

SIXTH FORM – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

A LEVEL COURSES

Do I need high GCSE results to get on to A Level courses at to Oaklands Sixth Form?

All applicants should expect to achieve at least five GCSE's at grade 4-5 including English and Maths. For many courses a grade 5-6 is a better indication of suitability.

How many A Level options are there to choose from?

Art & Design	Law
Biology	Mathematics
Business	Media
Chemistry	Modern Foreign Languages
Computer Programming	Music
Economics	Photography
English Language	Physical Education
English Literature	Physics
English Language & Literature (Joint)	Politics
Film Studies	Product Design
Further Maths	Psychology
Geography	Religious Studies
History	Sociology

This list is subject to change from year to year, dependant on student numbers.

How many subjects will you study?

At Oaklands Sixth Form most students will study **three** two-year courses. Students with predicted grades of 9-8 at GCSE can be allowed to choose to study four subject courses at Level 3.

Predicted GCSE Grades	Number of A Level (Level 3) courses to study
9-8	3 or 4
Mostly 9-7	3 or 4
Mostly 9-5	3
Mostly 7-4	3
Mostly 4-1	Level 1 or 2 may be more suitable for you. These courses are not offered at Oaklands Sixth Form and you would need to apply to a local further education college.

In addition to the subject courses, students' timetables will include registration and tutorial periods, study sessions, enrichment time and Philosophy, Religion & Ethics (PRE) lessons.

How many hours of study should I expect on an average day?

As a guide, the number of hours spent in class per week, per subject, should be 4-5, with the same amount of independent study applied.

Can I switch A Levels? If I decide to change subjects after starting Sixth Form, how much time do I have to do this?

You can change your A Levels as long as the subjects fit on the timetable, you have the required grades *and* it is possible for you to catch up. You must speak to the teachers and to the A Level office to seek agreement and this must all be done before October half term.

Do Oaklands offer an A Level for Philosophy?

Philosophy of Religion forms part of our Religious Studies, along with Ethics and New Testament.

Do we get to switch Teachers?

There are set teachers for each subject, so you cannot switch.

What is the most fun A Level?

It is important to pick subjects that you enjoy, if you enjoy your subject then you will work hard and get a good grade.

Which subjects are the easiest and hardest?

A Level subjects are all challenging but they are less so when you enjoy them and work hard.

Which subject would you recommend for a career as a Social Worker?

Sociology and/or Psychology are good subjects for a career in social work but not essential.

Can I do food Tech as an Enrichment programme?

This is not currently available.

Do I need to take Chemistry for a career in Dentistry?

Yes

Are the subjects interesting?

Our Teachers always try to make the subject content interesting and engaging. Selecting a subject that you find interesting yourself, or you know will add value to your future will ensure that the time spent in lesson will be more enjoyable for all.

Would studying all three sciences be overwhelming?

All A Levels are challenging, you should be prepared for hard work. If you enjoy the subject this will make the work more enjoyable.

Which subjects would help most to further my film career?

If you are interested in filming and editing, then Media Studies and/or Film Studies would be good options. If you are interested in scriptwriting, English may be a good option. If you are interested in acting then Drama would be a good option. For any of these careers, English is a very good choice but not essential. For these careers, experience outside of your subjects is useful too, such as belonging to a drama group or filming and editing your own videos.

THE SIXTH FORM – GENERAL INFORMATION

What are the grades I need to get into Oaklands Sixth Form?

All applicants should expect to achieve at least five GCSE's at grade 4-5 including English and Maths. For many courses a grade 5-6 is a better indication of suitability.

When is the right time to apply for Sixth Form?

The Sixth Form Open Evening is held during the third week in October, this is a good opportunity to visit and to find out more about the subjects we offer.

Following Open Evening, Sixth Form applications are open until December. In December we begin to look at best fit for subjects and student timetables. Applications received after the December deadline will be added to our waitlist and reviewed in the New Year.

How do the free periods work?

We prefer to think of 'free periods' as independent study periods. This time can be used for independent or group study outside of the classroom. It is advised that students stay on-site to study. We have a quiet study area, and students are able to use empty classrooms.

How long are the Sixth Form lessons?

Usually one-hour.

How is a typical Sixth Form day structured?

Registration:	09:00-09:20 (on Monday and Thursday)
Lesson 1:	09:20-10:20
Lesson 2:	10:20-11:20
Break:	11:20-11:45
Lesson 3:	11:45-12:45
Lesson 4:	12:45-13:45
Lunch:	13:45-14:25
Lesson 5:	14:25-15:30

Do you have to go to Registration (Tutor) if your first lesson is during the afternoon?

Registration is compulsory on Monday and Thursday even if your first lesson is in the afternoon. You should use your free periods to complete independent study. Assembly is every other week on a Tuesday, this is compulsory too. You will also have a tutor period fortnightly and this is compulsory too.

Are there any spaces at school where I can study?

We have a few areas around the Sixth Form building in which you can study during free periods.

How many Registration/Tutor Group are there in Sixth Form?

There are currently x7 in Year 12 and x7 in Year 13.

Are there any extra-curricular activities available in Sixth Form?

We have 'Enrichment' on a Wednesday afternoon, where there are a range of activities to get involved with from book club to sporting activities. We also have guest speakers, the HE+ programme and in June we have a week which focuses on enrichment activity and work experience.

How often is Enrichment, and what does it involve?

On Wednesday afternoon, students in Year 12 take part in enrichment activities, which include: work experience, school display teams, performing arts, sports, subject ambassadors for Oaklands departments, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and leadership opportunities across the school.

Are many resources needed (e.g. books, stationery) and are they expensive?

You will need your own notepads/folders and stationery. For some subjects you need to buy textbooks and for others they are online.

Can I use my mobile phone during breaks?

Yes, albeit the signal in our Sixth Form block can be troublesome for some networks. Phones can only be used in the Sixth Form building and not anywhere else on site.

Do I have to go to Mass?

Whilst you do not have to be a practising Catholic to enrol in Oaklands Sixth Form College you do have to know that we are a Catholic Sixth Form and accordingly, have a sympathy for the ethos and values that we strive to provide in our values-based educational approach. We expect all students to attend Mass.

Is there a microwave in Sixth Form?

Unfortunately, not, but hot food is available at break time and lunch time in our Canteen. There is a kettle and vending machines in the Common Room.

Can I make class notes on a laptop?

Yes, if this is your usual way of working. We have laptops available for students to use whilst onsite (i.e. not to take home).

Can I chew gum?

Not during lessons, please.

How many days per week do we come in?

The timetable is split over 5 days so you will have lessons each day, however you will have free periods and may have an afternoon or morning free.

Do you have to pay for Sixth Form college?

No

How often do we have Tutor time?

Registration is twice per week and tutor period (1 hour) is once a fortnight, these are compulsory.

Will there be help for me if I am feeling very stressed or finding things difficult?

Support will be provided by your Tutor, or another member of staff who you feel comfortable talking to. Our Sixth Form Pastoral Lead is also available in the Sixth Form office.

How many students study at Oaklands Sixth Form?

This varies each year but currently we have 265 students across Year 12 and Year 13.

How many students from schools other than Oaklands join Sixth Form?

This varies, but in the past couple of years we have had 50-60 students from other secondary schools in South East Hampshire join our Sixth Form.

Do you have provision for students with additional needs?

We have a small team supporting our Sixth Form students who have additional or complex needs. One to one support for EHCP students is of course available.

Can students buy food on site?

Yes, we have a canteen with hot and cold food options. The canteen caters for all dietary preferences including vegetarian, vegan, gluten free and lactose intolerant. Some students bring their own food in or leave site to buy their own food or eat at home if they live locally. We also have vending machines in the Sixth Form Common Room.

EXAMS

How many exams are there usually?

There are usually 2-3 exams per subject. Some subjects also have a Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) piece of coursework.

Is there one-to-one exam support available to students?

Academic support is looked at case-by-case. Usually this is in small groups rather than 1-2-1.

Do all A Level exams commence in Year 13?

Our A Level courses all run for two years with no external exams halfway through. There will be mock exams, however the official exams will take place at the end of the course in Year 13.