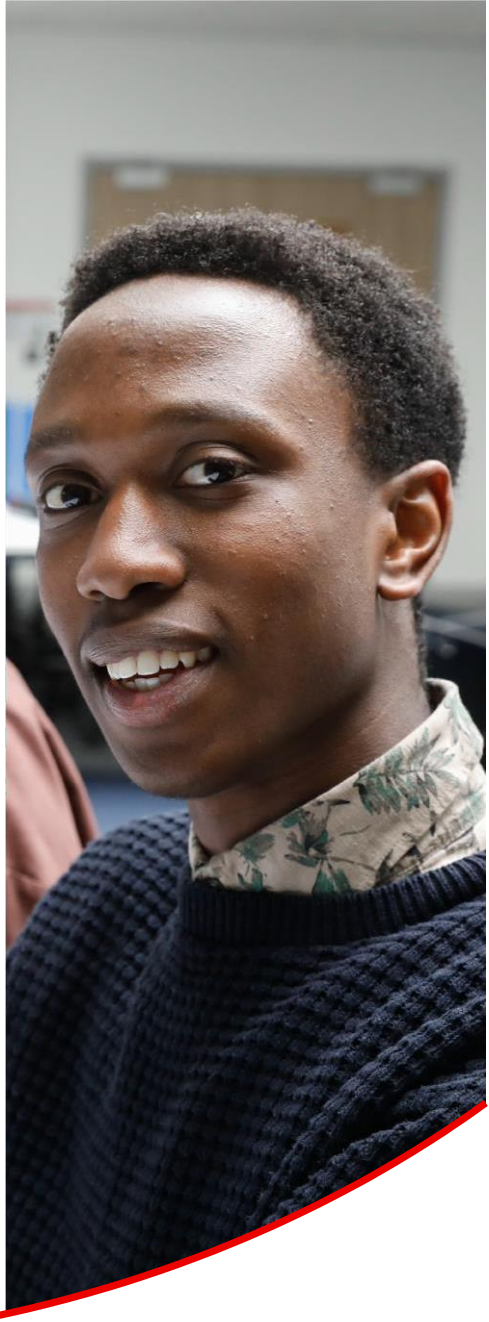

DIDSBURY
SIXTH FORM

Student Handbook
2026-2027

OPEN THE DOOR TO THE FUTURE OF YOUR CHOICE

Welcome

Firstly, we'd like to welcome you to Didsbury Sixth Form, an **OFSTED 'Outstanding'** *(Jan 2024)* Laurus Trust Sixth form. We are delighted that you have chosen to continue your studies with us and look forward to supporting you throughout your A Level journey. By making this choice, you have demonstrated that you share our high expectations and understand what you need to do to succeed academically and grow as an individual. We are looking forward to working with you to make sure that your time in the Sixth Form is successful, rewarding and enjoyable.

This handbook is designed to explain our expectations and what we offer to support you on your journey through the Sixth Form. We want you to succeed in all contexts that you find yourself in so it is only fair that we outline exactly what being a Didsbury Sixth Former is like. Whilst we have a driving vision and an unwavering core of values, we do want your input and trust that you will work with us to ensure that Didsbury Sixth Form always remains an inclusive, academic, successful and enjoyable place to be.

The information in this handbook is structured around the three attitudes that staff and students at the Laurus Trust are. We have **uncompromising standards**. We are **unashamedly academic**. We are **unapologetically aspirational**. Hopefully, you will find that the order of the content is somewhat chronological and gives you some comfort in the knowledge of what to expect when you start with us in September.

Miss. G Clark

Director of Sixth Form

Leadership and Management

Head of School	**Ms K. Houghton**
Deputy Headteacher and Safeguarding Lead	**Mrs A.Clayton**
Head of Pastoral Care	**Mrs H. Chick**

Sixth Form

Director of Sixth Form	**Miss. G Clark**
Assistant Director of Sixth Form	**Mr J. Manning**
Assistant Director of Sixth Form	**Mr N. Yates**
Head of Year 12 and 13	**Mrs D. Flowers**
Academic Services Manager	**Mrs J. Roberts**
Sixth Form Reception	**Mrs A. Clarke**

Personal Tutor Team

Year 12

12AS	**Miss A.Stanley**
12CB	**Miss C. Butler**
12CM	**Mr C. McLagan**
12EV	**Ms E. Vitija**

Year 13

13CH	**Miss C. Howman**
13HB	**Mrs H. Billson**
13HW	**Miss H. Wilson**
13LV	**Ms L. Victoria**

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Term Dates

To succeed in your A Levels at Didsbury Sixth Form, it is paramount that you attend. Missing just one lesson can cause undue stress as you try to catch-up and understand missed content. Please be kind to yourself.

Main Term Dates 2026-2027		
Autumn Term	Tuesday 1st September*	Friday 18th December
Spring Term	Monday 4th January	Friday 2nd April
Summer Term	Monday 19th April	Thursday 15th July

Mid Term Holidays 2026-2027		
Autumn Half Term	Monday 26th October	Friday 30th October
Spring Half Term	Monday 15th February	Friday 19th February
Summer Half Term	Monday 31st May	Friday 4th June

In-service Days 2026-2027	
Autumn Term	Tuesday 1st September Friday 23rd October Monday 30th November
Summer Term	Friday 25th June** Thursday 15th July

Public Holidays 2025-2026	
Good Friday	Friday 26th March
Easter Monday	Monday 29th March
May Day	Monday 3rd May
Spring Bank Holiday	Monday 31st May

*** Wednesday 2nd September - Year 7 and Sixth Form only**
****Examinations may take place on this date**

For Term Dates click here

The Working Day

We see A Level study as the equivalent to a full-time job. This is why Didsbury Sixth Formers will be at Sixth Form for Tutor Time every morning, work hard in all of their directed time and then can leave from 3:15pm – unless you wanted to do more work, of course!

All A Level options have 5 hours of contact time per week. Further Mathematics is an additional A Level so has 5 hours of contact time per week. If you have chosen Core Mathematics then there will be an additional 3 hours of contact time per week on top of your other three subject choices.

Below is an example timetable for a typical week at Didsbury Sixth Form, along with timings. This student has chosen Core Mathematics (3 hours) but has not chosen Further Mathematics.

Unit	Timings	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	08:20 – 08:45	Tutor Time	Forum	Forum Follow-Up	Tutor Time	Tutor Time
1	**08:45 – 09:40**	Laurus Launchpad	Option 2	Private Study	Core Maths	Option 3
2	**09:40 – 10:35**	Option 1	Core Maths	Option 3	Private Study	Option 3
	10:35 – 10:55	Break				
3	**10:55 – 11:50**	Private Study	Option 3	Option 2	Option 3	Private Study
4	**11:50 – 12:45**	Option 2	Private Study	Option 2	Elective	Option 1
	12:45 – 13:25	Lunch (You can leave site for lunch)				
5	**13:25 – 14:20**	Private Study	Option 1		Option 1	Option 2
6	**14:20 – 15:15**	Core Maths	Private Study		Option 1	Private Study
	15:30– 17:00	End of lessons Optional private study Additional Commitments				

Unashamedly Academic

You will be well versed in the fact that we are an academic sixth form. You'll be aware that you have 5 hours of contact time per week, per subject and taught by subject specialists who are passionate about their expertise. However, we go beyond the taught curriculum to ensure a thorough academic diet. Below, we outline a number of these additional offers as well as explain how we ensure that you stay on track in your pursuit for academia.

Laurus Launchpad

Once a week, all students have a 'Laurus Launchpad' unit together. This programme exists to empower you with the knowledge of how to thrive in the wider society both now and in the future. We do this through four strands:

1. **PSHE**

   The Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) strand addresses those wider life and social inclusion issues that all of us come across. It is essential that we have this education to ensure that we become upstanding, socially intelligent members of our society.

2. **Super Curricular**

   The ability to engage in academic conversation beyond our taught experiences is essential. We want to nurture your curiosity so that you ask the pertinent questions that expand your knowledge and understanding across many disciplines.

3. **Careers**

   New career opportunities are becoming available all of the time. It is true that the job you eventually do might not even exist yet! Therefore, we think that it is imperative that you hear from a broad range of industry experts about working in that given industry and the potential routes into these places of work. Through Career Briefings, we will hear the stories and advice from these industry leaders.

4. **Cultural Capital**

   In classrooms, we learn an astounding amount of knowledge – of that there is no question. However, some things about life and society are learned through experiences. In this strand, we aim to provide you with different experiences to broaden your social understanding and appreciation of how different cultures contribute to the global society that we live in.

EPQ

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is an offered Elective that, when completed, awards students with UCAS points (points that contribute towards university entry criteria). In essence, it is an independent project on a topic of your choice. It will be a project that lasts for the entirety of Year 12 and you will be given an EPQ supervisor to support you through the process. Our experience has been that some universities look very favorably on the EPQ with some university offers explicitly naming it as a requirement. All Year 12s are offered the opportunity to do the EPQ and it is an Elective that we endorse.

Apertura

Taking its name from the Latin meaning, ‘opportunities to open’, Apertura is a Laurus super-curricular programme designed to expose you to academic dialogue and further independent research to prepare you for applying to the world’s leading universities, including the Russell Group.

This additional commitment, open to all Year 12 students, sees you work in small groups with your supervisor to think critically and discuss a whole range of academic topics outside you’re a Level subjects. You will also attend lectures given by leading academics at the cutting edge of their fields, and you’ll get a further opportunity for independent research.

Academic Progress and Reporting

At Didsbury Sixth Form every student is given a target for each subject. These targets are informed by your overall performance at GCSE and by your performance in specific areas which link to your chosen A Levels.

We expect the very highest of standards in terms of academic achievement and as such set challenging aspirational targets. You will be assessed against these targets regularly throughout your time with us.

POTENTIAL + CHALLENGE = TARGET

Your performance in assessments, assignments, class-based work and prior attainment will be used to determine your projected grades for use on your UCAS form. Your progress will be monitored on a regular basis with your tutor being your first point of contact.

When we report about your progress, we give projected grades as well as an update on your Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills and Habits (KASH). Each of these categories is an essential (and equally important) component of what you, as an individual, bring to your studies and eventually your working life. In Year 12, the Life After Laurus programme will include some workshops designed to help you to work out where your strengths lie and what areas you might need to develop. When we report on your progress towards your targets, we will also report on how you are developing KASH in each of your subjects.

Changing Subjects

Most students will study three subjects at the start of Year 12.

It may be that, early in Year 12, you decide that one of your subjects was not a good choice for you. If this is the case, you must discuss this in the first instance with your subject teacher. If you then decide that you want to change from one subject to another, you must inform the Director of Sixth Form so that we can check:

- The entry criteria for your chosen subject and your GCSE grades
- The new subject fits into your timetable
- There is a space in the group
- You will cope with the new subject (in order to establish this, we will arrange a meeting with the teacher(s) of the subject you have selected at which you and they can ask questions and establish whether or not it is the right choice for you).

If everyone is in agreement that the new subject is an appropriate choice, then we will ask you to complete a form to be signed by your parents/carers.

You will not be allowed to change a subject after October half term. Doing this would generate a great deal of ‘catch up’ work and would compromise your performance in your new subject.

Uncompromising Standards

Logistics

We know that there are some fundamental logistical questions that you will have before you even step-foot into Didsbury Sixth Form as an official student. Hopefully, you will find some of this key information below:

Catering

We do have our own Refectory at Didsbury Sixth Form which serves food and drink from 9:30am every day. Our break and lunch offer includes (but is not limited to) paninis, soup, noodle bowls, dish of the day and salads. When there isn't a meal service, then there are snacks, fruit pots and hot drinks served up until 2pm. All meat is Halal and gluten free options are available. The catering is provided by Dolce who are keen for your input regarding the food offer and will explore suggestions to meet demand.

Payment of meals at Didsbury Sixth Form can be made through your identity card that has a pre-payment facility on it. Dolce also accepts payment from usual bank cards too.

At lunch time, you are free to leave the Sixth Form if you wish. Locally, there are cafes and shops that offer meal deals.

Sixth Form Study Spaces

There are three key areas where you can privately study. These are listed below:

***Silent Study Area*:** this is quite self-explanatory. This supervised room is equipped with desktop computers, plug sockets for your own laptops and desk space. You would use this space if you wanted a silent space to meet those deadlines or revise.

***Refectory*:** this is a more casual workspace. Again, there are tables to use and plug sockets, should you need to charge your laptop. It's a great space for group-work over a cup of tea.

***Roof Terrace*:** In the drier, warmer months, you can use the tables and facilities on the roof terrace to work peacefully outside. Again, it's a great space for group work or a more informal space to get things done.

Prayer Room

There will be a classroom available solely for prayer during break and lunch times.

Vehicles

Didsbury Sixth Form is in an amazing location – close to Manchester City Centre and great public transport links. This location, however, provides real logistical issues in terms of parking. We can't offer any on-site parking, unfortunately, and many of the local roads require a permit. Local residents are rightly concerned about the health and safety surrounding the current demand for parking so we would like to avoid

exacerbating this issue. Therefore, we strongly recommend the use of public transport.

Local transport routes and passes to Sixth Form can be found on our website (Travelling to Didsbury Sixth Form)

IT

Phones are permitted in the Sixth Form (but not in the high school). However, your phone must be turned off in lessons and put away. We also ask that no photos/videos of staff or students are taken in the Sixth Form without explicit consent to do so.

You can also bring in a laptop, if you wish. We do have desktops but if you would like to bring your laptop then you are welcome to. Use of laptops in lessons is in agreement between you and your teacher(s). Please be aware that you must follow our Acceptable Use of IT agreement (see appendix) when using laptops and desktop computers.

Attendance & Punctuality

We are passionate about seeing you do well in your A Level studies and will continue to do whatever it takes to support you in that. To see this come to fruition, however, requires firm boundaries around conduct, attendance and punctuality. To ensure that you have a positive experience of Sixth Form, we have outlined our stance on these three areas below.

If you are to achieve the grades that will open the doors to the future of your choice, then it is logical to conclude that attendance is vital. We see Didsbury Sixth Form as a workplace, where studying for A Levels is a full-time job. You can arrive from 07:30 for an 08:20 start and remain until the end of the day (15:15). We do not offer the option of attending only for timetabled lessons. Instead, Sixth Formers foster a culture of academia where private study is completed when there is no formalised contact time.

We understand, though, that sometimes life can get in the way. In this regard, we ask that appointments are made outside of working hours but if this is not possible, that an 'Absence Request Form' is completed. The Head of Year will review these and authorise as appropriate.

If you are too ill to attend Sixth Form, we ask that your parent/carer contact Didsbury Sixth Form before 08:30 to let us know (details can be found on the parent/carer section of our website). If we are not informed of your absence then we will get in touch with your parent/carer and may do a house visit to ensure that your whereabouts are known.

Where there is a concern regarding a student's attendance, a formal meeting will be held to discuss their attendance. Please be aware that all attendance data will remain on student's academic record.

Absences for medical reasons or due to sickness for more than five consecutive days will require medical evidence. Evidence may also be requested if there is an ongoing concern regarding a student's attendance.

You must not be absent from sixth form for any holiday, personal or family trip. Unsatisfactory levels of attendance will result in a discussion with a senior member of staff and a formal warning may be issued. If poor attendance becomes detrimental to your academic performance then a support plan will be created. If you not proactively engage with any support plan, we reserve the right to withdrawn your exam entry payment and/or ask you to leave Didsbury Sixth Form permanently.

Up to 1 days per academic year will be authorised for the purpose of observing a religious festival.

For further information, please see our Safeguarding Policy and our Attendance Policy.

Punctuality

Every minute of the Sixth Form day counts when you've only got two years to study for A Levels. Any time lost due to poor punctuality has a detrimental effect on both personal outcomes and the professional environment.

Like in the workplace, any lateness will be viewed as unprofessional. Where students are persistently late to school or lessons, any missed time will be made up in a detention afterschool on Wednesday. Attendance at these detentions is compulsory, and will escalate if a student does not attend, and if their punctuality remains a consistent concern. Punctuality to school and lessons is monitored closely by the Sixth Form Team and may result in a formal warning if there is no improvement.

Conduct

As we are sure you're starting to understand, we really value aspiration at Didsbury Sixth Form. By simply joining us you are also identifying yourself as having uncompromising standards, being unashamedly academic and unapologetically aspirational. Didsbury Sixth Formers take their education seriously. They value academic knowledge and respect other members of their community and wider world, recognising that they are a role model to the rest of our school community. Didsbury Sixth Formers do not tolerate behaviour choices of others that get in the way of this unwavering aspiration. As you enter early adulthood, there is an expectation that you have a growing control over your behaviour and social intelligence that allows you to see the impacts of both good and poor behaviour choices on others. Whilst we are very quick to praise positive choices, we are also quick to address negative choices.

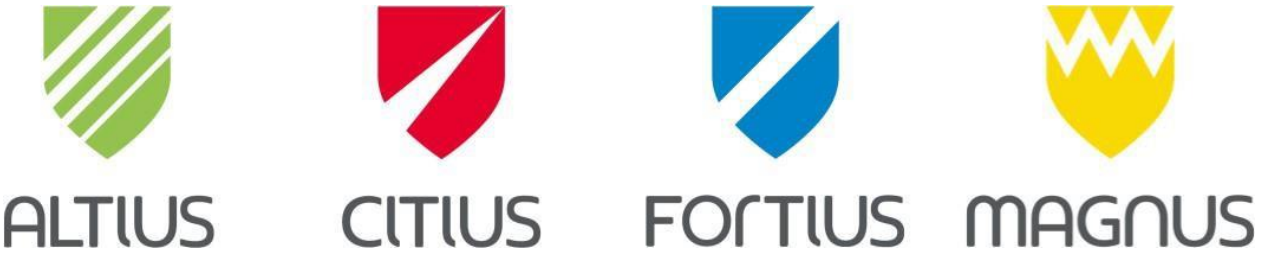
We remain resolute in our responsibility in teaching students about behaviour. We are neglecting our duty if we do not address behaviours that would cause you difficulties in the wider world and employment. Poor behaviour is something that we take a very firm stance on and if this behaviour becomes routine, despite interventions put in place, then a student will be asked to leave Didsbury Sixth Form permanently.

As a Didsbury Sixth Former, you will be seen as a role model to the wider school community in terms of your conduct and approach to work and others. This is why every student at Didsbury Sixth Form will contribute to the Leadership and Service cornerstone. This takes place during one Tutor Time per week and can take many forms. You may be asked to support younger students with their numeracy or literacy.

Or assist a subject that you study in their interventions with GCSE students. You may also be a familiar face for somebody: someone to talk to in what can be a daunting move to high school for some. Understanding your role as a member of a wider community is essential, as is understanding and respecting the influence that you can have.

The House System

You will also be assigned to one of the school's Houses:



Through the Houses, we award both the day-to-day achievements as well as the larger milestones. There are a number of social events where we come together to celebrate our successes and these will be planned alongside you so that there is an understanding of what rewards you actually appreciate. Don't worry though, you can still earn those coveted House Points!

Our Dress Code

Our dress code is designed to both personally embody and publicly reflect the high expectations and professional ethos of the school.

Respect, positive relationships with others and establishing oneself as a member of the Sixth Form will initially be achieved through your appearance and presentation as a positive role model for others.

As a guide, when deciding how to dress, always aim to present yourself as you would for an interview at a top university or professional role in a company. For some trips, e.g. Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, students will be permitted to wear non-business dress.

Failure to adhere to the dress code may result in you being sent home to correct this.

For further details on our dress code click here.

UCL
CAMBRIDGE
LSE
WARWICK

Unapologetically Aspirational

The Cornerstones

Academic success is essential to access future opportunities. However, academic success alone is usually not enough. We also need to be open to a range of different experiences, remain curious and develop ourselves holistically. This is where our 4 Cornerstones come in.

Academic Aspiration

This emulates our Unashamedly Academic approach where everybody in the Laurus Trust aspires to become more knowledgeable and respects the power of knowledge.

Culture, Creativity & Rhetoric

We must appreciate that great writing gives us access to ideas which challenge our thinking; that the power of language gives us the opportunity to make our voice heard and present our own ideas with courage, conviction and impact; that the Arts open up worlds which we might not otherwise inhabit. You will be offered opportunities to discover new talents and interests and develop existing ones.

Competition & Physical Endeavour

Physical activity and competition are vital to our holistic development as it fosters our physical, social and emotional health. Approaching these opportunities with optimism and vitality and relishing the opportunity allows us the understand the importance of hard work and commitment.

Leadership & Service

Individuality, diversity and having the confidence to think for yourself are of great importance. However, we must also emphasise the importance of tolerance, teamwork and collective responsibility. We place great importance on both leadership and participation and encourage you to take on roles of responsibility and engage in Sixth Form, whole-school and House activities. By the time you leave us, we want you to have that true sense of self-worth which will enable you to make wise choices, stand up for what is right and what you believe in and, in doing so, be of value to society.

The Cornerstones continued…

We support you in engaging with all four cornerstones mainly through our Elective programme. However, Laurus Launchpad will also provide experiences that broaden your outlook and understanding of the world to help you develop a holistic, evaluative perspective.

Electives

As a Didsbury Sixth Former, you will participate in Electives: enrichment that aims to broaden your experiences. These are built into your weekly timetable and are therefore a compulsory offer because, whilst we know that outstanding grades might get you to interview, it is your wider experiences that see you flourish once you've crossed the threshold.

Our different Electives contribute to our four cornerstones. We want our Sixth Fomers to have experiences from each of these cornerstones and understand their wider importance. You will be given a booklet outlining the wide range of Electives that we are offering in that given term. We will encourage you to either try something new or enroll in an Elective that further supports your future aspirations. If you have a particular idea for an Elective that we are not offering, then please do have a conversation with us. If we can run it, we will!

Tutor Time

You will have Tutor Time every morning at 08:20. Attendance at Tutor Time is compulsory as they are part of our wider A Level curriculum, designed to support you in achieving your high aspirations. Each week, you will have one Tutor Time dedicated to the following areas: Forum; Forum follow-up; Leadership & Service; Culture, Creativity & Rhetoric; Academic Aspiration.

Forum

This is once a week where all of the year group get together during Tutor Time. It is a space designed for introducing sometimes problematic stimuli that will be discussed and debated in an organised, respectful and healthy manner. The purpose of this is to expose you to the world of healthy debate in a larger forum and empower your use of voice in an effective way.

Forum Follow-up

Most of the time, 20 minutes will not be enough to discuss the topic in Forum. This Tutor Time will allow the debate to continue in an equally safe, respectful space within your Tutor Group.

Leadership & Service

Seeing ourselves as part of a wider community is of vital importance. This is why we ask you to dedicate some time every week to volunteering. This can be as a mentor to some of our high school students, designing and creating charitable occasions or organising and preparing for upcoming Sixth Form events. We can provide some of these opportunities but we also encourage you to be proactive in how you can lead and serve in our community.

Culture, Creativity & Rhetoric

During this Tutor Time, you will read and discuss current issues in society and the wider world. You will also further hone your rhetoric and oracy skills so that you become powerful orators. Similarly, this Tutor Time will be spent exploring different cultures and celebrating them to ensure that we remain an inclusive Sixth Form community.

Academic Aspiration

Certainly, as you get closer to exams and university applications, there will be Tutor Times dedicated to improving your knowledge around these processes and events. You will also have one-to-one conversations with your Tutor about your academic progress, discussing strengths, areas of development and how we might be able to support you further.

Leadership Opportunities in the Sixth Form

Your voice is of vital importance. As a Sixth Form, we are always striving for betterment and we cannot do that alone. Therefore, whilst all Sixth Formers deserve to have their voice heard, we have more formal leadership roles to channel those voices in a more productive manner. When you join us in September, we will be advertising for the following positions:

Sixth Form Student Body

The Sixth Form student 'leadership team', if you will. This will be a small number of students who regularly meet to discuss successes and areas of development for the Sixth Form. They are representatives of and for the wider student body and will lead on new initiatives where possible.

We will also be asking members of the sixth form to apply to be a **Laurus Ambassador.**

This a larger group of students who will represent Didsbury Sixth Form and the Laurus Trust at more formal events.

There will be an application process for the above roles which will be advertised in the first Half Term of Year 12.

Wellbeing

A Level study is challenging and, by choosing to come to Didsbury Sixth Form, you are inevitably an aspirational young person. Consequently, and naturally, these pressures come with a certain level of stress. However, the management of these pressures is fundamental and sometimes we need support in this to ensure that we do not become overwhelmed.

Being part of Didsbury High School and the Laurus Trust means that Didsbury Sixth Form has access to a wealth of knowledge and expertise in managing any pastoral issue that may arise. Below is a list outlining some of the support measures in place however this is by no means exhaustive:

1. **Tutor**

   You will see your Tutor every morning across the two years during Tutor Time. They can assist you in any concerns or worries that you may have or support you in getting help from the most appropriate person.

2. **Head of Year**

   The Sixth Form has a non-teaching Head of Year who is on hand to deal with any issues that may arise. This person's sole responsibility is the safety and care of you and they belong to the wider school's pastoral team.

3. **Academic progress support**

   Throughout the year the sixth form team work closely with subject teachers, students reports to understand how each of our students are progressing. Where necessary, particularly when you are finding studies difficult, they will meet with you to help create a plan of action to get things back on track.

4. **Life After Laurus supervisor**

   In the spring term of Y12, students will be assigned to a specific Life After Laurus supervisor. Here, you will receive tailored support to help you choose your next steps including university courses and degree apprenticeships at the right institution for you, as well as personalised feedback and support on your application.

5. **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

   Didsbury High School and Sixth Form has two Designated Safeguarding Leads who orchestrate and lead on the entire pastoral support across the high school and sixth form. Like with the Head of Year, they may step-in to support you in particular circumstances.

6. **Other agencies**

   Didsbury Sixth Form has connections with lots of other companies and agencies that can support with student wellbeing. This ranges from a text service to counselling, from a Pilates / Mindfulness offer to gym access. We care about you and if we think that an outside agency is necessary, then we can make those recommendations.

It is important to note that your safety and wellbeing is a priority for all staff who work in education. Therefore, staff may raise concerns about you to other relevant staff members if they are worried in any way. This is the right thing to do and is always with your best interest in mind. Parents / Carers will also be contacted when necessary but you will be made aware if this happens. It is also worth reiterating that the above is not an exhaustive list of support and that you are heavily encouraged to speak to any staff member that you feel comfortable. They will then pass that on to the relevant person on your behalf. It is a family at Didsbury Sixth Form and we all look out for each other.

Financial Support

The 16-19 Student Bursary

Bursary for students in vulnerable groups

A bursary for students in vulnerable groups of up to £1200 is available to students who meet the criteria below. To qualify for this bursary award, you must be either:

- in care or a care leaver
- in receipt of Income Support (or Universal Credit) in your own right
- in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (or Universal Credit) and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in your own right.

Discretionary Bursary

We welcome applications for the Discretionary Bursary award from students whose household income is below £35,000 per year. The Discretionary Bursary Award is to help you with any education-related costs that may arise during the school year, including essentials like a meal during the day or transport to the Sixth Form. Or you may need extra help to buy additional books, clothing or equipment for your course, or to pay for educational visits.

We may also look to provide support through the Discretionary Bursary fund to students who are not automatically eligible for an award but who face exceptional circumstances during the academic year which impact on their ability to participate in full time education. Proof of income or hardship will be asked for and awards are dependent upon available funds.

Applications should be explicit in outlining the exact expense details. Where possible the discretionary bursary will be provided in the form of equipment or services e.g., travel tickets etc. Only in exceptional cases will money be provided for expenses. Payments to support additional educational expenses will be made at the point of approval of application.

Funding may be withdrawn if you do not attend regularly or do not adhere to the Learning Contract. (A reference copy can be found at the back of this booklet).

There is further information about the 16-19 Bursary Fund at the back of this booklet. Application forms and expense claim forms can be obtained from Mrs Roberts in the Sixth Form Office or via our website here.

Free School Meals

The eligibility criteria for Free School Meals is changing from September 2026.

Free school meal provision is being expanded to all households in receipt of Universal Credit regardless of household earnings, meaning more families may become eligible for free school meals.

For students currently in receipt of free school meals, transitional protections that have been in place since April 2018 as part of The Universal Credit roll out are ending**. In order for students to continue to receive free school meals from September your eligibility must be rechecked.**

Your child is eligible to receive free school meals if you're in receipt of one of the following

benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Meet the criteria set for families with no recourse to public funds

To check and confirm your child's eligibility for Free School Meals please follow **this link** to submit an application. You will need your National Insurance number or National Asylum Support Service reference number to do this and applications submitted now will be valid for September. **Please note, from September free school meals will only be provided following a successful application.**

The 16 – 19 Bursary Fund: Your questions answered

What is the 16-19 Bursary Fund?

The Government has set aside some money for schools, colleges, training providers and local authorities to allocate to young people who need financial support to stay on in further education or training. This is called the 16-19 Bursary Fund. There are two types of bursaries, vulnerable student bursaries and discretionary bursaries.

Bursary for students in vulnerable groups

A bursary for students in vulnerable groups of up to £1200 is available to students who meet the criteria below. To qualify for this bursary award, a **student** must be either:

- in care or a care leaver
- in receipt of Income Support (or Universal Credit) in your own right
- in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (or Universal Credit) and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in your own right

Discretionary Bursary

We welcome applications for the Discretionary Bursary award from students whose **household income is below £35,000** per year. The Discretionary Bursary Award is to help students with expenditure such as transport costs, equipment and trips.

Funding may be withdrawn for students who fail to attend regularly.

We may also look to provide support through the Discretionary Bursary fund to students who are not automatically eligible for an award but who face exceptional circumstances during the academic year which impact on their ability to participate in full time education. Proof of income or hardship will be asked for and awards are dependent upon available funds.

Applications should be explicit in outlining the exact expense details. Where possible the discretionary bursary will be provided in the form of equipment or services e.g., travel tickets etc. Only in exceptional cases will money be provided for expenses. Payments to support additional educational expenses will be made at the point of approval of application.

Availability of Funding

The Sixth Form will help as many students as possible with the funding available but will prioritise those in most need. Didsbury Sixth Form has a Bursary Appeals Panel to consider appeals relating to the award or administration of 16-19 bursaries.

Who can apply?

To apply for a bursary, you must be aged between 16 and 19 and in full-time or part-time further education or training. It could help you with any education-related costs that may arise during the school year, including essentials like a meal during the day or transport to the Sixth Form. Or you may need extra help to buy additional books, clothing or equipment for your course, or pay for educational visits.

How do I apply?

To apply for a bursary, you must complete an application form either electronically or request a paper application form and return it with all the relevant documentation.

Where do I send my application?

Return your completed application form and all required documentation to Didsbury Sixth Form, 4 The Avenue, Didsbury, M20 2ET or via email to sixthform@didsburyhighschool.org.uk

What do I include?

Please include with your application form photocopies of your parents/carers current P60 or tax return if self-employed, pension income. All documentation for universal credit or working tax credit and child tax credit. All documentation for housing benefit, council tax benefit, job seekers allowance, disability living allowance and any other household income you may be in receipt of. Failure to send all the necessary evidence will result in your application being delayed. Please remember to sign the form on completion.

How will my bursary be paid?

Where possible the discretionary bursary will be provided in the form of equipment or services e.g. travel tickets etc. Only in exceptional cases will money be provided for expenses. Payments to support additional educational expenses will be made at the point of approval of application.

Can the Sixth Form tell me what to spend my bursary on?

Yes, your bursary is to help pay for things you really need to stay on at Sixth Form. We can insist that your bursary is spent on travel costs, meals during the day or equipment for your courses.

Can I have help with the cost of trips or equipment?

Dependent on the number of successful applications and monies available we would like to be able to help students with some of the cost of essential trips.

Can the Sixth Form stop my bursary payments?

Yes. You will be asked to sign a bursary contract which details the conditions under which your bursary will be paid. Typically, these conditions will include attendance, lateness, behaviour, medical appointments and sickness.

If I can't attend Sixth Form because of illness, medical appointments or authorised absences will I still receive my bursary?

A parent or carer will need to phone the Sixth Form on 0161 507 5600 every day you are absent due to illness to authorise your sickness, or medical appointments. Holidays are not authorised absences.

Employment and Part Time jobs

We know that many of you will have a part time job at the weekends or during holiday times, but it is extremely important that you do not prioritise work above your Sixth Form studies and your results. You should also think very carefully about whether or not your weekend or holiday work may be preventing you from undertaking voluntary work experience which would greatly enhance your chances of studying a particular subject at university. In particular, if you intend to apply for a place to study dentistry, medicine or veterinary science, you must try to gain as much appropriate work experience as you can. In addition to direct experience, it is advisable to become involved in the wider community in order to show that you can work with a wide range of people in a caring environment. For medics and dentists, work in a nursing home for the elderly or disabled, a nursery or even a charity shop is very valuable. Evidence of a sustained commitment will be essential and so you should avoid taking a part time job which prevents you from gaining experience which will ultimately be of far more value to you.

Our advice is that you should not be working for more than 8 hours per week in a part time job.

Life After Laurus

The Life After Laurus programme will provide you with opportunities to develop skills which are highly valued by universities. If you aspire to attend a prestigious university or get a top job, then you'll need to commit to developing these skills and more. You'll have space on your timetable for autonomous, independent study, but it's not enough to have top A Level grades. We don't just want you to be successful in our Sixth Form, we want you to be successful when you leave us. We want you to be able to compete against the best – because we expect you to be the best. And we believe that you are. There will be a comprehensive package of timetabled activities, workshops and events. You will also be able to attend additional supplementary activities at other times of the year. Examples of the various activities, workshops and events are:

- Career briefings with local practitioners (e.g. from law firms, medical practices, accountancy companies, engineering firms and other professions you might be interested in)
- Careers advice
- Visiting speakers from universities
- Work Experience
- Selecting an appropriate university and course
- Degree Apprenticeships
- Writing a personal statement
- Preparing for Oxbridge entrance
- Preparing for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science entrance
- Interview and presentation techniques
- Preparing for university life
- Student finance

As Life After Laurus suggests, once you are a Laureate, you will always be a Laureate. Our alumni network, the Old Laureates, is a way for you to stay connected with other Old Laureates (and us!) at every stage of your future career.

Post-18 Pathways

Clearly, as you start to consider applying to universities and degree apprenticeships, you will want to attend events that will help you to make your future choices such as University Open Days or degree apprenticeship events. This is a necessary thing to do and you are encouraged to attend. We permit attendance of **up to three** days in total on across your two years of study. Most universities or degree apprenticeships now have Open Days during the weekend which is an opportune time to go. If an alternative Open Day is available during the weekend, permission to miss a day of lessons will also not be given.

If you choose to go to an event during a week day, then you must submit an Absence Request Form and have it approved by parents/carers as well as your Head of Year. This must be submitted at least three days before the event. Failure to submit this form in time will result in the absence being unauthorised. The sixth form team will then determine if the absence is authorised.

Students, particularly those without UK residency, are advised to research post-18 funding eligibility prior to enrolment. Guidance is available via GOV.UK (Check what undergraduate student finance you can apply for depending on your nationality and residency) and UKCISA (Funding for international students).

Afterword

We know that you have high aspirations and that you value an outstanding education. This is what makes Didsbury Sixth Form so exciting because we know that we can give you that outstanding education and support you in working towards those high aspirations. Didsbury Sixth Form is based around the promise that we are unashamedly academic, unapologetically aspirational and that we have uncompromising standards. Everything that we do is considered and seeks to be the best so that you can get the grades and nurture the qualities that opens the doors to the future of your choice.

However, we cannot do that alone. The Sixth Form culture is of paramount importance and the community that is created here must be one of security, inclusion and aspiration. Therefore, your active involvement in the Sixth form (and high school) community is essential. Your voice must be heard and you must see the power of your voice in influencing the world around you. People will look up to you as role models and you must learn to understand the significance of that position. You will eventually leave Didsbury Sixth Form and become an 'Old Laureate', ensuring that you always belong to that Laurus Trust community which is something to be especially proud of.

Appendix

i. Home School Agreement

ii. Sixth Form Leaning Contract

iii. Student Responsible Use Agreement for ICT

Note: These are for reference only, a digital copy will be avaliable on the MCAS portal to sign.

Laurus Trust Secondary Schools

Home School Agreement

This agreement sets out what the School, the Student and Parent/Carers will do to ensure that your child has the opportunity to achieve the highest possible educational standards and benefits from the opportunities available at their school. By signing this agreement you will indicate that you agree to support this partnership with your child and the staff at your child's school.

All admissions, other than Year 7 intake, will require a meeting with a senior member of staff. At this meeting this agreement must be signed by all parties. The Staff and Governors of your child's school will:

- Provide a broad, balanced and flexible curriculum which will challenge your child to achieve their potential;
- Ensure that teaching addresses your child's needs, progress will be regularly checked and where additional needs are identified these will be quickly addressed;
- Insist on high standards of behaviour and respect for other people and the environment;
- Ensure that through our pastoral system the welfare of your child is paramount and that appropriate communication is made where we have concerns;
- Provide a safe and secure environment at school;
- Provide many opportunities, including sport and cultural activities, for your child to succeed;
- Reward your child for success in the many different areas of school life;
- Provide you with a report of progress each term which will include information about attainment, effort, attendance and assessment results;
- Arrange one meeting a year for discussion between parents/carers and teachers regarding the progress being made by your child;
- Adhere to and follow Local Authority Safeguarding Procedures

Parent/Carer

As the parent/carer of my child I acknowledge and understand that:

- The main responsibility for my child's education rests with me by law;
- If my child fails to maintain an excellent attendance record the school will take appropriate action;
- I will attend meetings in school, if required, to discuss the progress and welfare of my child;
- The school will follow Local Authority directions regarding matters of safeguarding.

Furthermore, **I undertake** to do the following to the best of my ability:

- Give my full support to the school, supporting all sanctions that the school issues to my child, including detentions;
- Ensure that my child goes to school regularly, on time and properly equipped;
- Ensure the school's policies and guidelines for behaviour and uniform are met;
- Attend all parents' evenings and information evenings at the school;
- Read reports sent by the school and take appropriate action;
- Provide suitable conditions and support for my child's Preparation, Practice and Retrieval (PP& R);
- Make the school aware of any concerns or problems that might affect my child's work or behaviour.

I acknowledge that:

- Attendance is a vital component of a student's academic success. I will not take my child/children on holiday during term time. I accept that school will only authorise holidays in term time in the most exceptional of circumstances e.g. bereavement, immediate family wedding. The school will normally inform Education Welfare Services and issue Education Penalty Notices if more than 10 sessions are missed.

  Also, from September 2015, we have been informed that children with attendance below 90% will be classed as having persistent absence; this will mean they will be closely monitored by the school, the Local Authority and the Department for Education.

AGREEMENT

The Student

I agree to:

- Behave well in class and not disrupt the learning of other students;
- Accept sanctions issued, including detentions;
- Actively engage in all aspects of school life to maximise my learning;
- Behave in an appropriate manner at all times during the school day, including the journeys to and from school;
- Arrive at school and all lessons on time;
- Aim for 100% attendance;
- Wear full school uniform correctly, details of which are in my journal;
- Bring all the equipment I need each day;
- Complete all my class work and Preparation, Practice and Retrieval (PP& R) on time and to the best of my ability;
- Be polite and helpful to others both in face to face situations and via electronic communication;
- Respect the school environment.

Sixth Form Learning Contract

The Sixth Form Learning Contract outlines the expectations and responsibilities of everyone involved in post 16 education in the school. A reference copy can be found below:-

Didsbury Sixth Form Learning Contract

The Sixth Form Learning Contract is an opportunity to remind all the stakeholders in a student's education what their individual and collective responsibilities are (the stakeholders being ourselves/the school, parents/carers and the students themselves). It is essential that everyone does their best to ensure their responsibilities are met; this will enable every student to develop their full potential, both academically and as young adults.

Name of Student: _____

Parents/Carers: I/we will:

- Discuss with my child their work in school, providing support as necessary and appropriate.
- Keep in contact with school concerning my child's progress and welfare and keep the school informed of all relevant and current issues which may impact on progress/welfare.
- Support the school with regard to its policies on dress code, punctuality, attendance in Sixth Form and to lessons and the electives programme, and engagement with the Life After Laurus programme.
- Encourage my child to take part in wider Sixth Form life through Apertura, Trips/visits and Societies.
- Not take family holidays during term time.
- Encourage personal responsibility and learning independence.
- Acknowledge and understand that the school will follow Local Authority directions regarding matters of safeguarding.
- Acknowledge and adhere to the points set out in the Laurus Trust's Home School Agreement.

School: We will:

- Provide, through outstanding teaching, appropriate opportunities for students to develop further their knowledge and skills and to fulfil their academic potential.
- Provide guidance about course options.
- Provide opportunities for students to contribute to the life of the school as a whole.
- Provide enrichment opportunities.
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment.
- Listen, and respond appropriately, to the 'student voice' – particularly via the House Leaders and Sixth Form Cabinet.
- Provide support and guidance in relation to progression beyond the Sixth Form into higher education, work-based training or employment.
- Ensure the Sixth Form team provide a service which is supportive of a student's academic progress and personal welfare, providing access to additional outside support and relevant agencies where appropriate.
- Adhere to and follow Local Authority Safeguarding Procedures.

Student: I will:

- Exercise personal responsibility and work co-operatively with staff in pursuit of a positive Sixth Form culture.
- Observe and abide by the requirements of the Sixth Form dress code.
- Wear an identity badge at all times around school.
- Contribute to the 'life' of the school as a whole.
- Accept the need to act as an appropriate role model for students in Years 7 to 11.
- Attend formtime and assemblies as required.
- Be an active part of the student body and take part in activities such as Apertura and Club and Societies.
- Attend all lessons unless there is a genuine reason for absence.
- Meet all deadlines for all work set, and adhere to department deadlines and policies regarding assessed work.
- Not take annual holidays (including music festivals) during term time.
- Keep a sensible limit on the amount of time spent on part-time employment.
- Inform Sixth Form of absence by completing an Absence Request Form.
- Be prepared to use study periods to undertake private study.
- Use the Study Centre and other private study facilities in an appropriate manner.
- Treat the premises with respect.
- Be respectful of the rights of local residents, in respect of litter and noise and parking near school.
- Follow general Sixth Form rules and procedures.
- Work hard to achieve my potential.
- Acknowledge and adhere to the points set out in the Laurus Trust's Home School Agreement.

Persistent failure on the part of a student to comply with the learning contract in areas which are having a detrimental effect on the learning of the student (or other students) or which conflict with the ethos and culture of our Sixth Form will be dealt with in accordance with the Behaviour Policy, available on the school website.

Laurus Trust - Secondary
Student Responsible Use Agreement for ICT

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the safety of every student and the confidentiality of their work – please read it carefully.

Introduction

The Trust's network/computer facilities are intended to promote teaching and learning, as well as effective communication and working practices within its school. School networks and storage will be treated like school lockers. Staff may review files and communications to ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that stored files would always be private.

User Credentials

Your password should be complex and include the following; upper/lower case, number and special characters, minimum of 8 characters. NCSC guidelines recommend using a three random words approach.

It is your responsibility to ensure that nobody else becomes aware of your password. You must not pass on your log on details to other students or attempt to access other students' accounts. If at any time you think your password has become known to somebody else, you must change it immediately.

Use of Devices and Networks

You must not attempt to use a PC or laptop without using your personal user account supplied by your school. You must not attempt to infect the network with viruses or attempt any form of attack, exploit or hacking. Any infringements must be reported to your teacher immediately. You are assigned a set amount of space on the network for the purpose of school work only. You should not use this for any other purpose.

USB storage devices are not permitted and should not be used in school. Please be aware that all computers are automatically monitored for user activity, including keystrokes. Any inappropriate usage will be reported immediately to the school Head of Year and appropriate action taken. This also includes any school owned laptops at home.

Internet and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use

Internet access is filtered and monitored. Students must not attempt to bypass filters or use VPNs. The use of AI tools must be transparent. Any content generated by AI that is used in assessments must be clearly acknowledged. Failure to do so may be considered malpractice under JCQ regulations. Students must not submit AI-generated work as their own. You must not break the copyright law or attempt to pass off material from the Internet (or any other electronic medium) as your own.

Email and Communication

School email accounts must be used respectfully and for school-related communication only. Students must not open suspicious messages, share personal information, or engage in inappropriate communication. Any concerns must be reported immediately. The sending or sharing of abusive or inappropriate messages, photographs or videos is forbidden. Instances of cyberbullying are logged and dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti Bullying Policy. Any files downloaded from or uploaded via Microsoft 365 should only be used for school purposes.

Mobile Technology

Sixth Form students are expected to model exemplary digital behaviour. You may use a mobile phone in the refectory, and classrooms when given permission, but in no other area of school. You must not tether your personal device (e.g. tablet) to your mobile phone for internet access, internet access for personal devices is permitted through the school wireless network only. You should ensure that your device has your name and form on your home screen so that the device can be returned to you if lost. Any attempt to access a fellow student or teacher's mobile device will be dealt with very seriously, and will constitute a breach of the Responsible Use Policy. The sending of abusive or inappropriate text messages is forbidden, as is the taking of inappropriate photographs and/or videos This includes the posting of malicious videos of staff or students online. Action will also be taken against any individual commenting on any videos posted by someone else, if this is deemed to be unacceptable. Instances of cyberbullying are logged and dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti Bullying Policy Sixth Form.

Agreement and Acknowledgement

By signing this agreement, students and their parents/carers confirm that they understand and accept the terms outlined above. They agree to use ICT systems responsibly and acknowledge the consequences of misuse, including those related to AI use in assessments.

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e: sixthform@didsburyhighschool.org.uk
w: didsburyhighschool.org.uk/didsbury-sixth-form

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