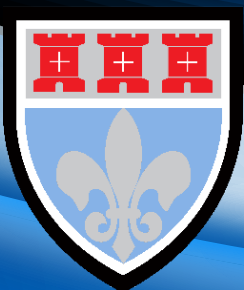


St Mary's Catholic School

Sixth Form Prospectus



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Welcome

We are delighted that you are considering joining St Mary's Sixth Form as a place to continue your studies. We recognise that this stage in your life is crucial in establishing the key skills and preparation for life beyond school, whether that be at university, further education, apprenticeships or in the workplace. Whether you are currently studying at our school or joining us from elsewhere, our Sixth Form offers a highly distinctive experience.

Our Sixth Form is a vibrant and energetic place to study. Sixth Form life involves much more than simply academic study. At St Mary's, we are proud of the provision we offer, which allows students to develop a wide range of skills, talents and knowledge, as well as providing many opportunities for students to develop as individuals in a more social, moral, ethical, and spiritual sense.

Our Sixth Form is characterised by its strong sense of community, wide-ranging curriculum and broad offer of extra-enrichment opportunities - both extra-curricular and super-curricular. We have an outstanding Sixth Form Area, a highly dedicated team of pastoral staff, teachers, and leaders, as well as highly talented and hard-working students, blessed with enthusiasm and wonderful gifts and talents.

Ethos

As a Sixth Form that is proud of its Catholic/Christian tradition, our ethos is very important. We are a very caring and supportive community where every student is valued and where every student's gifts, talents and interests are nurtured allowing them to achieve their utmost.

Students are given many opportunities to explore and develop in faith, whether that is through contributing to form assemblies, leading prayers, or developing their faith opportunities such as Masses, pilgrimage, completing the John Paul II Award or being part of the Sixth Form Student Spirituality Team. Our Faith in Action is seen through much of the work we do. Students regularly make contributions to charity, by organising events such as cake sales, collections for food banks and donating spare change. Sixth Form students make a significant contribution to the care and support offered in the main school by leading and helping others in many activities. Students in our Sixth Form are trained mentors, subject tutors and reading coaches who help support students who are vulnerable or require support.

Integral to the Sixth Form is an embodiment of a clear set of fundamental Gospel values in the community, which provide opportunities for all students to achieve their full potential, whilst placing the teachings of Christ at the centre and promoting the Catholic/Christian ethos.

St Mary's Sixth Form is committed to excellence, approaching everything with a commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and an aspiration to provide the best all-around education for all students irrespective of their faith, ability, culture, or ethnicity.

Achievement

At St Mary's, we are proud of the excellent exam results students achieve year on year. A-level results are consistently among the very highest in the north-east and the UK itself.

The overall pass rate for A-levels since 2019 has been 99.2%. Over the last three years, 42% of A-Level entries were A*-A and 88% A*-C. Whilst 82% of vocational entries have been awarded Distinctions or Starred Distinctions. This well all above the national average and the north east average.

Last year, 25 students achieved 3 or more A/A* or Distinction/Distinction* grades across various subjects.

In recent years, an increasing number of students have gained places at Oxford and Cambridge to read Natural Science, Law, Medicine, Modern Languages, Linguistics, Mathematics, History & Politics and Engineering, with more than half the cohort going off to other Russell Group universities. In addition, a number of students have also moved on to employment and higher-level apprenticeships.

Opportunities

There are many exciting opportunities for students to partake in over the course of their time in our Sixth Form. We offer many opportunities, not only to pass examinations and gain important qualifications for future career paths, but also to develop as an individual in a Catholic environment including spiritual development and providing service to your community. In a competitive environment, we seek to ensure that our students stand out from their peers. For example, students are offered opportunities to lead others in the school community and provide service to others in the Student Leadership Scheme, carry out charity work throughout the city with our Volunteering Scheme, complete work beyond the traditional curriculum in Super-Curricular sessions, partake in enrichment sessions with local employers and educational providers, and participate in awards such as the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award.

Life in the Sixth Form is vibrant, busy, and exciting. There is an atmosphere of focus and direction, but also a sense of camaraderie and mutual support. The support for sixth formers begins now, in Year 11, as we work with students and their families to ensure students are placed on appropriate courses that are linked to students' future career aspirations.

From this prospectus, you will get a strong sense of what is on offer at our distinctive Sixth Form. However, should you wish to discuss any aspect of Sixth Form life in more detail, you are more than welcome to contact the Sixth Form Pastoral Team at the school.

Miss Patterson
Headteacher

Mr Turnbull
Assistant Headteacher

Sixth Form Ethos

St Mary's Sixth Form is a unique place to study and has a distinctive ethos. We pride ourselves on being a caring school. St Mary's is a happy and inclusive place, where order and respect for others underpin all of our dealings with one another. Our aim is to create an environment where every student feels safe and where everyone can succeed and fulfil their gifts and talents. The welfare of our students is vitally important and, if there are any concerns, we are committed to dealing with them effectively and swiftly.

We take the responsibility for supporting the spiritual development very seriously. Students from diverse cultures, faiths and ethnic backgrounds are welcomed equally and add to the richness of our community.

We believe that it is our duty to offer a variety of experiences for our students, so that they can develop as dignified and fulfilled young people who can leave our Sixth Form as well rounded individuals ready to make a positive contribution to society.



organising fund-raising events including bake sales, collecting for food banks and donating spare change. Our students also demonstrate their faith by taking on supportive roles in school to help students who are vulnerable or need support.

Our Sixth Form has a supportive atmosphere and, although we are a distinctively Catholic/Christian Sixth Form, we welcome equally celebrate other faiths in our community too.

Our students have high aspirations and so there is a strong focus on achievement and diligence. For example, during independent study periods, our students stay in school to continue their studies in areas dedicated for focused work such as the Sixth Form Silent Study Room, the Sixth Form Library and the Sixth Form Work Area.



Every day, students have the opportunity to join their Form Tutors and peers in Morning Prayer and Spiritual Reflection. There are regular opportunities for collective worship throughout the year in the form of voluntary Masses and special Liturgies at important times in the Church's year such as Advent and Lent.

Sixth Form students have the opportunity for an annual Day of Aspiration and to work with JustIs; they are also given the opportunity to take part in spiritual events and the Pope John Paul II Award. This award recognises the work young people undertake in their local, school and parish communities, where they have used their God-given talents in order to serve others. We believe firmly in putting our faith into action, and students do this in a variety of ways.

In recent years, students have worked closely with a range of charitable organisations to raise awareness of the troubles women face in Kenya or the crisis in the Congo, as well as supporting charities such as CAFOD and Macmillan by



Personal Support

The transition into Sixth Form can sometimes seem daunting. Specialising in certain subjects, being expected to work autonomously and prioritising work, can be difficult for some. To support this transition, students have daily contact with their Form Tutor who will be experienced in supporting students and helping them to achieve their absolute best.

The relationship between the Form Tutor and student is essential to success in the Sixth Form, tutors will monitor and support students throughout the two years of their studies, acting as both a pastoral guide and academic mentor. They will work with their tutees, getting to know them well as individuals, helping to nurture their talents and interests as well as supporting them academically. Form Tutors will have the holistic overview of how our students are progressing in the Sixth Form and they will be the first point of contact if parents or students have any concerns or problems.



As well as a Form Tutor, students are currently supported by a Sixth Form Pastoral Team consisting of two Heads of Year (each dedicated to either Year 12 or Year 13) and an Assistant Headteacher leading the Sixth Form. As key senior leaders in the school, they work with students and their families to ensure their needs are met. They will monitor students' pastoral and academic progress very closely to ensure all students are fully supported in reaching their full potential and provide intervention, if this is needed.

The Sixth Form Team work hard with parents and carers to ensure all our students' needs are met. We are happy to discuss with parents any aspect of your child's needs and developments at any point throughout the course of the year.

Financial Support

16-19 Bursary

Students at St Mary's have the opportunity to apply for financial support to help them continue with their Sixth Form studies. The 16-19 Bursary was introduced by the Government and payment should be used to help students fund such things as:

- Travel to and from school
- Stationery/other resources
- Travelling to university Open Days
- Books and revision guides

There are two types of bursary, standard and enhanced. Your child can only apply for one of these, depending on their personal circumstances.

The payment of the bursary will be conditional on your child meeting the requirements of the St Mary's Sixth Form expectations on behaviour, attendance, and punctuality. Your child can apply for either bursary by completing the form on the Newcastle City Council website. The application process for this support opens in June and closes in December every academic year.

Students from other schools

We warmly invite students who are currently studying their GCSEs in Year 11 at other schools to apply to our Sixth Form. The process is straightforward. Complete an application form and school reference, available from the school website, and submit it to the school by Friday 16th February 2024. You will then be invited into school to meet Mr Turnbull, Assistant Headteacher –Sixth Form, to discuss aspects of your application and to discuss your options. Any offer of a place at St Mary's will be subject to entry requirements being met for specific courses and for successful completion of the admissions process.



Student Views

“I felt at ease immediately at St Mary's, like I always belonged here even though I studied for my GCSEs elsewhere. The staff were really welcoming as were the students. Choosing to come here was the best choice I have ever made as St Mary's has helped me to develop my character and given me a chance to succeed.”

“St Mary's Sixth Form had a friendly but focused atmosphere that allowed me to achieve everything that I wanted to from my A-Levels. The extra-curricular music opportunities were really good and I enjoyed being able to take part in, and help run, the Music and Drama departments' yearly production. This was a highlight for me.”

“I thoroughly enjoyed the extra freedom Sixth Form granted, both academically and otherwise. The support available for the UCAS process was especially good, and helped me obtain a place at my first choice university”.

“I joined St Mary's in Year 12 from another school and felt welcomed despite the challenges of changing schools. Not only did I receive guidance and encouragement with my A-Levels but also support with my UCAS application (especially interview preparation) that helped me to achieve my goals.”

“I love that St Mary's genuinely cares about our opinions and how we feel as students. They always make us feel listened-to and respected. They encourage us to ensure that our learning environment feels as comfortable and safe as possible. This was especially apparent during stressful exam periods when teachers would always treat our worries and concerns with importance and make sure we were supported both emotionally and academically.”

Nurturing High Ambition

St Mary's Sixth Form prides itself on creating a learning culture of high expectation, where all students are actively encouraged to maximise their full potential. In doing so, we believe our students leave us as confident, articulate and caring people who are well-equipped with the academic skills to succeed and flourish in higher education or the workplace. At St Mary's, students attend lessons that are stimulating and challenging and, as an inclusive and diverse Sixth Form, we endeavour to ensure that the needs of our talented and ambitious students are met in a variety of ways.

We are extremely proud of the academic achievement of our students. St Mary's Sixth Form has a track record for high achievement by the most able who consistently achieve grades A*/A in their chosen subjects at A-level. Students mostly achieve A*-B grades in the most demanding subjects.

As well as ensuring our students are catered for through excellent teaching in lessons, our talented and ambitious students are invited to participate in different opportunities.

- The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), to develop and strengthen study skills in an area of a student's own choosing. Students research a topic, evaluate sources, and prepare a 5,000-word-long essay. Guided by a mentor, students have to work autonomously to complete this original piece of work and, as such, an EPQ is highly regarded by universities.
- Completing the Thinking Skills AS qualification in Year 12. Throughout the course, students are given the opportunity to develop a strong ability to think independently, present well reasoned and logical arguments, and deconstruct, examine, and judge claims made by a wide range of sources.
- Working through our Employability and Careers scheme to secure placements in a variety of sectors including law and banking. This includes our KS5 specific Law Society and STEM Club which helps students understand the demands of working in these sectors. This is supported with Year 12 students being given the opportunity to complete work experience in the summer term.
- Attending Sixth Form Enrichment Sessions and Workshops at local universities and listening to employers, in the Sixth Form area and remotely via Teams. Students are regularly given the opportunity to look at further opportunities to prepare for life beyond Sixth Form, including a dedicated KS5 careers fair held in the school and regular bulletins and calendars on Future Opportunities via Teams.
- Our Mentoring and Volunteering programme allows to students to carry out voluntary work in the local community such as primary schools, care homes and charity shops. We also work with the Freeman Hospital and RVI to allow students to complete care based placements.
- A thorough 'Aspire to Oxbridge' programme to prepare a high-quality Oxbridge and Russell Group university application, including residential visits to Oxford and Cambridge Universities, preparation for admissions tests, advice on colleges and courses, and mock interviews.

- A dedicated 'Medicine and Dentistry' society run in collaboration with the Science Department to give students an insight of these careers, opportunities to build their experience in these fields and support in the application process for these competitive courses.

- Dedicated weekly sessions where students are guided to complete Super-Curricular projects. These directed activities encourage students to prepare for future steps in their lives by completing tasks beyond the KS5 curriculum and help prepare students for the world of work.



Progression

At St Mary's, we take very seriously the responsibility that we have to ensure students are well-prepared for whatever they plan to do after school. Whether that is university, an apprenticeship, further educational course or a job, we want our students to use the skills they develop during their time with us. We spend time during our Personal Development lessons and in our Future Opportunities programme (both at tutor time and after school) developing future employability skills with our students and offer the students opportunities to think about and plan their future decisions.

We have an excellent record for students securing places at their first-choice university. In 2023, the vast majority of students attended their first choice course. For those who decide that university is not for them, we have an employability group that meets a teacher or academic tutor weekly to discuss interview techniques and CV writing.

Our dedicated, state of the art Sixth Form area, includes a Sixth Form Café, Sixth Form Work Area, Sixth Form Library, Sixth Form Quiet Area and Sixth Form Silent Study Room. These rooms also have advanced ICT facilities for the students to use. The facilities have proved to be a huge success with the Sixth Form, and this specialised space is a key part of the school's outstanding facilities.



Curriculum 2024-2025

From September 2024

Each year, we welcome approximately 140-160 students into the Sixth Form. This group is largely made up of students from our current Year 11 and, additionally, a group of students who join us from other local schools.

Students joining us in September will be placed on a pathway that you can read about in further detail below. For most, this will involve studying 3 A-levels, or their equivalent, during Year 12 and Year 13. A very small number of students may opt for 4 A-levels.

For students starting Year 12 in September 2024, all A-levels will be linear. This will involve studying for courses where the content is assessed entirely by examination at the end of Year 13 in June 2025.

Choosing the right pathway and subjects is, therefore, vitally important for achieving their academic potential.

Pathways

We work closely with all students to give them individual guidance on their subject choices. It is very important that students start with an appropriate programme of study. We have to balance a number of elements, including aspirations and interests, with the relative difficulty level of courses, in order to ensure that our students leave St Mary's having achieved their full potential.

We use a range of national data in order to identify the relative difficulty of subjects. This information is then used to guide students towards choosing a suite of subjects for which they are suitable. At St Mary's we offer the following pathways to students:

- 4 A-levels
- 3 A-levels and an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)
- 3 A-levels
- A combination of A-levels and vocational courses
- 3 vocational courses.

Students are directed towards a pathway and advised to choose subjects based on their GCSE performance and their average GCSE grade. Many students at St Mary's complete 3 A-levels and an EPQ.

Entry Requirements

Students who join our Sixth Form do so voluntarily. In signing up for Sixth Form, therefore, students agree to abide by all of the general requirements of students at our school. The decision to join Sixth Form should be carefully considered. Our high expectations of all students in school, also extends to Sixth Form students. All Sixth Form students are expected

to adhere to the Sixth Form Expectations and Student Learning Agreement throughout their time in the Sixth Form. An excellent work ethic, attendance and punctuality record are all essential for success, as is a contribution to the wider dimension of Sixth Form life, such as full attendance at, and participation in, all aspects of our Core Curriculum and support for the school ethos. A student with poor attendance (unless this is for genuine reasons), poor punctuality or a poor work ethic in Year 11 is unlikely to succeed in Sixth Form where the academic demands are greater. Throughout Year 11, all of these factors will be reviewed and, if necessary, discussed with students during the transition process to the Sixth Form.

For each specific course in Sixth Form, entry requirements will vary, depending on the degree of difficulty of the course, as well as each student's track record over their two years' study of the subject in Key Stage 4. The 'make up' of a student's GCSE grade in the subject is evaluated too. For example, a student may have a 6 overall at GCSE in a particular subject that they wish to pursue at A-level but, if the key written exam component was a 5, our strong advice might well be not to take the subject at A-level, if extended writing is a key feature of the A-level. Some courses will require a higher minimum entry grade, either in the subject itself or in a related subject. For example, entry to certain Science courses will have a minimum requirement not only in Science, but in Mathematics too, given the level of Mathematics involved in the A-level. Many subjects will have a minimum requirement in English if written work is a key feature of the A-level. Finally, we also look very closely at the combination of A-levels that a student is proposing to study. For example, we may feel that a student has the potential to succeed in one of the harder A-levels, but a combination of two or three such subjects may well prove too much and, in such cases, we may well advise strongly against the proposed combination.

In general, students are most likely to succeed in the traditional academic A-levels if they have obtained GCSEs that include, as a minimum, a number of grades in the 7-9 range and some at grade 6. Ideally, a student would have a 7 or higher in their chosen subject, but some of these subjects may consider a 6 if there is evidence of strong performance in some of the key components of the GCSE or mitigating circumstances that affected the GCSE grade. In a number of A-levels (for instance, some with a strong practical component), grade 6 or above will be considered and, exceptionally, a grade 5. Students achieving grades largely in the 4-6 range will be best suited to our vocational courses. Further information about individual courses is contained in the Curriculum booklet and, throughout Year 11, entry requirements and their suitability for different subjects will be discussed with students in a one on one interview.

Subjects offered

The subjects we usually offer at A-level are the following. Please note, however, that not all courses run each year if the numbers of students opting for the course are very low.

Art	Geography
Biology	History
Chemistry	Maths
Computer Science	Music
Design Technology	Philosophy and Ethics
Drama	Photography
Economics	Physics
English Language	Psychology
English Literature	Sociology
Film Studies	Spanish
French	Sport Studies
Further Maths	

The vocational subjects that we usually offer (depending on demand each year) include:

Health & Social Care	Applied Science
IT	Child Development
Business	

Our curriculum is reviewed regularly, and subjects being offered are subject to viability. For further information on subjects, please refer to the booklet included in this prospectus. Our Core Curriculum is part of what makes our Sixth Form distinctive, as all students also study as part of their timetable Religious Education, Sport, Super-Curricular Activities and the Personal Development Programme. Students are encouraged to take part in a wide and varied Enrichment Programme including our Student Leadership Scheme and Sixth Form Volunteering Scheme where students are encouraged to lead Main School students in activities and provide service to the local community. This curriculum provides excellent foundations for studying in the Sixth Form and allows the students the opportunity to develop a variety of skills that will enhance their overall Sixth Form experience.

Core Curriculum

Catholic/Christian Sixth Form

All students in the Sixth Form continue to study Religious Education. As part of a Catholic/Christian Sixth Form, students are encouraged to study and reflect upon moral, ethical and philosophical issues that have an impact on our lives. Studying RE provides students with an opportunity to explore the pressing and relevant issues of a modern society, as well as to share and develop their own understanding of living by the Gospel values in a modern world.

We begin by developing further an understanding of spirituality, theology and ethics that continues from our work at GCSE. As a part of this, students are taught to understand the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and to consider different faith traditions within contemporary society. Moving from Year 12 to Year 13, we extend our work to focusing on the relationship between religious belief, personal faith and lived experience. Students leave St Mary's with a National Level 3 qualification in Religious Education.

Sport

Keeping fit is central to a healthy life so we encourage all students to keep fit and take part in sport, whatever their ability or interest. In doing so, they are able to develop self-confidence, learn the importance of teamwork and explore their own strengths. All students are encouraged to engage in a wide variety of sports and physical education opportunities throughout the year. Students will be provided with an opportunity two hours a fortnight to participate in a variety of recreational sporting activities.

Super-Curricular

Developing independent study skills is key for students to succeed in life after Sixth Form. In the weekly Super - Curricular Tasks, students are guided to work independently on tasks beyond their taught curriculum to both increase their wider understanding of subject areas but also prepare themselves for future employment in different sectors. These activities allow our students to stand out when they apply for university or future employment.

Personal Development

Our varied and exciting Personal Development Programme offers students the opportunity to develop skills that will help them in their studies and in their preparations for life after Sixth Form. Students spend two hours a fortnight in the Personal Development Programme.

The intent of the Personal Development curriculum is to prepare our students for the modern world. This includes ensuring students are well versed in issues prevalent in the modern world, have the appropriate skills for employment and further education, understand the responsibility of adulthood and are well prepared for any academic assessment.

There are 4 key areas to the Personal Development curriculum:

- Knowing the World
- Entering the World
- Preparing for the World
- Being in the World

Choosing your subjects

What subjects should you choose?

Choosing subjects to study in the Sixth Form can be a difficult task and requires careful consideration. Here, we offer some advice and key questions to ask, when thinking about which subjects you might want to choose.

Which subjects do you enjoy the most?

The amount of time you will have to spend studying your subjects in Sixth Form means you should choose subjects you enjoy. In Year 12, you will have nine hours for each A-level every fortnight. In Year 13, this increases to ten hours. You should then look to ensure these are subjects that you will be able to cope with at a higher level and that you enjoy studying. You must also meet the entry requirements for the course.



In which subjects are you expecting to excel?

Your predicted performance in your GCSE subjects will be a real indicator as to what you want to study at A-level. The work you do at GCSE will lay the foundations for the work in the Sixth Form. Talk to your subject teachers to discuss whether they think it would be suitable for you to study their subject in the Sixth Form.

Do you have a career/university course in mind?

Some degree courses specify subjects that should be taken in the Sixth Form. For example, to study Medicine you will need to secure a high grade in A-Level Chemistry. Think carefully about what you may want to do after Sixth Form and then look to see if you are required to have certain subjects. If you do not yet know what you want to do after Sixth Form,

then opting for a range of subjects will help keep your options open. You will, of course, have to ensure you meet the entry requirements for these courses.

What subjects will be most useful and will give you the best chance of success?

As mentioned above, it might be that you want to keep your options open for when you make decisions about life after Sixth Form. Think carefully about the combinations of subjects you are studying too. Russell Group universities have published a guide of what they call 'facilitating subjects', which are subjects that they think will help prepare students for the demands of an undergraduate course. These subjects include: English Literature, History, Modern Foreign Languages, Geography, Maths, Further Maths, Biology, Chemistry and Physics. However, you can secure a place at leading universities having not studied these subjects. It is important to get a balance between the subjects you enjoy, have the best chance to succeed in, and that will be relevant to you for the next stage of your life.

Who can you talk to about your options?

All students in Year 11 at St Mary's will complete an online form via Microsoft Teams to outline their future plans, including the Sixth Form options they are currently interested in studying next year. Students will then have the opportunity to discuss their options with a member of the Key Stage 4 Pastoral Team or the Sixth Form Pastoral Team in a dedicated CEIAG interview. They will discuss with you, and help guide you, to choose the most appropriate options and pathways. Students also have the opportunity of arranging an appointment with our careers advisor. Remember, discussing your options with subject teachers will also help you to get a good idea of what is involved in a subject in the Sixth Form and your suitability for studying different courses.

Extra-Curricular

Drama and Music

Sixth Form students enjoy taking part in drama and music productions including the yearly whole school production. We have many talented musicians in our student body and there are also various opportunities to take part in the orchestra and the school choir, whilst also participating in whole school concerts.

Student Leadership Scheme

All Sixth Form students participate in the Student Leadership Scheme completing weekly activities. As the most senior students in the school, Sixth Form students are expected to act as positive role models for all other students in the school community guiding them both academically and pastorally. Students are entrusted with leadership roles in various aspects of school life, with activities such as running extra-curricular activities, acting as classroom assistants, supporting at school events and assisting the duty staff. It is of paramount importance that Sixth Form students are visible in all aspects of day-to-day school life to assist and enrich the experience of other students whilst preparing them for leading others in their future lives.



Sixth Form Sport

There are many opportunities to develop sporting interests at St Mary's. We currently have a very successful basketball team, as well as netball and football teams. Sixth Form students have been very keen, in the past couple of years, to also train and mentor teams in the younger year groups of the school. Not only do we offer a range of team sports, but students also have access to a modern, state-of-the-art gym. Students who have a keen interest in sport and fitness are encouraged to share their expertise by taking on a Sports Leader role. With this responsibility, students help other students as well as staff to use the gym and also help run sporting activities, such as Running Club and Handball Club, which involve students from the Main School. Students who are talented in sport and who compete at a high level are supported by the Sixth Form to ensure they can adequately train for this sport whilst studying their Sixth Form subjects.



Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award

We are pleased to be able to offer students the opportunity to pursue the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award. This well recognised and highly valued award offers students the chance to develop a variety of life skills. They will take part in voluntary work, sport, and expeditions, and it has proven extremely popular since its introduction to the Sixth Form.

Sixth Form Leadership Team

Sixth Form students are also encouraged to become involved in leadership, by taking on key roles and responsibilities within school. This includes students being elected to our Sixth Form Leadership Team. The Sixth Form Leadership Team is a visible and respected group of students whose presence can be seen across a huge variety of school events. Students are asked to apply for a position on the Sixth Form Leadership Team in Year 12 and fulfil their responsibilities until they must focus on their preparations for their examinations at the end of Year 13. Students can hold various roles in different committees on the team, in key areas of school life such as Academics, Mental Health, Charity, Inclusion/Diversity and the Environment.



Sixth Form Dress Code

We are extremely proud of the way in which our Sixth Form students present themselves, both in school and more widely. Our dress code ensures that our Sixth Form students lead by example in school, as mature young adults who are role models for our younger students. Our Sixth Form dress code helps to create a purposeful, academic environment in which our students are able to achieve highly, both academically and holistically. The dress code also helps to prepare our students for the world of work, where the vast majority of professional workplaces expect such attire. Students take great pride in their appearance and the dress code standards at St Mary's are excellent. We appreciate the support of parents and carers in ensuring that students always follow the dress code below, without exception.



Dress Code

- Plain, dark smart tailored/suit trousers.
 - Plain, dark suit jacket or blazer jacket.
 - Plain formal shirt with collar in white, black, grey, blue, or cream.
 - Tie.
- OR**
- Plain, dark smart tailored/suit trousers or skirt, or plain, dark knee length dress.
 - No skirts or dresses higher than 2 inches above the knee.
 - Plain, dark suit jacket or blazer jacket.
 - Plain formal shirt or blouse with traditional collar in white, black, grey, blue, or cream.
 - Neat, sensible hairstyles only. No 'extreme' haircuts.
 - Natural hair colour only.
 - A student who, for religious reasons, wears a head covering must ensure that it is a dark colour.
 - Only one pair of stud earrings. No other piercings.
 - Only one ring and a wristwatch is allowed.
 - Plain, dark ankle socks or plain, dark or natural tights only.
 - Make-up must be discreet and natural.
 - Dark shoes.

International Links

Our Catholic ethos welcomes students from all faiths, nationalities and backgrounds, and, in order to further the international dimension of our school, we have developed many exciting and successful links abroad. Sixth Form students have visited destinations such as the Philippines, Zambia, Peru and India, where they have helped local communities by working on charity projects that have been made possible through tremendous fund-raising efforts.



In July 2019, nineteen Year 12 students travelled to Zambia to work on a life-changing expedition project for the local community of Sinazongwe. During the expedition, students built a chicken coop and food storage building for Chisyabulungu Community School. The eggs are sold to the local villagers, with the profit being spent on educational resources for the school. Being able to buy the chicken feed in bulk and store this on site will save them money, which can then be spent on resources for the students too. As well as the main building project, students taught English and Maths to a wide range of age groups and organised a Sports Day for the local children. In the months leading up to the expedition, students organised and participated in a variety of fundraising events, both in school and

at home, to pay for this experience. This experience, of course, was such a fantastic opportunity for St Mary's students to be involved in as they were, quite literally, ensuring the continued education of children in Zambia. Once the project was over, students visited the incredible Victoria Falls, and crossed the border to Botswana to see the wildlife at Chobe National Park. Even though the living conditions were extremely difficult, the students were absolutely incredible, and all the teachers involved could not speak more highly of the positive attitude and humble outlook that they showed throughout the trip.



Our Sixth Form students have benefitted hugely from these visits, gaining an array of life-changing experiences as well as enhancing their CVs in readiness for their applications to university. They have also been provided with an invaluable insight into the lives of people who are far less fortunate than themselves. Whilst all educational visits were paused due to travel restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, planning for our next expedition to Zambia is well-underway and will take place in July 2024. We will then continue to have an annual expedition.



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