

# Sixth Form Parent handbook

## Sixth Form staff

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Welcome to Freman College Sixth Form. This is the beginning of an exciting new phase in your son or daughter's education. Over the next two years, students will need to balance studying hard for their courses with preparing themselves for whatever they hope to do after leaving us. This can be challenging, and this handbook will outline what parents need to know in order to help.

## **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 and be proactive in using time between lessons to support their learning. 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 promptly after every lesson ensures that no gaps are left in a student's understanding. This process of continuous review will help them avoid over-loading themselves as exams approach.

Students will have the support of our Study Supervisor, who will help those struggling with organisation to make the changes they need.

**To be successful, every Sixth Form student will need to spend around one additional hour working on their subject for each hour of lesson time.**

**This cannot all be achieved in the study time available within their timetable, so they are likely to need to complete an hour or two each evening.**

In the early weeks of their courses, we ask students to keep a record of the things they do between lessons to consolidate their learning. This helps us to check that students are settling into good study habits from the start.

## **Attendance**

A minimum of 95% attendance is expected from all students. If attendance falls below 80% students may be withdrawn from courses.

All students are expected to attend morning and afternoon registrations unless they have a free period.

**In the case of illness, parents are asked to phone the college to inform us before 8:30am if possible.**

## **Student Cars**

Driving lessons must not be arranged during timetabled lessons or tutor time, but students will be able to arrange to move a study period on their timetable if it helps them to fit in driving lessons. 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 parking is available on the road outside college.

## **Community Service**

We hope that all Sixth Formers will want to play an active part in the wider life of the college, including participation in extra-curricular activities. As part of this, we encourage every Lower Sixth student to try to complete at least 30 hours of voluntary community service of some kind, either for an external group or organization, such as a sports club or scout group, or within the College. Opportunities within the college will include helping younger students in our Paired Reading scheme, helping to run the college's Amnesty group, or assisting in lessons with younger years. This is their chance to get involved their community and also gain something extra that can be including in work or university applications.

## **Dress Code**

Sixth Formers are free to wear clothes of their choice but are asked to dress in a way appropriate to a learning environment. Hats should not be worn inside college and a reasonable standard of dress is expected that does not offend or distract others.

## **Progressing into Year 13**

In order to continue their courses into Year 13, students are normally required to be predicted at least two D grades in A Levels, or Passes in Cambridge Technical courses.

## **Moving on from Freman College**

No sooner do students start studying their Sixth Form 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 post-18 applications in a little over a year's time.

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. Once we know their intentions, we can contact them when we receive information about work experience, taster days, or other opportunities that are relevant to their plans.

In a number of off-timetable days, students will work with professionals from a range of local companies to help build their employability skills and application confidence.

Every Friday morning students will have a Lower Sixth Workshop on their timetable. These are delivered by a combination of Sixth Form staff and outside speakers and cover themes to support their independence after Sixth Form, such as:

- Personal finance
- Health & mental health issues
- World Views
- Politics & social responsibility
- Study skills
- Progression to university and apprenticeships

## **Work Experience**

Students are encouraged to seek work experience and work-related activities that are relevant to their plans. These may be a combination of virtual events and in-person experience. One day in January is set aside for all students in the Lower Sixth to complete a day of in-person or virtual work experience that is relevant to their plans. **The date this year will be January 27, 2026** and we encourage students to start planning early for what they want to do on that day.

A wide range of virtual work experience opportunities can be found in the Special Opportunities page of the Unifrog website, which all Lower Sixth students have an account for.

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

- For **primary teaching** courses, two weeks' experience in a school is suggested, preferably at two significantly different primary schools. Interested students should see Mr Abell to discuss when in the year would be best to try to do this.
- For **medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine** at least three weeks of meaningful experience is expected. This need not be in a hospital or GP surgery, and students are encouraged if possible 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.

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

1. Help them to achieve at least 95% attendance. Anything less will damage their chances of success.
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. Try to provide 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 be a great motivator when work gets hard. If their intention is to go to university, this should involve going to open days in the Summer term so they can start to get a feel for what type of university they would like.