

Sixth Form Welcome Handbook

2022-23

ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY



stChris

Sixth Form Welcome Handbook

2022-23

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Welcome to Sixth Form

We are so looking forward to welcoming you to the Sixth Form in September and hope that you are excited too! The next two years will be transformational years for you, as you begin the journey of specialising in your subjects and planning your 'next steps' journey once you are 18. We truly believe that you will thrive during these final two years at school and our commitment to you is to ensure that you do!

Joining the Sixth Form can be a time of uncertainty and the transition from GCSEs to A levels can feel a little daunting. Through our experienced Sixth Form pastoral team, we promise to assist and support you through every challenge, as you begin to develop into truly independent learners. If you do need some reassurance or support, then you have a wide range of people to guide you; from Personal Tutors who will meet you daily and academically mentor you every fortnight, to the Head of Sixth Form (Nat Baker) and Deputy Head of Sixth Form (Jenny Savage), who are always in the Sixth Form Centre and available to support and encourage! As a result, students find that within a few weeks they really start to feel at home in the Sixth Form Centre, as they find their feet with their courses, teachers and wider Sixth Form life.

The Sixth Form at St Chris offers many opportunities for students, and aside from your academic studies, you will be involved in community service and roles of responsibility within the School. St Chris has a well-established tradition of student-led initiatives and student leadership, with Sixth Formers playing a central role.

Perhaps the most significant opportunity in the Sixth Form is the School Council, and the roles of Major Officials. Members of the Lower Sixth (Year 12) are elected by the whole school body to play a more active part in the self-government system of the School. However, Sixth Form students can also be trained as Peer Mentors for the lower school, as well as playing roles as subject leaders, for example, assisting Junior School students with maths and English. Outside of learning, Sixth Formers can also access a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including access to the St Chris gym, and weekly access to the swimming pool.

We are a relaxed, positive community that places relationships and support at the heart of all we do. Being small, we have a close family feel where honesty and personalised support is central to our interactions. Ultimately, our role is to prepare you for future opportunities. The vast majority of our A level students go on to university or higher education, such as Art foundation courses or degree apprenticeships.

We have high expectations of you, and we hope you have high expectations for yourself. This is a time in your life when great opportunities are opening to you, however it is up to you to seize them. Please make sure that you do!

NAT BAKER
HEAD OF SIXTH FORM

Welcome to the Sixth Form

MESSAGE FOR STUDENTS FROM SOONU, HEAD GIRL & OLI, HEAD BOY

As Head Girl and Head Boy of St Chris, we want to wish you a warm welcome. We thought you might find it useful to know a little bit about our roles and what we do.

At St Chris we have a team of eleven Major Officials (similar to prefects in other schools), who represent the student body and do a wide range of jobs throughout the School:

Head Girl	Soonu Dilke
Head Boy	Oli Grantley
Deputy Head Girl	Amy Mathias
Chair of Events & Fundraising	Sorley Pennybacker
Chair of Be Green	Izzy Forrester
Chair of Council	Theo Halliwell
Secretary of Council	Eleanor Goodridge
Human Rights Committee	Ellie Romain
Chair of Food Committee	Kitty Marlow
Senior Head Boarder	Yuto Sanada
Junior Boarding Rep	Aubert Seysses

The School Council is an important feature of our community. It gives students a chance to voice their views and opinions. We have a Council meeting every term where we discuss ideas and motions that students have put forward to their Company Rep for consideration. Once a motion has been passed through Council it is taken to a whole school meeting, chaired by the Head Girl and Boy, where it is discussed further before taking it to a final vote. Everyone gets a vote at the whole school meeting, including you.

Coming to a new school may feel daunting, but everyone is very supportive and friendly. We were all new to St Chris once (even the teachers!) so please do not hesitate to talk to us about any problems or queries you may have. As Head Girl and Boy we feel a personal responsibility to ensure that you feel comfortable and happy, and we look forward to meeting you soon!

With best wishes,
SOONU & OLI

KEY CONTACTS

A full staff list can be found on the website: www.stchris.co.uk/about-us/staff

Before starting with us, your key contacts will be:

Kate Allan Registrar kate.allan@stchris.co.uk	Kate and Sarah remain your main contacts before you start with us.
Sarah Davis Admissions Assistant sarah.davis@stchris.co.uk	After joining, your main contact will be your child's Company Adviser.
Ranjan Parmar Finance Assistant ranjan.parmar@stchris.co.uk	Ranjan is your contact for any queries regarding invoicing or payment of fees & extras (such as school lunch).
Martin Scoble Bursar martin.scoble@stchris.co.uk	Please contact Martin with questions about school fees or the school bus.
www.ridekura.com/st-christopher	Please use this website to view bus routes & book journeys. You will be invoiced by Finance at the end of each term.
School Nurse	nurse@stchris.co.uk
All staff can be reached by email using the format	firstname.surname@stchris.co.uk

Term Dates

2022–23

Staff Conference Days	Thursday 1 September to Friday 2 September
Induction Day for all new students in the Junior and Senior School. Includes all Year 7 (I Grp) students	Monday 5 September
Year 12 Conference Day	Monday 5 September
Start of Term	Tuesday 6 September
First Half Ends	Friday 21 October
Half Term	Monday 24 October to Friday 4 November (2 weeks)
Second Half Begins	Monday 7 November
Term Ends	Friday 16 December (12:00 Noon)

SPRING TERM 2022

Staff Conference Day	Friday 6 January
Start of Term	Monday 9 January
First Half Ends	Friday 10 February
Half Term	Monday 13 February to Friday 17 February
Second Half Begins	Monday 20 February
Term Ends	Friday 31 March (12:00 Noon)

SUMMER TERM 2022

Staff Conference Day	Monday 17 April
Start of Term	Tuesday 18 April
Bank Holiday	Monday 1 May
First Half Ends	Friday 26 May
Half Term	Monday 29 May to Friday 2 June
Second Half Begins	Monday 5 June
Summer Celebration	Saturday 24 June Compulsory for Senior School students
Term Ends for LSP (Senior School only)	Friday 30 June (12:00 Noon)
Term Ends	Friday 7 July (12:00 Noon)

SIXTH FORM INDUCTION

Our Sixth Form Induction Programme is compulsory for all students joining Lower Sixth (Year 12) and includes several events:

SIXTH FORM TRANSITION DAY

Friday 24 June 2022, 9.15am to 3.45pm

The Transition Day is an introduction to studying in the Sixth Form and includes introductory 30 minute lessons with your chosen subjects, where course specifications will be explored and summer tasks set, and an introduction to pastoral staff and group activities. There will also be a welcome lunch in the Sixth Form centre with current Year 12 students and Sixth Form staff.

Please note this day is after the final GCSE exam. On arrival, please come to the St Chris Theatre at 9.00am so we can start promptly at 9.15am.

WELCOME TO SIXTH FORM AFTERNOON TEA

Friday 24 June 2022, 4.30 to 6.00pm

At the end of the Transition Day, **parents** of all students joining Sixth Form are warmly invited to enjoy afternoon tea with Sixth Form staff in the Sixth Form Centre garden. This will be an informal opportunity to meet key staff and other families before the summer holidays. On the day, please park in the swimming pool car park (via Cloisters Road) and come directly to the Sixth Form Centre, which will be signposted.

SIXTH FORM CONFERENCE

**Monday 5 September 2022,
8.30am to 3.30pm**

Please note this is the day before the Autumn Term begins. The morning

starts in the Theatre at 8.30am, includes lunch, and finishes at 15.30.

The Conference includes a meeting with Personal Tutors and tutor group; a range of activities to help develop good friendships across the year group and prepare for A level studies, and a presentation on Sixth Form safeguarding and behaviour expectations.

INDUCTION FORTNIGHT

**Tuesday 6 – Friday 16
September 2022**

Following the Sixth Form Conference, the first two weeks of term include a range of opportunities to help you get to know your whole year group both inside and outside of school.

During these two weeks students will also be able to try out the academic subjects that they are interested in pursuing. If a student decides that a particular subject is not for them, this is the time to change it, as far as the constraints of the timetable allow. Staff are available to discuss a student's choices to ensure they are happy and confident in the decisions they have made.

SIXTH FORM RESIDENTIAL TRIP

**Thursday 15 – Friday 16
September 2022**

Although our students pursue a range of diverse courses, we value the community dimension of our Sixth Form, and aim to develop this through an overnight residential trip to Norfolk. The trip enables students to get to know each other outside of School, and enjoy shared interests. Further details will be sent to students and parents in July, so for now please just make a note of the dates.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SIXTH FORM

Our Community

Lower and Upper Sixth (Year 12 and Year 13) students are part of the Sixth Form community at St Chris and are based in the Sixth Form Centre.

The following facilities are available to students:

- The Library – open from 8.00am to 9.00pm
- IT areas (the Sixth Form Centre has Wi-Fi access)
- Common rooms
- Quiet study rooms
- Photocopying
- Kitchen and coffee/tea making facilities
- Sixth Form garden
- Sixth Form art area
- Sports and fitness facilities including the Swimming Pool

The Wider School Community

We encourage members of the Sixth Form to get involved in the many different areas of School life.

Sixth Form students play a vital role in the School, as Major Officials, as role models, and as participants in the different committees and activities within St Chris.

We believe that you, both collectively and individually, are a key part of the School community and will also gain personally from your involvement, so...

- Get involved in the self-government system as a member of Council or as a Major Official
- Become active in the various School Committees for example Be Green, or the Fundraising and Events Committee
- Get involved in charity work
- Become a Peer Mentor (Lower Sixth students are invited to volunteer for these roles, and are provided with training)
- Join a music group
- Take part in a school play
- Join a sports team

We ask Sixth Formers to help organise and oversee lunch clearing for the younger years. This is done on a rota system and involves the whole Sixth Form – you can expect to do one lunch duty each half-term for approximately 30 minutes.

You will also provide important support at the Summer Fair, when Sixth Formers take on a variety of roles, such as helping out with the bouncy castle to selling bottled water to serving tea, coffee and cakes in the Tuck Shop, as well as at our Open Days.

Sixth Formers are expected to set a good example in their behaviour and attitude to other students in the School. You should be polite and courteous to all other members of the School community, giving and earning respect by displaying mature behaviour.

The Sixth Form Day

8.30am to 9.00am	Registration
9.00 to 10.00am	Period 1
10.00 to 10.30am	Little Break
10.30 to 11.30am	Period 2
11.40 to 12.40pm	Period 3
12.40 to 1.40pm	Lunch
1.40 to 2.45pm	Period 4
2.55 to 3.55pm	Period 5
3.55pm	School ends

Registration

Mornings

Morning Registration for Sixth Formers takes place in the Sixth Form Centre.

All Lower Sixth (Year 12) students must be in to register by 8.30am every morning in the Lower Common Room.

On Monday and Thursday students then attend Morning Talk in the Theatre.

On Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday they then have time with their Personal Tutor or one to one mentoring.

Afternoons

Registration takes place at the start of Period 4 in the lesson.

If students do not have a lesson Period 4, they should Register in the Sixth Form Centre (Lower Common Room).

If they have a study period in Period 3, Sixth Formers can go to lunch on-site in the IG (Dining Hall) slightly earlier than the rest of the Senior School, from 12.30pm.

Members of the Lower Sixth (Year 12) are allowed off-site during the lunch hour (12.40pm-1.40pm). If you go off-site, it is essential that you sign out and then back in again with the Pastoral Assistant, in Room 12 (situated in the main school courtyard).

From the January of Lower Sixth (Year 12) students are allowed to leave at the end of Period 4 (2.45pm) if they have no lesson in Period 5, again remembering to sign out with Room 12.

Morning Talks

Morning Talks, the St Chris name for an Assembly, take place twice a week for Sixth Form. Sixth Formers join the whole school Morning Talk every Monday, and have a dedicated Sixth Form Morning Talk each Thursday.

Attendance at Morning Talks on Monday and Thursday is compulsory.

Morning Talks take place in the School Theatre and are an opportunity to come together as a community. There is a rolling programme of visiting speakers and they also provide an excellent opportunity for music and performance – both as a collective and in smaller groups. Morning Talks also include a period of silence, a tradition which has long been held at the School, which gives students and staff alike the time and space to think about what they have heard in the context of their own life and that of the wider community.

You will be asked to participate in Sixth Form Morning Talks and have input into the subjects covered. In the past, students have delivered Morning Talks both in groups and individually – to the great benefit of all.

You should also look at the list of topics for Friday whole school Morning Talks and feel free to attend any that you would like to.

LEARNING IN THE SIXTH FORM

For most Sixth Form students at St Chris, their study programme will comprise:

- Three A Level courses
(The opportunity to consider four A Level subjects will be offered to some particularly well-qualified applicants, however it is not necessary for university entrance)
- An additional A Level Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)
- Tutorial programme
- Study periods for independent learning
- PSHE, careers and higher education programme
- Options programme, every Thursday afternoon

The type of studying and learning that you will encounter in the Sixth Form is different to studying and learning at GCSE. You will be expected to take much more responsibility for your own learning, and teachers will expect different things from you. It is important that you develop the skills of independence because doing so will have a direct impact on your success, both at A Level and in the future.

The School has the following expectations of all Sixth Form students:

- Attend all timetabled lessons
- Be on time for all lessons
- Be prepared with the relevant equipment and materials
- Work to your best ability
- Meet deadlines for the completion and submission of assignments
- Use your study periods effectively
- Ask for support or guidance if you need it

Study Periods

The school day is constructed of five one-hour lesson periods. As a general rule, each subject you take will have five one-hour lessons per week. The number of study periods on your timetable depends on the number of A Levels that you are studying.

In order to achieve your potential, you will be required to put in a minimum of three to four additional study hours per subject, outside of lessons, per week.

What should you do in your study periods?

Study periods are not “frees”; they are allocated time slots for you to continue studying, but independently. You can:

- Write-up and re-read lesson notes
- Research background information and read around the subject, making further notes as necessary
- Prepare essays
- Complete homework
- Practice essential exam skills for your particular subjects

Your teachers will be more than happy to support you in your learning. If you have an issue or need help with your A Levels, your first port of call should be your subject teacher.

The jump from GCSE to A Level is considerable; subject teachers aim to make the transition as easy and gradual as is feasible, but you will help yourself if you keep up with the work you are given, review work you have already done, and speak to your subject teachers if you find something difficult.

PSHE

Personal, social, and health education (PSHE) is delivered to Lower Sixth students. The curriculum is delivered by the Sixth Form team through timetabled lessons for one hour a week, and through a programme of visiting speakers, covering issues as diverse as driving safety, mental wellbeing, criminal law and cooking skills for independent living.

Careers and higher education guidance also form an important part of the PSHE programme.

Careers and Higher Education Programme

St Chris provides comprehensive guidance and support to help students formulate their plans following Sixth Form through the PSHE curriculum. This includes study skills training and talks by visiting speakers, as well as visits to UCAS exhibitions.

Each student also has a programme of one-to-one meetings with a dedicated Higher Education Adviser, who provides higher education application guidance and support.

The above career and higher education guidance runs in conjunction with our bespoke Career Programme, developed by our Careers and Employability Lead, Lucy Coddington.

For further information about our Career Programme visit our website: <https://www.stchris.co.uk/senior-school/careers/>

Options Programme

The Options programme at St Chris is an integral part of the curriculum which takes place every Thursday for all students in Years 7 to 12.

The aim of Options is to give students an opportunity to expand their horizons, learn and develop new skills and discover opportunities.

Sixth Form students participate in the Options programme for the first four Options blocks in the year and are able to select from a broad range of topics – creative, physical, community/social awareness and academic.

PASTORAL SUPPORT SYSTEM

Personal Tutor

When students join the Sixth Form they are allocated a Personal Tutor, and the partnership between tutor and student forms a central part of the support offered to students.

Tutor groups are arranged vertically, with a mix of Lower and Upper Sixth students. This enables the two year groups to mix socially and in extra-curricular activities, and Upper Sixth students help to mentor Lower Sixth students and provide informal advice and support.

The role of the Personal Tutor is to guide, advise, mentor, and act as a critical friend. This is a very important relationship, and you will meet with your Personal Tutor both in groups and in one-to-one tutorials during your two years in the Sixth Form.

Tutorials are arranged on a fortnightly basis within Morning Registration on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Discussions can cover work progress, problems that have arisen, successes and future plans, amongst many other things. Tutorials generally last between 15 and 30 minutes. After each tutorial, tutors will contact home to update parents on current progress and targets set.

All Personal Tutors keep a close eye on the well-being of the students in their care. They help students settle into Sixth Form, encourage them to become responsible independent learners and to participate in the wide range of opportunities available outside of the classroom. They are the first point of contact if you have issues or concerns that may arise.

REPORTING & MENTORING

The dedicated Sixth Form team at St Chris are there to support students every step of the way to ensure that their transition is a successful one.

Throughout your time in the Sixth Form you receive regular feedback and guidance about your progress from your subject teachers and from your Personal Tutor. This is to enable you to stay on track and have a clear view of how far you have progressed.

Each year your parents also receive, via our parent portal, two Interim Reports and two Full Reports. There are also two Parents' Consultations each year when they can come in to discuss your progress in one-to-one meetings with your subject teachers and Personal Tutor. You are encouraged to attend these meetings which are usually held online.

The dates for parents' consultations and reports are available on the St Chris website: <https://www.stchris.co.uk/news/calendar/>

All departments and subjects offer opportunities to support and extend student's learning beyond the classroom. These are often at lunchtime or after school, and in some cases, such as for A Level 3D Design, at weekends.

Personal Tutors, the Deputy Head of Year and the Head of Year are all available to support students who may be experiencing problems, alongside school counsellors if appropriate. Any issues or concerns are sensitively and thoroughly discussed with students and parents. Student support is on-going and comprehensive.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

In Sixth Form at St Chris students have access to an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities.

We strongly encourage all Sixth Form students to fully engage with the life of the School and the opportunities available to them.

Extra-curricular activities encourage personal development outside of those skills learnt in the classroom; we also fundamentally believe that they are an end to themselves, and a means of having fun and maintaining good mental and physical health at a time when study and academic requirements increase.

The wide range of activities on offer at St Chris include:

- Drama – There are two major whole school productions a year, but there are also opportunities to get involved in smaller productions or by joining our Theatre tech crew (The Wombles!)
- Music – There are several different bands and musical ensembles, or you could set up your own! Music practice rooms are available for Sixth Form students to use by arrangement with the Music department. One of the two major drama productions each year is a musical (most recently Sweeney Todd, Legally Blonde and Grease.)
- Art & Design – There are a wide range of creative clubs on offer as well as the chance to get involved with our annual Recycled Fashion Show.
- Science Hub
- Sixth Form Committee
- Various sports teams including football, rugby, cricket, tennis, basketball and netball
- Use of the Swimming Pool at set times. (Every Thursday lunchtime Sixth Formers have exclusive use of the pool.)
- Use of the Fitness Centre
- Access to the school tennis and basketball courts; use of the school field for fun games of football
- Table tennis and table football
- Chess
- Peer Mentoring
- Major Officials
- Trips and visits

A timetable of extra-curricular clubs and activities is made available at the beginning of each term.

WORK EXPERIENCE

You are encouraged to arrange to go on work-shadowing or work experience visits during the summer holidays, between Lower and Upper Sixth.

We encourage you to be pro-active in arranging these visits, although we can provide some support. Some students also opt to take part in short university-based courses in their chosen career area.

LATE SUMMER PROGRAMME (LSP)

Year 12 students take part in the St Chris Late Summer Programme (LSP), which takes place in the last week of the Summer Term.

Students take part in a variety of activities – some aimed at the Sixth Form – but many also accompany LSP trips in the lower years of the Senior School to provide support for younger students and gain experience in helping to plan and run a trip.

There is also the opportunity this week to undertake work experience or further education courses. Recent trips and activities in LSP week have included:

- A Level Art and History trip to Berlin or Paris
- A Level Biology and Geography trip to Madagascar
- Year 9 LSP to Saas Fee, Switzerland
- STEM Headstart course
- Work Experience

COMMUNITY SERVICE

All members of Lower Sixth take part in the St Chris Community Service Programme from January each year. This involves a commitment of at least 10 hours where students undertake volunteer work at a variety of local charities and organisations. Further details will be given to you when you start with us in September.

A-Z OF SIXTH FORM

ABSENCE

If a pupil is ill and going to be absent from school, parents must email **attendance@stchris.co.uk** and copy in the student's Company Adviser, **before 9.00am**

If parents would like their child miss school for any reason other than illness or a medical appointment they need to request permission in advance from the Head by emailing **head@stchris.co.uk**.

If parents would like to request their child miss school for half a day or less, this request can be made by the parent to the Head or Deputy Head of Sixth Form, or the student's Personal Tutor.

If a pupil has an appointment during the school day, they need to sign out and back in again with the Pastoral Assistant in Room 12.

Lateness should be avoided whenever possible; it disrupts learning and the school day as a whole.

Late arrivals should report to the Pastoral Assistant in Room 12.

ACADEMIC PLANNING

On the first day, all students are issued with their weekly timetable, school email and computer network account, and access details for the Satchel One (Show My Homework) website. Names of teachers are given on timetables and everyone is called by their first name - staff and students alike.

AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS

There are lots of lunchtime and after school clubs at St Chris, some of which are for specific year groups but many of which are open to all. Our Late Bus can be booked from 5.30pm for students wanting transport to the train station or back into London.

With the exception of specialised provision, all lunchtime and after school clubs are included in the fees.

A list of current clubs will be sent to students at the start of term and is available on the board outside Room 12. Students will be able to book clubs through our online system, "MyEvolve". You will be sent further information about setting up an account for MyEvolve at the start of the school year.

Students can also stay on after the end of the school day at 3.55pm to work in the Library or Sixth Form Centre.

BANK DETAILS

The bank details are the same for all payments to the School, so it is important that parents use a reference for each, e.g. **SURNAME FEES** or **SURNAME TRIP**.

Account Name St Christopher School (Letchworth) Limited

Account Number 90800643

Sort Code 20-41-38

BOARDING: "FLEXI" BOARDING"

Flexi boarding of up to three nights within the week is very popular at St Chris, particularly amongst Sixth Form students who travel some distance to school each day.

If you would like to book regular dates, it is a good idea to do this at the beginning of each term, although we do offer booking at 24 hours' notice subject to availability.

To book parents should contact the Houseparents via **cecilia.drayton@stchris.co.uk**.

BREAKS

There are two breaks during the school day: Little Break from 10.10 to 10.30am and Lunch Break from 12.40 to 1.40pm. There is a Tuck Shop open at Little Break and students are also welcome to bring their own snacks.

BUDDIES

All new students at St Chris are allocated a buddy who looks after them for the first few days.

BUS ROUTES & BOOKING

St Chris has a partnership with a bus company so that students can travel from a number of areas directly to School.

For more information about bus routes and prices, or to book a space on the bus, please visit the website of our school transport provider:

www.ridekura.com/st-christopher/

If you have specific questions about this service, please contact Martin Scoble, Bursar: martin.scoble@stchris.co.uk

CLOTHING

Everyday Clothing

There is no uniform at St Christopher School, but clothes must be appropriate for a school environment, clean and mended. Camouflage and military-type clothing are not allowed.

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication between home and school is essential in supporting social, emotional and academic progress. To aid this, please can parents ensure that we have up-to-date contact details.

An up-to-date list of all St Chris staff can be found on our website www.stchris.co.uk/staff

All staff can be reached by email using the format:

firstname.surname@stchris.co.uk

The Personal Tutor

In the Sixth Form, the Personal Tutor is the “first port of call” for both parents and students for all day-to-day issues or questions or issues.

Head of Year

Nat Baker is the Head of Sixth Form and Jenny Savage the Deputy Head. Parents are welcome to contact either Nat or Jenny to discuss more serious matters, or even to request help with an issue that may need additional support beyond the day-to-day provision of the Personal Tutor.

Room 12

The pastoral area at St Chris is known as Room 12 and is situated in the Courtyard. This is where the Pastoral Assistant is based during the school day. Parents and students can contact Room 12 if they need advice about most day to day issues.

Parent Portal

We use an online parent portal (and App) to communicate with parents. Prior to starting at St Chris, the Admissions team will send you further information and your log in details.

Once you start at St Chris, you will receive a weekly school mailing through the portal on a Friday with updates on upcoming events and activities.

You will also be able to view your child’s timetable, messages for your year group, the weekly menu and your child’s school reports on the portal.

School Activities & Events

Details of events can be found on the School's online calendar at <https://www.stchris.co.uk/news/calendar/>

COMPLAINTS

The open climate of St Chris encourages parents, along with children and staff, to voice their concerns. Usually discussion of the matter allays or removes the worry without the need for formal procedures.

All complaints are carefully considered and it is usually helpful for there to be a discussion at an early stage about the issue, the procedures and the possible outcomes. In the first instance, please contact the Head: head@stchris.co.uk

A copy of our Complaints Policy can be found on our website. <https://www.stchris.co.uk/about-us/policies/>

CONTACTING THE GOVERNORS

The Chair of the Governors may be contacted in confidence by email at peter.mcmeekin@stchris.co.uk or c/o the main school address: Chair of Governors, St Christopher School, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 3JZ.

CURRICULUM QUESTIONS

Queries around curriculum matters should be sent to the subject teacher or Head of Department. When this is not appropriate, please contact the Head of Sixth Form.

COUNSELLING

We offer a counselling service for students at St Chris, which is scheduled during the school day. If you would like to discuss this please get in touch with the School Nurse or Cordy Lewis, Senior Pastoral Lead.

DOGS

Other than guide or hearing dogs, dogs are not allowed in the School buildings. Please keep dogs on a lead at all times and under your direct control.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

Sixth Form students can sign up for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which runs during Options on a Thursday with additional training and expeditions at separate times.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

St Chris prides itself in providing equal opportunities for all children regardless of ability, religion, sex, culture, ethnic origin or class. We ensure that discrimination in any form is treated as unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We respond positively to difference and ensure that all members of the School community are valued and encouraged to develop their potential.

FOOD

School Lunch

We enjoy fresh, tasty vegetarian food. Every day there are two hot choices, a salad bar and bread and fillings to make sandwiches. There is also a pudding and fruit. Weekly menus can be found on the website.

Students in different year groups take it in turns to go into lunch first; the order can be checked on a list outside Room 12.

Please note that need to be made aware of any allergies or intolerances that your child may have to nuts or other ingredients.

Students eat lunch together in the Dining Hall, known as the IG (because many years ago it was used as an Indoor Gym!)

Packed Lunch

Students are welcome to bring a vegetarian packed lunch, which is eaten alongside students having school food. Parents should

email the Finance Office before the start of each term to let us know if a student does not require school lunches as these are billed for in advance each term: finance@stchris.co.uk.

HEALTH

The School has two School Nurses. It is very important that the School Nurse has updated medical information for every student; please ensure that any changes are communicated directly to them.

If a student becomes ill while at school, we will contact their parents to collect them.

If a student has suffered from vomiting or diarrhoea, parents are asked not to let them return to School until they have been clear of the symptoms for 48 hours.

Prescribed medicines are administered at the request of a student's parent or guardian and with the consent of the School Nurse. Medication is kept in the School's surgery and administered by the School Nurse, who keeps details of its administration.

The School Nurse can administer non-prescription medicines in accordance with a student's completed medical forms.

Please contact the School Nurse to arrange this, rather than sending non-prescription medicines into school.

Staff are trained as appropriate in the health conditions of students (e.g. asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes, epilepsy) and the administration of medicines.

INSTRUMENTAL & VOCAL LESSONS

There are a wide variety of instrumental and vocal music lessons available at St Chris run by a range of external teachers.

Please visit our website to find out more about which instruments are taught and to download the booking form: <https://www.stchris.co.uk/senior-school/senior-activities/music/>

LAMDA

We offer LAMDA (London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art) lessons which are scheduled during the school day. If you would like to know more, or wish to book LAMDA lessons, please go to the following page on our website: <https://www.stchris.co.uk/senior-school/senior-activities/drama/>

LIBRARY

The Library – in the main Courtyard – is open from 8.00am to 5.00pm for students to use to do homework, read, etc.

OPEN DAYS

St Chris runs regular Open Days for prospective families. Students are asked to support these events by giving tours of the School or by taking part in performances and activities. Open Days are an enjoyable way for our students to showcase what they have been working on and to practice their conversational and presentation skills. Information about these events are communicated in advance to parents and students.

PARENTS' CIRCLE

All parents and guardians are members of the Parents' Circle. Newsletters are sent out to inform parents of meetings and events. All are warmly welcomed.

Each class has its own Parents' Circle Rep who makes contact with parents of children in their class to organise events, such as quiz nights. If you are happy to share your contact details with your Class Rep please contact the Parents' Circle via email: mail@stchrispc.co.uk.

We would also encourage you to sign up for ClassList which is the main communication tool for the Parents' Circle at: www.schoolclasslist.com

PARKING

Parking for parents is available in the car parks by: the Junior School playground, the swimming pool and the mini-roundabout. We request that parents park in the bays provided and not on yellow lines or in the disabled bays unless a blue badge is displayed.

Please be considerate of local residents when parking on nearby streets.

Sixth Form day students are allowed to bring a car into school but there is a process to apply for a permit. Please contact Toni Warner, the Head's PA, in order to discuss further: toni.warner@stchris.co.uk

PEER MENTORS

Peer Mentors are Sixth Form students who act as mentors to younger students in the Senior School.

Mentors offer a wide range of support – it can be anything from helping new students to settle in, or spending time with a younger student to help with a particular academic or social issue that they may have.

Students volunteer to be a Peer Mentor at the start of Year 12 and this continues throughout their time in Sixth Form. They receive training from the Director of Pastoral Care.

The programme is a particularly popular way for students to commit to helping the whole school community and both Peer Mentors, and those that they work with, find that it's a very rewarding role.

PARENTS' CONSULTATIONS

Consultations are essentially Parents' Evenings, during which parents and students can meet with the Personal Tutor, subject teachers and Head of Year. Parents book the appointments online and you will receive an email confirming your bookings.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

A comprehensive list of our policies and procedures can be found on the school website:

www.stchris.co.uk/aboutus/policies

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION

At St Chris, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the person appointed to take central responsibility for child protection issues and safeguarding concerns in the School.

The St Chris community shares the goal of helping to keep children safe by contributing to a safe environment for all through communication, vigilance and taking appropriate action.

For a student or a parent, the best person to approach with any concerns in the first instance is the Personal Tutor or Head of Year (or both). However, if it is felt that this is not appropriate in the circumstances, other members of staff may also be approached, including the Head.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Nat Baker
nat.baker@stchris.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

Rich Jones
rich.jones@stchris.co.uk

Cordy Lewis
cordy.lewis@stchris.co.uk

Linda Schumann
linda.schumann@stchris.co.uk

REPORTS

Reports are sent to parents via the parent portal.

Interim Reports

Interim Reports are used to supplement the more comprehensive Full Reports, and

are designed to provide a brief ‘snapshot’ midway through the term of how students are progressing.

Full Reports

Full Reports are posted home at the end of the Autumn and Summer Term and give a comprehensive picture both of the subjects being studied and the progress being made.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

The School Council was founded in 1919, and our self-government system is still an important part of St Chris, empowering students to play an active role in school life and giving them an early taste of democracy in action.

The system is run by a group of elected Major Officials. These are students who are elected in Year 12 to run the various school committees including Be Green (our environmental committee); the human rights committee and the events and fundraising committee.

The Council is made up of one Councillor from each Company (tutor group). Anyone may attend Council meetings and put forward motions for discussion, but only Councillors may vote.

Proposals passed by Council are then discussed at a meeting of the entire Senior School chaired by the Head Boy and Head Girl. These take place every term.

A vote is taken and it is the responsibility of the Major Officials to ensure that resolutions passed in a School meeting are enacted.

While the Head does have a power of veto, it has only been used five times in the past 30 years.

Recent initiatives that have been proposed, passed and enacted by Council include the redevelopment of the School’s

cookery classrooms (the ‘Vege Centre’), the introduction of a skate park and the development of a Zen garden.

SECURITY

Entrance and Exit

Senior School students can enter the buildings via several entrances. Certain buildings (for example the Theatre) have an entrance code which we ask students to keep confidential.

Visitors

All visitors (including parents) must report to the Senior School Reception on arrival at the School, where they will be given an identity badge and made aware of our Safeguarding and fire procedures.

Parents of boarders are not allowed into the boarding house with students unless they are accompanied by a Houseparent.

SILENCE

The Silence is a tradition at St Chris where the staff and students take a moment together to pause, think and listen. It’s an important part of our Morning Talks, school meetings and many lessons.

SNACKS

There is a student run “tuck shop” in the Senior School called the Coffee Shop, situated in the main Courtyard. Profits from the Coffee Shop go directly to a charity chosen by the Sixth Form Major Officials. Students are also welcome to bring in their own snacks.

TRIPS

There are a range of trips throughout the academic year, including compulsory curriculum day trips (for example to an art gallery), but also optional “extra” trips, some of which take place each year and some of which alternate annually.

Trips may be offered to the whole school or to specific year groups. Recent trips have included visits to Iceland and Borneo, and also activity holidays to ski, kayak, climb, play netball and tennis.

Parents will receive letters from the subject teacher regarding curriculum trips, (including the cost which is added to the next invoice) and from the School via the Friday newsletter regarding bigger, whole school trips.

SIXTH FORM FAQS

What do I do if I want to change one of my A Level subjects?

Your parents, Personal Tutor and subject teachers are the best people to talk to initially. After you have considered your options fully you will need to talk to your Head of Sixth Form, who will liaise with home, before a formal change of subject can be made officially.

What if I don't know what to do after my A Levels?

If you are thinking about going to college or university, you can talk to one of our UCAS Advisers. You will also receive guidance on possible careers, and we encourage students to consider all pathways, including Gap Years, apprenticeships and management training schemes.

Who can I talk to about an issue I have?

You should speak to your Personal Tutor in the first instance, or alternatively a member of staff with whom you feel comfortable. For medical issues there is the School Nurse, and we also have a school counselling service.

I've lost something! Where might it be?

Try the lost property cupboard - the key is held by the Pastoral Assistant in Room 12. Valuables left in the changing rooms will be kept by the PE staff.

I'm behind with my work. What shall I do?

Talk to your subject teacher, Houseparents if you are a boarder, and to your Personal Tutor. They may be able to offer solutions or assistance to you.

I need to miss school for some reason. Is that okay?

Your parents/guardians will need to email school for authorisation beforehand.

I want to bring my car to school. Can I?

In some instances, day students are permitted to drive to school but the Head has to give written permission for this. Boarders are not permitted to have cars at school. Car parking spaces (in limited numbers) are available close to the School.

Where can I work during my study periods?

The Library (open from 8.00am to 9.00pm) which has photocopying facilities; the Sixth Form study areas; the IT open access area, and the Study Room in the Art Block.

I would like to do some work experience. How do I arrange it?

See your Personal Tutor and Head of Sixth Form for advice. In addition, the Head is always very happy to meet with students to discuss ideas or any issues.

My school bag is pretty heavy with my books and folders... what can I do?

There are lockers available in the Sixth Form Centre. Please see Jenny Savage to organise.

What about internal exams?

There are internal exams in January and June of the Lower Sixth (Year 12). Full Mock A level exams are held in January of the Upper Sixth (year 13).

Are there any particular subjects I should study that will help with my future plans?

This is something you need to think about. For many university degrees, the A Level subjects you follow can be wide-ranging, but there are some courses where you must have specific subjects, for example to study Medicine you must have Chemistry A Level. If in doubt about your choices talk to the Head of Sixth Form.

What if I want to use the computers?

All students are issued with an ID and a password for the School system on the Conference Day. You will be required to sign a Use of IT Agreement. The Sixth Form Centre has a number of quiet study rooms with computers that any Sixth Form students can use.

ST CHRIS GLOSSARY

Over the past 100 years St Chris has developed a lexicon all its own, so here is a list of the most common words and phrases that you might need to know about.

Arundale	Our school boarding house. It is on the first floor in the central part of the School and is out of bounds to day students.
Arunfield	This is the home of the Head, and is also a meeting place and venue for some School events.
Cells	The rooms painted white on the outside down the left hand side of the Courtyard, opposite the Library.
Coffee Shop	The St Chris Tuck Shop which can be found in the Cells opposite the Library. Doesn't sell coffee but does sell snacks at Little Break.
Company	Your Form or Tutor Group
Company Adviser	Form tutor/teacher for Years 7 to 11. Sixth Form students have a Personal Tutor.
IG	Indoor Gym. But it's no longer a gym! It's now the Dining or Lunch Hall (or Cafeteria!) and is off the main corridor.
Little Break	The first break in the day. From 10.00 to 10.30am.
LSP	Late Summer Programme. The various residential trips we take at the end of the summer term.
Lunch & Theatre Clearing	Each Company takes it in turn, once a term, to help with moving the chairs and tidying the Theatre after Morning Talks and the Dining Hall (IG) after lunch.
Major Officials (MO's)	Sixth Form students who have been elected by the students to various posts of responsibility.
Morning Talk	Our name for Assembly. Monday: Whole School, Thursday: Years 12 and 13 (Sixth Form), Friday: Whole School
Notices	Announcements and messages that are made at the end of Morning Talk, telling everyone what's happening. These are also give to each Company and shown on the screen outside Room 12 in case you miss anything.
OG	Outdoor Gym. This is a gym and can be found near to the School Field and minibus parking area.
Options	Every week on a Thursday, the last lesson is open for you to choose what you would like to do, from a long list of Options – at the beginning of term you will be given a list of possible activities to choose from.
Peer Mentors	Year 12 students, led by the Deputy Head Boy and Girl, who are available to talk through issues and support you. Please ask your Company Adviser for more information.
Room 12	Heads of Year and the Pastoral Assistant are based there. It is in the central courtyard area.
School Council	The students' representative body, made up of children from all years.
School Meeting	A gathering of the whole School to discuss Council matters. Normally follows the week after a Council Meeting.
Silence	Taking time for a Silence has always been an important part of the School – when everything stops for a few seconds so that people can quietly compose their thoughts and get ready for the rest of the day. We hold a Silence during Morning Talks.
Social Library	Not a library but a meeting place/social venue. It is opposite the IG on the main corridor.
Wombles	Students who choose to help out in the Theatre, perhaps operating the equipment behind the scenes or moving the stage set around in the dark!







stChris