

Fremman  

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COLLEGE

SIXTH FORM  
PARENT  
HANDBOOK



A big welcome back to Freman and the start of your son or daughter's time in Sixth Form. This is the beginning of an exciting new phase in their education but also of a time of big change and expectations.

As well as having to study hard for their post-16 courses, Sixth Form students will also need to prepare themselves for whatever they hope to do after leaving us. They will be supported to develop skills and habits that will serve them well in higher education and in the workplace. Big decisions lie ahead, and students are encouraged to make an early start on researching the range of post-18 options open to them. We provide all the information the students need to do this – either in assemblies, during Lower Sixth workshops or in one-to-one interviews.

Inside this handbook you will find details on what happens over the next two years and information which will help you to support your son or daughter through the challenges ahead.

## What makes a good Sixth Form student?

Independent Learning is a big new aspect for students entering sixth form. They will be required by their teachers to take their learning to a new level – to think for themselves, to not just rely on being told what to do but to read around subjects and study beyond what is covered in class. This is an indispensable life skill which will not just be needed at university but also in the work place. After each lesson we ask students to spend time reviewing the new learning in order to secure their understanding before they move on. Many students get into the really useful habit of making “review cards” for each lesson, and we provide the materials for this in the Sixth Form study areas. Taking a little time to do this shortly after every lesson ensures that no gaps are left in a student’s understanding. This process of continuous review will help them to avoid over-loading themselves as their exams approach.

Sixth Form students will also have the support of our Study Supervisors, who will help those who struggle with organisation to make the changes they need in order to achieve the best results in their studies.

Remember: if your son or daughter says they have no homework and there is nothing else for them to do, they are still operating at GCSE levels!
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Lower Sixth students have been issued with a booklet entitled **Step up to Sixth Form**. This includes subject-specific advice on reading materials, films, programmes to watch, etc. A copy of this document is also saved on the Freman website in the Sixth Form folder.

## Attendance

All students are expected to attend all morning and afternoon registrations. Any absences known about in advance must be communicated in advance to their tutor. This will include medical appointments, university open days etc. In the case of unforeseen absence, parents are asked to phone the college before 8:30am if possible, or provide a note to explain the absence on their return.

A minimum of 95% attendance is expected from all students. If attendance falls below 80% students may be withdrawn from courses and no longer entered for those exams. Heads of House will continue to monitor students' attendance throughout their time in the Sixth Form, and should be the first port of call for parents on issues relating to pastoral care.

## Student Cars

Driving lessons must not be arranged during timetabled lessons or tutor time. Once they have passed their test, Students living outside Buntingford will be able to obtain a permit to park their car in the swimming pool car park by bringing in their driving licence, certificate of insurance and MOT certificate. Students who live in Buntingford are not permitted to bring cars on to the college site, but can park on the road outside if they wish.

## Dress Code

Members of the Sixth Form should remember that the majority of students have to wear a uniform, and that there are regular occasions, such as assemblies, where a certain formality is expected. A reasonable standard of dress is expected that does not compromise this formality, or offend or distract other members of the college community

## Community Service

The planner also contains a page for recording community service hours which form an integral part of being a member of the Lower Sixth at Freman College. Each student is required to contribute a minimum of 30 hours over their Lower Sixth year, either within the College or for an external group or organization, such as a sports club, scout group, or maybe helping one of our partner schools. This is their chance to give something back to their community but also to maybe learn a new skill or interest as well as gain something extra that can be added to work or university applications.

## Lower Sixth Workshops

Every Friday morning, students in the Lower Sixth gather for an hour. These times are used for a variety of things. Outside speakers are often invited in, to speak about issues relevant to young adults, and representatives from universities and apprenticeship-providers come in regularly so that students are getting the information they need to help make decisions about their future paths.

## Important dates and deadlines

Month	Lower Sixth events	Upper Sixth events
<b>Sept</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents' Information Evening</li> <li>• Community Service: start accumulating hours (minimum 30)</li> <li>• Students wishing to apply for teaching or healthcare courses meet with Sixth Form team to discuss work experience requirements.</li> <li>• Drive safety event at Stevenage</li> <li>• Lower Sixth Workshops begin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UCAS application:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Personal Statements to be drafted and emailed to staff for checking.</li> <li>○ Oxbridge, medics, vets and dentists have early UCAS deadline – 30 Sept.</li> <li>○ All other applications have Nov 30 deadline</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Oct</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit to Caius College Cambridge by potential Oxbridge students.</li> <li>• Progress Report 1</li> <li>• Students to meet tutors to discuss effort grades</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress Report 1</li> <li>• Students meet tutors to discuss effort grades</li> <li>• Complete UCAS applications/Research for non-uni plans</li> </ul>
<b>Nov</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maths and English GCSE Re-sits</li> <li>• EPQ supervisions begin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freman UCAS Deadline: Nov 30</li> </ul>
<b>Dec</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation Evening</li> </ul>
<b>Jan</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upper Sixth Trial Exams</li> </ul>
<b>Feb</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower Sixth Trial Exams</li> <li>• Work-shadowing day (Feb 4<sup>th</sup>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress Report 2</li> <li>• Visit to Houses of Parliament</li> <li>• Student Finance applications open for university loans.</li> </ul>

<b>Month</b>	<b>Lower Sixth events</b>	<b>Upper Sixth events</b>
<b>March</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress report 2</li> <li>• Consultation Evening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peak time for many apprenticeship applications</li> <li>• Visit to National Apprenticeship Show</li> </ul>
<b>April</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students encouraged to research University and apprenticeship options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress Report 3</li> </ul>
<b>May</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Post-18 Options” information evening for parents</li> <li>• Key time to arrange visits to university open days</li> <li>• AS Maths &amp; Further Maths exams</li> <li>• Deadline for completing 30 hours’ Community Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Level exams begin</li> </ul>
<b>June</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower Sixth Trial Exams</li> <li>• Visit to UCAS Convention</li> <li>• Students interviewed about their post 18 plans</li> <li>• Ex-students return to Freman to advise Lower Sixth about their future options</li> <li>• Students log on to the UCAS site and begin university applications</li> </ul>	
<b>July</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers make grade predictions for use in UCAS applications</li> <li>• Progress report 3</li> </ul>	
<b>Aug</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Level results day</li> </ul>



## **Moving on from Freman College**

No sooner do students start studying their post-16 courses than we are asking them to think about what they want to do when they leave us! This is because most students will need to make their applications in a little over a year's time.

During **Lower Sixth Workshops** and through PSHCRE day activities, we offer a comprehensive programme of activities to help prepare students for whatever their future plans entail.

### **For those students wishing to progress to university:**

- talks from university staff on how to choose a course and university
- information evening for parents, to explain the university application process and how best to support their son or daughter
- subscription to the UniFrog website, to compare universities and courses
- off-timetable day to create accounts on UCAS and begin applications
- visit to the annual UCAS Convention, where students can speak to representatives from all universities and attend taster lectures
- mock interviews for any students who are invited to interview by universities
- presentation by providers of "gap year" opportunities
- advice about applying for Student Finance

### **For students whose plans do not involve university:**

- outside speakers about apprenticeship opportunities
- "Alternatives to University" evening for parents, to explain how to research and apply for apprenticeships and school-leaver opportunities
- subscription to the UniFrog website, to compare apprenticeship opportunities in the local area
- CV – building workshops
- opportunity for individual careers interview
- mock interviews for any student invited to a job or apprenticeship interview
- targeted support in finding opportunities relevant to their plans

Towards the end of the summer term, tutors will meet individually with each student to discuss their future plans.

However, the ultimate responsibility for researching their future options must lie with the students and it is essential that they take on board all the advice and information that they are given during Lower Sixth and make good use of the various resources available in College and online.

Whatever route they are thinking of taking when they leave us, we ask students to keep the Sixth Form team informed about their ever-changing plans. In order for us to support them effectively, we need to know what it is they want to do. Once we know this, we can contact them when we receive information about work experience, taster days, or other opportunities that are relevant to their plans.

## Work-related learning in the Sixth Form

During their time in the Sixth Form, students will be given guidance and support to help make them more employable in the future. This is delivered through activities on PSHCRE Days, through Lower Sixth workshops and through career-specific presentations at lunchtimes, and covers aspects of work-related learning including:

- How to write a CV
- How to prepare for an interview
- How to research careers, apprenticeships and courses
- How to manage a budget
- How to demonstrate leadership and team-working skills

## Work Experience

Students are encouraged to seek work experience and work-related activities that are relevant to their plans. In the vast majority of cases these can, and should, be fitted into the school holidays so as not to disrupt the student's learning. However, for some types of experience (such as in a primary school) this will not be possible, and students are asked to see Mr Abell as early as possible to discuss the best dates for these.

Very few university courses **require** students to have specific work experience prior to application. The exceptions to this are:

- For primary teaching courses, at least two weeks' experience in classrooms is required, preferably at two significantly different primary schools.
- For medicine, nursing, dentistry, veterinary medicine and veterinary nursing, a minimum of three weeks of meaningful experience is expected. This need not be in a hospital or GP surgery, and students are encouraged to gain a wide range of short-term experiences that are relevant to healthcare professions, such as helping at a nursing home, shadowing at a dog-rehabilitation centre, assisting with lambing on a farm, etc.

All students will be expected to arrange one day's work shadowing, appropriate to their future plans, for the PSHCRE Day on **February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020**.

# University applications: a parents' guide

(taken from The Telegraph)

## Master the university application process to help smooth the way.



The benefits of a university education are well documented: a lifetime of enhanced earning power and entry into a wide range of professions; the intellectual satisfaction and cut and thrust of informed debate; the chance to spread one's wings.

What isn't so well understood is how to get there. Many parents with children at school today didn't go to university. Even if they did, the process has changed beyond recognition, with computerization, tuition fees and unprecedented levels of choice.

With universities in the UK offering more than 43,000 courses covering over 1,000 subjects, these days there is something for almost everyone.

### Choosing a course (Year 12)

The nitty-gritty of university application gets under way quite early in Year 13, so ideally students should finish Year 12 with a good, almost final idea of what they want to study and where.

Most students select their course to fit their career choice (if known) or the subject(s) they enjoyed at school.

The UCAS website details which universities in which areas offer which courses. University websites have clear course descriptions, and most institutions run informed open days where prospective students and their families can meet academics and students, and view teaching facilities and accommodation.

## **Applying (Year 13, autumn)**

In the autumn term of Year 13, the process shifts up a gear. Applications and offers are handled via the UCAS website and students will have registered via their school, although some are more on the ball than others so it pays to double check.

Students can apply for up to five courses. If they choose fewer, they can add extra ones later. There is no order of preference and universities are not told which other institutions the student has applied to. Entry requirements for most courses hinge on applicants' exam results.

Each grade of each qualification earns students a defined number of UCAS Tariff points (for A-level it's 48 points for an A, 40 for a B and so on). Universities usually demand either a total number of Tariff points or minimum A-level grades (for example, ABB). Read the notes carefully as there may be restrictions, such as: points must be earned from only three A-levels or students must have at least a B in Maths.

Students should make sure they are aware of their predicted grades by asking teachers and it makes sense to choose one or two "back-up" universities, or courses whose requirements are less stringent.

The application process is all online and can be completed in stages. The trickier bit is the "personal statement", where students have carte blanche to sell themselves to the university. Most candidates won't be interviewed so, apart from exam results and a short reference, the personal statement is the university's only chance to assess students' suitability and enthusiasm (plus their ability to spell).

The process can be pretty daunting for a 17-year-old, so be prepared to provide advice and moral support. It's worth starting early, jotting down ideas and writing a first draft during the summer holidays.

The final UCAS deadline for most applications is normally in January but earlier for medicine, dentistry, veterinary subjects and all courses at Oxford and Cambridge and later for some art and design courses. However, most schools make their own, earlier deadline and it's recommended pupils get applications in early. Although universities are obliged to consider all applications received by the deadline, many start making offers in the autumn.

Students can apply until June 30, but then universities will only consider the application if they still have vacancies. Anyone who applies after June 30 goes straight into Clearing in August.

Once an application is done, the school will check it, add references and forward it to UCAS who charge a fee of £25 paid by the students via the UCAS website. Students then receive written acknowledgements from UCAS and sometimes from the universities.

Students wishing to take a gap year can apply for a deferred place (subject to university agreement) but still have to meet the deadlines for the year in which they apply.

### **Offers (Year 13, spring/summer)**

Assuming students have met the appropriate deadline, universities must issue an offer or rejection by early May, but many do so much sooner (hence the earlier school deadline). Students who have already completed A-levels (or equivalent) will receive “unconditional” offers, but for the rest any offer will be “conditional” on academic success. Conditional offers may ask for a set number of UCAS Tariff points, or exact grades in specific subjects (or even modules). Study the offer carefully, as it may not entirely match what you read in the course prospectus. A minority of courses also invite candidates for an interview.

Students don't have to do anything until all their university choices have responded. UCAS will then prompt the student to make their decision by a set deadline (for example, early May if they have received all responses by the end of March). Unconditional offers are simple. Accept one and you're in. But if a student's first choice is a conditional offer, they can also accept a second choice if they wish (usually conditional on lower grades). All other offers are formally declined and cannot be reinstated later.

UCAS calls the first choice “firm” and the second choice “insurance”. Note that students can't choose between their firm and insurance offers once they get their results: if their firm choice accepts them, they cannot plump for the insurance choice instead.

Students with no offers can apply for another course that has vacancies, via UCAS's Extra service. If rejected, they then apply to another, and so on.

### **Finance (Year 13, spring/summer)**

As soon as students have a firm choice they can think about applying for a student loan (and grant if eligible) via Student Finance at [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance). What they can receive will depend on household income, so parents will need their income data to hand.

Students need to quote a bank account into which the money can be paid, and a valid passport number: if it's expired you must post their birth certificate and a counter-signature. Deadlines for applications can vary but are usually around May. Miss the deadline and the cash may not be available by the start of term.

If the university offers scholarships or bursaries, it may be necessary to apply for these now, too, so check.

### **Student Accommodation (Year 13, spring)**

Once they have made their first choice, students should check to see when student accommodation becomes available. There is usually a rush for the most popular type, so they probably need to apply on the first day. All the information they need – including what is available, how much it costs, how to apply – will be on the dedicated area of the university website.

### **Results (August)**

A-level results are published on a set Thursday in August and its vital students are home then and for the next week. Most exam results (including A-levels) are sent direct to UCAS, which automatically notifies universities. If the student gets the grades required by their firm or insurance choice, you can all breathe a sigh of relief, crack open the bubbly and start packing.

If they have just missed the required grades, one of their choices might still offer them a place, although there may be a nail-biting delay. Alternatively, the university may offer a different subject, a different level or a different start date. This is called a “changed course” and the student may accept or reject it.

## Top 5 things parents can do to help their children succeed in the Sixth Form

1. Help them to achieve 100% attendance. Anything less will damage their chances.
2. Check that they are matching every hour of lesson time with at least one hour of work outside of lessons, and reviewing their new learning after every lesson. This cannot be achieved just by using study periods within their timetable.
3. Make sure there is an undisturbed space at home for them to study (away from distractions like Xbox, mobile phones, etc)
4. Help them to understand that struggling is part of learning. Post-16 courses are not easy and they will face big challenges. The important thing is to use each experience to do better next time.
5. Help them to research their future plans. This can, and should, be done as early as possible as it can be a great motivator when work gets hard. If their intention is to go to university, this should involve going to open days so they can start to get a feel for what type of university they like. It's also great to take younger siblings along, so that they can begin the process of thinking about their own future plans.



The Sixth Form relies on the support of our students' parents and carers whose role is indispensable in helping guide and encourage them through the next stage in their lives. If you should have any concerns or worries, please do not hesitate to contact one of the Sixth Form team.

If you think it would have been useful to see other information in this quick guide, please let us know.

We look forward to the next two years and wish all our new Lower Sixth students every success.

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Mr B Hemel	Assistant Director of Sixth Form
Mrs C Monk	Study Supervisor & Administrator
Ms L Chapman	Study Supervisor

## Useful Websites:

### Careers advice:

[www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)  
[www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)  
[www.careersbox.co.uk](http://www.careersbox.co.uk)  
[www.connexions-hertfordshire.co.uk](http://www.connexions-hertfordshire.co.uk)  
[www.notgoingtouni.co.uk](http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk)  
[www.yini.org.uk](http://www.yini.org.uk)

### General uni advice:

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)  
[www.ucas.ac.uk/parents/register](http://www.ucas.ac.uk/parents/register)  
[www.ucas.tv](http://www.ucas.tv)

### Choosing a uni:

[www.unifrog.org.uk](http://www.unifrog.org.uk)  
[www.unistats.com](http://www.unistats.com)  
[www.push.co.uk](http://www.push.co.uk)  
[www.educationguardian.co.uk](http://www.educationguardian.co.uk)  
[university.which.co.uk](http://university.which.co.uk)  
[www.whatuni.com](http://www.whatuni.com)  
[www.ukcoursefinder.com](http://www.ukcoursefinder.com)  
[www.bestcourse4me.com](http://www.bestcourse4me.com)  
[www.russellgroup.ac.uk](http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk)  
[www.accessprofessions.com](http://www.accessprofessions.com)  
[www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate)

### Student finance:

[www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance)  
[www.moneysavingexpert.com/students](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/students)

### Open days and taster days:

[www.opendays.com](http://www.opendays.com)  
[www.unitasterdays.com](http://www.unitasterdays.com)  
[www.london.ac.uk/tasters](http://www.london.ac.uk/tasters)

### General:

[www.princes-trust.org.uk](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk)  
[www.projecttrust.org.uk](http://www.projecttrust.org.uk)  
[www.channelmogo.org](http://www.channelmogo.org)  
[www.suttontrust.com](http://www.suttontrust.com)