

A-Z of Sixth Form at Ballyclare Secondary School

Academic Planner

Each year 13 and 14 pupil will be required to keep an Academic Planner. This journal has been carefully prepared by pastoral staff to assist with time management and organisation. One of the single biggest causes of stress in year 13 and 14 is managing the workload. The journal is designed to help organise learning and motivate you as you can see that you are getting tasks completed. You can search the internet and Youtube for more information about how journaling can reduce stress and increase productivity and motivation.

Attendance and Punctuality

Success and attendance are inextricably linked and we expect all pupils to aim for 100% attendance.

Good attendance is recognised by the school in special assemblies and with badges awarded for consistently good attendance over a number of years. [Please see the attendance policy on our school website for more details.](#)

If students are not punctual to class assembly, the same consequences apply as to the rest of the school. Pupils driving to school must ensure they leave enough time to get to school and to their class assembly room by 8.40am. It is our expectation that students will be in school every day from 8.40am to 2.55 pm, attending all sessions: lessons, assemblies and study time.

A good attendance record in Sixth Form is essential. It is one of the first pieces of information required when filling in applications for jobs or further education, and you want to make a good impression.

Any absences need to be explained in full, otherwise your attendance record will be effected. [See Illness and Absence.](#)

Good attendance will also help you keep up to date with work. You will quickly notice that even though you have fewer subjects the volume of work is much greater and the pace of work much faster. Any day off can potentially mean a lot of work to catch up.

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed
85% Attendance	28 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed

Source Department of Education, NI "Miss School=Miss Out"

You should be punctual to all lessons. The school day runs as follows.

Reg <i>20 mins</i>	<i>08.40 – 09.00</i>
P1	<i>09.00 – 09.50</i>
Break <i>15 mins</i>	<i>09.50 – 10.05</i>
P2	<i>10.05 - 10.55</i>
P3	<i>10.55 – 11.45</i>
P4 <i>inc lunch</i>	<i>11.45 – 13.15</i>
P5	<i>13.15 - 14.05</i>
P6	<i>14.05 – 14.55</i>
	<i>14.55 – 16.00</i>

Year 13 and 14 lunch is 12.35 – 1.15. If pupils have gone off site from lunch it is of paramount importance that they are back in good time for the start of period 5.

Attendance at Assembly

Class Assembly begins each day at 8.40am. To make sure your attendance record is accurate you must attend registration each day at 8.40am and remain with your registration group until 9am, unless you have morning duties. This means you won't miss any important announcements or you can follow up any problems or absences with your class teacher. There is also an assembly programme designed to support you with your Sixth Form studies. Attendance at all assemblies, class and whole school, is compulsory. Please contact the school with any queries in this respect.

Buses

The following areas are served by buses Templepatrick, Parkgate, Dixons Corner, Moorfields, Ballyboley, Steens Corner, New Mossley, Cloughfern/Monkstown, Glengormely, Carrickfergus and Corrs Corner (Larne). Year 13 and 14 pupils have an important role in looking out for younger pupils who may be uncertain about getting the bus to and from school. Those who do not live within walking distance of the school, can we remind you that there is limited parking on the school site and that you should continue to take the bus to school.

Pupils must wait until all buses leave the school site before leaving in their private car.

Cars

There is no student parking on the school site. If you are driving to school, you should be sure that you park with care and consideration to local residents and the wider community.

Commitment

In choosing post-16 studies, you have chosen this as your full time occupation. By law, no student can be enrolled in another course or engaged in paid work during school hours

You should expect to spend at least as much time on your studies as you would if you were in full-time employment. In practice this means that you should plan to spend approximately the same amount of time doing private study, in study periods and at home, as you do in lessons. For example, for an AS/A level subject you will normally have five hours of taught lessons each week and should spend at least five hours doing private study related to the work you are doing in lessons. Teachers will guide you as to the type of task required for their subject.

Dates

Key dates for the Sixth Form diary 2024/25 are:

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
<p>28 August Year 13 Pupil, Parent/Carer Induction</p> <p>29 August Year Full Induction Day</p> <p>30 August Year 14 Pupil, Parent/Carer Induction</p> <p>9 September Year 14 University of Ulster Open Day Visit (Belfast Campus)</p> <p>12 September Year 14 Induction Evening</p> <p>20 September Year 14 University of Ulster Open Day Visit (Belfast Campus)</p> <p>25 November Year 13 and 14 Consultations</p>	<p>17 January Sixth Form Formal</p> <p>Careers Convention organised by Antim and Newtownabbey Council</p> <p>Date tbc</p>	<p>June Year 13 Work placements</p>

Education Maintenance Allowance

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a payment of £30 a week which may be paid fortnightly to those who are aged 16 to 19 years who continue in education. If you believe you are entitled to EMA it is your responsibility to apply. The school only processes payments once your application is authorised. The guide below will inform you if you are eligible. There are a limited number of application forms available from the school office, or go to:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/education-maintenance-allowance-application-forms-and-guidance-notes>

You can print application forms and guidance notes from here.

Please see below the eligibility criteria. Pupils are advised not to delay in completing their application. Once the application is approved eligible pupils must sign their EMA agreement at the school office.

Annual household income	Weekly EMA entitlement
£20,500 or less	£30
Between £20,501 and £22,500 and there's at least 1 other dependant eligible for child benefit in your household, other than you.	£30
Between £20,501 and £22,500 and there are no other dependants eligible for child benefit in your household, other than you.	£0
£22,501 or more	£0

Email and Internet

Each pupil will be given a username and password to gain access to the school system, both in school and at home. The internet is accessible only after a User Agreement has been signed. Passwords must be kept secure and no pupils should share accounts. Sixth Form pupils should regularly check their school email account and any relevant Google Classrooms as this is how most of the communication is made in the Sixth Form: Key information about the Sixth Form, universities, apprenticeships, etc. Pupils should use their school email account for all emails sent to staff.

Enrichment

Year 13 have weekly timetabled enrichment lessons. It is an opportunity to try something new, build your skill set, your friendship group and contribute to mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Options include Survival Cookery, DIY, Digital Skills, Money Management and Health and Fitness. During this time there are also workshops in Study Skills and Emotional Health and Wellbeing.

All pupils are encouraged to get involved in enrichment opportunities outside of their taught lessons.

These activities allow pupils the chance to get some time away from lessons and study to relax and try something new. Such opportunities are also often beneficial to pupils when

completing UCAS forms and personal statements. Enrichment opportunities mainly exist in helping out with the school's clubs and societies.

Holidays

The dates of all school holidays can be found in your pupil planner and on the school website.

To go on holiday during term time is to put your achievement at risk. The school does not authorise holidays in term time, purely as a result of the severely detrimental effect it has on your studies. Time away from school is not easy to catch up at this level. Therefore, we cannot permit holidays during school time. We do encourage visits to university and college open days, but we would ask students to select carefully and limit themselves to universities they are seriously considering.

Homework

Some of private study time will be spent doing homework set by teachers but you are also expected to plan some of your own work. This will include checking the notes you have made each lesson, doing background reading related to this work and learning it prior to the next lesson. Further guidance about how to spend your private study time will be given by subject teachers; if in doubt, ask! If you think that you have "nothing to do", ask again, you are quite possibly underestimating the task of studying at post 16!

Illness and Absence

If you know in advance (e.g. medical appointments, interviews etc.) that you are going to be absent, please ensure that your parent/carer has informed the class teacher in writing. We will amend our records accordingly. Pupils should bring these notes as soon as possible in advance of the absence. Absence during school hours for part of the day also requires written confirmation of appointments. All notes are to be brought to the class teacher who will issue a signing out slip, this slip must be handed in to the pupil desk before leaving school.

In case of unplanned absence, a note must be brought on the day of return.

Any pupils feeling ill during the school day must adhere to the school procedure. The pupil must first visit the school nurse, who will then make contact with home and decide on a course of action. This applies to all pupils, even those aged 18+. Pupils who have come by car may be advised not to drive home themselves if ill, this decision will be made in consultation with parents/carers.

Learning Contract

All pupils in Year 13 and Year 14, are required to sign a home-school-pupil agreement which outlines the responsibilities of parents, pupils and school in post-16, non-compulsory education. Parent, pupil and school will sign this at the August Induction day for year 13. Year 14 pupils will return the signed contract at the start of the new term.

Should the need arise from specific concerns, pupils may be placed on an individualised learning contract. This may also require formal meetings with parents.

Meals

Sixth Form pupils may use the school dining areas. A packed lunch can also be brought in to school and eaten in the social areas of the Sixth Form Centre. Pupils may leave the school site during their allocated lunch period.

Mobile Phones and other digital devices

Pupils in year 13 and 14 follow the same rules as all other pupils in respect of digital devices.

All mobile devices must be turned off from 8.40am to 3pm. Aside from this just being a school rule, recent research has shown that just having your mobile phone in sight when you are trying to work reduces your ability to think and concentrate by 20%. Work out what is likely to distract you and avoid temptation when studying

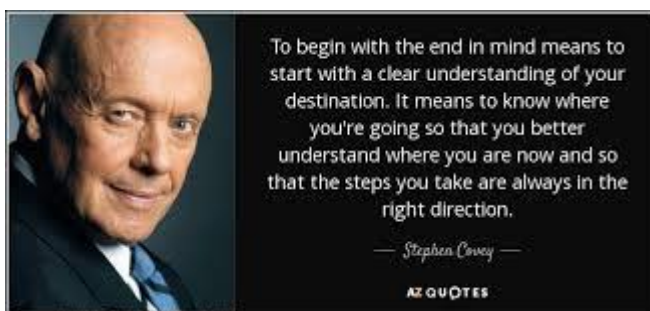
Should you wish to bring your own device to school you will need to sign a “Bring Your Own Device” agreement. This will be available at the start of term.

The school also has Surface SE devices available on loan to Sixth Form pupils. If you wish to avail of this offer please be sure to fill out the necessary documents at the start of the school year.

Motivation

Up until now you have had to come to school by law. Now you have *chosen* to come back and no doubt staying the distance will require determination at times. Your parents and teachers will be behind you all the way but nothing compares to self-motivation.

One of the tips from the book “ 7 Habits of Highly Successful Teens” by Steven Covey is to begin with the end in mind.



Be clear about why you have returned to Sixth Form: what do you want to gain from this year and how are you going to get there? Plan early, investigate what you want to do next and be clear about the grades this requires. Set yourself targets accordingly. There will be lots of help in class assembly to get you to think about this. You can also speak with careers staff in careers class or make an appointment with Ms Russell, Head of Careers.

Part-time Employment

Having a part time job is good experience, and is a valuable activity. Please remember, however, that this is an addition to your studies, and your school work must come first. Those students whose part time work is in retail often find that there is pressure to work most evenings and both days at the week-end in the run up to Christmas shopping. This is too much. One evening and one day at the week-end is the ideal. If you want to work 17 hours a week then you are a Level studies will inevitably suffer.

Time Management / Prioritising Work

This is possibly the biggest challenge moving on from GCSE. It is very difficult to keep lots of projects on the go at once, but as a Sixth Former, you will be asked to do just that – and right from the start of your course too! To help you we have designed an academic journal. This is not an optional tool, all Sixth Form pupils will be expected to use it to direct their learning each day. The journal has been designed as research and experience shows that chunking work and making to do lists aids productivity and motivation. Anxiety about getting work done also decreases. So win-win! The journal is fairly user friendly but your class teacher and Head of Sixth Form will guide you in its use.

Record all homework and deadlines. Assign particular study periods to completion of school work. If you are struggling to keep on top of things, speak to your subject teachers or one of the pastoral team. Try not to leave anything to the last minute – especially coursework. Those subjects with a large percentage of coursework have noted that a small amount of work completed regularly is much more beneficial than leaving it all to the night before!

Self-directed learning

This key skill is to be developed over your time in Sixth Form. You will have to take charge of and schedule your own learning outside of taught classes. Your academic planner will assist you in this endeavour and you should bring it with you each day. Cultivating this habit will be of huge benefit moving on to the workplace or further education.

Study Time

As a Sixth Form pupil, you will now have study time during the week. This looks like “free periods” in a timetable but these are designed to allow for follow up work outside of lessons. Some of these study periods can also be allocated to volunteering activities in school time, such as study buddies or prefect duties.

The Sixth Form Centre and the various learning environments around the school are available for Sixth Form students to use. These are allocated in advance, dependent on the courses being followed. All students will be expected to produce a study period timetable which must be submitted to Miss Collins. This timetable is then followed in the same way as the taught lesson timetables. When studying the Sixth Form Centre pupils are expected to be in the classroom area and sitting at individual desks. The soft seats and round tables are for use at break and lunch only.

Target Grades, Reporting and Assessment

At the start of the academic year pupils will participate in CAT4 testing, this gives a baseline to guide potential outcomes and aspirations. Pupil will have formal assessments which will be compared against this baseline. Various supports may come out of

The draft assessment schedule for year 13 and 14 is as follows. Pupils must be in attendance for all assessments.

Assessment Unit 1	Assessment Session 4-15 November 2024
Assessment Unit 2 (formal mock exams)	Assessment Session 24-28 February 2025
Summer exam series of external exams	May 2025

25 November

Year 13 and 14 Parent/Carer Consultations

UCAS

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) is the only way to apply to a University. The table below gives the tariff points you may find in some prospectuses. You will find out more about this during timetabled careers periods.

A level and Advanced VCE

Official title: Advanced GCE and Advanced VCE

Grade	Tariff points
A*	56
A	48
B	40
C	32
D	24
E	16

Size band: 4

Grade bands: 4-14

Offered by AQA, CCEA, OCR, Pearson Edexcel and WJEC

Uniform and Appearance

Sixth Form pupils set the standard for the whole of the school.

Pupils Parents/Carers are asked to ensure that uniform and appearance complies with our school rules at all times. Non-compliance may mean a pupil is sent home to change.

More information about uniform in Sixth Form can be found on the school website.

The final decision on what is acceptable will be made by the principal in accordance with our school uniform policy.

Volunteering

We encourage pupils to volunteer, both with activities in school and in the wider community.

Volunteering is one of the best ways to make your CV stand out and get that dream job

Gain new skills, training, great experience and confidence in an area where you would like to work

Employers value volunteering, with 51% of recent graduates saying volunteering helped get them a job.