



# METHODIST COLLEGE BELFAST

*Opportunity Diversity Excellence*



Lower Sixth Induction  
Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021

## ***Welcome to Sixth Form at Methodist College!***

I would like to extend you a very warm welcome to Sixth Form. In these unusual times, we are delighted you have chosen to continue your education here. There are many changes and adaptations to make as you progress from GCSEs to A Levels, especially so this year, but don't let that scare you. It's a brilliant two years, the highlight of most people's time at school, where your studies become more personal and more interesting, and you can get a taste of adult life. Our hope for all of you is that the COVID restrictions will not change the experience too much and that you leave Methody after Sixth Form not only with excellent grades but also with the skills and qualities that you need to prepare you for life after school.

In a rapidly changing world, we want to prepare you to achieve great things and compete for University places and in the job market locally, nationally or internationally in the future. At Methody, we aim to give you the best exposure to learning opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom. We will challenge you to change from an 'I can't do it' attitude to an 'I can't do it yet' mind-set, which will equip you for the challenges you will face in the future.

At Methody, we are proud of the diversity of our student body. We expect all of our students to respect themselves and others, to look for the good in others and to be honest and trustworthy. We want to make sure that every student feels valued and safe, so that you can make a positive contribution to Sixth Form. The Form Team is here to support you throughout the next two years.

Head of Lower Sixth	Mrs M Cooney
Deputy Head of Lower Sixth	Mr T Welshman
Head of Pastoral Care for Sixth Form	Mrs H Parker
Warden of the Sixth Form Centre	Mr S Lindsay

At Methody, we work hard to unlock potential and develop talent in all of our students. We aim for excellence, not only in academic subjects, but also in the many extra-curricular activities that we offer, which will hopefully be available again this year, including sport, music and drama. Many of you will move on from school to University or College, others may move directly into employment. Make use of this next year to enhance your future applications. Take every opportunity you can, even though they may be limited at the moment, to improve your teamwork or communication skills.

I look forward to working with you over the next two years and hope that you achieve great things here at Methody.

Mrs L McCluggage  
Head of Senior School

## ***Plan for the start of term***

### **Induction Session, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

10.30 a.m. – 12.00 p.m.

Welcome and new school rules and regulations	Mrs McCluggage
Life in Sixth Form	Mr Lindsay
Pastoral Care at Methody	Mrs Parker
Issue of timetables	Mrs Cooney

### **School begins for all Lower Sixth students on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

Classes start with period 3 at 10.55 a.m. (week B)

### **Tutor groups and rooms**

L6P Mrs Drumm, J5	L6Q Miss Moore, N3
L6R Mr Carruthers/Mrs Parks, J6	L6S Mrs Maguire/Miss Irvine, N2
L6T Mr Davidson, N5	L6V Dr Dorrity, J7
L6W Mr Millar, N6	L6X Mrs Duckett, J4
L6Y Dr Dempsie, N7	L6Z Miss Lloyd, N9

## ***Introduction***

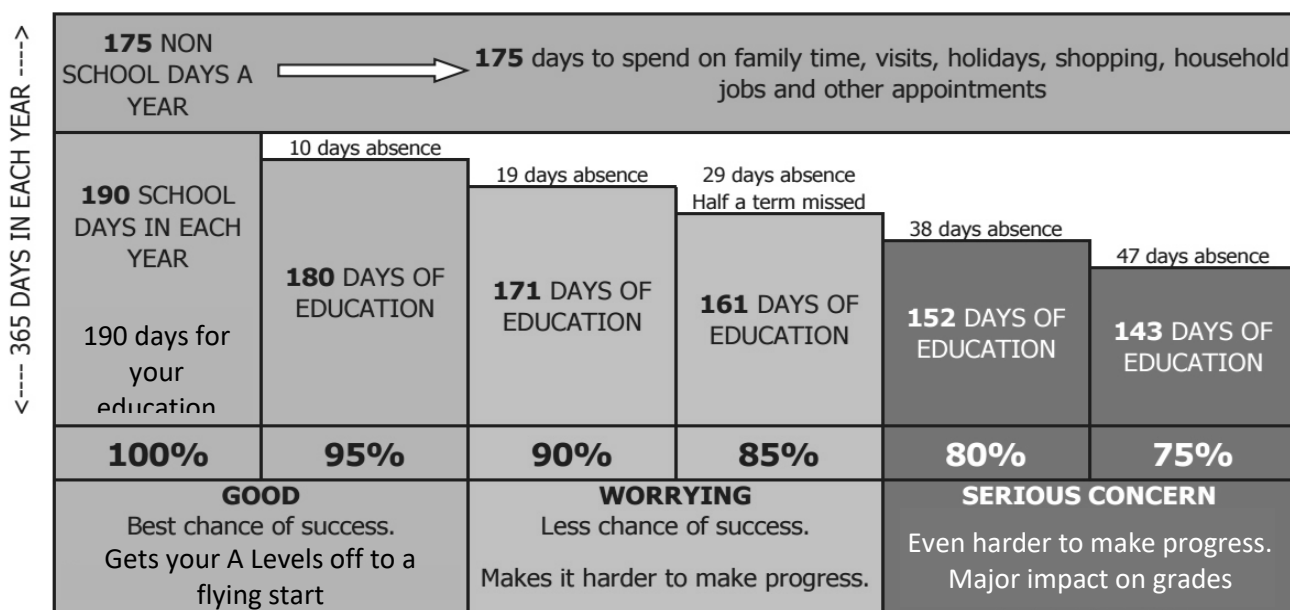
This booklet has been put together in order to provide you with information and advice to help to make the initial transition from GCSEs to A Levels as smooth as possible. The detail is correct as of **25<sup>th</sup> August 2021**, but changes may be necessary later depending on the level of COVID restrictions.

Pages 4 – 6	Attendance, the rules and regulations
Page 6	EMA
Pages 6 and 7	Pastoral Care
Pages 8 and 9	The Worrall Centre
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Page 10	Leadership opportunities
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## Attendance

All Sixth Form students are expected to **aim for 100% attendance**.

An attendance record of 90% may seem pretty good, but if you add up the time involved it would mean that you have missed up to 4 weeks of lessons over the course of an academic year. Educational research has shown that an attendance record of 90% or less can reduce your results by up to one grade per subject.



**Registration takes place at 08:55 (Monday to Thursday) / 08:45 (Friday) in your tutor group room. Registration is also at 08:45 on Wednesdays Week B** to allow time for a Form assembly. A register of attendance is also taken for every lesson by your subject teachers and Miss Edgar on the Study Floor.

**We expect that you will be in school throughout the normal school day and that you will make every reasonable effort to arrange appointments outside school hours.** Attendance at lessons, including Supervised Study, is monitored by your teachers and the Form Staff. Absenting yourself from class without permission will be treated as a serious offence and will result in you being given a sanction.

**All students are expected to attend tutor group every morning.** When extracurricular groups start again, some will organise rehearsals or practices before school and this may necessitate you missing tutor group on occasion. If you need to attend a rehearsal or practice on a particular morning each week, you must inform your tutor.

**In Lower Sixth, you have permission to leave school at lunchtime, but only at lunchtime, not at break or during free periods.** Any student who leaves school at other times, without permission, will be given a sanction. **During the current**

**COVID restrictions**, Lower Sixth students who have a free afternoon (periods 5 and 6) are allowed to go home, as long as we have received a message of permission from a parent or guardian.

If you get an offer of part-time employment, you should be aware that the school recommends a maximum of 8 hours working per week and preferably at weekends. Experience shows that students who undertake long hours of paid work during the week underperform in their academic studies. You are not permitted to be in paid employment between the hours of 08:40 - 15:15, Monday to Friday, except during school holidays.

### **Requesting leave for planned absences**

Many absences which you know about in advance are acceptable, but they still require formal permission from the school. This includes

- A medical/dental appointment which could not be arranged outside school hours.
- Religious holiday.
- Interview or visit, e.g. University interview or Open Day.
- Significant extra-curricular activity, such as music, drama or sport events not organised by the school.
- Attendance at a funeral.
- Severe disruption to your normal mode of transport.
- Driving test (this does **not** include driving lessons or the theory test).

Your parent/guardian should request permission in advance for a **part-day absence** by sending an email via the SchoolGateway app or via Schoolscom.

Please address the email FAO **Mrs Cooney** or **Mrs McCluggage** to request permission for a **whole-day absence or several days' absence**.

Requests for a family holiday must be made to the Senior Vice-Principal. Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for a holiday, but the school may choose to grant authorisation for leave of absence.

### **Signing in and out of school**

**Students arriving too late for registration must sign in with Mrs Allen-Antuna in K2½ (or if she is not there, with Mrs Brand at the Rolls and Records desk in Admin Office 3).** If you are persistently late, Mrs Drumm, the Form Tutor will give you a Free Period detention (one of your free periods becomes a study period).

**You are also required to sign out of school at Admin Office 3 if you have to leave during the school day, for a medical appointment for example. If you are returning to school before the end of the school day, you must also sign back in at Admin.**

### **Unplanned absence**

These are absences due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances. We expect your parent to send a text message via the SchoolGateway app or Schoolcomms or to telephone Mrs Allen-Antuna (the Administration Assistant for Senior School) on **90205226 between 08:30 and 08:45 on each day of the absence**. If this does not happen, your parent will be contacted by text via the Schoolcomms system. The SchoolGateway or Schoolcomms message from your parent/ guardian is accepted as a note and therefore avoids the need for a written note.

### **Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)**

EMA is a weekly allowance of £30 to help 16 - 19 year olds with the cost of Sixth Form education. Depending on your family's financial circumstances, you may be entitled to receive it.



You can collect an information pack and application form from Admin or from Mrs Allen-Antuna in K2½.

Complete the application online or return the form to the address given on the application.

Once you receive a letter of confirmation, go to K2½ to sign a Learning Agreement.

### **Pastoral Care in Sixth Form**

In Methody, we aim to support the personal, social, emotional and intellectual needs of every student, so that everyone can participate fully and gain maximum benefit from everything the school has to offer.

You may have been lucky enough to sail through Forms 1 - 5, never needing any extra help or support. This will hopefully continue in the Sixth Form.



However, unforeseen events can have a major impact on your life and may affect how you feel in school. There will be different issues, pressures and responsibilities in Sixth Form and sometimes students need a helping hand, or just someone to listen to their concerns without passing judgement. If you have any concerns at all, it is important to speak to a member of staff to find out how we can help.

### **What about confidentiality?**

Confidentiality is always a priority. However, if you have a concern about something which might result in serious harm being caused to you or another student, our duty of care means that we must pass the information on (but only to a small number of relevant people) to ensure that you will be kept safe.

### **Who can I contact?**

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Where to find them</b>
<b>Mrs L McCluggage</b>	Head of Senior School	K2½, Biology staffroom or N6
<b>Mrs H Parker</b>	Sixth Form Pastoral Care	A17, English or Pastoral Care
<b>Mrs M Cooney</b>	Head of Form	A16 or English staffroom
<b>Mr T Welshman</b>	Deputy Head of Form	L2 or Geography staffroom
<b>Mrs A Drumm</b>	Form Tutor	J5 or Science staffroom
<b>Sister Houston</b>	School Nurse	San
<b>Mrs A Logan</b>	Head of Pastoral Care	R26 or Pastoral Care
<b>Mr A Craig</b>	VP (Pastoral Care)	F12 or Maths Department

OR

### **ANY OTHER TEACHER WHO WOULD UNDERSTAND**

If you are worried or upset, don't ignore the problems in the hope that they will disappear. Please speak to a member of staff.



In addition, we can arrange sessions on site with an independent, professional counsellor from Familyworks. Counselling may help you to understand what you think, feel and do; to weigh up your alternatives and options, make your own decisions and act upon them.

Remember - we can't help unless we know you have a problem. If you talk to us, you might be surprised at the help we can offer.

## **The Worrall Centre**

The Worrall Centre is our Sixth Form Centre. The centre covers four floors and caters for student needs by providing:

- Large Recreational floor, with Coffee bar
- Study floor with computers
- Classrooms
- Extensive locker area. During COVID restrictions, we are trying to avoid students congregating in the locker area, so lockers are currently only available if there is a genuine need. Speak to Mrs McCluggage or Mr Lindsay.

The Worrall Centre allows our Sixth Form students a degree of independence. Even though you are still very much part of the school, you gain a little distance from the younger pupils. We hope it is a place where our senior students can start to assume greater responsibility for their own work and free time so that they can make the transition from school to university life more easily.

The Sixth Form Centre is run by a Forum of Sixth Form students, under the guidance of a small number of members of staff who help with the day to day running of the Centre. Sixth Form students are expected to cooperate fully both with staff and the members of the Forum and treat the Centre with respect. Any failure to comply will have consequences, ranging from a warning to exclusion from the Centre for a period of time.

Mr S Lindsay is the Warden of the Sixth Form Centre.

Mr A Gallagher is the Deputy Warden of the Sixth Form Centre.

Miss C Edgar is the Study Supervisor.

**During COVID restrictions, we have to strictly control the numbers gathering on the Rec Floor. This is often a particular problem at break time. Once the Rec Floor is full at break time, please use the top floor of the Sixth Form Centre or the Whitla Hall.**

### **The Coffee Bar**

The Coffee Bar is open from 8.30 a.m. until the end of lunchtime. It serves tea, coffee and some hot food. The Coffee Bar is run by members of the Forum and one of the Canteen staff. There are lots of bins on the Rec Floor - please get into the habit of using them. Under COVID restrictions tidiness becomes even more important. It is not fair or safe to ask someone else to pick up your rubbish.

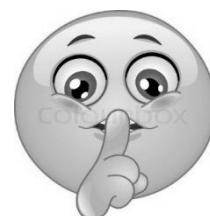


## Study Floor

Students should make maximum use of their study periods. Experience has shown that success at A Level depends on consistent effort. You will find more advice on how to make the most effective use of study time on pages 11 - 14.

Study periods are treated as a timetabled class. **Attendance is compulsory.** You can also make use of the Study Floor during free periods if there is room.

A register is called at the start of each period and students must stay for the duration of the class. Silence is to be maintained on the study floor at all times. Please respect the need of others to work in silence. Use of the computers should be for school work only. Students are not permitted to eat or drink on the Study Floor, with the exception of water.



Permission to miss a Study period must be sought in advance. Written notes from appropriate teachers must accompany any request and should be given to Miss Edgar prior to the study period in question. **Failure to attend a study period or leaving early will be considered as being absent without permission and will result in a sanction issued by Mrs Cooney or Mr Lindsay.**

## *Suggested equipment list*

Good organisation is key when it comes to making the best use of the Study Floor. Here is a list of equipment which should help you to stay organised, both at home and in school, and ensure that you are prepared for class.

- A ring binder for daily school use, with labelled dividers for different subjects and teachers. Use this for the work that you are currently doing in each subject.
- At home, one ring binder or lever arch file per subject, to put notes into once you have completed a topic.
- The specification for each A Level subject. Look on the exam board website and print off a copy for your file.
- Dividers for your folders.
- Plastic wallets to keep work in good condition.
- Pens, pencils, rubber, ruler, highlighter pens.
- Calculator for relevant subjects.
- A memory stick.
- A diary, either a mobile device or a paper copy. You can get a copy of the school homework diary, if you want one, in the first few days.

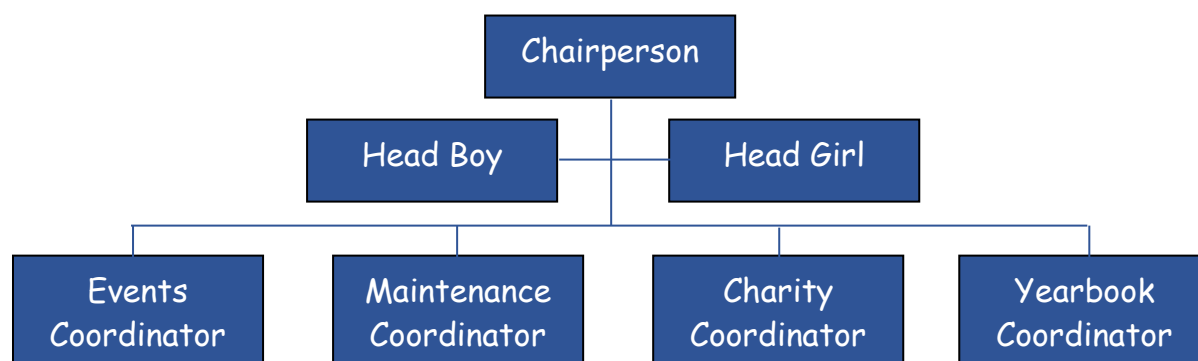
## ***Leadership opportunities***

### **The Sixth Form Forum**

The Sixth Form Forum assists with the daily running of the Centre and organisation of key events for Sixth Form. Its role is to encourage each student in Sixth Form to get involved in school life and ensure that the Worrall Centre is treated with respect. Serving on the Sixth Form Forum is an excellent opportunity for students to develop leadership skills, use initiative, motivate others and make a positive impact.

The Chairperson and the rest of the Forum work with, and are accountable to, Mr Lindsay and Mr Gallagher. The Forum is made up of 35 students; some are selected (the Senior Prefects) and some Lower Sixth students are **elected** through a vote by the student body. **Elections are held in September of L6.** The Forum meets once per term to discuss issues which are relevant to Sixth Form.

There is also an Executive Committee which consists of the Chairperson of the Forum, the Secretary, the Coordinator of each section and the Head Boy and Head Girl. The Forum is divided into sub-committees which play a key role in the smooth running of the Sixth Form Centre.



### **Assistant Prefects**

The Prefects in Methody assist the staff with the smooth running of the College by undertaking supervisory duties and (where possible) helping with academic subjects and extra-curricular activities. In Lower Sixth, students act as Assistant Prefects by contributing in the above areas and beginning to develop and display their leadership potential.

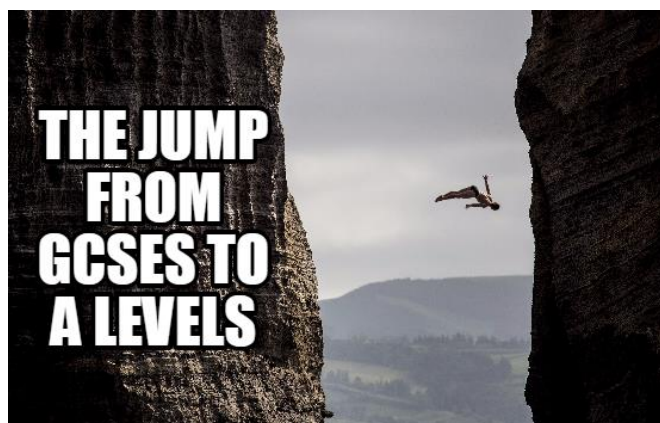
Later in the year, all Assistant Prefects will be offered the chance to apply for the position of Prefect in the College.

All applicants will receive notification of their success, or otherwise, in June.

## ***How to master the jump from GCSE to A Level***

GCSEs are over. Frustratingly, your almost two years' worth of study was not tested, but hopefully has still translated into some good grades.

Next up is A Levels, and how different can they be, really? Most of you are taking your A Levels in the same school, with many of the same teachers, there are exams at the end, so it can't be that much different, right?



Wrong! Yes, there are some similarities, but actually the jump from GCSE to A Level is quite a large one. So large, in fact, that it catches a lot of students out and they fall into the gap. By the time they climb out of it, the chance of them doing well has been seriously reduced. And unfortunately for you, lockdown meant that you have never got to experience the intensity of a serious revision programme and the stress of study leave and a full series of exams. So what can you do to be successful at A Level?

### **The practical differences**

You'll study far fewer subjects. Most of you studied 10 GCSE subjects, some you really liked, some you didn't care for, and some you hated. Now you're down to 3 or 4 subjects, all of which you chose. That means you get more lessons on those subjects and, for the first time, actual real-life free periods!

### **There's more to learn for each subject**

At GCSE it may have seemed that you already had quite a lot of content to commit to memory. At A Level, the content you need to learn is multiplied significantly. So learning and revising as you go along will make your life much easier. As well as more information to learn, you actually have to be able to understand it. At A Level, there's much more emphasis on the skills of analysis and evaluation, rather than just recalling what you have memorised.

### **There's less homework but more 'home-work'**

You'll probably find that those short 15 - 30 minute homework tasks that you used to get won't really exist at A Level. Instead, you'll be expected to do more independent study, unofficial 'home-work', which means reading around the topics

that you're learning about in class, reviewing the notes you've made and checking that you understand them. The expectation is that you should be spending **4 to 5 hours per week per subject** doing this. This won't be checked, you won't have to hand it in, so it's entirely your responsibility to do it. So why bother? If you do, you'll have a much better chance of doing well in your A Levels. If you're smart about it, you can get a lot of this 'home-work' done in school, during Study periods.

### **Teachers (might) not be on your back as much!**

Now that you're in Sixth Form, teachers will start to treat you more like an adult than a child. But they'll also start expecting you to take more responsibility for your own learning.

<b>Dependent learner / GCSE pupil</b>	<b>Independent learner / A Level student</b>
Has a full timetable, in which every period is allocated to a certain subject	Has a range of Free or Study periods in which they are responsible for organising their own learning
Relies on the teacher to guide them every step of the way	Has the confidence to 'have a go' at questions and assignments and the maturity to ask for the teacher's help when it is needed
Tends to just do the work set and often the bare minimum required	Undertakes additional study to find out more about a particular issue or topic
Uses sources such as the internet as a place to 'copy' facts from	Uses sources such as the internet to find out about new things and extend their knowledge
Only completes assignments when really pushed to do so by teachers, parents and others, and usually at the last minute	Completes assignments without being pushed to do so, making use of their teachers, parents or others for guidance

So how can you successfully make the jump from GCSE to A Level?

Although the points made above may seem a little daunting, there are reasons to be cheerful about starting A Levels. You're only studying subjects that you are

interested in, you've got more of your own time and you're treated more like an adult than a child. And by following the advice below, you can successfully make the jump.

### **Be mentally prepared**

The jump from GCSE to A Level is probably one of the biggest changes you'll have experienced in your life so far. So fully take on board that a big shift is coming your way. Be open to the changes this will cause. Be ready to embrace the challenge and the opportunities for both learning and personal growth that this step-up represents. And don't be scared to ask for help if you need it.

### **Get organised**

Organisation is crucial from now on. You need to keep careful track of deadlines, keep your notes really well organised (and complete) and bring everything with you every day that you will need (see the list on page 9). Get into a routine that incorporates plenty of study time. Use 'To Do' lists to help maximise your productivity and prioritise tasks.

### **Do the work, from Day 1**

A big part of the step-up to A Level is being prepared to do the work. If you're one of the lucky people who sailed through GCSEs without doing much work, then you're in for a big shock. A Levels are hard work for everybody. If you want to leave Methody in two years with grades to be proud of, you can't leave the work until Easter of Upper Sixth. You need to start doing the work on day 1 and keep it up throughout the two years.

### **Use your 'free' periods wisely**

When you first see your timetable, with 'free' periods in the middle of the school day, it can be tempting to use them to chat to your friends. However, this is how you can fritter away your time in Sixth Form. Much of your 'free' time at school should be thought of as 'study' time. You will have some official Study periods that you must attend, like any other timetabled class, but you can make use of the Study Floor at other times too. Assign a study period per week for each subject. Plan ahead, in your diary, what you need to work on in that time and what tasks you want to get done. Then there will be less work that needs done at home.

## **Revise things as you go**

It may not seem like it's much use revising something that you just learned that day, especially if the exam is months or even years away. But research has shown that revisiting information regularly helps you embed it in your memory. After a class, read up on what you learned to consolidate your new knowledge. Make flashcards with short snippets of the key information from each topic. These will be useful when you come to revise, days or even months down the line. Ask for help from your teacher if you still don't understand it properly.

## **Teach someone else what you have learned**

A Level is all about understanding. There is no better way to check that you understand something than to try to explain it to someone else - a family member, someone you know who doesn't take that subject, or whoever. If they get it, the chances are you do too.

## **Do practice questions**

The difference between a hardworking student who gets As and A\*s and one who gets Cs and Ds is how well they think like an examiner. Try past paper questions and ask your teacher to mark them. Take on board any feedback they give you to help you understand where you need to improve. **Then** use the mark scheme to help you learn to recognise what a good answer looks like.

## **Enjoy it!**

Sixth Form is a time when you've finally left behind the subjects you disliked at GCSE and you're now able to concentrate on subjects that genuinely interest you. What's more, you're working towards studying your favourite subject at University or College. Although A Levels are harder work than GCSEs, you'll hopefully find that you really enjoy Sixth Form and the new challenges it brings. It's a time to make new friends and have a more active social life. Enjoy it and remember that all this hard work will pay off, even if it doesn't always feel like it at the time.

## ***What do I do if . . . . ?***

These are some of the questions the Sixth Form Team are often asked by students.

What do I do if . . . .

<b>I have to miss a lesson/ lessons?</b>	See your subject teacher. It is your responsibility to get notes copied up, but your teacher will be able to offer guidance and explain what you missed.
<b>I am having issues with a particular subject?</b>	You have chosen 3 or 4 subjects for A Level. Sometimes, one subject may not turn out as you expected. Give it a chance, but if you really feel it isn't for you, talk to Mrs Cooney and she will explain what can be done. We will require a note from your parents, so make sure you discuss your problem at home. We can generally accommodate a change, subject to timetabling.
<b>I am struggling with the demands of AS Level?</b>	Talk to your subject teachers and ask for their advice. Then talk to one of the Form Team. We are here to help. We might offer you a system of mentoring, where one teacher will help you to come up with short term targets and design a Study Plan.
<b>I am getting behind with my studies?</b>	Again, talk to your subject teachers and/or a member of the Form Team. Don't ignore things and hope that they will magically get better by themselves.
<b>I have a free period in the morning?</b>	All L6 students must be in for registration at 8.55 a.m. (Monday to Thursday)/8.45 a.m. (Friday) and are only allowed out of school at lunchtime. So if you have a free period early in the day, use the time to study. Assign one of these periods to each subject and use the time to read ahead or review work done that day.
<b>I am free period 5 and 6?</b>	Because of COVID restrictions, Lower Sixth students are now allowed to leave school at the end of period 4 if they are free in the afternoon. To save you having to sign out at the same time every week, get a parent/guardian to send a one-time message to Mrs Allen-Antuna via Schoolscom or the SchoolGateway app, saying that they give you permission to leave school each week in the afternoon of whatever day you are free.

<b>I have no homework and have a Study period?</b>	There is lots you can do. Consolidate work done in class, read ahead on future topics, do some research, get a start on coursework.
<b>I'm not sure what I want to do after Sixth Form?</b>	Speak to Mrs Stott or any other member of the Careers Service. All L6 students will be assigned a UCAS tutor later in the year, to help guide you through the process of University applications. There will be information during the year from different Universities and you will get advice about UCAS and personal statements.
<b>I drive to school?</b>	If you are lucky enough to pass your driving test and have access to a car, you might want to drive to school. Leave plenty of time. Parking is a bit of a nightmare. College Gardens is normally full by about 7.45 a.m. 'I couldn't find a parking space,' is not an acceptable excuse for being late to tutor group. <b>You are not allowed to bring your car into school to park in the school grounds.</b>
<b>My financial situation is impacting my studies?</b>	Speak to Mrs McCluggage or Mrs Allen-Antuna in K2½. She is the Administration Assistant for Senior School and she processes the paperwork for EMA (Educational Maintenance Allowance). See page 6 for more details.
<b>I am feeling ill during the school day?</b>	Speak to your subject teacher and ask to go to the San. Sister Houston may be able to give you medicine (e.g. painkillers) to help. If you are too ill to remain in school, she can speak to your parents and give you permission to leave. You could also speak to Mrs Cooney or Mrs McCluggage. <b>You must not leave school without permission.</b>
<b>I need to get food at lunchtime?</b>	You can buy food at the Coffee Bar. In Sixth Form you are also permitted to leave the school grounds to purchase food at lunchtime (and <b>only at lunchtime</b> ). However, you must be back in time for afternoon classes.
<b>I have any other concerns or worries during my time in Sixth Form?</b>	Speak to any member of the Form Team (look at the list on page 7) or any other teacher that you feel comfortable talking to. We are all here to help ensure that everyone feels safe and happy here at Methody.