



Caterham School Sixth Form

Parent Handbook



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Welcome

Dear pupils, parents and guardians,

Welcome to the Sixth Form at Caterham School! Whether you are new to the school or have come all the way through from Reception Class, we are very happy that you have chosen to complete your school education here.

Our ethos is clear – in the Caterham Sixth Form we focus on developing the whole person, aiming to ensure that each pupil leaves here ready for the challenges of life at university and beyond and understanding their responsibilities towards others. We want our pupils to leave Caterham well equipped to engage positively with a rapidly changing world as accomplished problem solvers and innovators, confident in their ability to lead and with a clear appreciation of and respect for the views and potential of others. As a result, we ask our pupils to:

- Always give of their best in all that they do
- Be open minded and seek new opportunities and experiences
- Be positive and willing to take on a challenge
- Be prepared to learn from mistakes – there will be bumps in the road and building up resilience and the ability to bounce back is vital

The two year journey of Sixth Form life can be a little scary, but also immensely rewarding and enjoyable and we will support our pupils every step of the way to help them achieve their goals. To help clarify how the Sixth Form works, this handbook gives a brief overview of some of the key areas pupils will come across and will hopefully be a useful source of reference over the coming years.

Your path through the Caterham Sixth Form – a timeline

Autumn Term L6	
Pre-term	Induction days for new and existing pupils
September	“The jump from GCSE” forum L6 team building day L6 parents welcome evening Sixth Form wellbeing forum
October	Gratings report Sixth form trips information evening Sixth Form wellbeing forum
November	“Safe drive – stay alive” forum L6 internal exams week
December	L6 parents evening
Spring Term L6	
January	Decisions on dropping a subject to be made L6 enrichment programme starts “Beyond Caterham” parents Careers information evening
February	Gratings report Centigrade careers and HE testing Sixth Form wellbeing forum
March	Gratings report Sixth Form wellbeing forum
Summer Term L6	
April	Oxbridge/medics UCAS enrichment process starts (see UCAS timeline for fuller details of the university application process)
May	Gratings report
June	L6 internal exams week Parents information evenings for summer Sixth Form trips
July	Full reports Universities fair
Autumn Term U6	
September	Higher education consultation evening Sixth Form wellbeing forum
October	Gratings report Sixth Form wellbeing forum
November	University pre-tests
December	Full reports
Spring Term U6	
January	U6 mock examinations
February	Gratings report U6 parents evening Sixth Form wellbeing forum
March	Gratings report Sixth Form wellbeing forum
Summer Term U6	
May	Tutor report Leavers’ day celebrations and Bible Service A level examinations start
August	A level results day

Communication between the school and parents or guardians

Clear, open and honest channels of communication are vital in ensuring that we are able to provide the best possible academic support and pastoral care for our pupils. We are committed to ensuring that we communicate with parents and guardians in a regular and timely manner, both informally by phone and email and through formal channels such as full reports, gradings and parents evenings. It is also extremely important that we are made aware of any issues outside of school, so that we are able to take the right approach in our care of your sons and daughters.

The key contact for your child's care in both academic and pastoral matters should be the tutor. We are lucky to have an extremely dedicated and experienced team of Sixth Form tutors who will be more than happy to chat through any issues or concerns you may have about your child's academic progress or pastoral wellbeing. Our tutors are of course part of the academic teaching staff, so may not always be able to receive telephone calls in a given moment, but if you leave a message or email, they will respond within 24 hours, or sooner in many cases. Your child's tutor will remain with them for the entire two years of the Sixth Form, enabling them to build up a strong working relationship.

We understand that there are times when you may wish to speak to the Head of Year and this is also welcomed. There are many stress-points in the lives of Sixth Formers and we are always willing to listen to concerns, offer advice where it may be useful and do our best to make sure that the Sixth Form at Caterham is an extremely positive experience for your son or daughter.

Academic reporting

Over the course of the Sixth Form, parents and guardians will receive three main forms of formal academic reporting. These are:

- Gradings reports
 - A snapshot summary of homework effort, classwork effort and achievement grades, often accompanied by a written report from the tutor.
- Full reports
 - A written report from each subject teacher, highlighting not only how each pupil is performing academically, but also giving targets for improvement.
- Parents' evenings
 - A chance for a 5 minute conversation with each of your son or daughter's teachers. If more time or a follow up appointment is needed, this can also be arranged at a convenient time.

We would encourage parents to get in touch if they have any concerns, either in general or arising out of these reports, and would like to chat them through with their child's tutor or subject teachers. Maintaining a two-way dialogue will make sure that there is a consistent message between home and school and help our pupils achieve their best, whilst ensuring that a sensible, balanced workload is maintained. As well as being sent home via Firefly, both gradings and full reports are also discussed between the tutor and tutee to ensure advice is being taken on board. Where pupils are not working to their full potential, we will put a plan in place to help support their learning and help them catch up. This may involve specific subject target setting, closer and more regular monitoring, supervising private study periods and offering advice and guidance on effective learning techniques.

Subject changes

The majority of our pupils will start their A level course with four subjects. Whilst most pupils are happy with their choices, it can be the case that a pupil realises early on that they have made a wrong choice for them and wish to amend their subject combination. Where space and the timetable allow, we will do our utmost to accommodate this and allow any such changes in the first two weeks of term.

However, once this grace period expires, pupils and parents should be aware that pupils will then be expected to continue with their agreed subject portfolio for the remainder of the Autumn term. At the end of term, there are internal examinations which will, along with teacher feedback and a parents' evening, allow pupils to make an informed decision about which (if any) subject they wish to drop from the start of the Spring term.

The rationale for not allowing further amendment during the Autumn term is to ensure that they give all of their subjects a proper try and have the best possible range of options moving forward. It is often the case that the subject pupils think they will drop at the start of term is not the one they end up dropping, demonstrating the importance of keeping all options open as long as possible.

Pastoral care and the forum programme

Ensuring that our pupils are happy and well-balanced is key to them performing at their best academically and in their many co-curricular activities. In order to achieve this, we have a proactive approach to addressing difficult issues pupils might face through our Forum Programme. This is a programme of talks across a range of issues, such as alcohol, drugs, safe driving, eating disorders, e-safety and sexual health. We believe that providing balanced information through engaging outside speakers is effective in ensuring that our pupils can make good decisions when faced with challenging situations. The forums are backed up by discussion and debate in tutor groups to allow pupils to express their concerns and seek further guidance where necessary.

We do understand, however, that there may be times when pupils do struggle with the stress and demands of A levels and social factors in their Sixth Form years. As a result, tutors will closely monitor and support pupils who may be finding life difficult, as will the Sixth Form team. We also have a school counsellor who is very experienced in dealing with Sixth Form issues and who is available for pupils to see, should they wish to.

Enrichment, outreach and the Caterham Award

We believe that the Sixth Form at Caterham is not just about performing well academically, but also about acquiring the skills to be successful in life. Through our Caterham Award programme, all Sixth Formers will be required to set SMART targets across four main areas and log evidence that they are developing as a whole person. These areas are:

- Reaching your academic potential
- Understanding the world around us
- Contributing to society
- Maintaining a healthy body

By ensuring that they maintain a balance between the four key areas, our pupils will build up positive habits that we hope will stand them in good stead at university and in their lives beyond Caterham. We are not prescriptive with exactly what they need to do, but encourage our pupils to go beyond their comfort zones by trying new activities from the many on offer, engaging in service and charity work and making a real difference to the local community.

The UCAS process

The university application process (UCAS) is a key part of Sixth Form life. The tutor, subject teachers and Sixth Form team will help to advise and guide pupils with regards to which courses and universities are right for them and we are happy to meet with parents who have questions about these extremely important decisions. We have a clear and robust process to ensure that pupils are properly prepared for their UCAS application in terms of sessions on personal statement writing, review and approval structures and interview and pre-testing practice where relevant. We also take our responsibility as reference writers extremely seriously and are fully supportive of all our pupils' applications. This is reflected in the extremely high offer rate we achieve, allowing our pupils to access the very best universities. The process is outlined in the timeline below:

UCAS 2 year timeline

Date	Early applications (Oxbridge, Medics, Dentists, Vets)	All other applications
Spring term L6		
January	UCAS introduction evening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline of the process for parents and pupils Individual Research Projects launched <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compulsory for all Oxbridge applicants Oxbridge introduction evening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighting the differences in the Oxbridge process for interested pupils and parents Students interested in applying for Oxbridge register their interest 	UCAS introduction evening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline of the process for parents and pupils Individual Research Projects launched <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional, but recommended for all
February	Preliminary internal Oxbridge interviews	
March	Practice pre-test session	
Throughout the term	Centigrade testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional HE questionnaire and feedback Subject enrichment sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students should be attending these in their chosen subject areas Higher level enrichment programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compulsory for early application students, optional for all others 	Centigrade testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional HE questionnaire and feedback Subject enrichment sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students should be attending these in their chosen subject areas Higher level enrichment programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compulsory for early application students, optional for all others
Summer term L6		
Throughout the term	Subject enrichment and higher level enrichment programme continuing Students to be researching university choices with the help of the Sixth Form team	Subject enrichment and higher level enrichment programme continuing Students to be researching university choices with the help of the Sixth Form team
June	Visits to Oxford and Cambridge	
Arts week	A variety of sessions run for students, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal statement writing UCAS Apply 	A variety of sessions run for students, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal statement writing UCAS Apply

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Finance • Research of suitable courses • Open days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Finance • Research of suitable courses • Open days
Summer Holiday	<p>Continued progress on university application including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open day visits, taster days and further research of possible university choices • Enrichment reading • Work experience • First draft of personal statement 	<p>Continued progress on university application including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open day visits, taster days and further research of possible university choices • Enrichment reading • Work experience • First draft of personal statement
Autumn term U6		
September	<p>Enrichment day, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalising UCAS Apply • Refining personal statements workshop with visiting universities • Practice interviews with Old Cats • Post-summer results interview <p>Second pre-test practice paper</p> <p>Feedback on personal statements to be sought and acted upon immediately on return from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject specialist • Tutor • Early application mentor 	<p>Enrichment day, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalising UCAS Apply • Refining personal statements workshop with visiting universities <p>Feedback on personal statements to be sought and acted upon from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject specialist (by 15th September) • Tutor (by 6th October)
15 th September	<p>Final references to be submitted. These must have been checked and approved by early application mentors.</p> <p>Students' UCAS Apply to have been checked for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common errors • Suitability of university choices 	
15 th September	<p>Deadline for submission of UCAS Apply and personal statement. Your Apply form must have been checked by your tutor.</p>	

13 th October		Deadline for submission of UCAS Apply and personal statement. Your Apply form must have been checked by your tutor.
15 th October	Final external deadline for submission to UCAS	
2 nd November	Majority of university pre-tests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This mainly applies to early applications, but also some other courses – check with departments and see http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/ 	Check if pre-tests apply
November	Individual Research Projects due in followed by the presentation evening for finalists	Individual Research Projects due in followed by the presentation evening for finalists
December	Candidates called for interview	
Early January	Decisions received from Oxbridge	
15 th January		External deadline by which all applications must be received by UCAS. None of our students should be aiming for this deadline as there is no advantage in delaying the process.
February	Upper Sixth Parents Evening, where firm and insurance offers can be decided based on progress.	Upper Sixth Parents Evening, where firm and insurance offers can be decided based on progress.
May	Firm and insurance choices must be made on UCAS Apply. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This date may be delayed if offers come later than 31st March, which will be shown on a pupil's UCAS tracking system. 	Firm and insurance choices must be made on UCAS Apply. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This date may be delayed if offers come later than 31st March, which will be shown on a pupil's UCAS tracking system.
From Firm/Insurance choices being made	Accommodation applications start <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process varies between universities but in general pupils will be able to apply for accommodation at their Firm choice as soon as the choice is made, so research into halls should be ongoing from April. 	Accommodation applications start <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process varies between universities but in general pupils will be able to apply for accommodation at their Firm choice as soon as the choice is made, so research into halls should be ongoing from April.
May	Student Finance needs to be applied for between January and May to guarantee start of course payment.	Student Finance needs to be applied for between January and May to guarantee start of course payment.
16 th August 2018	A level results day	A level results day

Contact information

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us and we would be glad to help.

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