

The Sheiling School

6th Form Handbook



The 6th Form is all about preparing students for a successful transition into life beyond the Sheiling School. Our team of highly experienced specialist SEN teachers and craft workshop leaders are committed to providing the perfect balance of skills for work and independent living, experience of community living and social interaction, and opportunities for growth and self-development through arts, crafts and academic study. The measure of each will depend entirely upon the needs and wishes of the individual student, but we always aim to engender the ambition and 'can do' attitude necessary for the student to maximise their utmost potential.

6th Form Curriculum

Teaching and learning in the 6th Form is markedly different from the classroom based structure of primary and secondary school. As a pathway into adulthood, the emphasis is upon maximising life skills and independence. There are relatively few classroom based lessons, with the emphasis placed upon practical, 'real world' activities that provide a meaningful foundation for future transitions. Literacy and Numeracy is always an essential component, but the nature of the provision will depend upon the precise needs and abilities of the students – for those students who would benefit from accreditation (for future college placements), AQA Entry Level and Functional Skills exam schemes are available; for those where accreditation would not be meaningful, Literacy and Numeracy are firmly embedded across the range of curricular provision, including: Enterprise, Work Experience, Independent Living Skills, Arts and Crafts and SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural).

Enterprise

The aim is to make everything our 6th Form students encounter as 'real' as possible, which involves a firm focus on a learning as a tool for increased independence, self-realisation and the possibility of meaningful employment.

Our Enterprise scheme is a centrepiece of the 6th Form provision. Drawing on students' particular interests and abilities, and working with craft leaders in the areas of pottery, handwork, green woodwork and horticulture, we aim to produce quality items offered for sale in range of forums, including our Christmas Market, a local market stall in Thornbury, and online via the school website. Not only are students involved in creating these items, they are also involved in the business aspect of retail – planning, marketing, labelling, costing, and book-keeping – providing the perfect opportunity for putting their literacy and numeracy skills to actual, practical use. Whatever profits are made are fed back into 6th Form resources, with the sixth formers themselves deciding how best they should be used.

Our enterprise scheme is the ideal internal work experience – building confidence, independence, social skills, and a sense of ownership.

Work Experience

External work experience placements are an essential component of the transition between school and the world of increased independence and responsibility that awaits. One morning a week we aim to support pupils in accessing work experience or voluntary work. We have established successful links with a range of organisations, including Thornbury Volunteers where students have the opportunity

for an interview with a member of staff who helps them identify volunteering opportunities within the community.

We endeavour to arrange external work experience placements for all of our students, factoring in the key aspects of student preference, suitability, required levels of independence, and relevance for future living. Although it is recognised that not all of our students will one day hold down a job, we at the Sheiling School believe all of our students can find meaning in, and make great contributions to, their community. The aim of the work experience placements is to:

- Engender ambition and a ‘can do’ attitude for future living
- Foster new skill sets to provide a pathway to possible future vocations.
- Extend the student’s social environment to the local and extended community.
- Build new relationships
- Build self-esteem, confidence and increased independence
- Broaden the student’s experience of the world beyond the Sheiling School.

Life Skills and Independent Living

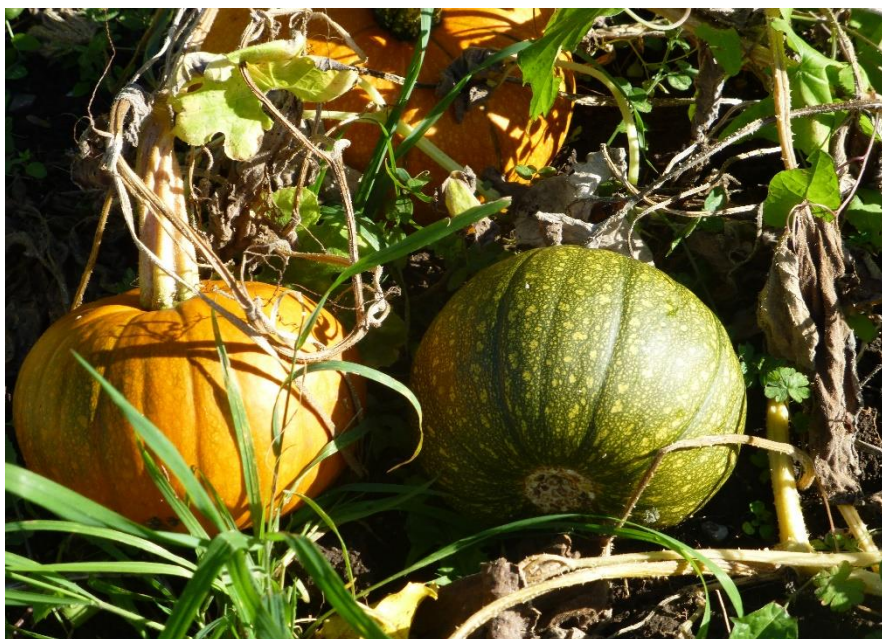
As part of the 6th Form Curriculum, each student will spend a day a week in the life skills flat. The focus is on getting to grips with the everyday skills that characterise life beyond school and sixth form – from budgeting, shopping and preparing meals, cleaning, washing and ironing, to arranging activities and scheduling them into a busy day. It may involve working out the times of public transport and catching a bus, or inviting peers over and planning how to spend the time. Students build a ‘life skills profile’ which can be used to inform future support of their capabilities, thereby ensuring expectations are maintained at an appropriate level.

Arts and Crafts

Central to the Sheiling School’s therapeutic and pedagogic approach is the idea of learning through doing and the balance of head, heart and hands (thought, feelings and will). Meaningful engagement with arts and crafts underlies the entire Sheiling School approach, though undergoes something of a transformation in the move from secondary education to 6th Form. Instead of discrete arts and crafts lessons, skills and approaches are embedded in the pre-vocational, vocational and community based activities that structure the 6th Former’s day. Attention to beauty, detail and meaning inform a whole range of art and craft based activities, such as:

- **Horticulture** – all students participate in an entire day of Horticulture and an entire day of Green Woodwork weekly. This is not to say that a single task is carried out for the entirety of that time; rather, the day is structured to include a variety of activities that overall *relate* to a single project. In Horticulture, for example, the central task may be the planting of seed beds for harvest at the end of the summer. But aside from the hands-on work involved in clearing and preparing the soil, it could also include: IT research into which seeds will

grow best, what light and water they will require, how we might most fruitfully use what we grow (for example, growing fruit to make into jam to sell as part of our enterprise projects); assigning responsibility for the various aspects of upkeep; measuring and staking out areas of ground using numeracy skills; visiting local garden centres to purchase what will be needed (again involving the use of money and the practising of numeracy skills) etc. Individual programmes and therapies may also take place in the course of the day



- **Pottery** – Instead of Pottery lessons *per se*, the use of clay and Pottery based skills are incorporated into broader projects relating to Enterprise activities, or to the upkeep and improvement of the buildings and grounds. The point of arts and crafts teaching in the 6th Form is to involve the student in meaningful and consequential activities that engender a real sense of purpose. It's our belief that the 'real world' meaning of the activity is what truly empowers the student, building resilience and a sense of independence.
- **Handwork** – as with Pottery, our skilled Handwork craft leader is on hand to support broader 6th Form projects. Whereas in their school career students may have learned to weave on a loom, they may now learn that making a willow fence to keep saplings from the wind requires exactly the same skills. Handwork can similarly be employed in a variety of Enterprise and Life Skills activities, and by practical application give the student a sense of personal achievement and self-empowerment.
- **Green Woodwork** – there are any number of exciting projects taking place under the broad umbrella of Green Woodwork. The therapeutic aspect is balanced with the vocational; using hand tools and a foot-driven pole lathe, students turn natural resources into usable (and beautiful) artefacts, some of which are used 'in house', others of which are sold.

SMSC (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural)

The continued Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural education of the students takes a number of forms, which to some extent will be determined by the individual student's particular needs. Alongside discrete SMSC sessions – where students follow the Sheiling School's SMSC curriculum – the subjects that arise will be embedded throughout the curriculum and supported by:

- **Festivals** - There is always room for music, dance and artistic expression in the celebration of the yearly festivals. It's a keystone of life at the Sheiling School and the 6th Form is no exception. The preparation for, and celebration of, the festivals gives a sense of the structure and rhythm of the year – drawing attention to changes in the natural world and supporting the spiritual life of the entire community.
- **Sex and Relationships Guidance** – all students will receive Sex and Relationship guidance in discrete SMSC sessions, tailored very much to the needs of the individual student. Sex and relationship guidance is overseen by the school's developmental psychologist and follows the school's SMSC curriculum.
- **Morning Common Room** – every day begins with a common room activity in which, alongside structured social conversation with peers, students explore their own feelings and those of others. It is also an opportunity to discuss News of the World (current world events) and festivals celebrated across the world.

Accredited Schemes and Academic Study

There is a focus on accreditation in the 6th Form *only when and where it is meaningful for the students' chosen future pathway*. Where academic skills are not a priority for future life, students might not access an accredited course. Others, where there is a possibility of future employment (at whatever level) might follow the ASDAN Workright qualification. Where students are achieving academically, and where there is a desire to pursue a more academic path (to pursue a future college course, for example), the 6th Form supports that with the following accredited schemes:

AQA Entry Level 1, 2, and 3 Certificate (English and Maths)

AQA Functional Skills

GCSE Maths and English

Assessment and Review

The young person's progress across the curriculum is monitored closely in a number of ways. Arranged according to the Sheiling School's own holistic Ariadne

Assessment Framework, the areas of assessment are as follows: Being Safe; Choices and behaviour; Communication; Education and Learning; Feelings, Confidence and Self-Esteem; Friends and Relationships; Living Skills; Physical Health and Self-Care; Sensory Difficulties.

Students are constantly monitored in each of the above areas, with regular 6th Form Faculty Meetings to ensure that indications of progress are robust and carefully moderated. The Ariadne Assessment is updated half termly to reflect progress or areas in which the student may have 'plateaued', thereby informing future target setting and providing a basis for discussion around any areas of non-development. Crucially, students are involved in setting and reflecting on their own personal progress in Student Progress Meetings, arranged three times a year with a Sixth Form Lead. These meetings are also an opportunity to discuss possibilities for future transitions, ensuring that students understand their options and that their desires and ambitions for the future are taken fully into account.

Literacy and Numeracy are carefully monitored according to the criteria set in relevant accreditation. Where the student is unlikely to complete the entire qualification, staff will set aspirational targets according to their evaluated levels of attainment, monitored daily on IEP tracker sheets. Targets are created from EHCP Educational outcomes. Reading skills are assessed by The Sheiling School's 'Reading Response Analysis', which is especially effective at identifying gaps in reading skills.

Therapies

Speech, Language and Communication

All Speech and Language Therapy at the Sheiling School is planned and directed by the Sheiling School's Speech and Language Therapist, who assesses each student individually and provides clear interventions and communication programmes. These are thoroughly embedded into activities across the student's day, with further guidance and support (for both staff and students) provided by the Therapeutic Support Assistant. Supported Communication (Signalong, PECs etc) is widely used in the 6th Form, although again, according to individual need.

Occupational Therapy

As with SLT, the degree of direct OT support for each student will differ according to need and the specifications of the Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), but our Occupational Therapist (who is additionally qualified in Sensory Integration) provides clear OT support for all of our students, with individual programmes designed around careful observation and assessment. It is a part of our therapeutic and pedagogic philosophy that meaningful craft-based activity is an opportunity for practising and

consolidating OT exercises and techniques; as such, and with the support of our Therapeutic Support Assistant (OT), occupational therapy is effectively embedded into a significant part of the 6th Former's day.

Other Therapies

The Sheiling School also offers Art Therapy, Drama Therapy, Massage Therapy and Eurhythmy, though access to these therapies is limited and based on the recommendations of Dr James Dyson.

Student Voice

Enabling and supporting students to develop their own voice – irrespective of verbal ability – is absolutely fundamental to the Sheiling School's belief in empowering young people to the full. The student's views are of the utmost importance. There are a number of ways in which we ensure our students are encouraged to self-reflect, and help steer the course of their journey through 6th Form:

- Emotional Literacy is embedded throughout the entire curriculum, but each day begins and ends with an opportunity for the student to practise self-reflection and social and communication skills with whatever degree of support (including supported communication) is necessary. The aim is to engender the highest degree of independent thought and self-awareness in order for the student's likes, dislikes, interests and ambitions to be clearly heard and structured into the course of their learning experience.
- Annual Reviews are an opportunity for the student to reflect – alongside parents/ carers, 6th Form Leaders, representatives from the Local Authority, support workers, therapists, and a representative from the Education Leadership Team - on their progress over the course of the year, and to plan forthcoming transitions into adult living.
- Progress Reviews – a meeting between the student and their 6th Form Lead - are arranged termly as an opportunity for the student to communicate issues, interests, ambitions, and to discuss progress across the curriculum. This involves reflecting on current targets and highlighting ways in which the student might take ever greater ownership of their own learning and personal development. The steps needed to support future transition plans are also discussed, allowing the student to acclimatize to the idea of moving on and to clarify their own hopes and aspirations.

