

# INTRODUCTION TO THE SIXTH FORM

The aims of the Sixth Form are:

- *To enable students to enjoy learning for its own sake*
- *To develop their creative talents and to fulfill their intellectual potential.*
- *To provide individuals with the skills to respond to a changing world with confidence and humility*
- *To encourage students to be reflective, open-minded and principled, so that they can make a positive contribution to their community and the wider world.*

The Sixth Form derives numerous benefits from its close links with the wider school community but also provides a very distinctive experience to that of Years 7-11. More specifically, the Sixth Form:

- *Enables students to further their studies in subjects that they enjoy.*
- *Provides students with the means to acquire the academic qualifications needed to gain admission to Higher Education or enhance their application for a fulfilling career.*
- *Helps students to cultivate a wide range of interests.*
- *Helps students to mature as individuals and bridge the gap between compulsory school and Higher Education or a career.*
- *Provides an enjoyable experience shared with like-minded people.*

## ENTRANCE

We expect all students to study a curriculum that is broad enough to give them the best possible chance of progressing successfully to the next stage of their chosen careers. It is important that students select a course in which they have a good chance of success, one that they will enjoy and is consistent with their career direction. For this reason students will be required to have reached the entrance requirements in each of their chosen subjects (see individual subject pages for details) as well as the general admissions criteria of 294 QCDA points from six nominated subject areas (see Appendix A for details). The school reserves the right to make an exception in extenuating circumstances.

Year 12 students must pass their IB Diploma mock exam or at least 3 of their AS subjects to continue their studies into Year 13.

## THE CURRICULUM

Details of the specifications are included in this document. The timetable is designed to accommodate the greatest number of chosen combinations but we cannot guarantee that every combination will be

possible, so a few students may be asked to re-opt. We normally set an upper limit of 20 on group sizes; if necessary, priority is determined by date of receipt of application (after the deadline) followed by the ranking of preference on the application form (where appropriate). Please see Appendix A for further details of procedures in cases of oversubscription.

Girls as well as boys are eligible for admission into the Sixth Form, but girls may only be enrolled for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. Boys may choose either the A/AS curriculum or the International Baccalaureate Curriculum.

To maximize choice we collaborate with the Girls' school at AS/A Level: Drama and Psychology are taught only by the Girls' School staff and Computing, Music, P.E. and Politics are taught only by Boys' School staff.

### A/AS Level:

All students must choose **FOUR** AS Levels, each of which is allocated five one-hour periods per week. They are also expected to choose a fifth option from the following list to complement their studies:

- General Studies (AS Level)
- Critical Thinking (AS Level)
- Extended Project (½ A Level)
- ICT National (Level 3)

These Options require a time commitment of one period per week. Time permitting, students may choose more than one of these options.

### IB Diploma

All students must choose **THREE** Higher level subjects, each of which is allocated four one-hour periods per week, and **THREE** standard level subjects, each of which is allocated five one-hour periods per fortnight. They must also undertake the common core of Theory of Knowledge, Extended Essay and Creativity, Action, Service.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

We believe that success is achieved by maintaining a close link between student, parent and school. To this end we keep parents informed of students' progress by academic profiles and Parents' Evenings, as well as routinely contacting home if there is a cause for concern. Parents are encouraged to contact the relevant form tutor if they have any concerns and can do so via a dedicated email. He or she is normally the first point of contact for raising concerns. Heads and Deputy Heads of House are also available for consultation and the Pastoral Support Tutor provides support with more complex issues.

Notwithstanding the high level of support that students can expect it is important that they quickly take responsibility for their own learning. Study periods are an essential part of engendering independent learning habits. Used properly, they can take the pressure off the demanding schedule of reading and written work (we would expect approximately 12 - 15 hours per week of private study above and beyond lessons). Study facilities are available in subject areas, in the Sixth Form Centre, the Stable Block, the Library and in the Girls' School Sixth Form Centre.

## ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

On Wednesday afternoons there are very few timetabled lessons. Instead students have the option of engaging in numerous extra-curricular activities, the most popular of which is organised sport. The school has a wealth of opportunities and expertise and students are encouraged to take advantage of these while they are here. A full list of clubs and societies can be obtained from tutors.

It can be especially rewarding to support and to show initiative, for example by supporting the staff through the House system and showing initiative and leadership as Prefect, Student Council/Sixth Form Rep., or within the various clubs and societies.

### ● *The House System*

Students are allocated to one of our six Houses: Blake, Davys, Frobisher, Gilbert, Hawkins or Raleigh. The Heads of House will invite Sixth Formers to take on positions of responsibility as Prefects. This could, in the Upper Sixth, lead to a role in helping to lead the House as a Senior Prefect. During the Sixth Form there will be numerous House competitions in which to get involved; for example, General Knowledge Quiz, Chess, Football, Rugby, Cricket, Athletics, Swimming, Basketball, Badminton, Tennis and Hockey. Houses also organise musical and dramatic productions and support numerous charities.

### ● *Sport*

The school is justly proud of its sporting tradition. In recent years boys from TBGS Sixth Form have represented England Schools at Rugby, Cricket, Football, Water Polo, Athletics, Skiing and Sailing. Senior Teams have won National Championships in Football (three times), Water Polo, Swimming and Skiing. At County and District level the school's sporting successes are too numerous to list here and its reputation is fearsome. Underpinning this is an ethos of having a go, whatever the level of competence.

### ● *Social*

The social facilities in the Sixth Form are shared with the Girls' school. Students have access to the Common Room areas in the Girls' Sixth Form Centre and in our own Sixth Form Centre. The rooms are comfortable places in which to relax and there are vending machines

and snacks served in the morning and during the lunch hour in the Sixth Form Café. An objective of the Sixth Form is to achieve a guided transition between compulsory schooling and the adult world; with this in mind students are given more freedom than in the lower school and there are fewer restrictions.

### ● *Clubs & Societies*

There is a vast range of clubs and societies for Sixth Formers to get involved in at school. Every autumn there is a Clubs & Societies Fair, showcasing a multitude of extra-curricular options from sporting to sedentary, adrenalin-fuelled to contemplative. Together they help to create the calm, purposeful atmosphere for which the school is known. Where any particular interest has not been catered for, students have often started their own club or society.

## UNIFORM & RESPONSIBILITIES

We believe it is reasonable to expect a high standard of dress and deportment from our students, just as would be expected in a professional working environment. Sixth Formers are therefore expected to wear school uniform at all times –

**For boys:** black blazer, Sixth Form House badge and tie, black 'V' necked pullover (if worn), black trousers, white school shirt (no fashion or sport shirt), black shoes, dark socks.

**For girls:** plain black or grey skirt or trousers, black shoes, plain black, white or grey top; black jacket or cardigan (if worn).

Sixth Formers are also expected to set a positive example for the younger boys to follow; the manner in which Sixth Formers conduct themselves has a considerable effect on the ethos of the whole school.

### Students are expected to:

- Register in their tutor group promptly at 8.50am each morning
- Agree to be bound by the School Rules
- Attend all lessons
- Complete all work on time
- Use study periods sensibly
- Wear School Uniform at all times on site
- Avoid extremes of fashion and superfluous visible adornments
- Involve themselves in the extra-curricular life of the school.

## WHAT SHALL I STUDY?

**Students who are intending to join the TBGS Sixth Form should be aware that the principal qualifications offered are the Advanced General Certificate of Education (A-level) and the International Baccalaureate Diploma.**

### WHAT ARE A-LEVELS?

Most A-levels are divided into modules, half of which are taken in Year 12, constituting an AS-level (Advanced Subsidiary); the marks from the remaining modules taken in Year 13 (known as A2) are combined with AS marks to give an overall A-level grade. Students often choose to continue only 3 subjects at A2 level and occasionally pick up an additional AS level in Year 13.

#### Extension Subjects

In an increasingly competitive Higher Education market the extension subjects, studied for one lesson per week, are intended to give students the edge over their competitors. The subjects offered (Critical Thinking, General Studies, ICT and the Extended Project) are all described in more detail after the AS subject pages. They are intended to complement the 4 main AS subjects.

#### Grading

Passes at AS Level are graded from A to E and at A level there is the added possibility of achieving an A\* grade. To gain an A\* a candidate must achieve at least 90% on the A2 units and 80% overall. To continue a subject to A level in Year 13 students must pass the equivalent AS level in Year 12 at grade C or above. In extenuating circumstances students may be allowed to continue to A2 on a lower grade.

#### Where do A-Levels lead?

A-levels are widely recognised as a route into Higher Education. It continues to be the most popular option for university entrants in the United Kingdom. Most of our students use A-levels as a stepping stone to get onto university courses. Of course, a small proportion of our students every year decides that Higher Education is not for them. In such cases A-levels can also be useful. To be successful at A-level requires a greater degree of personal organisation than with lower level qualifications, as there is much more independent learning. It also requires a more sophisticated grasp of the subjects studied. These are attributes which are just as attractive to employers as they are to university admissions tutors.

### WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA?

The International Baccalaureate Diploma is a prestigious academic qualification, which is taught in schools across the world. It has achieved phenomenal growth in recent years particularly in the United Kingdom. The main attractions of the IB Diploma are its breadth, its portability and its fierce defence of high academic standards. The conceptual difficulty of the IB Diploma subjects is broadly on a par with their A Level equivalents, but assessment is non-modular and genuinely synoptic.

#### The Core

It is commonly said that the IB Diploma is greater than the sum of its parts and this is partly down to the common core which all students have to undertake: Theory of Knowledge, the Extended Essay and a programme of extra-curricular activities known as Creativity, Action, Service. Together with the 6 subjects the core constitutes a coherent educational whole. The benefits of this are recognised by admissions tutors, who tend to see IB students as being particularly well prepared for the challenges of university.

#### Grading

Each of the six chosen subjects is graded from 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest). A further 3 points are awarded for the core which means that the maximum score is 45 points. A diploma is usually awarded for 24 points or above. Students must pass their mock IB exam in Year 12 to continue into Year 13.

#### Where does the IB Diploma lead?

Grade inflation has not been an issue for the IB Diploma, so universities have come to regard it as a highly desirable and reliable measure of academic excellence. This has been recognised in the UCAS tariff (the points score given to qualifications for the purposes of university admission), which equates a perfect score in the IB Diploma to 720 points (compared with 140 points for an A\* at A Level). An added advantage is that the IB Diploma is understood and recognised by universities and employers across the world.

**It is important to be aware, however, that A-levels and the IB Diploma are not the only routes into Higher Education or into employment. Other institutions in Torbay and South Devon offer vocational qualifications and careers advisers can give advice on work-based training in the form of Modern Apprenticeships. We encourage all students who are considering the Sixth Form to make a positive choice by taking into account all of the options available to them.**

## HIGHER EDUCATION

Despite the increasing cost of Higher Education it can still be regarded as an excellent investment over a lifetime; promotion in certain careers can be accelerated by having a degree, while many other careers are the exclusive preserve of graduates. Traditional degree courses (Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science etc) are not the only form of Higher Education qualification. Other options include:

- Higher National Diploma courses (HND's) which have a stronger vocational emphasis than most degree courses.
- Foundation courses and specialist diploma courses can provide a pathway into art, design, music, drama, dance, accountancy, journalism and other specialist areas.

Information on what courses are currently available can be accessed via the website [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

## SUBJECT COMBINATIONS

There are relatively few Higher Education courses which require a particular combination of courses. The most notable exceptions to this rule are:

- Dentistry (usually requires Chemistry and two other sciences)
- Economics (often Maths)
- Engineering (almost always Maths and usually Physics)
- Medicine (almost always Chemistry and at least one other science; in a few cases Biology is also specified)
- Veterinary Sciences (Chemistry, Biology & Physics or Maths).

For IB students these subjects should be taken at Higher Level.

David Cooper's *'How to Choose Your A-levels'* and Brian Heap's *'Degree Course Offers'* (copies of which are in the Careers Room) can provide further information. The Russell Group's document, *'Informed Choices'* (available online) is also very useful in this respect.

## PLANNING AHEAD

It is never too early to begin research on Higher Education or Careers options. Some useful sources of information have been mentioned above. Those who have no idea about their future career aspirations may find it useful to take the Stamford Test on [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). A full programme of higher education and careers guidance is delivered through timetabled enrichment sessions. A dedicated Careers adviser is also available for personal consultations throughout Years 11-13. Please see Mr Bainbridge (Head of Careers) or Mrs Parnell (Careers Administrator in the Stable Block) to make an appointment.

## A GAP YEAR

Taking a year out between finishing A-levels / IB Diploma and beginning a Higher Education course is becoming increasingly popular and may be spent in a variety of useful ways. There are many organised schemes, details of which can be found in the Careers Centre and on the Careers intranet site. It is also an opportunity to gain useful work experience, learn new skills and earn money.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The Sixth Form Prospectus and Application Forms are available from the school or on the school website ([www.tbgs.co.uk](http://www.tbgs.co.uk))

**7<sup>th</sup> December 2011**

Open Evening for prospective Sixth Form students and their parents, beginning in the Cavanna Centenary Hall at 7pm.

**3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012**

Submission of application forms from internal and external candidates.

**Applications received after this date will be at a disadvantage in the allocation of places in over-subscribed groups.**

ELECTRONIC FORMS SHOULD BE PRINTED AND SUBMITTED IN HARD COPY.

PLEASE HAND APPLICATION FORMS TO THE SIXTH FORM SECRETARY

BY **3<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY 2012** OR SEND TO:

**Mr A. Kosmaczewski**  
**Head of Sixth Form**  
 Torquay Boys' Grammar School,  
 Shiphay Manor Drive,  
 Torquay,  
 Devon TQ2 7EL

S I X T H F O R M P R O S P E C T U S

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