

Sixth Form

@

Mark Rutherford School



Handbook

for

Students, Parents/Carers and

Form Tutors

2025-27

Name	Tutor group
Sixth Form subjects	

Contents



Vision for the Sixth Form	3
Introduction	4
Sixth Form team and tutor structure	4
Role of Sixth Form tutors	5
Culture and Climate of the Sixth Form	6
Core Values	6
Expectations	8
Curriculum	10
Independent and Directed Study	10
Other timetabled sessions	10
Super-curricular and leadership opportunities	11
Reading	11
Careers advice and guidance	12
Deadlines	12
Progress and assessment	13
Attendance	14
Punctuality	15
Rewards	15
Sixth Form dress code	15
Mobile phones and other devices	16
Lanyards and fobs	16
Bursary	16
Catering	16
General information:	
Car parking, Part-time work, Trips and visits	18
Change of address/Emergency contacts	18
Contacting the school about a concern	18
Changing courses	18
Attendance/Fit to study procedure	19
Disciplinary procedure	19
Sixth Form Contract	20
ID badge and lanyard agreement	24
Leave of absence request	25
Mental health contacts and support	27

Sixth Form @ Mark Rutherford School

Our Vision

Our vision for the Sixth Form at Mark Rutherford School is to deliver an outstanding level of education whilst maintaining the students' best interests at our core. We believe the Sixth Form experience should be enjoyable and stimulating, providing opportunities for students to gain the qualifications, skills and attitudes which will enable them to shape their futures positively and equip them to be valued and valuable members of a global community.

We will do this by ensuring that every student is able to realise, fulfil and exceed their potential in their academic and pastoral lives, providing learning and teaching that challenges and equips students with the knowledge and skills needed for higher education, employment and lifelong learning; providing personalised information, advice, guidance and support whenever it is needed, cultivating a positive atmosphere of mutual respect and success.

Sixth Form @Mark Rutherford School

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Introduction

We are pleased to provide this handbook for Year 12 and Year 13, which gives you information regarding Sixth Form study and procedures. It is not in exhaustive detail but we hope it gives all stakeholders and interested parties some idea about the Sixth Form at Mark Rutherford School. We work hard to ensure students are provided with relevant information, advice and guidance about their learning journey, and to ensure that students enrol on courses post-16 and post-18 that allow them to be motivated and successful young people. We hope that with parental support and the information contained in this handbook, that significant success is achieved by all of our students.

In this handbook you will find:

- Expectations – the procedures we follow and how they can be supported by parents/carers
- Curriculum information – including how students will be assessed and monitored
- Sixth Form support – careers and finance
- The role of the Sixth Form tutor

As students continue their non-compulsory education with us, we know that they will want to achieve the best educational results so that they will be able to compete for higher education places, degree apprenticeships and careers. Sixth Form teachers at Mark Rutherford School are confident that we can ensure that students fully reach their potential and we ensure too, that students are provided with super-curricular and leadership opportunities to build confidence, offer experiences and develop a sense of identity and community as they pursue their academic endeavours.

In preparation for university or employment, students are expected to take increased responsibility for themselves, in terms of listening to and acting upon instructions, in managing their time and workload effectively and in demonstrating the core values of the wider school (see page).

If there are any comments, questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact the respective form tutor in the first instance. We will always do our best to assist in matters affecting learning and progress in the Sixth Form, and to ensure that students in Year 12 and Year 13 are positive in their attitude to learning, are happy and act as strong role models for their peers and the wider school community.

Sixth Form team



Ms A Vallance
Assistant Headteacher
Director of Sixth Form



Mr I Nicholls
Head of Sixth Form



Mrs A Henderson
Assistant Head of Sixth
Form

Sixth Form team and tutor structure

Students in Year 12 and Year 13 are in tutor groups with peers from the same year group. This is to enable tutors to deliver age and stage appropriate units during tutor sessions and so that we are able to maximise the time allotted to advice and guidance as students transition from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5, and into post-18 education, work or training.

Director of SF: Ms A Vallance Head of SF: Mr I Nicholls Assistant Head of SF: Mrs A Henderson					
Year 12			Year 13		
AHE	Miss A Hulance	042	EMN	Mr E Morgan	A5
CPL	Mrs C Purcell	022		Dr H Pateman	
CPS	Mr C Phelps	B14	RES	Mr R Edwards	037
	Mr A Sobiechowski				
MWI	Mr M Wali	110			
NCN	Ms N Chamberlain	108			
WTL	Dr W Tyrrell	033			

<i>Support tutors for Sixth Form:</i>
<i>Dr H Pateman</i>
<i>Mrs R Waters</i>

The role of Sixth Form tutors

Sixth Form tutors play a central role in the life of Sixth Form students. Students' general academic as well as personal strengths and weaknesses, their contributions to the life of the school, their significant achievements outside of the Sixth Form, and their participation in super-curricular activities should be known by the tutor. Such elements will form a major part of any references provided by the tutor. It is through regular contact via attendance to tutor time and genuine interest shown that unhappiness, underachievement and difficulties beyond the Sixth Form will be detected early, and acted upon by the tutor in the first instance. The work done by tutors underpins the whole experience of the students in the Sixth Form – ultimately affecting performance in academic subjects, and influencing the ethos of the Sixth Form. As such, students' interactions with form tutors should:

- Foster positive attitudes
- Develop personal life skills
- Enable students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and behaviour
- Develop an atmosphere conducive to learning.

Tutors are required to be the 'front line' of the Sixth Form in ensuring that the school's reasonable routines and expectations are consistently applied, particular with regard to:

- Attendance and punctuality – follow up the process of attendance/fit to study procedure
- Monitoring of academic achievement – monitoring assessment point data and completion of interactions on Unifrog
- Dress code – ensure students are presenting themselves in line with the Sixth Form dress code
- Completion of work/organisation – regular checks of student folders for each subject
- Form tutor tasks – fostering integration of the group and enabling extra-curricular and leadership opportunities (including PDA)
- Study and life skills programme – providing opportunities to gain an insight into personal, social, health and moral issues, preparing them for Higher Education, employment and adult life.

Most importantly, tutors' work and continuous efforts will assist individual students in achieving and succeeding in all areas of school life – and to a level with matches, if not exceeds, their potential.

The Culture and Climate of the Sixth Form @ Mark Rutherford School

The Sixth Form is both an exciting and a challenging time for students. It involves greater levels of freedom, choice and independence; new opportunities for leadership, quality facilities and the change to develop a distinct identity as well as being part of the Mark Rutherford School community. It involves the challenges of new students that are studied with an enhanced level of difficulty, alongside the increased demand to develop skills as an independent learner.

Additionally, the Sixth Form journey seeks to prepare, inform and advice students when it comes to considering their choices post-18, be that going on to study at university, applying for a degree apprenticeship or seeking employment. For a significant number of students who join the school in Year 12, the Sixth Form experience will be new due to the different environment, people and staff; however our ethos is to help to foster the school's core values of being **motivated**, **respectful** and **successful** within all of our students' experiences.

In our Sixth Form, we feel that success is about more than academic achievement alone. We pride ourselves on our ability to engage our students through various opportunities where they are able to take on leading roles that cover many aspects of school life; roles such as Ambassadors (for the Environment, Anti-Bullying, Wellbeing groups, for example), Sixth Form Presidents, members of the Sixth Form Council and various committees as well as involvement in the wide range of clubs and other super- and extra-curricular activities we have to offer.

Parents and staff have a significant influence over the successes and achievements of our young people through supporting their learning and activities both within and outside of school. The relationship built between parents/carers, staff and students must be based on mutual trust, respect and a commitment to improving the key learning outcomes.

Core values: Motivated • Respectful • Successful

In addition to securing the highest standards of achievement, the school's core values encourage, nurture and promote the very best qualities in our students and we value our role in helping to shape the young people we are privileged to serve.

**At Mark Rutherford School we are:
Motivated, Respectful
and Successful**

Below are the positive behaviours that we expect of all our students.

- Motivated**
 - ✓ To be organised
 - ✓ To be an inquisitive learner
 - ✓ To be resilient
 - ✓ To be ambitious
- Respectful**
 - ✓ To respect yourself
 - ✓ To respect others
 - ✓ To respect our school
- Successful**
 - ✓ To be a positive role model
 - ✓ To achieve to the best of your ability
 - ✓ To represent the school
 - ✓ To be prepared for life beyond Mark Rutherford

 **Mark Rutherford School**
Motivated • Respectful • Successful

In September 2024, Sixth Form students adapted the whole school values under each of the headings in the image above, so that these would better apply to students in Year 12 and Year 13:

Motivated

Be organised:

- Prioritise tasks and meet deadlines
- Organised folders and notes – hard and soft copies!
- Plan to use Directed Study time effectively
- Check emails and notifications for information about lessons, UCAS and courses

Be resilient:

- Remember the phrase: 'I have all that I need within me to succeed'
- Understand that comparison is the thief of joy
- Value feedback to improve outcomes
- Remain positive about the learning experience, even when things are tough
- Maintain high levels of motivation as an independent learner

Be an inquisitive learner:

- Curious to learn more about specialist subjects
- Find out how subjects have real-life applications
- Discover where studies can lead in the future
- Attend lectures and seminars to expand knowledge
- Complete wider and academic reading to hone skills

Be ambitious:

- Lead extra-curricular activities
- Take part in 'Raising Aspirations' sessions
- Develop a specialist vocabulary
- Leave the comfort zone and embrace challenging tasks!
- Apply for the best courses/roles that you can find

Respectful

Respect myself:

- Balance the social and academic sides of life in a healthy way
- Develop strategies to maintain wellbeing
- Strengthen relationships with teachers and peers
- Do the right thing even if others are not
- Ensure healthy sleep habits to be more productive in the Sixth Form
- Be disciplined about social media/online presence

Respect others:

- Celebrate diversity in the school and local community
- Model mature respectful relationships to younger students
- Understand and respect people's boundaries
- Contribute in lessons to support the development of everyone in the room
- Know how to use the right language to ensure an inclusive environment

Respect the Sixth Form:

- Enjoy privileges as a Sixth Form student and use them wisely
- Engage positively and proactively with staff, students and parents at school events
- Ensure equipment is ready for someone else when finished with it
- Treat people with respect, and in the way you want to be treated
- Be a positive role model for peers
- Represent the Sixth Form positively and share success stories

Successful

Be a positive role model:

- Use PDA sessions to support younger students
- Be helpful to peers and staff
- Respect and appreciate Sixth Form privileges
- Take on leadership roles in Student Voice groups
- Explore careers events and open days

Achieve to the best of my ability:

- Produce work of high standard that is mature and controlled
- Manage time and prioritise workload efficiently
- Meet deadlines
- Aim to exceed target grades
- Access wider reading to develop subject knowledge

Represent the school positively:

- Support at events to represent the Sixth Form and wider school
- Engage in local events to broaden the academic experience
- Uphold the Sixth Form @MRS core values

Be prepared for life beyond the Sixth Form:

- Attend university and apprenticeship talks and open days
- Practise and prepare well for interviews
- Carry out research to create a broader knowledge of possible future plans
- Gain personal and work experience for CV and personal statement building

Enjoy privileges as a Sixth Form student and use them wisely:

- Engage positively and proactively with staff, students and parents at school events
- Ensure equipment is ready for someone else when finished with it
- Treat people with respect, and in the way you want to be treated
- Be a positive role model for peers
- Represent the Sixth Form positively and share success stories

Expectations

As a member of the Sixth Form at Mark Rutherford School, it is important that you always strive to achieve your full potential. Students have a vital role to play in the wider community, both by setting an example to younger students in the school and by taking on responsibilities in the wider school community. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and we expect them to work alongside staff, by being committed to their learning in order to achieve their full potential. If this is to occur it is important that students abide by the following terms:

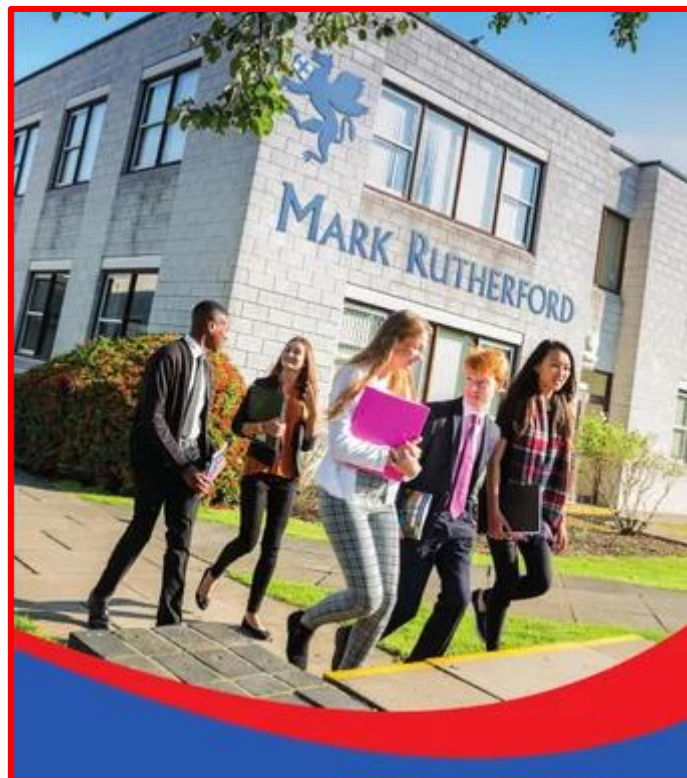
- Attend all lessons, including Directed Study sessions, PSHE, Speakers etc
- Be punctual to tutor time in the morning and to all lessons throughout the day
- Be fully equipped for all lessons
- Refer to Class Charts to keep up to date with homework, announcements and messages about opportunities for super-curricular activities
- Engage in PDA (personal development activities) in at least one 'free period' per week (not during Directed Study periods)
- Take individual responsibility to catch up on any work missed through absence or illness by proactively contacting/visiting subject teachers
- Complete all work set by deadlines that are set by subject teachers and tutors
- Be prepared to have work to do when you do not have formal timetabled lessons

- Work quietly and do not disturb other people working in the Sixth Form study areas, or people in other parts of the school
- Correctly use computer facilities. Personal back up files should be kept for all work. Misuse of computers leads to the loss of access rights
- Look after and respect all student areas, including those areas given specifically to the Sixth Form
- Abide by the published Sixth Form dress code, which includes wearing the Sixth Form lanyard and ID cards and by carrying the access fob
- Use the Inventory system to sign in and out of the school building every day
- Be engaged in study for approximately 35-40 hours per week
- Take on responsibilities of being senior members of the school community by abiding by all aspects of the school's code of conduct and being a role model to younger students

The Sixth Form home-school agreement supports the Sixth Form handbook and has been designed to ensure the 'culture and ethos' of the Sixth Form is met and that parents/carers, students and staff are in agreement when working together in a spirit of trust and co-operation.

What you can expect from us:

- High quality teaching and learning opportunities
- Motivation and encouragement to achieve to the best of your abilities
- Facilities to support independent and private study in school
- Opportunities for wider development and experiences
- Guidance and support with meeting the demands of your chosen subjects
- Leadership opportunities within the school
- Guidance through academic mentoring appointments to support you with reviewing your progress as well as setting and managing targets
- Preparation for life after Sixth Form



Curriculum

The Sixth Form at Mark Rutherford School firmly believes in delivering a rounded post-16 education and the school's core values are an integral part of this delivery. Throughout their time in the school and the Sixth Form, students cover a broad curriculum. The PSHE programme is delivered during timetabled lessons, and supported with a programme of study in tutor time on set days of the week; these sessions provide numerous opportunities for students to consider and discuss issues relevant for 16-19 year olds. Students have an input into the PSHE curriculum and therefore have some ownership of the development of the programme at Key Stage 5. In addition, students are also provided with a careers education and guidance programme with all students in Year 13 receiving careers appointments with an external advisor.

The majority of students will study 3 subjects at A Level or a combination of A Level and BTEC/AAQ courses, with some opting to take 4 subjects (often including Further Maths). A small number of students may also be re-sitting a GCSE in English or Maths. Each A Level subject consists of 360 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) that take place over 2 years, and the majority of students studying 3 subjects in the Sixth Form will cover a minimum of 540 GLH over the course of the academic year (including programmes such as PSHE and Speakers sessions). The Sixth Form follows a fortnightly timetable, with each subject being taught for 9 hours per fortnight.

It is expected that students will study at least 3 courses in Year 13.

Throughout the year at each assessment point, a student's tutor might place them on academic mentoring in order to support and encourage their development.

Independent and Directed Study

For each subject studied in the Sixth Form, students will be allocated 4 hours of Directed Study per fortnight on their timetables; these are sessions that students must remain in school for and use the study areas and facilities to complete work such as research, wider reading, writing responses and producing presentations. Directed study will be shown on students' timetables.

Independent study sessions should also be used to complete work or to conduct wider reading (including reading for pleasure). If a student has an independent study session ('blank' on the timetable) period 1, they do not have to attend tutor time on that morning and must sign in on the Invenry system when they arrive in school for their first lesson of the day. If a student has an independent study session period 5, they can sign out at lunch time and go home early to study. Learning to motivate oneself and take responsibility for one's own learning and progress is central to Sixth Form study and critical to success in future study and careers.

Other timetabled sessions

Tutor time takes place every morning for half an hour, starting at 8.30am. All students who are in school for a period 1 session must attend tutor time, and follow the programme of activities organised for their year group. Students will have an assembly during tutor time, once per fortnight.

All students in the Sixth Form will follow a Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum which will be delivered during one timetabled lesson per fortnight; this is compulsory for all students.

Year 12 students will have a Speakers' session on their timetables (one lesson per fortnight) – see Enrichment section. This is also a compulsory session for students to attend.

All students in the Sixth Form are encouraged to dedicate at least one period per week to complete a personal development activity (PDA) – see Enrichment section.

Super-curricular and Leadership opportunities

Students in the Sixth Form have access to a wide range of leadership opportunities that help them develop confidence, responsibility and essential life skills. These roles often include becoming representatives for student-led groups, acting as president or vice-president for the Sixth Form, along with other opportunities where they represent their peers and contribute to the school community. Sixth Form students also get the chance to lead clubs, work with and mentor younger students (PDA – Personal Development Activities – are an expectation for all students in the Sixth Form), or organise events such as charity drives, social events and school assemblies. Through these experiences, students not only enhance their communication and teamwork abilities but also build a strong foundation for future academic and professional studies.

Post-16 students have access to a wide range of **super-curricular opportunities** that extend their learning beyond the classroom and deepen their subject knowledge. These activities include attending university lectures, completing online courses such as MOOCs, participating in academic competitions, and engaging in independent research or reading. Students may also take part in summer schools, work experience placements, or subject-specific enrichment programmes offered by universities and professional bodies. These experiences not only enhance university applications – especially for competitive courses – but also help students explore their academic interests in greater depth and develop critical thinking, problem-solving and independent learning skills.

Reading

Wider reading is essential for Sixth Form students as it broadens their understanding of subjects beyond the curriculum and fosters independent thinking. By exploring academic journals, books, articles, and reputable online resources, students gain deeper insights into key concepts, current debates, and real-world applications of their studies. This not only strengthens their analytical and evaluative skills but also prepares them for the demands of higher education, where self-directed learning is crucial. Moreover, wider reading demonstrates intellectual curiosity and commitment—qualities highly valued by universities and employers alike—making it a vital part of academic and personal development during the Sixth Form years. Wider reading lists are available for all subjects studied at the school post-16; a reading for pleasure list will also be shared with students.

An example of a Year 13 student's timetable

	AMon	ATue	AWed	AThu	AFri		BMon	BTue	BWed	BThu	BFri
1	Biology RES 037	Directed Study	Directed Study	Biology AST 039	Chemistry WTL 032						
2	Directed Study	Biology AHE 042	Directed Study	Directed Study	Directed Study						
3	English AVE M118	English CML 107	English AVE M118		Biology AHE 042						
4	English AVE M118	Chemistry PMN 031	English AVE M118								
5		Chemistry PMN 031	PSHE CPL 022			1		English CML 107	Chemistry WTL 032	Biology AHE 042	Chemistry WTL 032
Reg						2	Biology AST 039	English AVE M118	Directed Study	Chemistry WTL 032	Directed Study
6						3	Directed Study	Chemistry PMN 031	Directed Study		Directed Study
						4	English CML 107	Chemistry WTL 032	Directed Study		Biology AST 039
						5	English CML 107		Biology AST 039		
						Reg					
						6					

Careers education and guidance

All students will continue to receive careers education and guidance. Work will involve further aspects of self-assessment, decision making, opportunity awareness, preparation for moving beyond Sixth Form study. During Year 12 and Year 13, students will meet with their tutors with a focus on their chosen pathway. Students who require support to consider their chosen pathway will receive help and advice from their tutor, the school's careers lead (Mrs Unwin) and the Sixth Form team, to ensure that when they leave the Sixth Form they have a destination.

During the Summer term of Year 12 a visit to the University of Bedfordshire (Polhill campus) for the UCAS Discovery Day and a UCAS/Higher Education evening will be held to introduce students to some of the opportunities available at university. Regular information about Open Days is publicised through the Weekly News, via Class Charts and on displays in the Sixth Form Common Room. Students should take advantage of any organised Open Day visits. During the Summer term in Year 12, tutor time will be devoted to the drafting of personal statements in readiness for making university, apprenticeship and job applications. Applications to universities are made on-line via the UCAS APPLY service and all students are encouraged to apply. Students need to be aware that some popular degree courses (such as Law, Medicine, as well as entry into Oxbridge) and some particular universities, require students to sit additional tests which need to be organised by students themselves who wish to access these courses, before the end of Year 12 (or as dictated by the institutions' deadlines).

Students undertake a week of work experience in the Summer term of Year 12 and the Unifrog platform is used to complete the administration of the programme.



Meeting deadlines

Deadlines for the handing in of subject related work should always be met. The Class Charts platform is used to communicate homework/independent study tasks for Sixth Form students; completion of tasks will be logged on Class Charts and is linked to the rewards system. Where there are concerns about the completion and submission of homework/independent learning tasks, subject teachers will contact home in the first instance, with follow-up from the Sixth Form tutors and Sixth Form team as appropriate.

All NEA (non-examined assessment)/coursework deadlines related to external examinations are available from the necessary subject departments. Please note that if a student fails to hand in any set work by the deadline, they could forfeit their entry to that module of the examination.



Progress and assessment

Regular checks on student progress are made during the year. In the Autumn term, the calendared Academic Mentoring Day allows for students and parents/carers to meet with form tutors to discuss transition and attitude to learning (for Year 12), and assessment outcomes and next steps (including post-18 applications) for Year 13 students.

- Year 12

Internal assessment points in Year 12: results are shared with students and parents/carers. The assessment points will allow students to discuss, with subject and form tutors, appropriate targets to help them improve their performance. A parents' evening is normally held for Year 12 students in June, following students' mock exams taken in the Spring term.

Should parents/carers wish to follow up any issues related to assessment outcomes, please contact in the first instance the form tutor. Subject teachers will use assessment data to inform predicted grades for students' UCAS applications.

For any student taking an external Year 12 written examination, these occur in May and June, but some practical examinations start in March. In some cases, pre-release material is issued before the examination period. It is important that students do not take time out of school for holidays, as vital preparation for exams may be missed. Parental support is invaluable in helping students to organise their time effectively and by encouraging them to meet coursework deadlines and to achieve their personal targets.

- Year 13

Mock exams for Year 13 take place in January, and a parents evening is usually held in February. This will allow students to discuss, with subject and personal tutors, appropriate targets to help them improve their performance. Should parents/carers wish to follow up any issues related to the performance check, please contact in the first instance the Personal Tutor.

External examinations occur from January onwards for Year 13 students. In some cases, pre-release material is issued before the examination period. It is important that students do not take time out of school for holidays during this critical period, as vital preparation for exams may be missed. Mock exams in Year 13 take place in January; if students fail to attend these exams without a valid reason, they may not be entered for the final exams in the summer. If a student leaves a course early, they are liable for the cost of the examination fee. Students applying to university may be lucky enough to be given an unconditional offer for that place. Students must be aware that they still need to take the exams for this unconditional offer to stand; students' exam results are with them for life and are needed beyond getting a university place.



Attendance

We would like all students to aim for an attendance record of 100%, which is above the 96% attendance that Ofsted sets out for the expectations of a successful post-16 student. Persistent or intermittent absences have an adverse effect on academic progress. In any reference request, attendance data is normally required and is often based on the following:

- Excellent: 98%
- Good: 95-97%
- Satisfactory: 90-95%
- Concern: 90%

Our attendance register is also used for auditing and is vital for Health and Safety purposes, so it is key that attendance is recorded accurately. Sixth Form students must use their access fob (attached to the ID card) to sign into the school each morning by using the Inentry system located in the Sixth Form common room. Students must also register with their tutor each morning when they are in school for tutor time, and then with each teacher for lessons they attend.

Students must inform their form tutor and Mrs Henderson via email of any unplanned absence, by 8.30am on the morning of absence. On return to school, students' absences will be reviewed by the form tutor/Mrs Henderson. Staff should be notified of any known absences at least three school days in advance and they should see Mrs Henderson in the Sixth Form office to notify her of any planned absences.

The table below shows which types of absences can be authorised under such circumstances: (please note that formal attendance disciplinary procedures will be used if a student does not register properly or deliberately misses lessons, please see the stepped response process.) Unfortunately, at times students' health and wellbeing means they are not fit to study, whilst we recognise this is no fault of their own, this does impact on a student's progress. Continued absence due to these circumstances will follow a similar stepped response pattern as for those choosing not to attend, however the nature of the monitoring will differ.

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
1. Medical appointment that cannot be arranged outside school hours	1. Holidays
2. A religious holiday	2. Part-time or full-time work, not part of a student's programme of study
3. Unpaid work experience placement by prior agreement	3. Leisure activities
4. Attendance at a wedding or funeral	4. Childcare for younger siblings
5. A driving test	5. Driving lessons

Parents/carers will receive regular attendance updates throughout the year. Families are strongly urged to avoid booking holidays during term time, or agreeing to take students on trips during term time as this disrupts their education and progress. There is no automatic right to take a child out of school for a holiday as made clear in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These will be recorded as unauthorised absences. Students are involved in mock and public examinations at various points during the academic year and can be working on Non-Examined Assessment ('coursework') at any time; from Easter onwards in Year 13 students will be sitting their final Key Stage 5 examinations and non-attendance at key assessment points would have a detrimental effect upon students' performance and outcomes.

Punctuality

Students must scan in with the Invenry system on arrival to school, and will need to do so before registering in tutor time or in lessons. Students must scan out with the Invenry system when they leave the school site. Any students arriving after tutor time must also sign in manually using the sheet in the Common Room; when leaving the site students must also sign out manually.

Tutor time begins at 8.30am, with period 1 starting at 9am. Students who are late into school will need to inform Mrs Henderson of the reason for their lateness; lateness is recorded and sanctions such as detentions are implemented as appropriate. Continued lateness to school will result in a meeting with parents to ensure that the issues are resolved.

Students are permitted to leave the school site during lunch time and must follow the signing out procedure if they choose to do so. It is important that any students leaving the school site at lunch time sign back in before period 5, and they must be on time to the last lesson of the day. The privilege of leaving the site at lunchtime can be withdrawn for students who fail to meet punctuality expectations. There is no afternoon tutor session for Sixth Form students, so the school day finishes at 3pm; students must scan out on the Invenry system when they leave the school site.

Rewards

As with the main school, rewards are given to Sixth Form students who are consistently motivated, respectful and successful. Students may earn rewards for the following:

- Homework/independent work completion
- Attainment
- Respect raffle
- Tutee award
- Head of Year award
- Attendance
- Tutor group (highest number of reward points)

Rewards range from certificates, celebration breakfasts, Amazon vouchers, and pizza (to be shared for the tutor group award!). A rewards trip/event will run at the end of Year 12; students' attitude, attendance, punctuality and progress data over the year will be used to decide which students will take part.

Sixth Form Dress Code

The Sixth Form at Mark Rutherford School encourages students to be confident and independent, so they are well prepared for the next stages of their academic and professional lives. The Sixth Form dress code is 'smart/ causal'. We ask students to consider if what they are wearing is appropriate for a 'professional environment'. Should the school staff decide that a student is not adhering to this code, staff have the right to ask the student to address this either immediately on the day or moving forward. The Sixth Form team has deemed the following attire as not appropriate:

- Inappropriate footwear (eg sliders/flip flops)
- Revealing clothing (eg showing too much of the top or bottom half of the body)
- Caps/hats on indoors
- Hoods up indoors
- Items that could cause offence to others (eg offensive language)
- Hoodies and clothing with large sports logos/images
- Smart jeans are permitted
- Smart trainers are permitted

There will be some specific safety/protective clothing requirements in some subjects e.g. Science subjects, D&T, Sport and Dance. Please refer to subject teachers for advice.

The Sixth Form team have the final decision regarding what is and what is not suitable attire for Sixth Form students. The school reserves the right to send home any student who is not properly dressed. The student will then be expected to change and return to school as soon as possible to resume their studies.

Persistent disregard for the dress code will result in further disciplinary action being taken. We retain the right to act as the final authority in the interpretation of the dress code. If unsure, parents/carers and students are advised to contact a member of the Sixth Form team for clarification before purchasing items.

Mobile phones and other electronic devices

We recognise that the use of mobile phones and laptops forms an important part of students' transition to independent study and so we welcome the use of electronic devices in the Sixth Form. As teachers set work on Class Charts, and as tutors and the Sixth Form team share messages with students on this platform too, it is important for students to be able to access information regularly throughout the school day.

Students must recognise this as a 'privilege' as students in Years 7-11 must hand in their mobile phones to their tutors every morning. We expect Sixth Form students to limit the visibility of their electronic devices around the school, and when in areas that are used by other year groups (such as the Space 4 Learning), the use of mobile phones should be discrete and for study purposes only. Headphones should not be worn while students move around the school building. Students should not make or receive phone calls around the school building and ensure that any essential calls are made or taken in the Common Room. Sixth Form students are able to access the school's WiFi and will be informed of the access code by the Sixth Form office.

Lanyards and fobs

All students are issued with ID badges, access fobs and lanyards, all of which must be worn at all times around their necks whilst within the Sixth Form area and the wider school site. This is important for safeguarding purposes, especially as Sixth Form students are able to access spaces that are 'Mag-locked' during lesson times.

Students will sign a contract regarding the wearing of lanyards and use of key fobs; any student who forgets to wear their lanyard to school will need to borrow one from the Sixth Form office and leave their mobile phone as a 'deposit' – returned at the end of the student's day.

Bursary

Awards of bursary payments are made in line with government policy. Applications for awards of bursaries should be made in the first instance to the Sixth Form team; information regarding the application process will be delivered to students via an assembly early in the Autumn term. Please see the Sixth Form area of the school's website and select 'Student Finance' for information about the bursary scheme. The Sixth Form also has access to a small fund from which emergency payments can be awarded. If you are in need, please see a member of the Sixth Form team.

Catering

The canteen at Mark Rutherford School operates a biometric cashless system, using Parent Pay. Students or parents/carers can put money directly into their Parent Pay account. Sixth Form students are able to access the canteen early before break and lunch time (if they are not in lessons) and are therefore able to

avoid queueing in most cases. The weekly menu is available on the school website and is shared in the Sixth Form Weekly News.

Students may wish to ensure that they have some money on them when they are in school, as the Sixth Form tuck shop (run by students and profits going towards fundraising for the Year 13 leavers' event) takes both cards and cash.

Sixth Form students are permitted to use the canteen as a quiet work space throughout the day and the Sixth Form team will ensure that students understand the expectations around working in an unsupervised location.

General information

Car parking

Students who wish to drive to school will not be able to park their vehicles on the school site. There is on-street parking available near to the school and a number of parking spaces in the layby near to the Rugby Club. Any students who come to school on a moped should see a member of the Sixth Form team to obtain permission to park near to the school bike sheds. Electronic scooters are not allowed in school and should not be used as a mode of transport to get to school.

Part-time work

There are many benefits to students who have part-time jobs, but it is important that students do not take on too many hours or responsibilities outside of the Sixth Form. We recommend that part-time employment should be limited to a maximum of 8 hours per week. Research shows that any more than this will have an adverse effect on students' work, attendance and results. Students should not agree to part-time work during the school day, as in joining the Sixth Form they are agreeing to be full-time students. Employers should be made aware of this restriction at any interview stages.

Trips and visits

Trips and visits will be a feature of life in the Sixth Form, and depending on the nature of a student's course, they may be involved in a range of activities of this nature during the course of the school year. Students may also wish to attend university open days or interviews. For any educational visits whereby an additional charge is required, parents/carers will be notified appropriately. As students develop as independent learners, they may wish to undertake visits on their own volition, as part of their research or to broaden their knowledge and interest in a subject area. We would advise that students always ensure that a responsible adult/parent/carer knows where they are intending to go, and we would advise too, that students travel as a group if they leave the local area. When out in the wider community we would, of course, always rely on Sixth Form students to behave in a safe, mature and responsible manner.

Changes of address/Emergency contacts

We ask that parents/carers inform the Sixth Form team, in writing, of a change of address or other personal circumstance. It is important that we are notified of any change to parents'/carers' day-time phone contact numbers. This is essential information in times of emergency such as accidents.

Contacting the school when you have a concern

If for any reason you feel unhappy about some aspect of a course, or have a concern of any nature, you should in the first instance refer the matter to the subject teacher or your child's Sixth Form tutor. If it cannot be resolved at this level, you should speak to the subject leader/head of department; if it is not resolved at this level you should speak with the Sixth Form team who will aim to resolve or escalate the situation as appropriate.

Changing courses

Students may be permitted to change courses early in the school year in Year 12; if a student wishes to change courses, they must complete a course alteration form and must ensure conversations take place with the relevant members of staff. All course changes should happen by 30th September and changes will not be permitted after this time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Please note if initially pursuing a four-subject pathway, after the 30th September students will no longer be able to relinquish one subject until the end of Year 12 and will therefore remain studying four subjects for the duration of the academic year.

Attendance/Fit to study procedure

An informal word with a student should normally be sufficient in the majority of cases, however when a student does not respond and improve their attendance, it may be necessary to use a more formal procedure shown below:

Attendance level	Action	Key member of staff
Attendance is below 95% due to unauthorised absence of continued failure to attend tutor time or lessons	Student and tutor meeting, followed by 2 weeks of monitoring	Form tutor
Attendance drops below 90% due to unauthorised absence and no improvement in attendance to tutor time or lessons	Student, tutor and parent meeting, with a further 2 weeks of monitoring	Tutor and Sixth Form team
Attendance drops below 85% due to unauthorised absence and no improvement in attendance to tutor time or lessons	Student, tutor, parent and Sixth Form team meeting, 4 weeks of supervision in the Sixth Form area with an hour supervised revision after school	Tutor and Head of Sixth Form
Further days absence and no improvement in attendance to tutor time or lessons	School, parent and AHT – Director of Sixth Form meeting to discuss student's position in the school	Assistant Headteacher – Director of Sixth Form

If the decision is made that students will not be allowed to continue to study at Mark Rutherford School, students or parents/carers might wish to appeal the process and if to, they must do so in writing to the Headteacher within 10 days of this decision being made.

Disciplinary procedure

It is usually possible to ensure that all students in the Sixth Form meet the high expectations of the school, and if there are any issues or transgressions to deal with, an informal conversation has the desired impact in the majority of cases. In the unlikely event that any issues need to be escalated and if students do not respond to the informal approach, it may be necessary to use a more formal disciplinary procedure, which is outlined below. All aspects of the disciplinary procedure will be documents and parents will be informed/involved where appropriate.

Issue	Action	Key member of staff
Small number of independent work submitted late/not completed Low level disruption in class, Sixth Form areas or other areas in the school (eg library)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Departmental action - Discussion with student - Inform tutor - Discuss contacting home with subject teacher 	Subject teacher and subject leader Tutor
Continued or larger number of independent study tasks not completed Continued low level disruption in class, Sixth Form areas or other areas in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting with tutor and/or subject teacher/leader including review of SF contract - Outcomes noted on file - Review data agreed - Letter, phone call or email home 	Personal tutor/subject leader/teacher
Continuation of the above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting with parents and student - Agreed contract - Discussion about whether the Sixth Form is the right environment - Verbal/written warning 	Head of Sixth Form/Director of Sixth Form
Failure to meet terms of contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final written warning - Possible denial of progression into Year 13/final exam entry - Discussion with parents of options other than the Sixth Form at MRS - Consider permanent exclusion 	AHT Director of Sixth Form/ Headteacher

On rare occasions, students may be involved in serious incidents which will bypass these steps and lead to immediate intervention by the Sixth Form team. These incidents may result in a fixed-term exclusion being one possible action.

If the decision is made that students will not be allowed to progress into Year 13 or sit their final exams, students or parents might wish to appeal the process. If so, they must do so in writing to the Headteacher within 10 days of this decision being made.



Sixth Form Contract (2025 - 2027)

Name:

Tutor Group:

Dear Students and Parents/Carers

Welcome to the Sixth Form at Mark Rutherford School.

You have made the decision to continue with your studies and this shows you are committed to your education and have the support of your parents/carers. As a student in the Sixth Form you are expected to work hard, lead by example and take part in the additional activities available to you.

All staff and students in the Sixth Form are encouraged to create an atmosphere based on mutual respect between teachers and students that is conducive to high quality teaching and learning. As a student in the Sixth Form you will have more free periods and directed study time that needs to be used wisely and to your advantage. This will be introduced during the first half term. In order to encourage you to make the expected progress, please read the details of our Sixth Form contract and sign and return one copy. The other copy is for your records.

What do we expect from you?

Attendance:

- To maintain an excellent attendance record of 95% or above, in line with the whole school target.
- Attend Tutor Time on all school days for 8.25 am if you have a lesson or Directed Study period.
- You are expected to attend some additional Tutor Times and Assemblies when required.
- To have an excellent punctuality record for Tutor Time and lessons.
- To remain on the school site until the end of your last taught lesson or directed study session of the day.
- To sign in and out of school when permitted to do so: at the end of your school day if earlier than 3.10pm and for offsite appointments.
- To attend and arrive on time to all timetabled lessons, participating fully in all activities relating to your subjects.
- In the event of an unscheduled absence due to unforeseen circumstances to phone 01234 290200 (and then select option 1) as early as possible on the day of absence.
- To inform the Sixth Form Team and your Tutor where planned absences are known.
- To ensure absence notes are provided by your parent/carer, on your return to school, where there has been an unforeseen absence.
- To ensure any work missed through absence is discussed with your subject teachers and appropriate action is taken to complete it.
- To attend subject consultation evenings.

Attitude and Behaviour:

- You are expected to maintain a proactive and curious attitude towards your studies. Your teachers will help you but you are expected to think about what you do, and do not understand or recall and take action to help yourself.
- You are expected to plan your in school and home study time accordingly and be prepared to show these plans to a member of the Sixth form team.
- To behave in the manner expected of senior and influential students in the school and in a way that would be expected of an employee in a professional working environment.
- To adopt a responsible and mature attitude towards caring for the facilities available for the Sixth Form and the other students using them.
- To have respect for each other, including property, at all times.
- To make appropriate use of the Sixth Form private study facilities or adopt a quiet working atmosphere when using other learning environments.

Dress Code:

- To adhere to the Sixth Form dress code.

Additional:

- You are expected to plan your in school and home study time accordingly and be prepared to show these plans to a member of the Sixth form team.
- To complete a minimum of 4 hours of Directed Study per subject, outside of lesson time, per week.
- Discuss any issues that may require support with either, your Tutor, the Director of Sixth Form, Head of Year and/or the Assistant Head of Sixth Form at the earliest opportunity.
- Make the most of life in the Sixth Form, contributing and participating in the range of activities on offer.
- Not to book or undertake driving lessons during the school day.
- Not to park any vehicles on the school site during the school day. Scooters are allowed and must be parked adjacent to the bike sheds taking care not to block the site agents' access road. Permission should be sought prior to riding your scooter to school for the first time.
- To keep a record of the homework and/or coursework set by your subject teachers.
- To adhere to the whole school policy regarding the use of mobile phones in school.
- To keep paid work to less than sixteen hours per week.

What can you expect from the school?

- To provide you with initial and on-going information, advice and guidance to support your learning and meet your needs.
- To provide high quality teaching and learning opportunities which are appropriate to the final examinations and reflect your progress and ability.
- To set and mark your work to provide frequent and on-going feedback on your progress.
- To provide you with regular reports and assessments of your progress which take into account your abilities and objectives for the future.
- To provide facilities for independent and private study in school, wider research, background reading and recreation time.



- To provide opportunities for wider personal development and experiences.
- To provide support and guidance on meeting the demands and deadlines relating to your chosen subjects.
- To provide leadership and other opportunities for responsibility within the school.
- To motivate and encourage you to achieve the best level of performance. This will be done through reporting to parents/carers and consultation evenings.
- To provide an introduction to, and preparation for, life after Sixth Form, such as employment opportunities or application to the higher education system.
- To provide you with a Sixth Form Common Room, and Study Room(s) as facilities to support private study lessons and a place to use responsibly and with respect during break and lunchtimes.

ICT Acceptable Use:

- To follow the school's Internet Acceptable Use Policy without exception (see below).

All students are expected to follow this policy at all times and remember that breaking these conditions may lead to restricted Internet access, withdrawal of access to the Internet / Network, close monitoring of your network activity, investigation of your past network activity, being liable for repair / replacement costs and in some cases, criminal prosecution.

Students will be provided with guidance by staff in the use of the resources available through the school's network. School staff will regularly monitor the network to make sure that it is being used responsibly. The school will not be held responsible for any loss of data as a result of the system or student mistakes in using the system – always back up your work!

Students are expected to use the network systems in a responsible manner. It is not possible to set a complete set of rules about what is, and what is not, acceptable. The following list does provide some examples that must be followed and so you are expected to follow both the spirit and the letter of this policy.

Please remember - your access to the school ICT and internet resources is a privilege and not a right and your access to the network may be withdrawn if you do not adhere to this policy.

By signing your contract and ICT use policy you are agreeing that:

- You will be expected to use the resources for educational purposes only.
- You will not create, send or post any material that is likely to cause offence or needless anxiety to other people or bring the school into disrepute and will remember that you are a representative of the school on a global public system.
- Illegal activities of any kind are strictly forbidden – be aware that downloading some material is illegal and the police or other authorities may be called to investigate.
- You will not use language that could incite hatred against any ethnic, religious or other minority group.
- You will not share your login details (including passwords) with anyone else. Likewise, you will never use other people's username and password and you will ensure that if you think someone has learned your password then you will change it immediately and/or contact ICT Support.



- You will ensure that you log off after my network session has finished and if you find an unattended machine logged on under another user's username you will log it off immediately and log back on under your username and password.
- You will not trespass into other users' files or folders or use the network in any way that would disrupt use of the network by others.
- You will report any accidental access to other people's information, unsuitable websites or being sent inappropriate materials that make you feel uncomfortable to ICT Support.
- You will not attempt to harm or destroy any equipment, work of another user on the school network, or even another website or network connected to the school system.
- You will not attempt to visit websites that might be considered inappropriate or illegal.
- You will not receive, send or publish material that violates copyright law.
- You understand that students under reasonable suspicion of misuse in terms of time, activity or content may have their usage closely monitored or have their past use investigated.
- You are aware that files and e-mail are not guaranteed to be private and anonymous.
- All 'USB/portable drives' are virus checked on accessing the network, you need to be aware that suspicious files may be deleted as a result.
- You will not download and/or install any unapproved software, system utilities or resources from the Internet.
- I will report any faults or damage to my teacher before I use the equipment and I will not damage / vandalise school ICT equipment. I accept liability for the repair/replacement costs.

Having read the details of our Sixth Form contract please confirm your commitment to study at Mark Rutherford School by signing below.

Signed (student):

Date:

Signed (parent/carer):

Date:

We look forward to working with you and supporting you through your time in the Sixth Form.

Mrs A Vallance
Director of Sixth Form

Mr I Nicholls
Head of Sixth Form



September 2025

Contract: Sixth Form ID Badge 2025-2026

Student Name: _____

Tutor Group: _____

By signing this contract I agree to the following terms and conditions of the Sixth Form ID badge:

- To wear the Sixth Form ID badge as a form of identification for staff, students and visitors to Mark Rutherford School.
- To wear the Sixth Form ID badge at all times when on the school site, including break, lunchtimes, after school and school events, for example, open evenings.
- To not lend the Sixth Form ID badge to any other student, Sixth Form or otherwise.
- To not use the Sixth Form ID badge to allow any visitor from outside of Mark Rutherford School onto site.
- To inform Ms Vallance (Director of Sixth Form, Mr Nicholls (Head of Sixth Form), and/or Mrs Henderson (Assistant Head of Sixth Form) if the Sixth Form ID badge has been lost or mislaid at the earliest opportunity to ensure the safety of staff, students and visitors to Mark Rutherford School.
- To inform Ms Vallance (Director of Sixth Form), Mr Nicholls (Head of Sixth Form), and/or Mrs Henderson (Assistant Head of Sixth Form) if the Sixth Form ID badge has been damaged, including details as to how this happened.
- To pay £5 in order to replace a lost or damaged Sixth Form ID badge.
- To return the Sixth Form ID badge prior to leaving Mark Rutherford School at the end of studying in the Sixth Form.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

- This contract will remain on the file of the student named above for the duration of their time studying at Mark Rutherford School.
- All Sixth Form ID badges remain the property of Mark Rutherford School.

Leave of Absence Request Form: Term Time

Dear Parent/Carer,

Time off from school for a family holiday is not a right as a parent/carer. Please complete this form and return it to us at least four (4) weeks before the date of when you are requesting the period of absence to start.

In relation to your request, please note:

- We may ask that you attend an interview with the Headteacher or another senior member of staff.
- You are required to provide supporting evidence, e.g. confirmation of travel details.
- You must complete a separate application for each child in our school.

Holiday absences that have not been agreed will be coded as unauthorised and may be referred to Bedford Borough Council for a penalty notice or other action to be considered.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Rutherford School

Section 1: Child's Details

Child's Full Name:

Year/Tutor Group:

Date of Birth:

Home Address:

Period of Absence (inclusive):

From:

To:

Section 2: Reason for Request

Please outline the reason for requesting a leave of absence during term time. If this is for a family holiday, please outline why this is an exceptional circumstance.



Section 3: Leave of Absence Return Slip

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your term time leave of absence has been carefully considered. Please find outlined below our decision.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Rutherford School

Child's Full Name:

Year/Tutor Group:

Requested Period of Absence (inclusive):

From:

To:

Leave of absence:

Has been granted

Has not been granted

Reason (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....

Signed (Headteacher):

Date:

Mental Health and Counselling Support Services

Young Minds - <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

Excellent for supporting young people and for parental support.

- Text the YoungMinds Crisis Messenger for free 24/7 support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis – **YM 85258**
- All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors.
- Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

Bedford Open Door - <http://www.bedfordopendoor.org.uk/>

TO FIND OUT MORE OR TO REGISTER FOR THE SERVICE

Text us on 07922 105 200

call on 01234 360 388

or

email: counselling@bedfordopendoor.org.uk

Bedfordshire Wellbeing Service - <https://bedfordshirewellbeingservice.nhs.uk/>

Ability to self refer **01234 880400**

Kooth - <https://www.kooth.com/>

Online mental wellbeing community

Free, safe and anonymous support

Childline - <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/>

Call free on 0800 1111

The Mix

The Mix Counselling service is for short-term help with mental health and emotional wellbeing. It is a phone and Webchat counselling service for young people under 25.

4pm-11pm every day: 0808 808 4994 www.themix.org.uk/get-support

Tellmi

Tellmi is a safe, anonymous **app** to talk about anxiety to autism, dating to depression, or self-harm to self-esteem. There are moderators to keep things safe and in-house counsellors on hand for extra support.

www.tellmi.help



Calm Harm

A free award-winning **app** to help manage the urge to self-harm. Developed for teenage mental health by clinical psychologists in collaboration with young people

www.calmharm.co.uk

