

St Mark's



Sixth Form

A to Z Handbook

2018 – 2019

Contents

Accommodation	3
Assembly	3
Action Planning.....	4
Attendance.....	4
Registration	5
Absence	5
Bicycles.....	6
Car Park	6
Careers Guidance	6
Changing Courses.....	7
Charities and Fund-raising.....	7
Combination of Subjects.....	7
Christianity and the Catholic Faith	8
Complaints Procedure.....	8
Dress Code.....	9
Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA).....	10
Enrichment programme.....	10
Equal Opportunities	12
Examinations.....	12
Food and Drink	13
School Canteen Facilities	13
Free Time.....	13
Getting your best possible grades.....	14
Monitoring progress	15
Hampers for the Elderly	16
Head Boy/Girl: Deputy Head Boy/Girl.....	16
Holidays during term time	18
Joining the Sixth Form.....	18
Skill Development	19
Leavers' Prom.....	19
Leavers' Service	19
Masses and Religious Services.....	20
Mobile phones and I Pod's MP3 Players	20
Music at St Mark's	21
Physical Recreation.....	21
Reading partners	21
School Clubs.....	22
School Council.....	22
Sixth Form Management Group	22
Social Life	22
Study Leave	23
Timetables	23
Tutors.....	23
Visitors to the school.....	24
Voluntary Service	24
Young Enterprise.....	24

Accommodation

- The Sixth Form block has facilities available to Sixth Form students only. Many of your lessons are scheduled in the block and you are expected to use this facility for study in your spare time. All students have access to the ICT facilities in M3, M10, M11 and M12.
- The Study Area is where quiet work is possible throughout the day. Eating, drinking, chatting and music are not considered appropriate in this area, as they are not conducive to good studying. You are responsible for maintaining a correct code of conduct yourself. The Mezzanine floor is an area for **SILENT** study only. There is access to E3, E10/11, A2/3 and M3 at the teachers' discretion. The Library is used for study and you will have scheduled study periods in here.
- The Sixth Form Common Room offers opportunities to work, read and relax quietly during lesson times. You may play music at a **reasonable** level. If you have doors and windows open you must ensure any noise you make is tempered so as not to intrude on the quiet atmosphere of surrounding classrooms. Tidiness and hygiene are the responsibility of the Sixth Form.

Information concerning Higher Education and notices about lectures and conferences are posted on the notice boards in the Sixth Form suite and the Study Area. These boards are important, as they will also publicise changes to your daily routine, public examinations, clubs and societies as well as requests for help and special meetings in the school. At appropriate times letters about employment vacancies and careers interviews are also posted. You should look carefully at least once a day.

Members of the Sixth Form will be expected to assist in maintaining these notice boards and ensuring the information is current.

Assembly

Daily worship is a Diocesan requirement for all Catholic schools and for students of all ages in those schools. It offers you the chance to come together as a group and share a time of quiet prayer and engage in thinking about moral and ethical issues.

There is one assembly each week for the Sixth Form, which takes place on a Monday.

Action Planning

You will have the opportunity to action plan on a regular basis. The reporting system involves you setting specific and realistic targets with the help of your subject teachers and tutors. These are then reviewed at the next reporting time so that new targets can be set. Dates and deadlines will be given to you at the beginning of the term.

You are also encouraged to produce action plans as part of your assignments. You will be shown how to do this by your tutor as part of the Enrichment Programme.

Action planning is a way of making efficient use of time and resources. It needs to be done first before you start a project.

Attendance

Attendance is expected on ALL school days. All programmes of study in the Sixth Form are full-time. There are **fourteen weeks** of holidays, so **Driving Tests, personal holidays and routine dental** appointments should be arranged in this time whenever possible.

All students are expected to study on site, outside lesson times, for **4 hours per week** in Year 12 and **5 in Year 13**.

Lateness

Regular and punctual attendance is **required** at registration. The registration times are:

8.50 am and 2.20 p.m.

You are expected to be on time for these. Lateness is treated very seriously. You should plan to be in school at least 10 minutes before registration to avoid any unforeseen delays that may cause you to be late.

If you are late you must go to the Office and sign in. You must ensure you see your tutor as soon as possible so they know you are in. When you know you are going to be late in advance, you should inform your tutor so they can authorise it in the register. Unforeseen lateness may occur so you should telephone the school and leave a message for your tutor giving a time when you expect to arrive.

Registration

Registration is a legal requirement. The school is audited by external auditors and the attendance of every student from Year 7 to Year 13 is monitored.

Attendance at registration is therefore an obligatory requirement for all students. If you know you are going to have a planned absence you should let your tutor know. The Registers are legal documents and will be used to calculate your attendance and punctuality for any reference requests you make to the school.

IT IS IN YOUR OWN INTERESTS TO ENSURE ALL YOUR ATTENDANCES are correctly recorded and all absences are authorised.

Absence

Absence may be authorised in advance. You should see your tutor and discuss your reason. They will let you know whether your reason is acceptable. If it is, they will indicate it in the register.

Emergencies and sudden illness are unavoidable. You do need to let the school know that you are not coming in as a matter of courtesy. You should telephone the school before **8.50 am** and leave a message.

All absence for illness or emergency that is not authorised in advance should be covered by a note on your return to school.

Any absence caused by attending Conferences, Field Courses and visits to exhibitions etc. must be authorised with your tutor and other subject teachers who may be affected, in advance.

Temporary absence from the school site

If you need to leave the school site during the day you should sign out in one of the books designated, stating the time you left the site, your expected return and the reason.

You must observe this requirement for Health and Safety reasons. Once you have registered, or signed in if you are late in the morning you are considered to be on the school site. In the event of a fire the registers and signing in book will be used to identify all students who have safely left the building. If you are marked present and have not been identified the Emergency Services will search the buildings for you.

Informing us of your movements ensures your own safety and the safety of others.

Bicycles

You may cycle to school. There are several designated areas for storing your bike during school hours. While every attempt will be made to ensure your bicycle is safe, the school cannot accept responsibility for it. Therefore you should:

- Always lock it up with a recognised security lock.
- Remove any items that can be easily detached such as lights and quick-release front wheels.
- Be vigilant and alert a member of staff if you see anyone acting suspiciously around the bicycles.

You are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of your machine. It must be road worthy and have lights during the winter months.

Car Parking

You may wish to drive to school once you have passed your driving test. However due to lack of space you may not bring your car on site it must be parked on local streets. Always drive safely and slowly in the vicinity of the school. Younger children are not always aware of cars so you need to be alert at all times. You need to leave details of the make, model and registration with your form tutor.

Careers Guidance

Career planning and advice is given as part of your Sixth Form Planning. The school has a comprehensive careers library including computerised data facilities and access to the Internet.

BTEC level students will receive help in the spring term to prepare CVs and apply for employment. Advanced students will begin job seeking and applying for places in Higher Education in the summer term of their first year.

Changing Courses

St Mark's aims to give you as much information prior to enrolment so that you can make appropriate choices to suit your own needs. The first 4 weeks of the Autumn term will enable you to confirm your choice. During that time you will be able to gauge whether the courses are offering you what you expected.

You may reconsider your subject choices during this period and make changes where necessary. We do not advise making changes after that time because many of the courses are modules and a considerable amount of essential work will have been covered.

Sometimes personal circumstances change, which require the students to reduce the number of subjects being studied. These should be discussed with your subject teachers, parents and tutor before you make a final decision.

All course changes must be made on the form obtainable from the Head of Sixth Form. You should continue to attend the subject lessons until the form is complete and signed by all the teachers concerned. Once the process is complete you may change your timetable if it has been agreed. **No changes can be made after autumn half term.**

Charities and Fund-raising

Sixth-formers take part in an enrichment programme that includes organising activities to raise money for charities and charitable acts like the *Hampers for the elderly* and the *Charities Week*.

Combination of Subjects

The combination of subjects that you choose is very important. You should ensure that, as far as possible, you are happy with what you have been offered. Changes can only be made within the option grid. No students can mix subjects in the same option block.

Please refer to the current option grid to make your choices. Further detailed discussions will be held at interview and then, if necessary, after your GCSE results come out.

Choose subjects at A/Level that you are interested in. This will motivate you to do well. Please refer to the subject handbook for details of each course on offer at St Mark's.

Christianity and the Catholic Faith

St Mark's is a Voluntary Aided Catholic School. It is supported by the Catholic Church and is in the Diocese of Brentwood. Religious Education is a mandatory part of the curriculum for all students including the Sixth Form.

We believe that the Christian values of caring for others, sharing and giving underpin the life of the school. The Catholic faith is central to the school and what it is trying to do.

The Sixth Form spiritual experience is interpreted differently to the rest of the school. You will have opportunities to discuss spiritual, moral and ethical issues during formal debates. You will be able to offer practical help to others through the *Enrichment Programme*. You will also be able to attend mass on a voluntary basis in the school chapel. Attendance at specified religious conferences is compulsory.

The Sixth Form welcomes non-Catholics as well as Catholics. Your religious beliefs will be respected and you will be asked to respect those of the other students in return.

There are a number of Holy days of Obligation where special services are held in the school. These are usually voluntary for Years 7-13. Other services are held during the year when all members of the St Mark's community are expected to attend.

Complaints Procedure

Every student has the right to fair assessment and grading of work by qualified assessors in the field of study being followed.

When you feel an assessment decision is unfair or wrong for whatever reason you should discuss it with the assessor first and/or consult our subject handbook. If you still feel that the decision is unfair you may complain on a formal basis. You will need to submit the assessed work in full together with evidence of the grade to the Head of Sixth Form who will arrange for it to be re-marked by another assessor using the assessment criteria.

You will be supplied with an explanation of the second grading and how it was reached. In cases of externally assessed course work you should follow the awarding bodies' own complaints procedure after discussion with the Head of Sixth Form who will advise you how to go about it.

Dress Code

The general principle, which underpins the Dress code, is that clothing should be clean, in good repair and appropriate to the school environment.

Day to day attire:

Male students - Year 12/13 – Suits – consisting of:

- Shirt
- Trousers
- Tie
- Shoes
- Jacket
- Outdoor coat

Female students - Year 12/13 – Suits consisting of:

- Shirt or blouse.
- Trousers (plain, office style).
- Skirt or dress (plain, office style)
- Shoes
- Jacket
- Outdoor coat

Sports wear

Items, which can be reasonably interpreted as sports wear, should only be worn when taking part in specific sports activities e.g.

- Tracksuits/shell suits
- Sports/Football shirts
- Sports shorts/vests
- Trousers
- Trainers

You should change for sports in the designated changing rooms. Sports wear should only be used on sports/games surfaces. You should not wear any sports items around the school buildings during the school day.

Hats

Hats are for outdoor attire only and should be removed during lessons and moving around the school buildings.

Hair

Hair should be worn neatly, regardless of length. Extremes of fashion, cut, colour and style are not permitted.

Jewellery

Jewellery is permitted. However, items should not be ostentatious, should comply with the needs of safety and should not be of excessive value. The school takes no responsibility for the loss of jewellery. Please observe the following guidelines:

- Ear studs or small rings
- No other body pierced ornament is allowed unless it is permanently covered during school hours in and around the school vicinity.

Dress Code Postscript

Sixth Form students are the senior students in the school and act as ambassadors in the community.

These points are guideline qualifications. Discretion to interpret the code and judge positive cases not specifically covered above lies with the Head of Sixth Form. Decisions taken in this respect will be absolute to ensure the school's standards for health, safety, decency and style are upheld.

Failure to adhere to the dress code will lead to students being sent home for the day and making up any missed time after school.

Bursary

The scheme has been replaced by a **16-19 Bursary**. This is money that is paid to the school directly and students can apply by following the application process. In making a decision financial factors and need will be considered.

Please note: to qualify you must attend all lessons and registrations. Failure to attend is reported to the payment body and your allowance will be withheld.

Enrichment programme

We are all different. Each one of us has a unique set of skills and attributes that make up our identity and personality. We are all members of the community and have something of value to offer. Academic qualifications are used as a universal indicator for someone's initial ability and suitability for employment. However, we are judged and selected on what we can offer in addition to the recognised qualifications.

The experiences and knowledge we gain along the 'road of life' will also help us to do a job more effectively and employers recognise this.

It is crucial for you to develop a broad range of experiences to draw upon when applying for a University place or employment. The *Enrichment* programme here at St Mark's Sixth Form is designed with that in mind. It begins from the spiritual base within you and builds on aspects of your personality to help you create your own strong, individual identity.

The main aim is to nurture your spiritual growth so that you can take your place in society as a caring, responsible and useful person. This will be achieved through:

- building confidence
- improving self-esteem
- encouraging physical development
- raising awareness of moral and ethical issues
- serving others
- enhancing academic success

Equal Opportunities

The school has an equal opportunities statement and actively seeks to ensure that it is integral to all of the school. The key points of the statement are:

- Gospel values inform all aspects of community life.
- Respect for every individual as God's unique creation.
- Recognising individual aspirations and their potential.
- Tolerance of individuality and the views of individuals.
- Right to learn and be taught and the responsibility to support that right for others.
- A curriculum that seeks to meet the needs of the students wherever possible.
- Fair and accurate assessment of work.

A full version of the statement is available upon request.

Examinations

All AS/A2 and Applied A Levels offered in the Sixth Form have examinations as part of the assessment procedures. Please consult your subject handbook/tutor to establish specific assessment guidelines.

All the examinations are carried out by the school on behalf of the awarding bodies. There are clear, non-negotiable regulations that **must** be observed by all candidates and invigilators. These will be made available upon request.

In order to ensure examinations are conducted fairly and efficiently the following **must** be observed.

- You **must** be in the school and waiting outside the examination room **10 minutes before the start**. If you are late you may not be allowed to sit the exam.
- You should be appropriately dressed (see Dress Code). **You will be refused admission if you are not dressed properly.**
- Mobile phones and Ipods are not permitted inside the examination room.

It is in your interests to follow these rules.

You should make arrangements to collect your results with the Head of Sixth Form who will let you know what day and time to come to the school. Alternatively, you can receive them by post but you will be asked to supply the correct number of stamped, addressed envelopes prior to leaving the school in the Summer term.

Food and Drink

There are two dining halls offering an extensive range of meals and snacks during the lunch hour. Food purchased on a plate should be consumed in the Dining Hall.

All food and drink wrappings should be disposed of carefully and any spillages cleared up. Rooms must be left in a clean hygienic condition ready for use by other students. You must not eat or drink in the library.

The Sixth Form has its own kitchen facilities. You are responsible for these.

School Canteen Facilities

The school has a well-equipped canteen with two adjoining dining halls. Hot and cold meals and snacks can be purchased during breaks and lunch times. The staff aim to please by providing a friendly and helpful service. Dinner tickets are used by the Lower School and you may be eligible for Free School Meals if your parents are on benefits.

You should be properly dressed when using the dining halls and you are expected to leave the tables clean and tidy for other students using them after you. You are not permitted to take any food from the dining hall that is served on plates or dishes. Pre-packed snacks and canned drinks can be taken away.

Free Time

Success in the Sixth Form depends on recognising the priority of work and fitting recreation and employment into the week when the main tasks have been completed.

All students must spend a *minimum of four hours per week on private study at school*. This will be monitored to prove that you have completed the work. Details of these arrangements will be explained to you at Induction. There will be Supervised Study for all students.

Many pieces of work will require reading and thinking as well as writing and teachers may allow two or three weeks for their completion. It is important to plan private study so that you are not overwhelmed with essays at any one time, and can therefore present written assignments punctually. Saturday jobs and other part time work must not be allowed to interfere with your studies. *You should aim to spend no more than 10 to 15 hours per week on part time work.*

The responsibility for organising your time outside lessons demands self-discipline and the Sixth Form provides a useful opportunity to learn this before you become a student in higher education or hold a responsible position in the working community. ***You should aim to spend a minimum of fifteen hours per week on private study at home and in school.***

You are also expected to use registration time effectively. This includes completing all tasks with your tutor as well as work for your subjects.

NB: See also Timetables

Getting your best possible grades

Getting higher grades is not an accident, and passing your A/Levels is not something you do on your own. We are with you all the way and we will help you gain higher grades. The process is very simple. You establish a **Target Minimum Grade** for each A/Level subject and we will work with you by reviewing your progress, evaluating where you did not do well in a piece of work and advising you on how to get back on track.

How does this system work?

When you begin the Sixth Form you will be asked to calculate your GCSE score. This is done by giving a value to each grade eg:

Grade	A*	=	58	D	=	32
	A	=	52	E	=	26
	B	=	46	F	=	20
	C		40	G	=	14

You then add up your scores and divide the total by the number of GCSEs you took eg:

Total	460	Number of GCSEs	46
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46 divided by 10 = 46

This is your GCSE score. You use the A/Level 'Look-up' table to find what your minimum expected grade will be for each subject.

At the beginning of your studies you will find that your actual grades are sometimes lower than your Target Minimum Grade or your predicted grade. This is because you are working towards Advanced or Intermediate standards of attainment. As you complete each progress review you should find that you progress and that you “bust” your target minimum grades. You will be expected to discuss your progress on a regular basis with both subject teachers and your tutor. At the end of each review you will set targets for improvement. At the end of year 12 you will have a progression interview.

Progression onto Year 13 is dependent on your commitment, attendance and quality of work. You will also be expected to prove that you have kept up to date with your progress reviews and have carried out some careers and/or Higher Education research.

In the unlikely case of your grades being consistently below your minimum grade and even being recorded as unclassified over a period of time you will be referred by your subject tutor to your tutor who will discuss the issues with you and, if necessary, ask you to have an interview with the Head of Sixth Form. Targets will be set and a copy of the review will be sent home to your parents.

Modular courses require you to pass each exam during the course. Therefore you need to make an extra effort to get your grades up as quickly as possible before the exam and maintain them.

Monitoring progress

St Mark’s aims to provide all pupils with an education which will enable them to achieve the exam results of which they are capable. This is no less true of the Sixth Form. GCSEs are not in fact the end but rather the beginning and the Sixth Form builds on what you have achieved at GCSE. In order to help you to get the A-Level results or other qualifications appropriate to your level of ability St Mark’s employs a “Value Added System”.

When you start in the Sixth Form you will be given a TARGET MINIMUM GRADE (TMG) for each of your subjects. This is calculated on the basis of the total number of points achieved at GCSE and used to indicate the lowest level which you should aim for at A-Level. This means that if you fall below this level something is going wrong!

It is expected that you will do significantly better than this TMG - so do not regard it as a prediction of the grade you will achieve. The aim is that you “bust” this.

The value-added system monitors your progress carefully and also checks that you are coping with both your chosen subjects and the workload.

Induction to the Tutorial System

- You will be given a general introduction to procedures in the Sixth Form.
- You will receive an outline of reporting and review deadlines.
- You will have identified your Target Minimum Grades (TMG).
- The Value Added System will be explained to you in more detail.
- You will understand your role and responsibilities in relation to the Sixth Form.
- You will learn how to identify your learning styles and to identify ways of improving your weaknesses.

Year 12 Monitoring Schedule

The monitoring schedule will be given to you at the beginning of September.

Hampers for the Elderly

During the Autumn term you will embark on a project during your *Enrichment Programme* sessions that culminates in delivering food hampers to some of the elderly residents of Harlow. The project entails planning fund-raising activities to raise money so that you can purchase the things you need to make up the hampers. You will also identify the recipients of the hampers and arrange to deliver them in December in time for Christmas.

Head Boy/Girl: Deputy Head Boy/Girl

Senior Student Posts of Responsibility

St Mark's prides itself on its Sixth Form and the emphasis it places on treating Sixth Form students in an adult way. To assist this and help the rest of the school recognise the special position Sixth-formers have, a number of liaison posts have been established. The individuals holding the posts are expected to carry out their duties responsibly, fairly and in a friendly way. The experience you will gain by holding one of these positions will benefit you immensely when applying for university places and employment. It is regarded as an honour to hold a position and you are encouraged to consider volunteering for one or more of them.

The current posts are:

Head Boy

Head Girl

Deputy Head Boy

Deputy Head Girl

This group forms the Sixth Form Management Committee.

Senior Prefects: 6 boys, 6 girls.

Further posts may be added in the future when required.

Head Boy/Girl

Person Specification

Both the Head Boy and Head Girl are prestige positions and will normally be elected by the Sixth Form students themselves.

The student for either of these posts will exhibit the following:

- A responsible nature.
- A sense of fairness.
- An awareness of the honour of holding the position.
- An ability to speak in public.
- A desire to be an ambassador for the school.
- A belief that everyone is important and deserves to be treated as an individual.
- A sense of humour.
- An active awareness of the importance of self-presentation.

Description of the responsibilities

- Represent the school at external functions and events.
- Lead the whole student group in the school.
- Chair Sixth Form Committees and Management Groups.
- Act as a guide when important people visit the school.
- Participate in small discussion groups with visiting guests.
- Advise the Head of Sixth Form on issues concerning the management of school life, the rules and the well being of the pupils.

Term of Office

The posts will normally run from March of year 12 to March of Year 13. The incoming Head Boy/Girl will be elected in March of Year 12 and spend the summer term working alongside the existing post-holders to allow a smooth take-over.

Deputy Head Boy/Girl

The holders of these posts will exhibit similar characteristics to the Head Boy/Girl. They will deputise for them when required, support them in their roles and take on a number of their own responsibilities as well. These will generally include being members of various Sixth Form groups and acting as ambassadors for the school. The term of office will be exactly the same as the Head Boy/Girl and the summer term preceding them coming into post will be for training in a similar way.

Holidays during term time

Attendance is expected on all school days. There are fourteen weeks of holidays so personal holidays should not be arranged during term time. Experience has shown that students who go on holidays during term time fall behind and rarely regain the lost time. This results in poorer final results, usually as much as a grade lower for A/Level students. Holidays **SHOULD NOT** be booked during May and June exam period.

Sometimes an extended period of leave is unavoidable due to personal circumstances. When this is required you should obtain a standard 'Holiday Form' from the Main Office, complete it and return it to the Head of Sixth Form for approval.

Joining the Sixth Form

Enrolment

Enrolment takes place on the first day of term. You will be notified by post of the date and time you should attend.

Do not worry if your GCSE results are not as good as you expected. Come to the school and we will discuss your options with you. We will try to offer you alternatives that will help you.

Sometimes students do not do very well and only gain say, 3 GCSEs at C or above but if we feel you could achieve an advanced qualification like AS levels or an Applied AS Level in certain subjects we may offer you a place on those courses.

At enrolment you will be interviewed by the teachers of your chosen subjects. They will either enrol you into their subject classes or advise you of the alternatives. Following enrolment you will begin the Induction stage.

Induction

This lasts six weeks and is a continuation from the Summer. During this time you will get to know the school, the teachers and your fellow students. You will follow your chosen subjects. Each subject teacher will give you the information you require to succeed on the course. It will include:

- Reading lists
- Course syllabus
- List of equipment you need
- Sample examination/test papers
- Course Timetable including test dates
- Field Trips, visits etc. (if applicable)

During the Induction you will get an experience of what the whole course will be like. You will also gain an insight into how the course will be taught. You will also attend a seminar that will promote your skills in studying and help you cope with your courses.

You will embark on the *Tutor Programme*. You will learn to improve your own learning through action planning, target setting and managing your time.

You will receive a Progress report at the end of the first half term. You will participate in the production of this by identifying the targets for improvement.

The purpose of the Induction is to make sure you have made the right choice. Although our aim is to give you as much information as possible to ensure you have, sometimes students do realise they have made the wrong decision. If you feel that this is the case you must speak with your tutor who will refer you to the Head of Sixth Form.

Skill Development

Broadening your experience includes learning new skills. The *Tutor Programme* offers you the opportunity to learn new skills and to develop and refine existing ones. All the activities undertaken are designed to help you to realise your potential and succeed in your chosen career.

Leavers' Prom

In June/July of your last year at St Mark's you will be invited to attend the Annual Sixth Form Prom. This is organised by Sixth-Formers and forms your final time together as a group. It is an important Rite of Passage and marks your move from school to the adult world of careers and Higher Education. It is usually a very enjoyable, moving and memorable occasion. You will be expected to dress formally and the Head Boy/Girl will give the after-dinner speeches of Thanks, Farewell and Friendship. Other social events will be arranged throughout the year.

Leavers' Service

In May of your last year at St Mark's you will be invited to attend a special leavers' service in the chapel. Parents will be invited. It will be an opportunity to give thanks for your time in the Sixth Form and the school. Some of our more accomplished musicians and public speakers will present the various highlights of the service.

Everyone is warmly welcomed whether they are Catholic or not, to celebrate your achievements and wish you well in your final examinations.

Masses and Religious Services

Voluntary Mass is offered in the chapel on a weekly basis and you are invited to attend whenever you can. It usually begins at 8.25 am and finishes at 8.40 am. It is a useful time to reflect and enjoy the calm and quiet before the work of the day begins.

You do not have to be confirmed to attend; you may receive a blessing during communion if you wish. You do not have to be a Catholic either. The chapel is a place of worship where you can come for prayer - you are always welcome.

There are a number of Holy days of Obligation that Catholics observe during the year. When these occur on a school day there is usually a voluntary Mass.

Mobile phones and I Pod's etc

The school does not allow these to be brought into the buildings by students in Years 7-11. The school switchboard is staffed constantly from 8.30 am to 4.00 p.m. - an answerphone service is available outside of these times.

Sixth-formers have special privileges, which extend to the use of these under controlled conditions. You may bring these to school as long as you abide by the following conditions. **NB:** Forgetting to do so is not considered an excuse; rather it is seen as extremely inconsiderate to other people.

- Mobiles must be switched off during lessons and while in the school building (except the Sixth Form Block).
- Calls must be made either outside in the open air or in the Sixth Form Block only.
- Walkmans may only be used in the Sixth Form Block and the volume should be low so as not to annoy others nearby.

The school does not accept responsibility for the loss of any of these items.

Music at St Mark's

There are many opportunities to continue your interest in music or perhaps learn to play an instrument for the first time. A music school runs from 3.30 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. most Tuesdays. Individual lessons of either 30 or 15 minutes are available and you can take the music grade exams up to Grade 8. The instruments you can learn include:

Piano	Flute	Saxophone	Trumpet	Guitar
Keyboard	Clarinet	Coronet	Trombone	Percussion

There are also a number of ensembles, which are always open to new members:

Band	Tuesday lunchtimes
Choir	Thursday lunchtimes

Various music rooms can be booked by bands at lunchtimes and after school for rehearsals.

Physical Recreation

Life in the Sixth Form should be more than just studying. Physical recreation and exercise are an essential part of a well-balanced lifestyle. It provides a break from studying and allows you to return to your work refreshed and invigorated.

You will be encouraged to take up a sport or recreational activity as part of the *Enrichment Programme*.

Reading partners

At St Mark's we operate a partnered reading scheme to help younger pupils develop their reading skills. It has been extremely successful and a very satisfying experience for those involved. The younger students have benefited immensely from the help Sixth-formers have given them.

The scheme takes place during the 'Reading Time'. This is prior to the first lesson one day each week. The whole school (including teachers!) spends 15-20 minutes reading either silently to themselves or in pairs out loud to each other.

All Sixth-formers in Year 12 take part in the scheme and are allocated a reading partner for the year. You will be given advice and instruction on how to offer the best help to your reading partner. You are expected to attend this scheme and must ensure that the Special Needs Co-ordinator is notified if you are unable to attend so that a reserve can be provided.

The scheme requires: commitment, consistency, patience, a friendly attitude and a willingness to help. Participation in this scheme will provide you with a valuable addition for your CV/HE application form.

School Clubs

The school actively encourages extra-curricula activities and already hosts the Music School operating in the evening after the school day. Sixth-formers are encouraged to start up clubs offering activities that they have experience in. The *Enrichment Programme* has more details of this.

This will provide you with invaluable experience in organising and working with other people. It will be well worth including on your CV and in any Higher Education application you make. It will also contribute to gaining the Key Skills Diploma.

School Council

The School Council enables the students to voice their views and contribute towards the running of the school. The Sixth Form have their own Management Group (see Sixth Form Management Group). You will be able to assist with the organisation of the School Council by becoming an adviser for one of the Form Groups. Your role will be to advise them during their meetings and help class representatives feed back to their Form Groups after Council Meetings. There is usually one meeting per month. This is a responsible position and you will be setting an example as a Senior Student of the school who younger children will look up to.

Sixth Form Management Group

This group will manage the Sixth Form facilities; codes of conduct, entertainments and provide a forum to raise any issues.

The group will meet twice a term in harmony with the cycle of School Council meetings. It will be chaired by the Head Boy and Head Girl alternately and each meeting will be minuted.

If you are interested in being in this group you should see the Head of Sixth Form.

Social Life

The *Enrichment Programme* is designed to structure your social life in the Sixth Form. There will be some periods of 'Free Time' when you wish to relax and socialise during school time. The Sixth Form Block is provided for that purpose. A variety of activities are arranged throughout the year. You are welcome and encouraged to take part but note, you will have to pay for them.

Standards of decency, conduct and dress need to be maintained at all times, even when relaxing in your own accommodation. Music should be kept to a level that does not intrude upon the life of the rest of the school.

Study Leave

Study leave is granted to all Year 12/13 students after the Summer Half Term break in May so that they can prepare for their examinations.

Authorised Study Leave cannot take precedence over any timetabled activities such as lessons, assemblies, Reading Partner Schemes etc. You may be asked to attend school for certain events when you have arranged study leave and you are expected to co-operate at these times.

All authorised study leave will be subject to periodic review from time to time by the Head of Sixth Form.

Timetables

When you enrol you will be given a timetable showing the lessons, assemblies and *Enrichment Programme* sessions you should attend. You should then identify 4 hours of private study and put it on your timetable. You should discuss this with each teacher who can help you choose the best times so they can be available if you need help. They may also suggest which room you should work in (some subject teachers have the facilities to enable you to study in their department area).

Timetables cannot be changed without the permission of the Head of Sixth Form. This will ensure your records are always kept up to date on the school system.

Tutors

When you enrol in the Sixth Form you will be given a tutor. Your tutor is there to help you make the best use of your time in order that you gain the maximum benefit from your Sixth Form experience.

The tutors are experienced in post-16 work and are able to advise on a range of issues that may affect you. These include:

- Time Management
- Study Skills
- Broadening your experience
- Applying to Higher Education
- Enhancing your list of qualifications
- Attendance

Tutors work alongside students in a partnership. You should aim to make use of their help and develop a good working relationship with them.

Visitors to the school

St Mark's prides itself on being an open friendly school, serving the community and offering a focus for a range of activities both within mainstream education and extra-mural. We welcome visitors when they are needed to support learning e.g. Young Enterprise links. **Social visits from friends are not acceptable.**

Voluntary Service

Giving up time for others, is something we seek to encourage in our students. Voluntary service can lead to rewarding experiences as well as the chance to make new friends.

The *Enrichment Programme* includes a voluntary service project, which requires you to arrange to help someone either within the school or in the community for a minimum of 10 hours. Further details are available in the *Enrichment Programme Handbook*.

Young Enterprise

This is a nationally recognised qualification. Students set up a company, devise a business plan, produce a product and market it. You will work in a group of around 10 pooling ideas and supporting each other. It is highly regarded by many employers because it offers real experience of the commercial world. Students who have gained it usually develop good interpersonal skills and, the ability to manage time effectively. They become confident and able to speak publicly in a persuasive and assertive way. This is a must if you are contemplating a career requiring management and leadership skills.

Students embarking on the Advanced Business Programme will automatically follow Young Enterprise as part of the course. However, you may wish to participate in it even if you are not doing the Business programme. You will need to give up your own time, usually one hour per week and the course runs the full year. It is a very rewarding experience and well worth considering.