying either three or four A Levels. It might be possible to swap from one subject to another during the first half-term, but if possible, consider your choices carefully from the start. You should speak to your Tutor about any changes in the first instance.

Students who choose four subjects are expected to continue with all four until the first set of progress tests in January. Continuing with all your subjects for the first term will give you the opportunity to get a thorough understanding of what each subject is about and to assess your aptitude in each of them. All too often, a subject is dropped too quickly and students later regret their decision, wishing they had made a different choice. In January, you will have the option to continue with all four or to drop one. Your tutor will meet with you to discuss your options. Occasionally, we will recommend that a student drops from four to three if we feel that academically, it is not in their best interests to continue with all four. All subject changes must be also agreed by your parents.

Each A Level subject is timetabled for four periods (each one hour 15 minutes) per week in both Year 12 and Year 13. In most subjects you will have two teachers throughout the course. These teachers, staffing permitted, will teach you in both Year 12 and in Year 13. The examinations are all taken during May/June in Year 13. A few subjects also include non-examined assessments (NEA) or coursework. Your teachers will guide you through the requirements for this.

Developing the skills necessary for study in the Sixth Form and beyond is often a gradual process and it may well vary from subject to subject or topic to topic. The key to success is to keep on top of your learning, not to procrastinate and learn what you need to as soon as possible so that you can spend time on the higher order skills of application, evaluation and analysis.

Your teachers will set homework regularly. The nature of the homework will depend on the subject. You should expect to spend around 3-4 hours per week per subject on homework. In addition to set tasks, you should also spend time consolidating your understanding. Depending on the subject, this might involve making additional notes, wider reading, making good use of additional sources such as your textbook or cross-referencing material from different sources or different parts of the syllabus in order to make firmer connections between the ideas being met.

More than just A Levels

Developing the skills and character for university and life beyond comes from more than simply studying for your A Levels. In addition to your A Level studies your timetable will also include our unique Core Programme, PE, Enrichment and EPQ/Research Skills

EPQ/Research Skills

In the Autumn Term of Year 12, all students will be timetabled for one period per week on a research skills course.

This course is designed to develop your skills in both academic research and academic writing. These skills are essential for university where you will be expected to produce coursework and dissertations no matter what subject you study.

During the course you will be encouraged to think about completing a personal project to demonstrate the skills that you have been developing. This can either lead to an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) or to our in-house Stephen Perse Research Award.

The EPQ is equivalent to half an A Level. Universities and employers value it for the skills that students develop through completing it. Some universities will make slightly lower offers to students who have completed an EPQ, but not all and not for all courses so this should not be the only reason that you complete an EPQ.

The biggest advantage to completing a research project, whether that be the EPQ or our own in-house version, is the independence that you will demonstrate by managing your own project. You will have to choose your own topic, identify your aims, produce an action plan and review this along the way. You will need to keep a record of this process, meet deadlines and importantly reflect on the progress of your project and learn from it. The research project is a scaled-down version of the EPQ. It has been designed by us to include the skills that are developed by an EPQ. This has the advantage of being less demanding on your time but the disadvantage that it isn't a formal qualification.

Students who opt to continue with four A Levels after the January progress tests can opt out of continuing with the EPQ or SP Research Award. They can either choose to take an additional sport or enrichment option or to use the period for private study. If you are taking only three subjects, then the EPQ or SP Research Award is compulsory. The EPQ or SP Research Award is completed in the Summer Term of Year 12.

Introduction to Knowledge course

As knowledge is central to the skills that you will be developing on your academic journey, developing an appreciation of the nature of knowledge and different perspectives of it will become increasingly useful.

The Introduction to Knowledge course will be explored (notice it isn't taught - knowledge is a journey of discovery), as part of the Core Programme delivered by your Tutor. It is included in this section of the handbook as understanding knowledge is an academic subject: epistemology. Epistemology is defined as the theory of knowledge, especially with regard to its methods, validity, and scope, and the distinction between justified belief and opinion.

Introduction to Knowledge will encourage you to develop critical thinking and metacognitive skills by examining the foundations of your knowledge and beliefs, how you gain knowledge and how reliable the sources of that knowledge are. Over your Sixth Form journey, you will develop the ability to reflect on and evaluate your knowledge and yourself as a knower, as well as examine your A Level courses through a critical and metacognitive lens. You will be given the tools to place your A Level subjects in the context of the history of ideas and think about the scope and methodology of your academic subjects. You will also consider relevant ethical questions pertinent to the acquisition of knowledge in your A Level subjects, for example:

- Should there be ethical limitations to the methods used in the human and natural sciences? Who should decide these?
- Should offensive or controversial art be allowed?
- What ethical responsibilities does an historian have?

Introduction to Knowledge runs over approximately 13 weeks, spread across five terms and is organised as follows:

The first term introduces some of the main methods or ways of knowing and their advantages and limitations, namely:

- sense perception
- reason (inductive and deductive)
- language (issues such as ambiguity and translation)
- imagination

The second term explores the epistemological context of key academic disciplines: the Arts, Maths, the Natural Sciences, the Human Sciences and History.

Year 12 will culminate in an exhibition, where you will work independently to select and 'curate' an object (including digital 'objects') and write a short commentary addressing one of twelve questions about knowledge. This will be assessed.

In the first term of Year 13, you will reflect on how your values and identity influence your beliefs and acquisition of knowledge. In the second term of Year 13, you will explore the role of technology in the generation and acquisition of knowledge.

Introduction to Knowledge complements your academic studies, giving you a cross-curricular and metacognitive perspective and developing the higher order thinking skills, which are valued by universities.

The Core Programme

The Core Programme will be led by your Tutor in one lesson per week in both Year 12 and shorter sessions in Year 13. It is composed of a number of elements including the Introduction to Knowledge course that was described in the previous section.

The programme is focused on developing your wider skills and preparing you for life beyond school, staying safe, staying healthy, staying balanced, and providing opportunities to broaden your experiences.

Study skills

Having just successfully completed GCSEs or their equivalent, many of you may think that you know how to organise yourselves, study and revise. And I would agree, you would not be at the Stephen Perse Cambridge Sixth Form if you hadn't and, hopefully, you have enjoyed the process to some extent and certainly the sense of achievement. Studying at A Level is both more of the same and yet different and you will need to develop, refine and probably change the way that you approach academic study. Gone are the days where you've ticked off everything on your 'to do' list. This is because your 'to do' list will not just be composed of tasks set by others but tasks that you have identified as necessary or desirable. You might find this idea stressful but, in the workplace, this is normal. Your workflow just needs to be under control and your 'to do' list manageable. Developing the organisational skills to achieve this is part of the process and you'll find most people - teachers and parents included - are also juggling a wide variety of tasks!

During the Core Programme, your Tutor will help you with sessions focused on growing your skill set for Sixth Form study.

Wellbeing & PSHE

Our specialist Sixth Form Tutors work closely with you and your parents to support your progress and develop your moral views, sense of responsibility, self-reliance and awareness in relation to other people and the community. Our aim is to prepare you to meet and embrace life's challenges.

The tutor team and Head of Pastoral Care, Mrs Hammersley, are here to listen to anything that may be troubling you. Whether you are feeling stressed and anxious about managing your time and workload, apprehensive about the changes ahead, or if you have issues with your emotional wellbeing, we are here to support you.

Our PSHEE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) and wellbeing programme covers topics most relevant to post-16 pupils, and aims to give you a toolkit to deal with life during Years 12 and 13 and beyond.

We welcome speakers from outside the school and encourage debate on a wide range of issues. Students also attend workshops from a range of external organisations on drugs education, relationships and sex education, healthy eating, self-esteem and mental health, and personal safety.

As well as your Tutor, and the wider Sixth Form team, you also have free access to our in-house counsellors.

Assemblies

Assemblies will be held once a week in the Senior School Hall at 8.30am. Attendance is compulsory. The assembly programme provides an opportunity for you to think about others and reflect on the world, as well as the usual notices and information sharing.

Visiting speakers

Approximately once per half term there will be a visiting speaker who will address the whole year group. If possible these talks will be scheduled during your tutor period, but it depends on the availability of the speakers. The aim is to expose you to the range of pathways that life can take and that it is rarely straight. The speakers include alumni, parents, academics and entrepreneurs.

Our programme in 2023-24 included:

- Professor Drew Milne, poet, writer, critic, Judith E Wilson Professor of Poetics in the Faculty of English at the University of Cambridge
- Dr Jon Moore, Advent Life Sciences, Epitopea. Biotech:therapeutics and the business world.
- Dr Sally Bai, Precision Medicine Lead, AstraZeneca. A journey of a thousand miles starts beneath your feet.
- Dr Maggie Semple, Semple couture, Honorary Bencher of the Middle Temple, Founder of The Experience Corps, co-CEO of i-Cubed Group. Identity, perception and experience.
- Munish Datta, Director of Sustainability, Specsavers. Ikigai and sustainability.
- Dr Kate Kennedy, writer, cellist, broadcaster, Co-Director of the Centre for Life-writing. Telling stories, engaging audiences and raising awareness through the interaction of literature, music, social history and public engagement



Enrichment

Enrichment is a key part of our educational provision at the Sixth Form and an important part of your educational journey. The Enrichment programme provides an opportunity for you to try new things and discover new interests. Enrichment is scheduled for one lesson per week. Some of the activities are more suited to a whole-year commitment, such as the Young Enterprise group and Language options, others are for one term only and you can then choose different activities for the following terms. All will be explained at the start of the year. Activities include discussion groups, practical activities such as music, drama or science, the school magazine, Language courses and the sustainability group

Examples of activities include:

- Creative Arts
- Critical Thinking discussion group
- Controversial Art discussion group
- Film group
- Forensic Psychology
- Science project group
- Exploring the culture of Cambridge
- DELF, DELE, DAF, Japanese (JLPT) or HSK language courses
- Performing Arts
- Young Enterprise business group

PE

Fresh air and exercise are important components of a healthy lifestyle both for physical and mental wellbeing. One lesson per week of physical activity is compulsory. You will need to wear Stephen Perse PE kit which can be ordered from www.schoolblazer.com. The minimum requirement is a school branded top and plain black shorts/leggings.

There will be a range of physical activities available. As well as the usual team sports such as netball, football, hockey, cricket etc., there will be the opportunity to try new things, such as rowing, paddleboarding and climbing. For those who are less keen on team sports, fitness gym sessions are available so you can set your own goals. Other, gentler options, which will get you outdoors and into the fresh air include walking and gardening.

Academic progress

Your subject teachers will track your progress carefully throughout the Sixth Form, and will monitor especially closely during the first few weeks of Year 12; if we feel a certain subject or combination of subjects does not look to be in your best interests we will have a conversation with you around whether it might be sensible to rethink your options at this early stage.

Your teachers will monitor how you are getting on throughout your course through your contribution to lessons, homework tasks and in topic tests. Homework tasks will be marked and feedback provided about your progress and how to improve as appropriate. These are not formal assessments, it is simply how your teachers get to know you and how they know how to help you with your studies.

There will also be formal assessments in all subjects. These formal exams are usually held in January and June of Year 12. There will also be mock examinations in the spring of Year 13.

The results of these formal exams will be reported using an A Level grading system which will be explained in detail nearer the time. Your teachers will also be giving an indication of the grade they think that you are likely to achieve, given the evidence they have up to that point and in the expectation that you will continue to improve as your course progresses. These are referred to as your 'most likely grade' or MLG.

The usual pattern of reporting to parents is:

- November of Year 12 - parents' evening
- February of Year 12 - report with progress test results, MLG and subject comments
- June of Year 12 - progress exam results, updated MLG and UCAS predicted grades at parents' evening
- December of Year 13 - parents' evening
- March of Year 13 - mock examination results, updated MLG and subject comments.

Academic support

Your teachers are happy to help you with your studies both in and out of lessons, but sometimes you may feel you need a little bit of extra help. It might be that you are struggling with a particular topic or were absent and want to check that you've fully understood the catch-up material. Sometimes, it is just a case of getting stuck on a homework question and you are just looking to seek out a subject expert. These are the types of things for which academic support is designed. Academic support is a subject based drop-in. The weekly support schedule can be found in the Student Blog on your iPad. Closer to exam periods, some subjects run focused support sessions such as practicing for oral examinations.

Sometimes your teachers may ask you to attend academic support sessions regularly because they have concerns about how well you have understood some of the content or they feel that you need some extra help. In this scenario, they may well set you a task to complete beforehand to help consolidate your understanding. This can then be reviewed in the support session.

In addition to the academic support, the learning support department is available to support students with specific learning needs. The head of learning support is Mrs Bethan Uden (bdu@stephenperse.com), although Sixth Form students will generally work with Mrs Barbara Murray (bmr@stephenperse.com), who has an office just off of the Sixth Form Library.

Academic extension

In an era in which more and more students achieve very high grades at GCSE and A Level, universities are becoming increasingly interested in applicants' 'super-curricular' engagement to help them decide which students to admit - i.e. they want to know that you have the motivation to spend three or four years studying the subject you are applying for. There are various ways in which you can demonstrate academic engagement beyond your classroom lessons, for example:

- Attending talks and lectures (in person or online)
- Listening to podcasts
- Reading books and articles
- Undertaking work experience (which can be virtual)
- Attending university taster sessions
- Completing a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course)
- Undertaking additional research (which might be an EPQ)
- Entering an essay competition or Olympiad

The most important thing is to be aware that reflection is far more important than quantity. This means that you need to be able to demonstrate what you have learned from your experience, not simply accumulate a list of things you have done. If you have read one book but then gone on to question what you read, and looked for alternative viewpoints, you will have shown more engagement than someone who has read five books but has nothing critical to say about them. If you have volunteered in a local care home and reflected on your experience of end-of-life care, you will have demonstrated more engagement than someone who has done work experience at a magic circle law firm, but cannot talk about what they actually learned from it.

In the Sixth Form, we offer a wide variety of extension sessions, which enrich your classroom experience and help you to prepare a strong university application. The sessions will vary according to the subject, but will generally include a selection of the following activities:

- Discussion and debate
- Visiting speakers
- Wider reading
- Critical thinking
- Problem-solving
- Support with personal statements
- Preparation for aptitude tests
- Preparation for interviews

In addition to 'normal' A Level subjects, we also have Medical Society (MedSoc), Law Society (LawSoc), Debating, Model United Nations (MUN) and Spark Club. You are strongly encouraged to attend an enrichment session in an area which will benefit your application. You should also consider (and seek advice) about other areas which may be useful - someone applying for Law might equally benefit from attending sessions in Politics and English, as well as MUN. We can help you to create a programme of sessions which works for you.

Sixth Form Library

The Sixth Form Library is on the top floor of the West Wing in the Bateman Building. It is open to students from 8.00am until 5.30pm (5.00pm on Fridays) for silent study.

The library is staffed by two librarians who are very much a part of the Sixth Form team. Please don't hesitate to ask for help.

A message from Mayna Kfoury, the Learning Resources Coordinator at the Sixth Form Library

“I have chosen to work with Sixth Form students as it offers challenges but also opportunities for us, educators. We encourage and try to develop our students’ information skills to a high level in order to support their independent work to A Level and other paths they choose to pursue.

The technology that is available to students has undergone significant changes, such as the widespread usage of tablets and computers in classrooms, not to mention the opportunities and challenges of social media. However, this means that even more than before, there is a need for information literacy and research skills. The ability to analyse information and choose the best and most reliable sources for an assignment may be more readily available, but it hasn’t necessarily kept up with these changes. Although our students may be well-versed with new technologies, there are many other information seeking habits and skills that need to be taught.

We librarians and learning resources coordinators can help them with this. The best method to approach this challenge is to collaborate with our teaching colleagues to integrate these abilities into topic learning. We have a comprehensive range of online and on the shelves resources to help our students in their studies. It is a matter of convincing them that our assistance and knowledge can affect their grades, the same way that the knowledge and information they learn from their teachers!

We also offer here at our Sixth Form Library, adult fiction books to develop their love of reading for pleasure and to relieve some of the stress that goes with a high pressure environment.

It is always rewarding to see our Sixth Formers develop and blossom ready to move to the next stage of their lives as young adults. This is why I love the work I do.”



Your Tutor

Your Sixth Form Tutor should be both your, and your parents, first point of contact.

Your Tutor will be a key person in your journey through the Sixth Form. They will offer advice, monitor your progress academically and support you pastorally.

Your Tutor will also play a significant role in leading you through the Stephen Perse Core Programme which was described earlier in this handbook.

You will be spending time with your Tutor as part of your form group but also be meeting with them separately to discuss your individual progress. It is usual (staffing permitted), for you to be assigned the same Tutor in both Year 12 and Year 13. Your Tutor is part of the Guidance Team and will also help you with your application to university, advising you on your personal statement and drafting your academic reference.



The shape of the week

Sixth Form opening times

The Sixth Form is open from 08.00am until 5.30pm Monday to Thursday and 5.00pm on Fridays.

After 4.00pm, students are only allowed in the library unless they are attending a supervised activity.

Formal lessons begin at 9.00am and finish at 3.30pm. Between 8.30am and 9.00am, there are a variety of things going on such as assembly, House meetings, you might be acting as a mentor to a tutor group in the Senior School, or your Tutor may want to meet with you. Attendance at all these activities is compulsory even if you do not have a lesson immediately afterwards. On days when there isn't an assembly, House meeting or other pre-arranged meeting, then you do not need to be in school until your first lesson of the day.

Clubs and activities occupy the 3.30pm onwards slot. The end time for clubs and activities can vary. Details will be published in the Student Blog.

In the Sixth Form, all lessons consist of two periods and there are four lessons per day. Each lesson is one hour and fifteen minutes in length. You will receive your personal timetable at the start of term. These will show in your Google calendar, so it is important that this becomes your default calendar.

The shape of the day

8.00am	School site opens
8.30am	Assembly/House meeting/Tutor meeting
9.00am	Lesson 1 (periods 1&2)
10.15am	Break
10.35am	Lesson 2 (periods 3&4)
11.55am	Lesson 3 (periods 5&6)
1.10pm	Lunch
2.15pm	Lesson 4 (periods 7&8)
3.30pm	After-school clubs and activities
5.30pm	School site closes (5pm on Fridays)

In the first term, a typical week would include:

- 4 lessons per A Level subject
N.B. Maths with Further Maths is timetabled for 7 lessons per week and counts as two subjects
- 1 lesson with your Tutor following the core programme
- 1 lesson of EPQ/SP Research Award
- 1 lesson of PE
- 1 lesson of either Enrichment or of additional PE

After Christmas, if you continue with 4 A Level subjects then in a typical week there would be the option to continue with the same schedule as in the first term, or to swap the EPQ/SP Research Award lesson for a PE or enrichment option, or for private study time. There would not be any such changes after Christmas for those studying three A Levels.

Study periods

In most cases, study periods will have been built into your timetable to allow you to develop independent study skills and to give you the space to complete additional work outside the classroom.

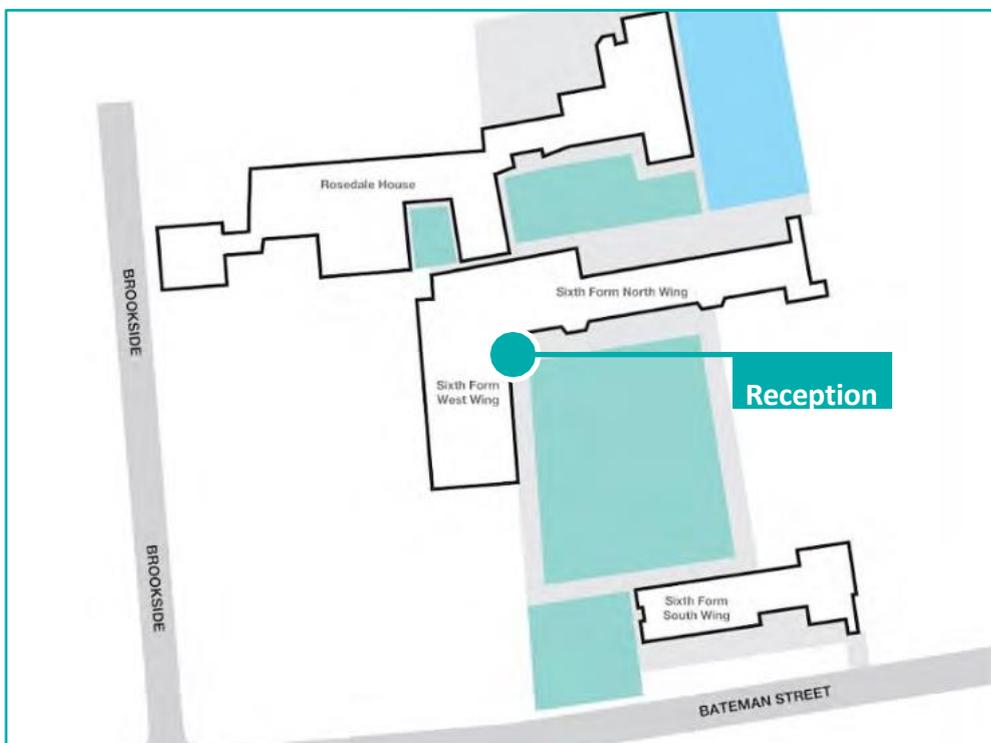
Please note that if you find yourself with an additional study period because of teacher absence, then you will be expected to complete the cover work set. You do not need to stay on site.



Practicalities

Maps

The Sixth Form has two main buildings: Bateman Street, which is made up of a north, west and south wing, and Rosedale House.



You will be given a room location map when you arrive in September.

Reception

The Sixth Form Reception is just inside the main entrance to the Sixth Form in the Bateman building and should be your go-to place if you have any questions. Kirsty Carter is the Sixth Form Office Manager (sixthform@stephenperse.com).

If you don't feel well during the day

Sixth Form Reception staff are first-aid trained so you should go to Reception in the first instance. The School Nurse is also on site at various times. The Nurse's Office is next to G3 in the Bateman building. You must not go home without first speaking to one of them.

Travel information

There are many ways in which our students travel to and from the school, ranging from walking or cycling to taking public transport such as the Park & Ride buses or train services. Further information on each mode of transport is provided below, with more detailed information found on the school website.

Cycling

Students are actively encouraged to cycle to school where possible. CamCycle (a local cycling NGO) provides excellent maps outlining cycling routes around the city, and advice on the rules as to where you can and cannot cycle in the city. Cambridgeshire County Council provides an extensive array of cycle maps for Cambridge and the surrounding areas.

There are plenty of cycle racks available at the Sixth Form. Students should have a bike that is roadworthy, regularly serviced, and insured against theft. A high visibility jacket, and a bike lock are strongly advised; a helmet and bike lights are a must.

Train

Cambridge railway station is approximately 10 minutes' walk from Stephen Perse Cambridge Sixth Form, a map is available on our [website](#). Those who travel by train are advised to walk to and from the station in groups. There are often discounts on season tickets for students travelling by train to school. Greater Anglia has a page about discounts for students aged 16-19 [here](#).

Home to School Transport (HTST) Service

The school provides a HTST service using a combination of school minibuses and an external coach supplier.

We have partnered with Kura, who manage our day-to-day operations including bookings and live journey monitoring. Please find more information regarding routes, times and costs [here](#). Queries regarding the HTST service should be directed to HTST@stephenperse.com. Please note that existing users are given priority access to upcoming bookings.

Student parking

There is no student parking available.

Car drop-offs

We are aware of the difficulties which parents face in driving through Cambridge and when driving through the streets near our Cambridge sites when dropping off/collecting children.

We ask for parents' support in keeping the roads near school as safe as possible for our children and their families. Parents are kindly reminded that the zig-zag markings are designed to advise motorists not to park directly outside school, for the safety of people arriving at and departing from the school grounds.

There are areas in proximity to the Sixth Form that parents may find helpful in dropping/collecting students, such as the laybys on Trumpington Road, with pedestrian crossings nearby for students to utilise. We encourage parents to not idle outside the school.

Lockers

Lockers are available in the courtyard at Bateman Street and near to R6 and R8 in the Rosedale House building on a first-come, first-served basis. You will need to provide your own padlock.

iPads/personal devices

In September, you will be issued with a school iPad, charger, lead and setup guide. Details about your email account have been included as part of your welcome pack. You must check this account daily; it is advisable to use it as your default account. The school uses lots of Google applications such as Google Drive and Google Classroom. Lots of the resources shared with you will only be accessible if you are signed in to your school account. You will have already signed the Sixth Form Technology Acceptable Use Policy as part of your acceptance documents; this is available on request.

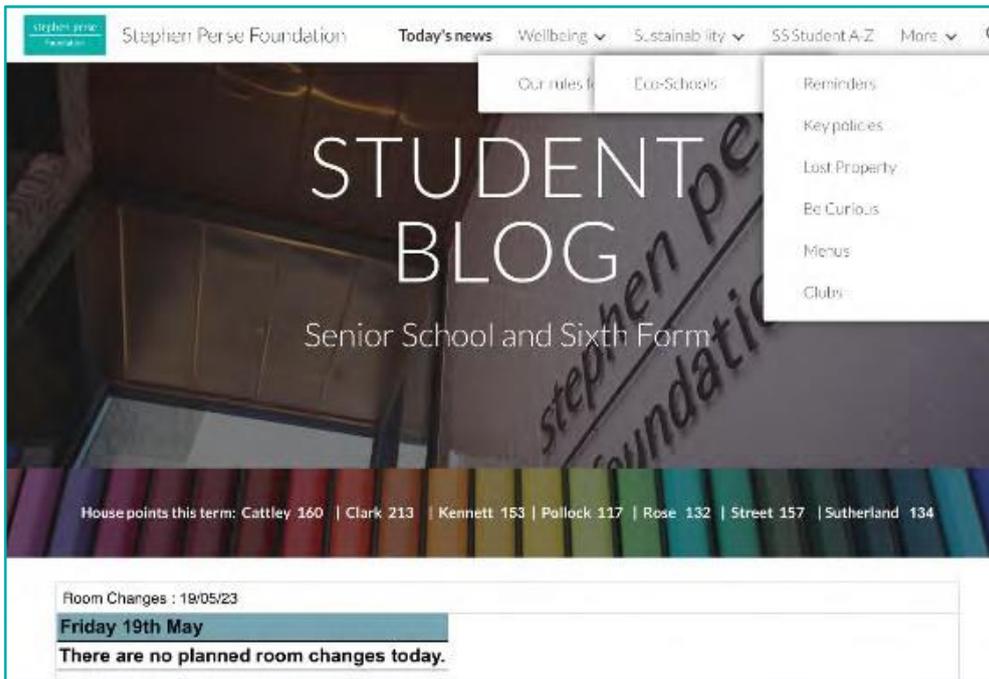
You are expected to bring your school iPad to all lessons. However, please only have these open in lessons when requested by your teachers. Please keep your iPads stored safely in school and when travelling to/from home. Our IT department will provide a written user guide when you collect your iPad. If you have any technical issues, please contact ithelpdesk@stephenperse.com

You may also bring your own devices to work from (e.g. laptops, smart phones), provided any such device is used in accordance with our Technology Acceptable Use Policy. Phones and other personal devices should not be used in lessons without the express permission of your teacher.

Whilst on the Senior School site, all mobile phones should be out of sight.



The Student Blog



The Student Blog is an app on your iPad which is updated daily with information such as room changes and general notices and reminders.

It is also where the timetables for activities such as support, university extension sessions and clubs can be found.

Notices with information about the following week are usually emailed to students on a Friday evening.

Stationery

You are required to provide your own stationery in terms of pens, pencils, files etc. However, lined and graph paper is available for student use and can be obtained from Reception. You will be provided with further information about any subject specific pre-course reading materials and any other materials you may need at the start of term.

Common Room

There are two student common rooms in Rosedale House. Both are available for use by Year 12 and Year 13 students from 8.00am - 4.00pm.

The ground floor common room has a piano, pool table, table football and Apple TV and access to an outdoor seating area.

The upstairs common room also has a pool table and is generally quieter and more suited to relaxed study and conversation. There are also PCs for student use.

Please treat the furnishings and furniture in the Sixth Form with respect. Willful damage will not be tolerated and will result in serious sanctions.

Food is not allowed in the common rooms.

Catering

Lunch and other snacks can be purchased on-site. Payments can be made by preloading your access card which will be given to you in September, via ParentMail or by using a manual reloading system that accepts cash. Please note that you will not be able to purchase items if you do not have any money on your access card. Please make sure that you have sufficient credit by asking your parents to top up the card or topping it up yourself using cash at the machine in the cafe. Lunch on the first day of term is free for Year 12 students.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included in boarding fees and the relevant credit will be added to the student access card so that you can eat at the Sixth Form teaching site during the day and in the boarding house in the evening.

There are two dining spaces to choose from in the Sixth Form. The Café in the South Wing of Bateman building offers a breakfast and break-time service. At lunchtime it offers sandwiches, sushi boxes, paninis, soup and snacks. The dining room in Rosedale House is open at lunchtime and offers a variety of hot meals and salads. There are always vegetarian meals available and the food is freshly prepared on site. Please ensure you tidy up after yourself and keep the premises litter free. Menus are advertised in the Student Blog.

There is a hot drinks machine available all day in the Bateman Café. Please bring a small reusable cup with you for this. There is a microwave in Rosedale House along with a boiling water tap.

If you are required to attend any evening events at the school (e.g. Open Evening), food will be provided.

The school operates a strict no nuts policy. This is to ensure the safety of all students, staff and visitors. If bringing food onto the site, please ensure that it does not contain nuts - if you are not sure of the ingredients, do not bring the food on site. Food deliveries/takeaways are not permitted.

All food must be consumed in the café, dining room or outside seating areas. Food and drink is not allowed in the classrooms, common rooms or library (apart from water in a spill-proof bottle).

Alcohol is not permitted at any time. Smoking, including e-cigarettes and vapes, is also not permitted at any time while on the premises, in the vicinity, or while students are under our care. Chewing gum is not allowed on site.



Extracurricular and supercurricular activities

Taking part in additional activities is encouraged for multiple reasons. First and foremost, it should be fun. Choose activities that you enjoy or about which you are curious to know more. You should not choose activities just because you think they will help your university application or look good on your CV. Employers and universities will be looking for genuine interests and enthusiasm for what you do. They will not be impressed by a long tick list. It is always better to be fully engaged in a single activity than to superficially take part in multiple activities. There are a whole range of opportunities available to you both in and outside of school. Cambridge is a busy and vibrant city - seek and you will find something that suits you.

Below is a taste of just some of the opportunities available in school.

Music

Stephen Perse Cambridge is pleased to be able to offer tuition on a wide range of musical instruments and singing. These lessons are delivered by an extremely experienced team of over twenty five self-employed visiting music teachers who work closely with our Music Department under the leadership of Mr Rudd, Director of Music. Information and a link to the booking form were included in your welcome letter.

Speech and drama

Speech and drama lessons are available for those students wishing to work towards LAMDA qualifications. Students have the opportunity to prepare for exams in a variety of different performance disciplines including acting, verse and prose and public speaking. Lessons are generally taught in small groups; individual lessons may also be available. Lessons are provided by self-employed private teachers and are subject to a separate contract between the parents and the peripatetic teacher.

Clubs & societies

We encourage all students to take part in extracurricular clubs and societies. Many of these are student-led and generally take place at lunchtime or after school. Recent examples include QSoc and Christian Union. If you have an idea for a new club or society, or wish to run your own one, please contact Mrs Hammersley and she will help to facilitate this.

Trips

There are usually a wide range of trips throughout the year. The details of those currently planned will be sent separately as part of the induction information pack. Some trips such as the Geography visit to Cranedale or the Classics trip to Greece are subject-specific because they relate to coursework. Others are open to all.

Visiting speakers

As well as the visiting speaker programme that runs as part of the Core Programme, visiting speakers are often arranged by departments or by subject societies. These will be advertised within lessons and in the Student Blog.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Stephen Perse Cambridge is an active centre for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award with all three levels being offered across the Senior School and Sixth Form. In Year 12, students are introduced to the Gold level, which they can take part in as a continuation of their involvement at Bronze and Silver levels or as a direct entrant having not done either of the other two levels.

The Award consists of five sections:

- Volunteering – students are required to do 12 months of activity that is of benefit to society or their community; this can involve work with a charity or coaching of younger students.
- Skill – students develop a new talent, be it artistic and creative or something relating to their courses of study.
- Physical – students partake in individual or team sporting activity on a regular basis and set goals for their development.
- Expedition – students undergo a five-day expedition in wild country following a period of training and a practice with our external provider, The Adventure Element; this usually takes place in the Lake District during the summer.
- Residential – students must choose and attend a five-day residential course where they live and interact with other students to a common purpose.

Registration usually takes place early in the autumn term and further details will be sent out at that time. If students are already 16 they can usually start their activities before they join the Sixth Form and back date the time they have done. On completion they will be invited to St James' Palace in London to receive their Award. If you have any questions on DofE, please contact our Head of Outdoor Education, Mr McAlinden (rmc@stephenperse.com).

Leadership and mentoring

Part of your educational journey is developing leadership and management skills. There are many ways you can do this at the Sixth Form - for example, running a club, joining the Student Leadership Team, becoming a Head of House, or helping organise whole school events. Good leadership skills will serve you well as you progress to the world of work and can be used for the greater good of society. Now is the opportune moment to start developing these skills. As Sixth Form students, you will be important role models to younger students. If you would like the opportunity to be part of their educational experience and make a positive difference, there will be ample opportunity to do so through our Sixth Form mentoring schemes and outreach programmes.

Essays and competitions

There are many ways you can enhance your learning - for example, through essay writing competitions, online courses and debating competitions. Our teachers and the Guidance Team regularly post details of wider educational opportunities, including workshops, lectures and seminars. In addition, we run a Prize for Argument competition each spring. This involves a written paper in which you can demonstrate your critical thinking. The top students are then invited to defend their views during a viva voce.

Careers & Guidance

Our careers and university guidance is extensive and we excel in helping you reach the next stage of your academic journey, whatever that should be.

We understand that some of you will have a clear idea of what you want to do with your A Levels, some of you will have no idea (and that's fine) and some think they know but will change their mind! That is why we provide ample advice, numerous opportunities, and a range of avenues to help you seek advice whilst encouraging you to keep your options open.

In addition to tutors, we have three members of the guidance team who specialise in key areas:

- **Dr Curry, Head of Guidance and Careers:** Dr Curry is the Stephen Perse Cambridge Sixth Form's UCAS lead, a qualified careers leader who oversees all Guidance events and further education applications in the Sixth Form. In addition, Dr Curry currently supports MedSoc (applications for Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, and Allied Health Professionals).
- **Mr Rudd, Head of Competitive University Applications including Oxbridge:** In addition to advising students on Oxbridge applications, Mr Rudd coordinates aptitude/entrance test applications and is Director of Music.
- **Dr Woodward, Head of International Applications:** Dr Woodward specialises in applications to all non-UK universities; students can apply to these alongside their UCAS applications. Dr Woodward also supports students wishing to apply after taking a gap year.

Although university, degree apprenticeship, foundation course or other applications are not required to be submitted until the beginning of Year 13, the time in Year 12 is critical for all the preparation work needed so that you are completely ready in plenty of time. This includes conducting research on university and other courses through Unifrog, building up the skills needed for personal statement writing and interviews, writing your personal statement, discussing material for your reference and much more. We have a range of Guidance events to both support and inspire you; this includes visiting speakers and university representatives, workshops and lunchtime and after school activities. All of these are advertised on a specific Guidance Google Classroom alongside essay competitions, scholarships, local opportunities, work experience etc. Leaving things to the summer holidays is too late so we encourage you to jump in and explore some of the options advertised. We simply ask that you stick to deadlines to ensure you have the best application. The Guidance office is located in Rosedale House and students are always welcome to pop by.

Full details of the Careers and Guidance programme are published in the separate University Handbook which will be shared in the Autumn Term.

A broad outline of the key features of the Careers and Guidance programme are included here.

Work experience

Running from January in Year 12 to January to Year 13, this programme combines a combination of virtual and in-person work experience resources. Time is given to conduct research, prepare for placements and reflect on experiences. The work experience itself occurs outside the normal school teaching timetable. Our ongoing support from alumni, local businesses and the University of Cambridge means there is a large variety of virtual and in-person opportunities.

Annual Careers and Guidance Day

This annual event is usually hosted in May of Year 12. It is timed to coincide with emerging university interests, the opening of the new UCAS cycle and with university open days. It is composed of a combination of university presentations, a careers fair with local companies and organisations, plus subject-specific breakout sessions with alumni. Its exact format for next year will be confirmed nearer the time.

University application support

This is provided at a number of levels designed to support both pastoral and academic needs. Your Tutor will be your key contact during Year 12 in the initial stages of your decision-making. Your Tutor will also be the person responsible for drafting your reference. In the summer of Year 12, you will be assigned a UCAS advisor who is a specifically trained member of the Guidance team. They will be checking your application and discussing its final stages with you.

There will be subject-based workshops on personal statement writing and how to incorporate reflection on work experience and on your super- and extracurricular activities into your applications.

Support and practice for aptitude tests is provided in extension sessions.



School Houses

Houses

All students, on joining the school, are attached to one of seven Houses, each of which is named after a distinguished former Headmistress or Governor, and each of which has its own colour.

These are:

- Cattley – Royal Blue
- Clark – Yellow
- Kennett – Red
- Pollock – White
- Rose – Green
- Street – Light Blue
- Sutherland – Orange

There are regular House meetings and inter-House events throughout the year which include quizzes, sports and music events and talent competitions. House Points can be awarded for demonstrating the values the school holds dear, such as kindness, collaboration, academic or extracurricular excellence, leadership, and endeavour.

Each House picks a charity that they will fundraise for the year and will try and raise as much money as possible through different fundraising events.

In the Spring Term of Year 12, there is the opportunity to put yourself forward for the voting to become Head of your House. This is a significant responsibility where you will have the opportunity to use and develop your leadership skills in leading your House through organising events and leading House meetings along with your deputy. You will work closely with the other Heads of Houses to come up with new ideas and initiatives that will be implemented throughout the school.



Rules and Expectations

Site access & registration

To gain access to our buildings, you will need to use your access card.

The student access card system (Inventry) also acts as our register for evacuation purposes in the case of emergency. New students will be provided with an access card during September induction.

The access card must be swiped in and out when you arrive in the morning and depart at the end of the day. You must also swipe in and out every time you enter or exit the premises during the day. Similarly, you must swipe in and swipe out when visiting the Senior School or other Stephen Perse premises. You do not need to swipe in and out when moving between the Bateman and Rosedale buildings. It is important that you wear your school lanyard at all times.

If, for any reason, you are unable to swipe in/out on a given day, please do so manually via the touch screens available at both Rosedale House and the Bateman Building. If you lose your lanyard, you should report this to a member of staff immediately.

Attendance and punctuality

Attendance at all lessons, assemblies, enrichment and other scheduled activities including scheduled study periods is compulsory. You are expected to arrive on time and correctly prepared. It is considered disrespectful to arrive late. Repeated poor punctuality will result in a sanction such as an after-school detention. This is generally after three occurrences. Missing a scheduled lesson or assembly without prior authorisation will result in an automatic detention.

Being punctual is not always that easy first thing in the morning as Cambridge traffic can be very busy. Similarly, public transport can be unreliable. It is important therefore to be prepared for the worst and allow plenty of time for your journey.

If you have a study period at the very start or end of the day, then provided you do not have any other commitments as outlined above, you may choose to arrive a little later in the morning (in time for your first lesson or other commitment) and/or go home early (after your final lesson or other commitment).

You are also permitted to leave the site during the day, including at break and lunchtimes, if you do not have any other commitments. However, it is essential that you sign in and out whenever you leave/enter the premises.

Visitors

Visitors are not permitted on-site without the prior written approval of a member of staff. All visitors must sign in at reception in the Bateman building. Social visitors are not permitted on the premises at any time.

Planned absence

Requests for authorised absence must be made by your parents. They should email the Sixth Form Office (sixthform@stephenperse.com). This includes for medical and dental appointments, open days, interviews and the like. Boarders must also seek permission from the Head of Boarding.

Which absences are likely to be unauthorised?

- Family holidays: Given that term dates are published over a year in advance (available on our [website](#)), absence for any period of time for a family holiday will not be categorised as 'authorised', even where there is an educational aspect of the holiday.
- Absence due to travel issues such as a lack of availability or the cost of flights.
- Birthday celebrations: these will not usually constitute authorised absence, even in the case of the birthday of an elderly relative. We ask that alternative arrangements are made for such celebrations to ensure you can come to school.

The following family events are considered exceptional and are therefore normally authorised:

- Wedding day of immediate family members (e.g. parent, sibling). Any preparatory day will not count as a part of this, except where it is necessary to travel to the venue (up to a maximum of one day either side of the wedding day).
- Graduation ceremony of immediate family member - as per weddings.
- Funeral of immediate or close family member or close friend. We recognise the importance of supporting students and their families at such times. Periods of absence will therefore be authorised and students will also be offered pastoral support upon their return to school.

Other authorised circumstances

Absences to allow participation in activities that fall into these categories are likely to be approved if they meet the following criteria:

- Sport: International, national or significant regional sporting competitions, up to five days in any academic year.
- Drama: Rehearsals and performances for drama performances in national or significant regional productions, and where there is a clear plan to mitigate against the work that is missed. This will normally be limited to one production per year and not during an external exam year.
- Music: It is understood that, once musicians reach a certain calibre, the demands on practice time can be extremely significant. Where this is anticipated, we would request that a meeting be arranged at the beginning of the academic year with the Head of Sixth Form to arrange a plan that will allow for both musical and academic demands to be met. In other circumstances, permission will be granted for: international, national or significant regional performances, up to five days in any academic year.
- Educational opportunities: There may occasionally arise educational opportunities that present an opportunity for personal growth that is significant and only available if school time is missed. These will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and can be approved if they are in the best interests of the student, genuinely educational in nature and unavailable outside of school hours (i.e. missing school is a requirement not a convenience).

Ill health/unplanned absence

For ill health or any other unplanned absences, parents/guardians must contact the school at the start of every day of absence, either by emailing sixthform@stephenperse.com or telephoning the school office on 01223 454700 (select option 'one').

For boarders, you should inform the house staff at the morning welfare check.

If you become unwell during the day, please seek assistance at Sixth Form reception.

Parents/guardians will be contacted before you are allowed to return home. For boarders, house staff will be contacted.

Further information can be found in our Ill Health policy.

Prescribed medication

Medical conditions should have been declared as part of the registration documents completed when joining the school. Parents need to inform us as soon as possible of any changes or additions to this information. This includes details of any prescribed medications that you are taking.

If you have been prescribed an epipen, inhaler or emergency medication then you should carry these with you at all times. Please ensure that an up-to-date spare is given to reception. Over-the-counter remedies, such as paracetamol and ibuprofen, are available from the Sixth Form reception. Please check our medicines policy if you need to take prescribed medication during the school day.

Dress code

The Sixth Form operates a no uniform policy. However, you are expected to dress in an appropriate style for a place of study and appropriate to the work or activity that you are doing, be that in a laboratory, in a classroom, or on a visit. The phrase 'smart but informal' should be a guiding principle. Dress for a workplace not for a beach. If you are unsure about a matter of the dress code, please talk to a senior member of staff. No item of dress should be offensive or provocative.

You will be required to wear a sports kit for some PE options. Stephen Perse PE kit is available from schoolblazer.com

Code of conduct

You will be provided with a copy of the Sixth Form Code of Conduct as part of your induction.



Tips from former students

Work (Google Classroom, homework)

- Teachers will use Google Classroom to set homework and share material - it's a good idea to make sure the notifications are turned on on your iPad so you don't miss anything.
- Make sure you get organised early (i.e. folders) so you can get into a routine.
- Make sure you understand the topic while you're studying it - you move on quickly so it's good to stay on top of it from the start.

Time management

The lessons for A Level subjects get split into two (or more) sides of the course, almost always taught by different teachers - they will each give around two hours of work a week, which should include any extra reading you do around the subject.

University applications

- Your Tutor will be the person who organises your reference, so engage in form time to make sure they really know you.
- If you read an interesting book or article, or attend a lecture on a subject you enjoy, make some notes on it! These can be useful to refresh your memory before interviews and can also be invaluable when writing your personal statement. Try and fit this stuff in earlier on so you don't have to cram textbooks before the personal statement deadline.
- Go check out some universities you like the look of in Year 12 so you have an idea of where you want to go. If you look on websites you'll be able to find the dates of the open days.
- Don't be worried if you don't immediately know what you want to study at uni or do in the future — you have ages to decide and it's okay to change your mind!



Daily life

- If you want to find out what's for lunch, check the Student Blog via the iPad app.
- You can top up your lunch card through the ParentMail system, or through the on-site machine.
- Remember to sign in and out whenever you leave the Sixth Form, even if you are going to the Senior School.
- Check the weekly notices and your email carefully and regularly.

Support and help - reception, tutors, counsellor, work

How do I get support with my school work if I need it?

Normally there are several support sessions in a week for each subject, so don't worry about it clashing with another commitment. Some support sessions focus on specific topics each week and some are organised for you to take your own questions along.

What if I have a non-work problem? Like organising a club, finding the bus timetable?

The reception staff in the Sixth Form are normally your first port of call. Often if they can't help, they'll direct you to the most appropriate person to contact.

What if I have a personal problem that I'd like help with?

There are two school counsellors, Ash and Andy. As cringeworthy as it sounds, they really are there for every problem, big or small. There are both drop-in sessions and appointments for regular sessions.

The Senior Leadership Team is also there to help out, especially if there's something going on that you want them to know about that might perhaps explain why you're not working at your best.



Stephen Perse

Cambridge

