



WOKING COLLEGE

Parent Handbook

2015/16

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Welcome from the Principal

Welcome to Woking College.

Our relationship with parents and guardians is very important to us. Therefore we have produced this booklet so that you are aware of the important information and guidance that we have given to students in their first few weeks with us.

The College prospectus and website (www.woking.ac.uk) provides much useful information and news about the College. Planners have been issued to students and these set out in detail useful information about a variety aspects of College life.

Each student has been allocated a Personal Tutor to support them while they are at College and he/she will normally be your first point of contact. However, the Heads of Year and members of the Senior Management Team are also available to discuss any matters that concern you.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that your son or daughter achieves their potential in all that they do and that they enjoy their time at Woking College.

Martin Ingram
Principal



Charter for Parents

We welcome your involvement as parents in the life of the college and the opportunity to work with you towards the success of our students. If we have any concerns about your son/daughter, we will certainly wish to discuss this with you and, where necessary, will contact you to arrange a meeting. If you wish to discuss anything with us, please contact your son/daughter's Personal Tutor or Head of Year.

Once your son/daughter has started College, a copy of their timetable will be posted to you. You will also be invited to a 'New Parents' Evening' which will provide an opportunity to find out more about your son/daughter's programme and meet their Personal Tutor.

While your son/daughter is studying at College, you will receive regular progress reviews as well as invitations to parents' consultation evenings and academic tutoring days.

We will also keep in touch with you through our termly newsletter. One elected parent represents your views on the College's Corporation. You will have an opportunity to stand for this position when a vacancy arises.

If you feel unhappy with the service that we offer, please get in touch with us to share your concerns through the Personal Tutor, Head of Year or the Assistant Principal, Mike Finn. If you remain unhappy with the resolution, please contact the Principal, Martin Ingram.

College Executive Team

| | | |
|----------------|--|------------------|
| Martin Ingram | Principal | min@woking.ac.uk |
| Nuweed Razaq | Assistant Principal | nra@woking.ac.uk |
| Mike Finn | Assistant Principal (Support for Learning) | mfi@woking.ac.uk |
| Colin Barnard | Director of Teaching & Learning | cba@woking.ac.uk |
| Kathryn Mercer | Finance Director | kme@woking.ac.uk |

Parental Involvement in College

Parents can offer support to the College by attending Arts, Performing Arts and Sports events, helping on field trips, offering an insight into the world of work through work experience or talking to a group of students or considering involvement as a parent member of the Corporation.

Woking College Corporation

The College Corporation complies with the Articles and Instruments of Governance laid down in the Higher and Further Education Act of 1992 and it is the Corporation's responsibility to ensure that the College adopts appropriate strategies to achieve its mission as a sixth form college.

The Corporation comprises 20 members including a parent member, two student members and a staff member. Many of the members have, in fact, had experience of being a parent of a student studying at College. Members of the Corporation are all volunteers and are not paid for their duties. Members meet at least four times a year as a whole group and the work is delegated to six committees. The Committees meet according to need and this varies with the committee in question between two and four times a year. Members visit the College on regular occasions, attending events and activities, visiting departments and cross-College areas.

The Chair of the Corporation can be contacted via the Clerk of the Corporation, Helen Meredith (hme@woking.ac.uk).



Timetable

The timetable is designed to provide students with as much flexibility as possible. Students negotiate individual programmes of study with the Heads of Department and their timetable may well be different from every other student in the College. The week is divided into six teaching blocks. Most students will have some non-contact time each day. In addition, some activities may take place after College, particularly clubs and enrichment involvements.

Enrichment

The College has always aimed to provide a broad and balanced educational experience for its students. The Enrichment programme is designed to provide the breadth. There are over thirty courses from which students may choose including sports, arts, musical activities and vocational studies.

Progression between Years and Level

In order for students to progress from an AS course onto an A Level course they will need to achieve at least a grade E in their AS examinations. In order to progress onto Year 13 of a C/BTEC Level 3 course, students will need to have passed all first year modules. It is essential that students attend College from mid-June to the end of the summer term. Year 13 work will commence during this period and work will be set for the summer holiday. As a result of choices made after the AS examinations, students may be in different teaching groups for A2 courses. Students on a one- year Level 2 (GCSE) programme will need to achieve Merit grades in their CTEC Level 2 courses in order to progress onto Level 3 (Advanced Level). **All students looking to progress will need to demonstrate satisfactory attendance and commitment.**

Functional Skills

In line with Government policy, the College is committed to developing and accrediting transferable Key Skills for its students. Our students will be working towards achieving a minimum Level 2 in each of the main Key Skills (Literacy and Numeracy) if they have not achieved the GCSE equivalent at grade C or above.

Learning Resource Centre (LRC)

The LRC is equipped with over 80 computers as well as textbooks and other resources. Students are free to use the facilities in the College in term time between 8am and 5.30pm Monday to Friday. The LRC is also open during the Easter break and May half-term to enable students to complete coursework or revise. The internet can be accessed by all computers connected to the College network.

Students are free to use this facility for research and College work purposes. All students also receive an email account with the College to aid them with their College studies and have access to a wealth of subject, careers and wider College information through Moodle (the College Virtual Learning Environment).

Tutorial Programme

Every student in the College is a member of a tutor group and, as such, participates in the tutorial programme as part of their programme of study. This programme aims to develop students' ability to monitor and improve their own academic progress and to research and plan for moving on after college. The programme also provides students with a greater awareness of social, health and economic-related issues.

External Examinations

AS and A Level subjects are assessed in modules through examination and coursework. Students will take public examinations in the summer of each year. Therefore, there is a focus on examination work right from the start of their college courses. Some AS and A Level modules can be re-taken but the College will only pay for the examination entry fee for the first attempt. New linear A Levels are fully reassessed at the end of Year 13. AS results form the basis of UCAS offers and predictions.

Examination Entry & Payment

The College pays examination and course registration fees for all students who are under 19 at the beginning of their course. However, if overall attendance falls below 85% covering the whole of the student's course at the time of exam entry and/or registration, students may be charged for exams and/or course registration. This can amount to over £130 for each course. Where a student fails to improve upon their attendance despite numerous warnings, the Assistant Principal reserves the right to withdraw the student from examination/ coursework entry. Serious long-term illness and hospital/medical appointments must be supported by a medical certificate. These absences will be excluded from the calculation of 85%. Minor illnesses will count against attendance.

Routine appointments at doctors, dentists, opticians or driving tests and lessons should be made in the student's own time; these absences will count against the 85% as will holidays taken during College term time. We will aim to keep parents/ guardians advised about their son/daughter's attendance if it is a cause for concern.



Careers Information

The College has a well-resourced careers library which is open for student use during the College working day. Advice and guidance take place in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. Individual appointments to see the careers adviser can be made via the Personal Tutors. Students' primary access to careers education is through the tutorial programme. A range of independent advisers are regularly welcomed into College from a variety of organisations and institutions.

One-year students are carefully guided through the year by undertaking a special programme which includes individual guidance interviews. All options after College are addressed including work based learning through employment, returning to College and other Further Education options. For Year 13 students there is a comprehensive programme which guides students through the application processes for Employment and HE.

References

References are written for students in consultation with teaching staff and Personal Tutors. References are usually treated as confidential although open testimonials can be obtained in consultation with the student's Head of Year.

Value Added and Target Grades

Statistically, the best single indicator of how a student will perform at AS, A Level and C/BTEC is their achievement at GCSE. A number of organisations have developed systems to enable colleges to analyse AS/A Level value-added performance relative to GCSE. The GCSE results of each student can be converted to an average GCSE score by giving a score of 8 for an A* grade descending to a score of 1 for a grade G. An average GCSE score of 5.5 therefore indicates that a student's average GCSE is half-way between a grade C and a grade B.

This type of data is used in systems such as A Level Performance System (ALPS) and allows the College to take into account the relative GCSE ability of students and find out how our students performed at AS/A Level relative to other sixth form colleges. It also allows us to identify which students have exceeded their targets and which have under-achieved at AS/A Level and to predict realistic target AS/A Level performance levels for new students in College.

Grades at GCSE and AS/A Level cannot be directly compared. The national average data illustrates that students who average a grade C at GCSE will need to over-achieve in order to get better than a D/E grade at AS/A Level. Further, it predicts that students who achieve A* or A at GCSE should not automatically assume they will achieve A grades at AS/A Level. We use this process to give students a minimum target grade at the start of their studies and we measure their progress against this grade.

Pastoral Care in College

The College continues to maintain its strong commitment to the support and guidance of each individual student, primarily via the Personal Tutor. The College Counsellors are also available to meet with individual students by appointment, which can be arranged through Student Services. Where necessary, or where it is in the best interests of the student, the College may also draw on the professional experience of external agencies. This would normally be done in consultation with parents.

Safeguarding & E-Safety

The College takes its Safeguarding duty very seriously, and a dedicated team work to ensure that students are supported and monitored pastorally. The Designated Safeguarding Officer is Mike Finn, Assistant Principal and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer is Laura Cook, Director of Safeguarding and Progression.

As part of our Safeguarding policy, The College is committed to the Safety of all students when working online. The College uses filters and monitors usage of the IT network. Staff are trained to understand e-safety and the dangers present online. The College tutorial programme aims to educate students about being safe online and when using social networking sites. If parents want more information about e-safety/safety online, please contact enquiries@woking.ac.uk, requesting more e-safety information, including a reply e-mail address.

Communication with Parents

Parents are kept informed of events in a variety of ways. The College Twitter feed keeps students and parents informed of what is going on in the College. Letters may be used to update parents or to inform them of particular events and developments.

The College has its own website (www.woking.ac.uk); the site features current news, the College calendar, events, the newsletter, the prospectus, departmental and subject profiles and careers information.

If particular problems occur during a student's time in College, parents will generally be contacted by telephone or letter as appropriate. The College is increasingly contacting parents by email so please provide us with your contact email address for correspondence. All progress reports are sent to parents via email.

Use of Non-Contact Time

All students in the College will find that, within the overall College timetable arrangements, they have a certain number of blocks free each week when they are not timetabled for classes. These "non-contact periods" offer them the chance to organise their own work and to study independently. The LRC is the main area available for supervised quiet study although practical subjects also provide areas for students to continue with their own work.

Part-Time Work

We recognise that many students have part-time jobs which give them personal and financial benefits and we encourage students to hold such positions. However, we strongly recommend that students should not take on more than 8-10 hours of part-time work per week during term-time periods. Research shows that any more than this can affect final grades.

Trips & Visits

A range of educational and recreational visits are offered for which your consent is always required, regardless of the age of the student.

Attendance & Absence

The College expects 100% attendance and all students are required to attend all timetabled lessons and tutorials irrespective of when they have non-contact periods.

Absence from College, when known in advance, should be notified to the Personal Tutor. Absence must always be explained. If students are absent we ask the student or their parent to telephone the College before 10am.

Prolonged or unexplained absence will involve contact with parents and may result in discontinuation of a student's programme of study, or withdrawal from examination entry. Attendance is checked regularly and students who fail to attend classes or tutorial through absence or lateness may find themselves facing a formal disciplinary procedure.

The College accepts that some absences are unavoidable and these are categorised as 'authorised'. These include:

- Non-routine medical appointment which cannot be made outside College hours
- Careers/job interview
- University open day visit/interview (up to a maximum of 3)
- Religious holidays
- Work experience placement related to College course
- Participation in a College activity
- Funeral of a close friend or relative
- Serious failure of public transport

The following absences are generally not acceptable and are considered 'unauthorised':

- Holidays and leisure activities
- Part-time work which is unrelated to the programme of study
- Birthdays or other similar celebrations
- Babysitting younger siblings or other family chores
- Driving tests or lessons

Financial Help

The College has set aside a Learner Support Fund to provide help to students facing financial difficulties whilst incurring expenses relating to their academic courses, such as an essential educational trip/visit and buying specialist equipment/materials. Requests, which are always treated sensitively, should be made to the Assistant Principal, Mike Finn, in the first instance.

Holidays During Term-Time

Students should not take holidays in term-time. Course programmes are demanding and the time available to prepare for examinations and assessments is relatively short. In exceptional circumstances, students who require leave of absence during term time must complete an 'Absence Request Form' and send it to their Head of Year, along with a supporting letter from parents. The Assistant Principal will make the final decision as to whether such absences can be authorised.

Please note that all first year students will be expected to return to College in mid-June (after their AS examinations) to begin Year 13 (A2/ BTEC courses). It is a condition of progression into Year 13 that students attend these lessons and satisfactorily complete the work.

Smoking

Students are strongly encouraged not to smoke as it is very harmful to health. Smoking is only permitted in the defined external area of the College between the Learning Resource Centre and the field. Smoking is not permitted in any other part of the College.

Alcohol & Illegal Substances

No one is allowed to consume or possess alcohol or illegal substances on College premises or at College events whether on or off site. Any student found under the influence of or dealing in such substances will immediately be suspended pending an investigation, which may result in the student being asked to leave College. Such instances will also be reported to the police.

Exclusion

The College is committed to the provision of first class learning opportunities for all students. In a very limited number of cases, it is sometimes necessary to exclude a student from the College as part of the disciplinary procedure. This would normally follow discussion with the student and parents. The College always aims to act in the best interests of all students and staff of the College. Exclusion decisions will only be made by the Principal / Assistant Principal.

What We Expect From Our Students

Whilst we appreciate student rights and opportunities, it is important that students have a clear understanding of our requirements which will enable them to make a success of their time with us. We therefore expect that all students will:

- Accept responsibility for their own learning and academic progress with the support of their Personal Tutor, Subject Teachers and Head of Year.
- Complete all set work to the best of their ability and by the required date, as well as giving appropriate time to background study, research and examination revision.
- Attend all designated activities fully and punctually.
- Maintain an acceptable, courteous standard of behaviour at College and whilst engaged in activities associated with the College. Ensure that their behaviour never have a detrimental effect of the academic progress of other students.
- Follow the College Equality and Diversity and Safeguarding expectations with regard to all students, members of staff and visitors and never knowingly endanger the health and physical well-being of others.
- Respect and maintain the condition of the College buildings, property and general environment.
- Follow any instructions and guidelines issued by the College and its staff.



Transport

The College works with Surrey County Council (SCC) to obtain concessionary transport rates for students attending the College. If your son/daughter will be travelling to College by bus and/or train and intends to purchase the subsidised weekly ticket, he/she will need to apply for a SCC travel pass. Application forms will be available at induction or online at surreycc.gov.uk.

Reception

The Reception of the College (by the LRC) is staffed from 8.00am until 4.30pm. Enquiries can be directed to reception in person or by telephone using the main College number 01483 761036.

College Opening Hours

The College buildings are normally open for student access and use from 8am until 5pm during term time. Specialist facilities (science labs, photography rooms, art and design rooms and the sports hall) will only be available outside lesson times by clear arrangement with staff due to other timetabled lessons and for health and safety reasons. Details of holiday access will be given to students in advance of each holiday period.

Students' Union

The Students' Union is an elected body which discusses the issues affecting students and raises them with senior staff and governors. They also organise activities for the students such as charity events and social activities.

Catering in College

The College Refectory provides meals and snacks, which are of good quality and good value for money when compared with other local options, from 8am until 2pm daily. Vending machines for snacks and drinks are also available throughout the day. The College is committed to promoting healthy eating.

Contacting Students

In an emergency, students can be contacted via the College switchboard (01483 761036). This provision is made for emergency use only and whilst every effort will be made to contact the student as speedily as possible, we cannot guarantee being able to relay a message.

Lockers

A very limited number of lockers are available at College, on a first come first served basis, for the storage of inexpensive personal property. An initial charge of £20 is made, £10 of which is refunded when the key is returned (£10 usage fee). Lockers are of light construction and students are advised not to leave expensive items in them.

Security

Students should avoid bringing valuable items into College wherever possible. Where this cannot be avoided, students are advised to ask staff to help them arrange safekeeping. The College is protected by CCTV cameras.

All students will be issued with a College ID card when they start at College. This must be carried by students at all times and will need to be produced on demand. Spot checks are carried out by senior management.

First Aid

The College has a number of members of staff who are qualified First Aiders. Students who are feeling unwell may seek assistance from any member of staff or from Reception, where a first aider will be called if necessary. Students leaving the College due to illness should inform relevant staff by completing a signing out form.

Safety Procedures

The College has a full set of safety rules and procedures and students are instructed to follow these and any instructions given by a member of staff. Students are given a Health and Safety briefing as part of the induction process.

In the event of a fire or any other emergency, a continuous alarm will sound and everyone will be asked to leave the building immediately using the nearest safe exit. These fire evacuation practices take place at least once a term.

Parking

Limited parking spaces are available for students on a first come first served basis. Students need to register their vehicles at Reception and will then be issued with a parking permit. Motorbikes can be parked in the designated area.

If students are being dropped off or collected from College at any time, drivers are asked to park safely outside the College. Please do not block the entrance gate as this presents a danger to pedestrians and other vehicles.

Key Dates 2015/2016

The College term dates are detailed in student planners and on our website.

| Date | Event | Description |
|--|---|--|
| 26 th – 28 th August | Enrolment Days | New and returning students enrol for courses |
| 3 rd - 4 th September | Induction Days | New students familiarise themselves with the College and undertake screening tests |
| 7 th September | Lessons begin | Students collect timetables and lessons start |
| 24 th September | New Parents' Evening | An opportunity for parents to meet their son/daughter's Personal Tutor and Head of Year |
| 15 th October | Open Evening | An opportunity for prospective students and parents to visit the College |
| 19 th – 23 rd October | Progress reports issued | Progress report issued and sent home via students |
| 2 nd November | Staff INSET | College closed to students |
| 3 rd November | Safe Drive Presentations | A talk on how to stay safe on the road run by the emergency services |
| 9 th - 13 th November | Assessment Week | Whole College Assessment and Exam Week |
| 1 st December | Year 13 Academic Tutoring Day | Individual appointments with subject teachers for students and parents to discuss progress and set targets. No lessons running on this day |
| 7 th December | Year 12 / Level 2 Academic Tutoring Day | Individual appointments with subject teachers for students and parents to discuss progress and set targets. No lessons running on this day |
| 14 th – 18 th December | Progress reports issued | Progress report issued and sent home via students |
| 1 st – 5 th February | Mock Exam Week | Mock exams across all subjects |
| 12 th February | Staff INSET | College closed to students |
| 7 th - 11 th March | Progress reports issued | Progress report issued and sent home via students |
| 10 th March | Year 12 / Level 2 Academic Tutoring Day | Individual appointments with subject teachers for students and parents to discuss progress and set targets. No lessons running on this day |
| 16 th March | Year 13 Academic Tutoring Day | Individual appointments with subject teachers for students and parents to discuss progress and set targets. No lessons running on this day |
| 2 nd May | Main exam period starts | Main AS examination period begins. Lessons will continue until date of exam for each subject |
| 8 th June | AS Lessons resume | AS students return and begin A2 classes. Teachers will meet with students to review March targets and set goals for the second year. |
| 24 nd June (TBC) | Welcome Day | New students in College for initial induction. College closed to students |
| 6 th July | Last day for students | Students finish for Summer break at the end of the day |
| 8 th July | Year 10 Taster Day | Woking High School |
| 12 th July | Year 10 Taster Day | The Winston Churchill School |
| 18 th August | AS/A2 Results | Provisional date for publication of Summer exam results |
| 25 th August | GCSE Results | Provisional date for publication of Summer exam results |

Please note that these dates and events are subject to change. Further information will be given to students and published on our website. Additional staff INSET days also to be confirmed.



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