

There are a number of basics which can make a real difference to a young person's experience of, and academic success in, sixth form. Your support as a parent or carer is one of the most crucial elements and we very much value open dialogue between the college and parents.

Other important factors include:

Excellent Attendance

Academic success is affected significantly by absences. DFE research (February 2015) suggests that a drop to approximately 95% attendance over the academic year can result in lower achievement. 5% absence equates to roughly 8 or 9 days missed in a year.

Ready to Learn

Students will need to be able to organise their time carefully, managing deadlines and competing demands. We recommend keeping a diary or planner for logging coursework and homework. Coming ready for the lessons they have each day, with the right equipment, books, notes and homework is vital. Knowing what they are being assessed on and how they will be assessed in each subject is also essential. Students can download course specifications and past papers from their exam board websites.

Space and Time for Independent Study

All A level and Level 3 BTEC courses will expect students to undertake 4-5 hours of study per subject each week outside of lessons. This will increase for some courses during coursework assessments and for all examined courses prior to exams. Students who prefer to work at college, can stay in the LRC until 5.30pm each evening. Research by the University of Sussex a few years ago, showed a clear link between paid work and student success. The recommendation from this study was that a full-time student should be in paid/voluntary employment for no more than 12 hours a week. At Heathfield we recommend 10 hours, if possible.

How can you help your young person?

We want to develop independent learners who are ready for higher education or the workplace. But in these early days many students need a little extra support. Please encourage your young person to:

- Attend all lessons, study sessions, group tutorials, coaching meetings and assemblies.
- Use a diary/planner to record and manage work. Paper can still be more effective than electronic!
- For each subject, save a copy of the specification and example exam papers for quick reference.
- Use a structured note-taking method such as *The Cornell Method* to help organise notes for future reference and revision.
- Keep a terminology/concept dictionary/glossary for all the new terms at Level 3. You could test your young person on these!
- Spend 10 minutes per lesson each evening making notes - summarising, creating questions, making links to other topics, plans for further study, etc. This is proven to help memory.
- Keep paid work to a maximum of 10 hours per week.
- Attend after school subject support sessions, where appropriate. Use teachers' expertise. Don't hesitate to ask for help or extension work.
- Complete exam questions and mark them regularly to test knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Read beyond the specification and lesson material (for fun!). This is beneficial for top grades and very important for students considering competitive universities and courses. Visiting museums, specialist libraries, university lectures, etc, all help to engage at a deeper level with subjects.
- Get involved - go on academic visits, join Heathfield Vine, Radio, debating, film or sports clubs.
- Switch off completely every week - to enjoy guilt free, study-free time as they want to spend it.

If you have concerns or wish to talk to a member of the Sixth Form Team please use the main College contact details by calling 01435 866066 or sending an email to office@heathfieldcc.co.uk