



# STUDENT HANDBOOK

# WELCOME TO SIGMA SIXTH

A college which supports a journey of self-discovery and prepares you for the next stage of your life. Our students consistently achieve excellent results on our A Level and Applied courses, and students progress to their first-choice universities or employers with ease.

The vision is to create opportunities within and beyond the curriculum to enable you to become a well-rounded, confident, responsible and successful person and to achieve your full potential both academically and personally. The information and expectations outlined in this handbook will help make this possible.

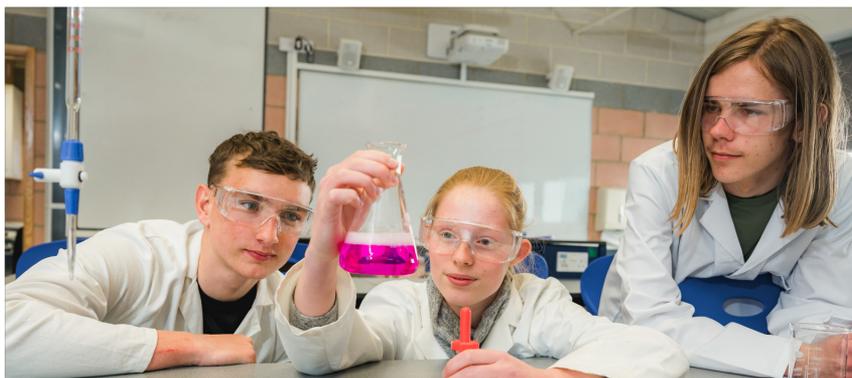
Sigma Sixth is going to be very different from your school experiences so far. You will be required to be much more organised and independent with your studies. You will have periods on your timetable for additional study when not in lessons. Each subject you are learning requires extra work on your behalf. You need to re-do notes, go over what you have learnt in class and investigate further in your own time.

There is an expectation of you to work hard and get involved in activities within the Sixth Form, to ensure that you fulfil your potential and leave Sigma Sixth with a sense of achievement. Staff will help advise and support you, but, at the end of the day it is your hard work, commitment and enthusiasm that will make you a success.

Whatever path you choose after Sigma Sixth, staff are here to ensure that you get the best possible opportunities to help you succeed.

The pastoral care in our Sixth Form is second-to-none and whether you want a job, apprenticeship, or a place at university, our experienced staff can help you get there and achieve your goals.

# BEST WISHES AND GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR STUDIES HERE AT SIGMA SIXTH



# THE SIXTH FORM DAY

Each subject is taught on a single day per week for a morning and afternoon session. There is a break during each session as well as a 40 minute lunch break. It is likely you will study three courses which are taught over three days. In addition to this, you will select an Enrichment Curriculum subject, attend work experience and attend private study.

**Year 12 students are expected to attend Sigma Sixth for a minimum of four full days per week plus a day of work experience.**

Timings of the Sixth Form day:

<b>8.15am</b>	<b>College opens</b>
<b>8.50 – 10.30</b>	<b>AM Lessons</b>
<b>10.30 – 10.50</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>10.50 – 12.10</b>	<b>AM Lessons</b>
<b>12.10 – 12.50</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>12.50 – 2.00</b>	<b>PM Lessons</b>
<b>2.00 - 2.10</b>	<b>Rest Break</b>
<b>2.10 – 3.10</b>	<b>PM Lessons</b>
<b>3.30 - 4.30</b>	<b>Extra-curricular activities</b>

# FACILITIES AT SIGMA SIXTH

Sigma Sixth will be different to your previous school experience. As a member of the Sixth Form, you will have access to:

- Sports Lab
- Specialist Art and Design studios
- Dance and theatre performance spaces
- Mac suite and recording studio
- Four court sports hall and astro turf pitches
- Well equipped technology workshops
- Excellent ICT provision including Chromebooks
- A range of separate, private study facilities
- On site café



# THE SIGMA SIXTH TEAM

The Sixth Form Team will support your development, both emotionally and personally, and monitor attendance and behaviour; operating an 'open door' policy throughout the day. The care and support provided by staff is recognised as a real strength.

Members of the Sixth Form Team:

Mrs McKarry	Head of College
Mr Dale	Deputy Head of College
Miss Bailey	Head of VI6
Mrs Nash	Academic Key Worker: Attendance/Pastoral
Mrs Read	Academic Key Worker: Careers/Study Skills
Mrs Settle	Outreach and Work Experience Coordinator
Mrs Pirie	Learning Support Advisor

# SEND & MEDICAL SUPPORT

Sigma Sixth is strongly committed to both inclusion and equal opportunities and will look at what reasonable adjustments can be made to ensure there is appropriate access. Students should flag up any special educational needs or exam access arrangements as soon as possible so appropriate strategies and arrangements can be made. When students first enrol, we ask you and your parents/carers to provide information about any medical needs and provide contact numbers in case of emergency. If your needs change or if emergency contact details change, please inform us.

Please visit our website to read our SEND guidance document.



# SIGMA SIXTH PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Our commitment to you is very important, and you should have high expectations of the provision offered to you at Sigma Sixth. Equally, we have high expectations of our students and we require a high level of commitment to attendance, studies and conduct. When you join us you will be required to sign a partnership agreement, which details precisely what you can expect as a student and what Sigma Sixth expects from you. This agreement is explicit and concise so make sure you are familiar with this before you sign.



# SIGMA SIXTH SUPPORT STRATEGY

Any student who is not meeting the standards required in the Sigma Sixth Partnership Agreement will receive the following stages of support:

Stage	Behaviour	Action
Informal warning	Repeated low-level inappropriate behaviour; off-task in lessons, lateness; poor or incomplete home learning or class work; minor plagiarism; isolated unauthorised absence.	The member of staff identifying the problem speaks to the student. A note of the conversation is logged and an email sent to the student summarising the outcome of the meeting.
Stage 1	Regular inappropriate behaviour and inability to meet sixth form expectations despite informal warning(s); repeated unauthorised absence, with attendance below 93% or failure to meet deadlines or repeated minor plagiarism	A formal meeting with appropriate staff to discuss what support can be put in place. Conversation is logged, student and parents/ carer informed.
Stage 2	Initial issue(s) unresolved and so failure to respond to the Stage 1 warning after 1 month review.  Attendance below 93%.  Progress is a cause for concern and is affecting chances of progression.	At this point the student will be required to attend supervised study during any non-contact time that they may have. Further or first meeting with parents/carers. Attendance contract and/or interventions agreed between student/parents/carers and sixth form.
Stage 3	Initial issue(s) still unresolved as the student fails to meet the targets agreed with the student and set out in the Intervention Plan and/or attendance contract.	Parent/carers meeting (if appropriate) with Pastoral Leader or Head of College. New targets and support measures identified with a new review period.
Stage 4	Serious and/or persistent failure to meet expectations despite a Stage 3 warning. Gross misconduct.	Final Review: if there is no positive response from the student, sanction(s) up to and including, as appropriate, a move to another establishment or exclusion.

# VI6 PARTNERSHIP STUDY EXPECTATIONS

Some Sigma Sixth students will have the unique opportunity to attend the very prestigious VI6 provision. Five schools and the University of Essex teamed up in 2015 to provide a learning experience unlike anything else in the country. Students involved will have the opportunity to:

- Study and work at Essex University
- Access University facilities
- Have access to University professors and expertise



If you who have opted for a VI6 subject, you will be travelling to Essex University for your lessons; travel will be provided. You are still a representative of Sigma Sixth and our expectations remain the same.

# SIXTH FORM DRESS CODE

The dress code is fully inclusive and allows students to feel empowered to wear attire that they are comfortable in.

However, you should wear clothing which is appropriate for a multi-user site and educational environment. The following rules must be adhered to:

- Clothing should be smart and clean.
- No clothing with inappropriate/offensive logos, images or text.
- Torso to be covered.
- Legs to be covered to mid-thigh.
- Underwear should not be on display.
- No excessive piercings or tattoos
- Functional shoes with back or back strap.
- Hats and hoods to be removed indoors.

This is not an exhaustive list in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of dress and appearance. Either the Head of College or KS5 Pastoral Leader makes the final decision on whether dress/appearance is acceptable. Any member of the Sixth Form who does not conform to the dress code will be spoken to and if necessary will be asked to go home to change.

# IDENTITY CARDS

You will be issued with a photo identity card, allowing you entry to the Sixth Form area. Identity cards need to be in your possession at all times. Identity cards should be worn and visible, whilst on site for safeguarding reasons and are essential to gain access and move freely around the Sigma Sixth building.

You will need to use these cards to register in and out of the building using our electronic systems that are positioned at all of our entrances and exits.

It is vital that staff know who is on the premises at all times.



# ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

Good attendance = Good results

We place a strong emphasis on good attendance because employers and university admissions officers want people who can be relied upon. They are not going to invest in people who will not be there. Punctuality is very important, if you come in late, for whatever reason you must use our electronic sign in system and report to the Pastoral Office.

If you know in advance that you will be absent, please email [sixthform@cchs.school](mailto:sixthform@cchs.school). If you are unable to come to Sixth Form, because of illness or some other personal difficulty, you or your parents/ carers must phone 01255 424266 by 9:30am so that we are aware that you will not be in, or are likely to be late.

To authorise an absence due to visiting your doctor or dentist, you must hand in an appointment card to the Pastoral Office before or after your appointment. Otherwise, it will count as an unauthorised absence.

Holidays in term time are not permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances that have been agreed by the Head of College. If absent, you must ensure you contact your teachers to arrange completion of missed work and agree a hand in date.

# PART TIME WORK

Many students in the Sixth Form have part time jobs in the evenings or at the weekend and a good work ethic is very important, however, this must not affect your learning and independent study.

Be warned, that most students can cope with one or two evenings paid work each week combined with a day's work at the weekend, but beyond that it will almost certainly be at an obvious cost to your studies.

Under no circumstances should any paid employment be scheduled Monday to Friday between 8:45am and 3:10pm.



# ENRICHMENT CURRICULUM

Our unique enrichment curriculum includes opportunities for you to broaden your knowledge and develop your personal and social skills. Our enrichment courses can lead to recognised qualifications to enhance and complement your studies.

Year 12 students are required to select an enrichment course alongside their mentoring, selecting an option that is available on non-subject days.

We offer:

**EPQ:** The Extended Project Qualification is equivalent to an AS Level. Students research a topic of their choice to develop more mature writing skills demonstrating a higher level of academic ability; valued by universities.

**E4L:** Equipped 4 Life is designed to give college leavers the tools needed to progress to life beyond post-16 study. Incorporating the Prince's Trust Qualification, the course focuses on CV writing, interview technique, communication skills and leadership.

**Core Maths:** This course is excellent for students whose aspirations may include careers with elements of maths and statistics, without having to study the full Maths A-Level, and can be advantageous when you apply for apprenticeships or university.

**LAMDA:** A performing arts qualification. It is an opportunity for those who want to deepen and extend their skills and experiences in performance and improve confidence in public speaking and will support with interview preparation.

# MENTORING

Your mentor is an important person who not only gives you notices and information about what is going on in Sixth Form, but also provides invaluable guidance to help you succeed. Mentors will have discussions with you about topics beyond the subjects you study, develop life skills and explore your post-18 options. Some students will have additional academic mentoring with members of the Sixth Form Team, these sessions will be scheduled in advance and students will be informed.

# WORK EXPERIENCE

Our work experience programme provides the ideal link between Sixth Form and the independence of University or work. In order to provide opportunities and boost ambition, Year 12 students are expected to complete the equivalent of 50 hours of work experience.

You are expected to conduct one day of work experience per week to fit around your timetabled days. Students who are studying 4 subjects will need to make alternative arrangements with the Work Experience Co-ordinator.

Our Work Experience Co-ordinator will support you to find your own high quality work experience placement.

# ASSEMBLIES

Assemblies will keep you informed of relevant issues, dates and information as well as celebrating success and introducing you to important visitors. Attending assemblies is compulsory.

An assembly schedule is released at the start of each term. They will be on different days, so please refer to the schedule and look out for email/text notices from the Sixth Form Team.



# PATHWAY EVENTS

Within the Sixth Form, a wide range of careers information, advice and guidance is available and is delivered throughout the academic year.

We offer a number of off-timetable Pathway Events in which outside agencies, employers and training providers will introduce you to the numerous options available to you for your post-18 career plan.

We conduct student voice to find out the type of events you would enjoy and benefit from the most.

**These events are compulsory and will occur on different days of the week, they will replace your normal lessons.**



# EXTRA CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

Sigma Sixth Students are encouraged at the start of Year 12, to participate within different areas of the Sixth Form, to widen their knowledge and also build a rapport with members of staff and other students. Extra Curricular opportunities can provide you with valuable experiences that you can include in your personal statements or discuss at interview. Some of these opportunities include:

- Social committee: They meet regularly to plan trips and social events.
- Student Council: Students meet each fortnight to talk about issues that arise within the Sixth Form.
- Charity committee: Sixth Form has a committed group of students who organise charity events and raise money for local causes. This has included Cancer Research UK; Great Ormond Street Hospital; St Helena Hospice; along with many others.



- Film Club: students meet to watch and discuss important films.
- Debate Club: students debate topical and current issues.
- Chess Club: students learn new chess strategies and compete with one another.
- 6-a-side Football League - an opportunity to form a team and compete.

If you would you like to start a new club, this can be accommodated - please see a member of the Sixth Form Team to discuss your ideas.

# VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering gives you the opportunity to gain experience through helping others and using your skills to enrich the local community. It gives you a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment, and volunteer work looks brilliant on your CV or personal statement. Volunteering separates you from other candidates and makes you stand out from the crowd.

Currently, there are Sixth Form students who volunteer for the RNLI; others are trained as Youth Health Champions, Primary School TAs, Care Home Assistants, and charity shop workers.

If you are interested in volunteering and require support in gaining a placement, please see our Work Experience Co-ordinator.

# COMPUTERS AT SIGMA SIXTH

There are excellent computer facilities available to you at Sigma Sixth. Make sure that you comply with the guidelines about use of computers and the internet.

## **Acceptable Computer and Internet Use Policy**

The computer systems provided by Sigma Sixth are made available to students to support and enhance education and research. This computer and internet use policy has been drawn up to protect all parties – the students, the staff and the Sixth Form. Remember that access to the network resources and internet is a privilege, not a right, and that access requires responsibility.

Remember:

- All computer or internet use should be for study purposes, and enhance your work done in the classroom.
- Access should only be made via your authorised username and password, which should not be made available to any other person; you alone are responsible for your user area.
- Activity that damages or changes the school computer systems, or activity that attacks or corrupts other systems, is forbidden and may be an offence under the Computer Misuse Act 1990;
- No programs may be brought in on disc, or downloaded onto any machine;
- Copyright of materials must be respected; copying of software is not permitted;
- Users are responsible for all emails sent and for contacts made, that may result in emails being received;
- Messages should be polite and responsible;
- Do not reveal personal information, the home address or phone numbers of yourself or other people;

- Use for personal financial gain, gambling, political purposes or advertising is forbidden;
- Posting anonymous messages or forwarding chain letters is forbidden;
- Use of the network to access inappropriate materials such as pornographic, racist or offensive material, is forbidden.

Sigma Sixth reserves the right to examine or delete any files that may be held on its computer system, or to monitor any internet sites visited.

## **Consequences of not following the computer and internet policy:**

Violation of these rules will result in a temporary or permanent disabling of the internet and computer network access. Additional disciplinary action may be added in line with existing expectations of behaviour. When applicable, police or local authorities may be involved.

All students have a Sigma Sixth email address. You will receive messages, news bulletins and other communications via email. It is your responsibility to check this regularly. Please provide this email address for all communications with your subject teachers.



# PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is when you are taking work, words, ideas, pictures, information or anything that has been produced by someone else and submitting it as your own work. Copying and pasting from websites without acknowledging the source, failing to use quotation marks, paraphrasing work and not referencing the original source are all examples of plagiarism.

Depending on the nature of the incident, Sigma Sixth may have to report a suspected incident of plagiarism to an awarding body which could result in examination results being withdrawn and cancelled. Students in breach of the Sixth Form Contract could risk permanent removal from the Sixth Form and a managed move to another establishment or organisation.



# STUDENT BURSARY/ FINANCE

The Sigma Sixth 16-19 Bursary Fund exists to provide support for eligible students during their time at Sixth Form. Full details, eligibility criteria and application form are available on our website or from the Pastoral Office.

We are committed to:

- The distribution of 16-19 bursaries via fair and equal process that is transparent, accountable and easily understood.
- Ensuring that information regarding the application, award and administration is publicly available on request.

If you decide to go to university or college, you can apply for student finance. To calculate what financial support you could receive, you can check the online calculator at [www.gov.uk/student-finance-calculator](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance-calculator). There are tuition fee loans, maintenance loans and grants available as well as scholarships at some universities. These vary from one university to another, so you are best to research the university you are interested in and look on their website for details of bursaries and other financial support they may offer on top of student finance.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Are Applied Level 3 courses the same as A Levels?

Applied Level 3 courses are equivalent to A Levels. Some are graded A\* - E and some Applied subjects are graded as follows according to UCAS:

Pass = E grade at A Level

Merit = C grade at A Level

Distinction = A grade at A Level

Distinction\* = A\* grade at A Level

## Can I go to university with an Applied Level 3 course?

Yes, most universities accept this, although some of the Russell Group Universities such as Oxford and Cambridge, prefer A Levels to Applied level subjects. However, some Russell Group universities such as Exeter



have accepted 2 traditional A Levels with 1 Applied Level 3 course. Each university is different on entry requirements so it is important to check. Please ask the Sixth Form team for advice on this.

## **What do I do when I am not in lesson?**

You will be expected to select a compulsory enrichment subject as well as completing work experience and private study. Private study will be used for the completion of homework and wider research/reading.

## **What is VI6 and what is it like?**

VI6 is a fantastic opportunity for you to experience a university

environment, and

allows you to

become more

independent,

fulfilling a key

element of Sixth

Form learning. VI6

students can use the

facilities on campus,

ranging from coffee

shops, restaurants

and resource centres. The Head of VI6, Mr Duffy, is always

on hand to support, advise and monitor students whilst at

the University. The main advantage of the VI6 programme,

is to support your application into Higher Educational

Establishments.



## Do I get transport to VI6?

Yes, the coach will pick you up from Sigma Sixth and then meet you at the university in the North car park to return. Staff will accompany you to where you meet the bus in the first few weeks so that you know where you are going.

## How do I get to Sigma Sixth?

**Car:** If you are being dropped off at the college please use the designated drop off point or the main car park. Use the pedestrian walkways at the front or back of the college. Parking on the college campus is very limited. If you do use the front car park please ensure that you do not block access and only use the allocated bays. You are not permitted to use the back car park. At the start and close of the college day, the possibilities for accidents are high; please be aware of the dangers. If you are driving always give way to pedestrians and cyclists. You must also drive slowly and very carefully around the college and observe the speed limits shown.

**Bike:** There are bike sheds at the back of the building for our students. Please ensure bikes are secured with a lock.

**Bus:** Hedingham Buses have extended an existing bus route in the mornings and afternoons to include a stop at Sigma Sixth. For further information about bus timetables and travel cards, please see our website.

## **Can I leave site at lunchtimes?**

Students can leave the site during lunch breaks, but for safeguarding purposes students are required to use our electronic sign-in system. All Sixth Form students are presumed to have parental consent to leave the site, unless parents/carers have explicitly revoked their consent.

## **Can I smoke on site?**

Students are strongly advised not to smoke as it is harmful to health. In the interest of hygiene, the law and the health of all, smoking and vaping is not permitted within the Sigma Sixth building or any part of the site including the public area surrounding the building. Students who wish to smoke or vape, must do so outside of the perimeter gates and dispose of any rubbish in bins provided.

## **Can I use my mobile phone at Sigma Sixth?**

All mobile phones must be switched off and stored out of sight during lessons, unless you have been instructed to use them by your teacher.

Mobile phones are not permitted in any examination room. Examination boards regard mobile phones as unauthorised material and as such a student can be disqualified from some or all of their examinations if they are found to be carrying a phone.

Staff use a messaging system to communicate with you, it is your responsibility to keep us informed of any changes to your contact details.

## **What food provision is available on site?**

The Sigma Sixth café provides a wide range of hot and cold food options starting service at 8:30am. Payment is by cash, contactless debit card, Apple Pay or Android Pay. Water is available at all times, free of charge from the dispensers located around the site. Students are required to bring their own bottles.

## **What happens if I have a medical need during the day?**

In the event of an accident or medical issue, you should report to the Pastoral Office. First Aid is managed by a trained First Aider, but in more serious cases, emergency services will be called.



## **Where do I go if the fire alarm sounds?**

The Sigma Sixth fire assembly point is on the netball courts, spaces are sectioned out according to the subject you have on that day. Registers will be taken by your subject teacher.

# SIGMA SIXTH PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

As part of the provision at Sigma Sixth Form, we offer you:

- High-quality teaching.
- Regular monitoring which informs students and parents/guardians about progress and attainment.
- Opportunities to achieve the best possible exam results.
- Have work regularly assessed in detail and speedily returned.
- The opportunity to express your concerns with the Sixth Form Team.
- Appropriate and quiet study areas to work in.
- A social area to meet in, outside of study periods and lesson times.
- Opportunities to participate in enrichment activities.
- Support from staff in preparing for exams.
- Work experience opportunities.
- Recognition and celebration of your achievements.
- Access to Pathways advice and guidance for post-18 routes.

By accepting a place at Sigma Sixth Form, students must adhere to and abide by the standards listed below. Students agree to:

- Attend all timetabled lessons, assemblies and additional commitments such as enrichment activities.
- Be punctual and ensure they are registered.
- Work hard and to the best of their ability and develop independent learning.
- Use study periods productively.
- Meet deadlines.

- Fully partake in work experience.
- Behave in a way that is appropriate to an education establishment and professional work environment.
- Keep mobile phones switched off and out of sight during lesson time.
- Follow the Sigma Sixth Dress Code.
- Adhere to the Acceptable Computer and Internet Use Policy.
- Behave appropriately and respectfully on the way to and from Sigma Sixth.
- Take appropriate steps to ensure no work is plagiarised.
- Observe Sixth Form guidelines, which state that Sixth Formers must not smoke or consume alcohol or illegal substances on or off the premises during the day including on the journey to and from Sixth Form.

As a Sixth Form student, you are expected to take responsibility for what you do or fail to do. If you do not fulfil the expectations indicated in this Sigma Sixth Partnership Agreement, you must expect and accept that one or more of the following sanctions will happen in line with the Sigma Sixth Support Strategy:

- Extra study time added to your timetable
- A formal verbal warning
- Parent meeting
- Target setting and intervention which may include an attendance contract
- Permanent removal from the Sixth Form and a managed move to another establishment or organisation.

#### Declaration

I have read and understood the Sigma Sixth Partnership Agreement and agree to adhere to and support the school policies explained within this document and the Student Handbook.

Student Name:

Student Signature:

Date:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date:



# STUDENT HANDBOOK

[sigmasixth.org.uk](https://sigmasixth.org.uk)