

Enhancing your Sixth Form Education



Introduction

Your sixth form programme of study will be one of the following two options depending on whether you take 3 or 4 A levels:

Option 1

- 3 A levels
- Community Service
- An Elective
- Lecture programme
- Form Time
- 1 hour of Games/ PE

Option 2

- 4 A levels
- Community Service
- Lecture programme
- Form Time
- 1 hour of Games/ PE

This booklet will outline your options regarding the various Elective studies which are being offered and the Community Service.

Selection

All students will need to select both an Elective and a Community Service on your options form, including a reserve. This includes students wishing to take 4 A levels in case they don't meet the entry requirements or they change their mind.

Community Service

Your time in the sixth form not only gives you the opportunity to progress in your studies but also to develop some of the wider skills which are held in high regard by future employers and universities. The Community Service formalises one of the great traditions of Watford Boys of giving to the school and wider community your effort, intelligence and energy in helping and supporting others.

The following options are available:

Community Contribution	Description
Lesson Support	Volunteer to help in one lesson per week with younger students. Develop a relationship with the same students each week in one subject.
Literacy support	Become a trained literacy assistant to help younger students with their reading and writing. You may spend time with different students each week, helping them to gain confidence in key literacy skills.
Workshop	Help younger students with their work through this long-established morning programme. You may have benefitted yourself from Workshop in past years.
Kissing It Better – Watford General	Volunteer through this charity to visit patients at Watford General. Valuable medical work experience. A chance to have a very positive impact on the local community.
Cassiobury Park	Conservation work at Cassiobury Park. Practical, outdoor projects to help maintain and develop our local park.

All contributions will equate to an average of one hour per week from September to May.

Electives – Introduction

Electives have been designed to complement and contrast your academic A level subjects. They are not designed to replace the “4th AS level” which students used to take and is the reason why many of them don’t result in a formal qualification. They should be seen as an opportunity to explore areas of interest.

All of the electives will allow you to develop a range of skills which will be held in high regard by universities and future employers.

The electives will have an hour lesson with a further 2-3 hours of independent study.

All Students should select a first and reserve choice irrespective of whether they have put down 3 or 4 A levels. Those students that qualify and take up the option to do four A levels will then not have to do an elective.

Electives will only run if more than 15 students have selected it as an option.

The electives which are being offered this year are listed below and further details can be found on the subsequent pages.

- EPQ
- MOOCs
- Sport Leaders
- Interpretation of Film
- Communication Skills
- Core Maths
- Digital photography & photo editing
- Military History: Battles, Strategy & Learning lessons
- Italian
- Peak Performance & Positive Mental Health

Electives – EPQ

The EPQ is an elective module in which you will undertake an independent research project of your own choice, following your own interests. You will be supported by weekly sessions which will teach you how to research, write critically and analytically, project-manage, problem solve and work independently.

By the end of the year you will have produced one of the following:

A dissertation or an investigation: This is a written response to your own question or hypothesis. This is the most common choice for the EPQ and the most similar to an undergraduate 'dissertation'. You will undertake research and structure your response as an extended essay which will look critically at your research findings.

A performance: You will develop an original 'performance'. This could be anything that you will perform, for example it could be musical, sport based, or dramatic. You will be assessed not only on the performance, but on the creation and development and the background research you have undertaken which will have underpinned your decisions.

An artefact: In this project, you will create and develop an artefact. These have ranged from a model of a combustion engine to a fiction story about the impact of the Wall Street Crash. It will require research into your chosen topic as well as the creativity to create something with a purpose and rationale.

Why should you choose an EPQ?

- ✓ It gives you the opportunity to pursue your own interests and work on project that you feel passionately about.
- ✓ It is an opportunity to be creative and be in charge of what you are learning.
- ✓ It is worth up to 70 UCAS points and the equivalent of ½ an A Level.
- ✓ Universities value students with EPQs as they can work independently at a high level.
- ✓ Some universities (an increasing number) take it into account in the offers they make (e.g Southampton University make reduced offers for students with EPQs)
- ✓ You can bring together different subject areas, for example, sport and psychology; history and literature, economics and current affairs.
- ✓ You could use it to research something that you would like to study at university, for example, engineering or medicine.
- ✓ You will be well-supported by a team of mentors within the school and will go on a research trip to a University.
- ✓ The skills you learn will support your A Level studies and prepare you for university life.

Who should choose an EPQ?

- ✓ Someone who really, genuinely wants to do one. You will have to undertake some research in your holidays and free time so you need to be willing to do this!
- ✓ Someone who is considering higher education.
- ✓ Someone who has the ability to work independently.
- ✓ Someone who has a passion and an interest outside of their A Level choices.

Electives – MOOC

What are they?

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC's) are delivered by many of the top universities from the UK and abroad and are free, interactive courses. Students can study a MOOC in any subject area where they have an interest. A MOOC is a fantastic opportunity to enhance their current A level studies and also to provide them the opportunity of being taught by leading university lecturers and research professors who can provide them with the most up to date knowledge. Below is an outline of some key benefits that studying a MOOC will bring to your son/daughter:

1. They are topic/subject specific and if a student knows they wish to continue with X subject at university then taking a MOOC course in year 12 and 13 to support their university applications will be of great benefit.
2. Support and adds an independent learning aspect to A level courses which is highly valued by universities.
3. Students get a chance to become part producers and consumers of research content alongside university experts.
4. Free – there is no charge to enter a MOOC course.
5. Interactive learning – they are not just lectures.
6. Each MOOC has a recommended number of learning/participation hours per week – the student can decide when they do this as there is no set time of day or the week.
7. Use of higher education skills and knowledge is enhanced.
8. Assists with 'tasters' of university courses.

What is available?

There are a huge range of courses many of which reflect the undergraduate degree courses offered by the universities. Some examples are as follows.



FOOTBALL
THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH



Thermodynamics

Have a look on Future Learn's website (www.futurelearn.com) for an idea of the type and range of course on offer, alternatively use google to explore the huge range of courses on offer.

How will you study?

With your course tutor you will plan an individual programme of study comprising of a range of MOOCs. These can have a wide or narrow focus depending on your interests and future career and university aspirations. You will have an hour a week tutorial session and the rest of the time will be spent in independent study.

Electives – CSLA (Sports Leaders)

Community Sports Leaders Award allows you to develop the skills needed to lead groups in safe sporting and recreational activity. It encourages participants to take responsibility for others, develops organisational and communication skills and instils confidence in people for whom leading groups in sporting activities is a new experience. The majority of the course is practical in nature with an emphasis on learning through doing, rather than through written work.

Course Content

The Community Sports Leader Award syllabus is divided into eight units which are as follows:

- 1 Organising and delivering a sports activity session
- 2 Establishing and maintaining a safe sporting activity
- 3 Sports and recreation in the UK
- 4 Fitness sessions
- 5 Running sporting events/competitions
- 6 Adapting sports activities
- 7 Select, plan and lead on an sporting activity
- 8 Demonstration of leadership skills in the community

To qualify as a Community Sports Leader, all units must be satisfactorily completed.

Further Information

The skills you will learn are:

- Communication, Teamwork, How to motivate other people.
- The ability to organise and plan activities, improvising and adapting in sports and officiating.

All these skills are useful in life and in the workplace as well as in sport.

Level 2 Certificate in Community Sports Leadership is endorsed and approved by national bodies.

Electives – Interpretations of Film

The course will consist of one film a week from a wide variety of genres and from different decades, including both classics and blockbusters, through the 20th and 21st centuries, which the boys will be required to watch in advance of the classes.

The sessions will involve the boys reading and interpreting the films through small group and whole class discussion. The boys will consider themes and ideas that are presented in these films as well as contextualising the films. The boys will be asked to analyse the films as visual and auditory texts and may be asked to present their ideas on films from time to time.

The boys need not have any prior knowledge of the study of films as texts.

This course would provide a really useful platform for the study of film at university or could simply serve to provide the student with a wider cultural knowledge.

Topics such as: the presentation of the hero in film classics; Hitchcock and suspense; Dystopian societies in film; Feminism, race and sexuality on screen will be covered.

Electives – Communication Skills

This course is designed for students who will not be taking English for A Level.

The sessions would involve techniques on how to improve both written and oral communication skills such as how to write and structure: essays for any subject; CVs; covering letters; personal statements for university and job applications.

Skills such as interview techniques, including face to face interviews, Skype or telephone interviews would also be taught.

Boys will also be given tips on how to deliver presentations to colleagues on a range of topics related to the real world.

Boys will also be given the opportunity to pitch products and practise scenarios that require good communication skills.

Electives – Core Maths

Core Maths is a course for those who want to keep up their valuable maths skills but are not planning to take AS or A-level mathematics. At the end of Year 12 there may be the possibility to continue with the course, to come out with a level 3 qualification –equivalent to an AS level – in Year 13.

Core Maths is designed to help with other A-level subjects – in particular with sciences, geography, psychology and economics – to ensure you continue to maintain and develop your maths skills related to these subjects.

Several universities have come out in strong support of students continuing to study maths beyond GCSE. Even subjects like history now recognise the importance of statistics and so Core Maths will help you at university too.

Also many roles in today's workplace require high levels of budget management and problem-solving skills; Core Maths will be a useful tool in equipping you with these skills. Only 20 per cent of students study maths beyond GCSE in the UK – the lowest rate in leading developed countries in the world; in Japan, this figure is 85 per cent. This puts young people in the UK – you – at a major disadvantage in a global job market. Core Maths is designed to help solve this problem by enabling you to study maths after GCSE to improve your career choices and increase your earning potential.

Electives - Digital photography & photo editing



Time needed

One hour per week at school

Additional time of up to two hours between sessions to complete practical tasks

Benefits of the course

- To have time to develop a new skill outside the constraints of the A level curriculum
- To understand more about the camera and how to take better photographs
- To understand about different types of photography from Fine Art and Commercial to Documentary
- To learn basic Photoshop skills for photo editing and other purposes

Proposed course content

- How the digital camera works including body and lenses, automatic, assisted settings and manual settings
- Fundamental photo techniques including, vocabulary, zoom, lighting, depth of field and understanding light, composition
- Basic Photoshop
- Photo editing
- Understanding about the work of others, how to develop the ability to analyse and understand images

Electives – Military History: Battles, Strategy & Learning lessons

The course provides a fantastic opportunity for students to develop their historical research skills by investigating and analysing a selection of critical battles from history. Through these case studies the students will be taught to examine the battles in detail so that they can produce arguments and demonstrate their ability to consider all factors. They will make informed conclusions based on evidence, essential skills that they will be able to apply in whatever degree course or career they will pursue. Why did one side lose and the other win? Finding the answer is challenging as the students will need to search for the answers, looking at events from a wide range of potential factors such as leadership, weather, motivation, technology or terrain. Conclusions will be debated, ideas discussed and theories presented. What, if any, lessons history learnt from the battle will also be a source of investigation.

Each battle will be studied with a research agenda that allows each battle to be fully investigated. : Why did it happen? What were the qualities of the opposing commanders? What advantages or disadvantages did each army possess? What were the strategies and tactics planned for the battle? What part did the battlefield itself play? What were the reasons for ultimate victory or defeat?

The case studies have been selected as each one provides a range of opportunities for study and debate and pose different challenges for the student. Some are famous, some changed the world, some are barely known, though each battle is a fascinating exploration of human nature, history, geography, leadership and resilience.

The battles come from different periods in history, providing the chance to consider changing perspectives, technologies, cultures, challenges and landscapes from each different time. The battles to be studied include: Thermopylae 480 BC, Salamis 480 BC, Gaugamela 331 BC, Cannae 217 BC, Zama 202 BC, The Teutoburg Forest AD 9, Adrianople 378, Hattin 1187, Crecy 1346, Mohacs 1526, Vienna 1529, Culloden 1746, Leipzig 1813, Waterloo 1815, Isandlwana 1879, Rorke's Drift 1879, Gallipoli 1915, Stalingrad 1943, Cassino 1944, Dien Bien Phu 1954, Khe Sanh 1968.

Besides developing critical skills it also offers effective cross-curricular benefits by supplementing the study of Classical Civilisation and History. The course will consist of two hours per week research time and one hour per work of teacher-lead debate and discussion where the students ideas, conclusions and investigations will be brought together.

Electives – Italian

From the country that brought you the mafia, the Ferrari and the opera, the place that has made living with your parents until thirty-five cool, the home of fashion, corruption and enigmatic gesturing.

Italy is stylish, controversial and theatrical. Its rich history, from the Romans to the Risorgimento, has created a social fabric that is dazzlingly paradoxical and a language to match. Italians, for the most part, are bilingual; they have a home dialect and also speak standard Italian, the language of Dante, Tuscan Italian. The language of Puccini, Da Vinci, Michelangelo and Galileo is a romance language like no other, phonetically uncomplicated making pronunciation straightforward and beautiful to hear, no hidden silent letters, no lisp, nothing harsh.

The MFL department are offering a GCSE course in Italian, to be completed in one year.

We will be following the new specification for exams which means that all four skills are tested at the end of the year and there is no longer a controlled assessment element.

It will be a course taught conversationally alongside rigorous grammar so that you have the skills to discuss, understand and write about several different topics with a clear idea of structure and vocabulary.

For more information on the exam format, visit the AQA website, or if you have any questions please do not hesitate to come and ask.

Electives - Peak Performance & Positive Mental Health

Topics: Introduction to positive psychology, mindset, learning to learn, resilience, mindfulness, peak performance, character strengths, neuroscience of wellbeing, happiness, building for the future.

This course helps you investigate the science behind how we can prepare for more successful lives and better well-being.

To complement the course, a range of guest speakers will provide expert analysis of current practice and where possible, students will experience techniques used to enhance peak performance and positive mental health. Students will constantly test their skills and apply them to real-life situations, coming to understand which tools and strategies to use both in and out of the classroom.

Guided self-study may involve studying a MOOC or following a guided online course via Moodle which will examine up to date research in peak performance and positive mental health.

Introduction to Positive Psychology: Flourishing, Well-being and Happiness

The introduction will provide a broad overview to the central topic areas of positive psychology, including the concepts of flourishing, wellbeing and happiness. Find out how to optimise your physical, emotional and mental wellbeing so that you can flourish in every aspect of your life.

Mindset

Mindset from the world-renowned Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck is based on decades of research on achievement and success. In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. Discover how to develop a growth mindset that is essential for great accomplishment.

Learning to Learn

The focus of this topic is on learning to learn approaches; known as meta-cognition. You will learn to think about how you learn by making the process of managing your thoughts explicit, and in doing so, help you become a more effective learner through reflection and the application of learning strategies.

Resilience

Resilience is the ability to recover and bounce back from adversity and hardships, feeling stronger and more capable to cope than ever before. You will be provided with practical strategies, tactics and tools to bolster your resilience.

Mindfulness

The ability to stay in the moment is the key to delivering a great performance. Thoughts of the past or worries of the future are all distractions and patterns of poor outcomes. The present is the only moment that counts. You will discover and practise techniques to help you improve both mental and physical health.

Peak performance

Performance is envisaged here in its widest meaning of the word, not only from the perspective of winning or being able to produce a high-level sport performance. You will examine how optimism, self-efficacy, control of anxiety and goal setting affect performance and learn strategies to optimise your performance.

Character strengths development

Character research shows that knowing and applying your unique character strength profile increases your life satisfaction and well-being. This topic will identify your signature strengths and how to apply them inside and outside the classroom.

The Neuroscience of Learning and Performance

At its' core, learning is change. Learning changes the physical structure of the brain and results in its organisation and reorganisation. This topic will focus on the role of the brain in the four stages of the learning cycle: gathering sensory experiences, engaging in reflective observation, creating new concepts and actively testing them.

Happiness

The topic will focus on a fundamental finding from positive psychology; that happiness is inextricably linked to having strong social connections and contributing to something bigger than yourself—the greater good. You will look at what is Happiness, where Happiness comes from and the benefits of Happiness.

Building for the future

This topic focuses on what you should know in order to maximise your potential at school, university and the workplace. This will include developing time management techniques, how to become an independent learner, an appreciation of personal finance and healthy eating.