

Bishop Wordsworth's School

Sixth Form Handbook 2026



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Welcome to the Sixth Form! This handbook is designed to help guide you to life in BWS Sixth Form. The short time you are with us will pass quickly, and hopefully this will help you get the most out of the time. You can also ask the Sixth Form Team any questions you may have.

Section 1: General School Life

The School Day (Timings, facilities, getting to school)

Attendance & reporting absences

The House System

What to wear

Financial support

Facilities

Section 2: Studying at BWS

The study rooms and supervised / independent study

Academic monitoring

Access arrangements and other academic support

Section 3: Support and guidance

Tutor time and mentoring

Pastoral care and support

Careers guidance

Section 4: Extra & cocurricular activities

The prefect system

Volunteering

Societies, clubs and other enrichment activities

The School Council and Student Voice

Section 5: Rewards and Sanctions

Section 6: Useful information – Teams, Bromcom and more...

1. Every student is assigned to tutor group and a house.

All Sixth Form students are assigned a tutor and placed in one of our five houses. Your tutor will be a key point of support throughout your time here, meeting with you during tutor time each morning in Year 12 and on one morning per week in Year 13. The house system helps build community and offers opportunities for involvement, leadership, and friendly competition across a range of events.

2. Lots of information is put on Teams

Please check the Sixth Form Teams channels daily – there are two key channels, Essential Information (an absolute must read with key information about where you should be and when) and Sixth Form Announcements (less vital but still useful information and opportunities). Your homework will be set on Teams and it's a vital way of communicating with your teachers. The calendar is also very useful for reminders e.g. for setting mentor meetings. We recommend you download the app on your phone and if you have any problems using Teams, please ask your Head of Year or anyone in the sixth form office.

3. The Prefect System and volunteering

BWS has a thriving prefect system (which you can apply to join in the spring term of Year 12). The most senior prefects are known as our “Top 8” - the Head Boy and Head Girl, deputy heads, cathedral prefects and charity prefects. There are another 20 senior prefects (who wear a silver tie) and a very wide range of other prefect roles. Prefects, or teachers, may approach you about volunteering to help out. BWS is very much an interactive school community, and we expect our students to take an active role in school life, such as giving tours to prospective students, helping younger years, setting up or running clubs etc. If you are interested in any aspect of this, please speak to a member of the Sixth Form Team or the Prefect Team.

4. The Sixth Form Team

The Sixth Form team can usually be found in the Sixth Form Office (SFO) and consist of the following members of staff (with their initials should you need to contact them on Teams or by email):

- Head of Sixth Form, Mr Rogers (JPR)
- Head of Year 12, Mrs Doran (AJD)
- Head of Year 13 Mrs F Jones (FEJ)
- Sixth Form Support Officer (attendance, work experience and pastoral) Mrs Maisey (KEM)
- Sixth Form Support Officer (pastoral and attendance) Mrs T Jackson (TMJ)
- Careers Adviser, Mrs Armstrong (SAA)

Any of the team can be found in the office, or reached by email or Teams message (usual business hours apply unless very urgent). In addition, Dr Wood (SMW) our Chaplain, and Mrs Paden (SMP), our SENDCo, aren't directly part of the SF team but are also available for support as needed.

5. Other BWS Staff

Beyond your tutor and subject teachers, you'll be supported by a wide range of staff across the school, including our IT Manager, the School Leadership Team, the Reception team, Dining Hall staff, and of course, Mr Baxter, our Headmaster. There are too many to list, but each plays a part in making BWS a vibrant and supportive community. Make the most of it!

We wish you every success on the next stage of your academic career and look forward to celebrating your achievements attained through shared commitment and perseverance.

Section 1: General School Life at BWS

The general school day starts at 8.55am and finishes at 3.50pm. Sixth Form students can have a degree of flexibility built into their school day – you can choose to study at home or elsewhere when not required in school, but this is a privilege and must be used appropriately.

Full details of the school day can be found here: [The School Day](#)

The School Day

- The school day starts at 8.55am and you will have tutor time or assembly each morning.
- School finishes at 3.50pm. If you have an independent study period during the day you can choose to study at home or off the school site.
- Sixth form assembly days are usually Tuesdays at 9.00am in the Sports Hall. Cathedral services and other assemblies are posted in the School Calendar (found online) and in the SF Teams channel in the “What’s on this week” message.
- Other events on your timetable include: Wednesday afternoon games and Supervised study (on your timetable as SPS – four periods, one for each subject you are taking).

Attendance & reporting an absence

- Students are required to attend all tutor times, lessons, supervised studies, games / enrichment sessions, Cathedral services and Headmasters lectures, relevant assemblies and meetings. Please check the SF essential information Teams Channel regularly to make sure you are aware of any additional commitments.
- We expect above 90% attendance from all our students. If for any reason you are unable to attend school, your parents/guardians must report your absence by email at sixthform.absences@bws-school.org.uk
- Your parents/ guardians can also report absences in advance, so if you know you have a doctor’s appointment, or a university visit or other important reason for not attending school, please ask them to contact us as soon as possible on the email above.
- For any university visits, or other educational trips, please seek permission from your teachers and the sixth form office.
- If you are absent without prior notification from a parent or guardian, our attendance officers will contact home to confirm your whereabouts. This is a vital part of our safeguarding procedures as it's important that we know you're safe.
- Sixth Form is a short and intensive period- just over 20 months- and A-Level courses move quickly. Every lesson matters. Therefore, we are strict about non-attendance, as it directly affects your academic progress.
- Absences for appointments that can be scheduled outside school hours (e.g. driving lessons) are not permitted.
- Paid employment during school hours is not allowed.
- Holidays during term time cannot be authorised, except in exceptional circumstances and in line with Department for Education guidelines.
 - Urgent requests should be sent to Mr Rogers (Head of Sixth Form)
- If you're experiencing difficulties with attendance, please speak to us, we're here to support you.

Getting to school - Parking and Road Safety

Unfortunately, there are no parking facilities for students at BWS. We encourage the use of public transport or bicycles, but if you choose to drive, please park off site, safely, and do not park at Britford Lane, The Friary, or adjoining roads.

There are bike shelters on site, and you can leave your bike overnight if you wish. You will need to provide your own padlock and remove your bike from site at the end of term. For safety, please do not cycle on the school site.

The House System

You will be assigned to one of five BWS houses when you join BWS - Jewell, Martival, Osmund, Poore and Ward (named after former Bishops at Salisbury Cathedral). The House system is an important part of the wider school community and involves meetings, competitions etc. More information can be found via your House Captains, who are part of the senior prefect team. Each house has a house board where updates and points totals are posted.

House points are usually allocated by teachers or other members of staff for excellent behaviour, volunteering, outstanding work or effort etc. Students can also earn points by taking part in competitions and challenges.

What to wear – the Sixth Form Dress Code

As a member of Sixth Form, you are a role model to the rest of the school. We expect very high standards of appearance and behaviour at all times when representing the school, either in school or outside of school as a recognisable member of BWS. The full dress code is available on the Sixth Form Essential Information Teams channel and on the website here: [Sixth Form Dress Code](#).

In summary though, we promote a smart, business-like appearance, and suit jackets must be worn at all times around the school site. Boys must wear a suit (matching dark suit jacket and trousers) or a formal jacket / blazer and tailored trousers; a shirt with a standard collar for a tie; a Sixth form or other BWS tie; smart polished shoes (not trainers or canvas shoes!).

Girls must wear a suit (matching jacket and skirt, dress or trousers) or a formal jacket / blazer and tailored trousers, skirt or dress; a shirt or top that is sleeved and covers the shoulders; a BWS tie can be worn if appropriate but can be replaced with a BWS badge on the lapel; smart polished shoes (not trainers, or canvas shoes). Skirts must be of a respectable length (knee length or below), heels should be low and tights should be plain, neutral coloured or dark and not laddered.

Games kit is ONLY allowed on Wednesdays – it may be worn all day on Wednesday but at no other time unless actively participating in sport organised by BWS. Students can use the changing rooms to change before training activities or using the gym. All games kit must be navy or white except for leggings (which may be black). Kit does not need to be BWS branded, but must be in school colours correctly fitting and not have an oversized logo. If you are wearing shorts or a skirt for games, please wear tracksuit bottoms or leggings for lessons.

Financial support

We offer the 16-19 bursary to support students financially, as well as other possible bursaries or

scholarships. If you feel that you may struggle financially with the costs associated with full-time study for example books, uniform, travel expenses, you may be eligible for a bursary.

Please feel free to come and talk confidentially to a member of the Sixth Form team or further information can be found here: [Financial Assistance](#)

Facilities for all:

BWS provides several all-gender and accessible toilets for student use. These are located:

- On the ground floor of No.11
- At the front downstairs area of the Sports Hall
- In E Block
- Upstairs in the Sixth Form Block

If you have any questions or specific requirements, please speak to Mrs Maisey or Mrs Jackson in the Sixth Form Office

We offer prayer facilities for a variety of religions. Please talk to Mrs Miles in no. 11 about any specific requirements.

Section 2: Studying at BWS

Study periods:

Sixth form study areas

- Sixth formers have access to a number of areas where they can study
 - Three study rooms – the Independent study room (ISR), where you can study in a more relaxed way, and in small groups; the Smallwood Study Room (SSR) for Year 12s and the Golding Study Room (GSR) for Year 13s. The latter two rooms are silent and usually supervised by teachers during lesson times. They can be used outside of lesson times as long as you respect others trying to study.
 - The school library. Found in chapel block, this has computers and is open to Sixth Formers during lesson times but please note, not during supervised study.
 - IT rooms – these are available for use, if not booked for lessons, or if there is space during a lesson. Please be respectful at all times, and food and drink is not allowed in the IT rooms.
 - Common room – this is open at breaktime and lunchtime for you to relax.
- On your timetable you have two different types of study period: supervised study and independent study (also known as frees):
 - Independent study periods allow students to study in a location of their choosing. This means you can study at home; in town; on the no. 11 lawn or outside the cathedral if the weather is nice. You can also study in any of the study rooms available to sixth formers or the library. Independent study periods are a privilege and may be withdrawn and replaced with supervised study if deemed appropriate.
 - Supervised study is registered in the study room and you need to attend at the correct time and place. You have one supervised study period allocated for every subject you are studying, and teachers will direct the work you do there. **You must attend your supervised studies at the correct time and in the correct room (as timetabled) and may not leave to study elsewhere.** Exceptions to this, such as careers meetings or peripatetic musical lessons should have permission from a member of the sixth form team.
 - As you have one hour allocated per subject for supervised study, art and music students can choose one of their study sessions each week to spend in the art room or music department. This will be marked on the register for their term. Please let the sixth form office know which one you would like to be marked out for.
 - You can bring your own device to use in supervised study, and may use headphones as long as the noise is not audible to others. As we are unable to provide lockers, if you need somewhere secure to store your device when not in use, please bring it to the sixth form office.

- o To achieve strong results, it's important to use all study time productively. If you're struggling with time management, procrastination, or want to improve your study techniques, speak to your tutor, Mrs Jackson, or your Head of Year, we're here to support you.

Research shows that high-achieving students often treat their studies like a full-time job—committing around 38 hours a week. However, they structure their time in a way that suits their lifestyle. This might mean taking breaks during the school day to join activities or Wednesday afternoon enrichment, and then making up study time in the evenings or at weekends. Not all of your 38 hours will be filled by lessons and work set by your teacher. You will also need to complete independent study – taking the time to work on areas of the curriculum where you feel less confident, revising and practicing past papers.

It's essential that all deadlines set by your teachers are met. Late work may not be marked, which means missing out on important feedback—and late coursework cannot be submitted to the exam board.

Academic monitoring

You and your parents will receive regular reports from school and a lot of information, as well as copies of reports etc. can be found on My Child At School (MCAS) - a downloadable app that links to the Bromcom management information system we use.

There is one parents evening a year, and an additional "By Invitation" evening which is offered to help support students of concern. Dates for all of these are in the school calendar which can be found on the BWS website.

Additional meetings with your tutor, subject teacher and / or Sixth Form staff may be set up to offer support where appropriate.

Other useful information

- **If you are entitled to access arrangements for your exams (e.g. extra time) or feel you may be entitled to this, please speak to Mrs Paden, SENDCo (located in the Chapel Block).** If you had these arrangements in Year 11, we need to reapply for these in order for the arrangements to continue.
- If you want to change an A-Level course, please speak to your Head of Year. We offer changes of subject in the first and third week of September only, with all changes to be complete by 30th September.
- If you are in any doubt about your choice of courses and need further advice, please make an appointment with Mrs Armstrong, our Careers Lead.

Section 3: Co-curricular & Extracurricular at BWS

Tutor time takes place in the registration slot. These sessions will start off with team building activities but will go on to cover many topics such as PSHE, study skills, team building, social responsibility, ICT literacy, AI misuse and many others. Towards the end of Year 12 we will focus more on your future destinations, including an introduction to UCAS, writing personal statements and more.

On Wednesday afternoons, students will be able to select options for games and enrichment. You'll be required to attend selected sessions on a rotating basis. Games will include activities such as rugby (boys and girls), netball, basketball and using the school gym. Full details will be given to you on joining BWS Sixth Form and further information can be requested from the PE Department. Enrichment sessions will include a range of valuable content such as charity talks, Safe Drive presentations, Headmaster's Lectures, and important PSHE topics including sex education, consent, and health, as well as other interesting options such as cookery, critical thinking, debate and games. Some students choose to volunteer in the community on Wednesday afternoons instead.

Volunteering – There are a number of different opportunities for volunteering at BWS, either within or outside of school. More information will be made available on the Teams channel, but this includes

hospital volunteering, working with primary school children, volunteering at the vaccine clinic, reading to the visually impaired, mentoring younger BWS students, volunteering at the Cathedral and more.

Sports, music and drama – there are a wide range of extracurricular activities in these areas. Please speak to the departments concerned, the subject prefects or keep an eye on the SF Teams channel for opportunities. We also offer the Duke of Edinburgh Award and Ten Tors.

Debating & public speaking – our debating and public speaking Teams are very active, and practice and competition debates are organised by the relevant societies under the supervision of Mrs Goldsack and Mrs White.

Other societies and clubs – We have such a wide range of societies and clubs available at BWS, that we have two Senior Prefects to organise them all. More information will be given out at the start of term, and if we don't have a club you want to join, please feel free to set it up!

The School Council- There is an active whole school council, a forum for debate and action, that is led by the Sixth Form council. If you want to get involved in changing the school for the better, this is the place to do it!

Section 4: Support and Guidance

Your tutors have been mentioned above, and are a key area of support for you, but we have a number of other ways of getting any help or support you need, or finding someone to talk to.

Pastoral care:

There are plenty of people in school who are here to support you, whether you're facing a challenge or just need a friendly chat.

- **Mrs Jackson and Mrs Maisey – Pastoral Officers for Sixth Form**
You'll find them in the Sixth Form office, or you can book an appointment via Teams.
- **Dr Revd. Wood – School Chaplain**
Her office is near the Year 13 study room, complete with a comfy chair and (usually) biscuits. She's always happy to listen.
- **School Nurse**
Check Teams notices for her availability for health concerns and wellbeing support.
- **Sixth Form Team & Senior Prefects**
Whether it's advice, encouragement, or just someone to talk to, they're always happy to help however they can.

Exams access arrangements and other information:

Mrs Chorlton (AXC) is the school exams officer and is situated in the Chapel Block. Mrs Paden is the school SENDCo and oversees access arrangements. Please talk to your mentor or your Head of Year for further information about any of these.

Subject, university and careers guidance - Mrs Armstrong provides expert impartial advice and guidance to students throughout Years 12 and 13. Her support includes lessons and timetabled activities designed to help you make informed decisions about your future, whether you're considering university, apprenticeships, or other career paths. Students can also request individual appointments to discuss their plans and explore opportunities in more depth. A dedicated Teams channel is available, offering a wide range of resources and updates to support your journey. For further information, please visit the channel or contact Mrs Armstrong directly: [Careers](#)

Section 5: Rewards and Sanctions

Celebrating success - We really appreciate the brilliance of our students at BWS and try to show this in a number of ways. You may receive house points from your teachers, be awarded a Silver Cross Tie for community service, School colours for sporting achievement, apply to become a prefect or a senior prefect, or even win a prize at Prize Giving. For more information about any of these opportunities, please speak to your Tutor or our current Prefect Team.

While it is fortunately rare that sanctions are necessary in the Sixth Form, students are expected to uphold the standards and expectations of the school. If rules are broken, for example, through truancy, incorrect uniform, or inappropriate behaviour, a suitable sanction will be applied at the discretion of the Tutor, Head of Year or Head of Sixth Form. Sanctions may include behaviour points, being on report with the Sixth Form Office, detentions (during or outside school hours), loss of privileges such as free study periods, or in more serious cases, suspension or permanent exclusion. Full details of our behaviour policy can be found here: [Behaviour Policy](#)

Your subject teachers can also set sanctions as appropriate for late or missing work, or misbehaviour in class.

Section 6: Communicating via Teams and other useful information

All useful information can be found on our school website (www.bishopwordsworths.org.uk - the [calendar](#) is particularly worth noting) or on Teams. We use Teams a lot to communicate and recommend you download it to your phone. We post all important information, and your teachers will set homework on Teams.

We also use a management information system called Bromcom and you can access your timetable, attendance, positive and negative points, and lots of other information on Bromcom.

Some of the Teams Channels you will come across include:

- Sixth Form New Year 12s – This channel will only stay operational until October, to keep essential information for new starters in one place.
- Sixth Form Essential Information – this channel is used as an important notice board. Key documents such as this handbook, the learning agreement, tutor information etc. are put there, as well as a “What’s on this week” thread which provides a guide to key events that week. Please check this every couple of days or when you get a notification (if you have these switched on).
- Sixth Form Announcements – this is a great channel for useful information that isn’t quite as essential as the one above. Keep an eye on it, we often post information about talks, lost property, opportunities for volunteering and other things there. It has a sub channel called “enrichment opportunities” and this is usually jam packed with extracurricular or super-curricular opportunities such as essay competitions, free online lectures and more.

You are welcome to message your teachers and other staff through the Teams chat function, but please don’t expect an immediate response out of office hours, and it goes without saying (but I’ll say it anyway!), please address your teachers in a semi formal, polite fashion. “Dear Mrs So-and-so, please could you.... thank you very much” goes a long way to get you what you want!

IT training will be given at the start of term to new joiners.

There's probably a lot more to include in the handbook, please do let us know if you think of anything else that may help others, but in the meantime, we hope you really enjoy your time in sixth form and wish you every success!