Welcome to the Sixth Form

A Guide to the Sixth Form at BST
For BST Students and Parents
Years 11-13
Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Sixth Form. The last two years of school are intense: lots of hard, academic work coupled with the business of applying to university, balanced by the need to build upon your resilience and independence make the terms fly by. You will build strong friendships, challenge yourself by serving and leading your community and find, at the end of it, that you are quite proud of the capable and confident young adult which you have become. I am always amazed by the delightful transformations that we see as our students stretch themselves and put their talents to work.

This booklet has been written to give you a flying start. There is a lot of information in here about everything from dress code to residential to coping with your workload. As you read through these pages you’ll get a sense of what is expected of you, and indeed, a sense of what life is like for the Sixth Form Students at our school.

Ours is a non-selective school and so we are careful to ensure that students are well-supported and challenged in their studies, whether they’re aiming to go to a highly academically competitive institution like The University of Cambridge or a niche art-and-design specialist institution like The University of Bournemouth. Both are excellent places to study; it is our job to help students make good judgements about where they are going to thrive.

Apart from our culture of hard work, there are three other elements to our Sixth Form at BST which you will find most distinctive. The first is volunteering, the second is leadership, the third is our Outdoors Programme, which bolsters and consolidates the first two. We expect that all our students will find ways to serve and in various ways, lead, their community. Our partnership with Hands On Tokyo and other organisations makes this easy, even for students who don’t speak Japanese; there are also lots of opportunities within school. The House system and Vertical Tutoring naturally prompt older students to step up and lead the younger students around them. We know that this process will not only enhance your self-awareness and confidence, but also your wellbeing and self-esteem.
Introduction

Here is the map to show the various destinations from our last year’s cohort with almost 100% of students achieving their first or second university choice. Students study a huge variety of courses in many different locations depending on the best fit for each individual student.
## The Sixth Form at a Glance

### Year 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>What’s expected of me?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Establishing good study routines; Producing a CV (resume) and submitting initial course and institution choices for Higher Education; setting up volunteering activities; attending Friday Lectures Series and lunchtime university visits. Begin work on Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Preparing for tutorial meeting (students should present their reflections on leadership, volunteering and learning); attending Friday Lectures Series and lunchtime university visits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Classroom to Boardroom interviews and Work Experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>Revision and staying on track with EPQ (Classroom to Boardroom continues).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Revision and Examinations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Once examinations are complete: finalise courses and institutions list, write and redraft Personal Statement and/or Common App. Essay. For students applying outside the UK, you will need to create an application timeline. Sign up for summer MOOCs and finalise reading lists. EPQ work over summer should be discussed with your EPQ supervisor.</td>
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</table>
## The Sixth Form at a Glance

### Year 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>What's expected of me?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Complete and submit UCAS/other application essay and forms. Admissions test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Submit EPQ for final assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Mock Examinations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>Finalising university offers - speak to Tutor, parents, and Universities support team before making final decisions on your firm/insurance choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Make sure you respond to your offers from your chosen institution(s) paying close attention to deadlines. Some A Level E\ examinations begin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Begin visa application process if necessary. A Level examinations begin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How can Parents Help?

The experience of being in the Sixth Form is challenging, and as parents there is a lot that you can do to support your child in making the best of Year 12 and 13. There are three distinct areas where you can help your child: their curricular activities; extracurricular activities, and their wellbeing and personal development.

Curriculum & Academic

• Your son or daughter should be doing 3 hours study, review, preparation and reading each evening, on average. If this is not being done, talk to your child and ask about how they’re managing their school work.

• Ensure that your child has a quiet, calm place to study for a significant proportion of the school holidays (which, in Year 11-13, are not really holidays!). Students will be set a considerable amount of work during these periods, and will benefit from a familiar routine and workspace in order to achieve their goals.

• Ask your child about their upcoming assessments - they will have at least one of these in each Half Term and these assessments will form the basis of the grade they achieve in their report. Theses reports are published on the Parent Portal

• Discuss your child’s targets (in light of university applications) and to what extent they match the grades they are on track to achieve. What is holding them back from reaching their targets if they are not yet on track to achieve them?

• Please make non-urgent dental and medical appointments outside of your child’s timetabled lessons. Missing a single lesson, or worse a double lesson (as many lessons are) can leave a student with significant gaps in their knowledge. Since class sizes are small and often discussion-based, it is difficult to catch up on the learning which has been missed.

Extracurricular Activities
How can Parents Help?

• We encourage Year 12 and 13 students to have a position of leadership within the school. This might be as a House Representative, a member of the Student Council, a Subject Ambassador or a Prefect. Ask them about the opportunities that are available and encourage them to step out of their ‘comfort zone’ and sign up for something which will help them to develop their confidence.

• Every Year 12 and 13 Student should complete at least 20 hours of volunteering during each academic year. We have partnerships with a wide number of organisations in Tokyo and beyond in order to facilitate this: Hands On Tokyo, Second Harvest, Refugees International Japan, and of course, our own Primary School. Of course, your child can find other ways to contribute to the community, please encourage your child to approach the Service Prefects.

• On the summer residential your child will have created a summer ‘to do’ list which will make it easier for your child to start their Year 11 and Year 12 summer holiday with a plan - books to read; research to do; a personal statement or college essay to polish; a MOOC to complete and so on. This time is precious and structure will help them to get the most out of it.
How can Parents Help?

Wellbeing

- Days at school are busy and the jump in the workload at the beginning of Year 12 is significant; some students find it overwhelming. Encourage them to be organised and find a system which works for them and enables them to track all their deadlines.

- Although as a school we have high academic expectations, your child’s wellbeing is our priority. Please get in touch with your child’s Tutor if you feel that they need support in managing their time and prioritising tasks.

- Make sure your child gets time to wind down or relax by socialising, doing hobbies, playing sports. Exercise is an excellent way of managing stress. Encourage your child to do whatever they enjoy, whether it be going for a run in the local park, finding a yoga class or joining the school’s sports programme.

- In Year 12 and 13 your child will be spinning many plates with A Level work; university applications and research; volunteering; and in some cases leadership roles and part-time jobs. Juggling these demands will be difficult, so please encourage regular breaks and monitor changes in your child’s behaviours e.g. mood, stress level, eating, sleeping and coping style. If you feel that your son/daughter is feeling low and struggling to cope please contact your child’s Tutor immediately. We are all here to support students and their families and we understand that the Sixth Form is a demanding time.

We appreciate that this is a stressful experience for parents too. It is important to manage your own anxiety and/or stress about your child’s A Levels and talk to members of our BST community as many other parents will share the same worries and it is important to talk about it.
Supporting you through the Sixth Form

Most students will feel overwhelmed at some point during the two-year course that makes up the Sixth Form. There are many people in school who can support you and, as a team, we have a great deal of experience in helping young adults come to terms with their workload and the (seemingly) daunting demands that confront you. The most important piece of advice is certainly to talk to someone and seek support.

Here are some of the people who will be happy to help you:

• **Your Tutor(s)** - the teachers who will know you best and who will have an overview of your progress and your targets - your Tutor(s) will always be able to help if you’re struggling with anything.

• **Year 13 Students** - all of you will have older students in your Tutor Groups, but there are also Prefects, Peer Listeners and House Representatives in Year 13. Students in these leadership positions have lots of experience of juggling deadlines and balancing demands.

• **Heads of House** - our House Leaders are very experienced teachers who will have dealt with hundreds of students’ problems over the years. They will be able to give you some good advice or connect you to another person who has specific expertise in the area in which you’re struggling.

• **Subject Teachers** - if you are concerned about your progress in a particular subject, your subject teacher is the best person to consult.

• **School Counsellor** – our counsellor can be reached on her school email or your Tutor(s) can refer you to her. Drop in sessions are also welcome.

• **Safeguarding Lead** - our Deputy Head of Secondary is in charge of the overall safety of students at BST. You can speak to him if you are struggling or if you are worried about another student.

• **TELL** - Tokyo English Life Line offer support in English. They have expertise in supporting people with a range of mental health issues [http://telljp.com/](http://telljp.com/). They offer free anonymous confidential telephone counselling everyday (03 5774 0992). They can help with problems large and small and have specialist experience in helping young people with issues from sexuality and gender identity to eating disorders, bullying, culture shock, substance abuse and family breakdown.
Key Expectations of the Sixth Form

1. Attendance should be over 95%. Attendance will be monitored and if attendance is lower than this Tutors and Head of Houses may offer support where needed. It’s very important to look after your health and be in school every day.

2. Studying for around three hours per evening at home on weekdays and at weekends is recommended.

3. School reports will mention two effort grades one reflects a student’s efforts in the classroom whilst the other reflects how well a student is able to use their study periods and all Sixth Form students should achieve 1 or above in all their subjects; this is the expected level at BST. If students achieve this they can apply for the Sixth Form Privilege, which means that they can have more flexibility in planning their day’s work. For example, if a student has a study period at the end of the day, they can go home at 2:45 and work at home instead.

4. The Study Room is for quiet study; the Common Room, outside break time, is for work which might require discussion. For example, group preparation for class presentations that require collaboration.

5. Organisation is important. Sixth Form students may use their own system to record tasks due, but if they miss three homeworks in the course of a year, they’ll have to use the school planner.

6. During breaks from school (Half Term or Christmas/Easter holidays), Sixth Form students should still be doing a significant amount of study, especially before mock or actual examinations. Think about a day in three sessions: morning, afternoon and evening and studying for two out of these three sessions, five days a week in advance of your examinations.

7. Every Sixth Form student is responsible for keeping the Sixth Form areas clean and tidy. If you don’t respect these spaces, you won’t be able to use them.
Key Expectations of the Sixth Form

8  Sixth Form students are expected to complete around 20 hours of volunteering during the course of each academic year. Completing the Duke of Edinburgh Silver or Gold Awards is an excellent, structured way to approach volunteering in the community and is warmly encouraged.

9  Check school emails at least twice a day: in the morning and in the afternoon. There will be important information of which Sixth Form students will need to be aware of.

10 Start all emails to staff and other adults (such as your work experience supervisor or your Classroom to Boardroom interviewer) with the salutation ‘Dear Ms ..’ or ‘Dear Mr ...’ and end with an appropriately formal phrase such as ‘Kind regards’ or ‘Best wishes’. If it in unclear how to phrase an email to an adult you should always err on the side of formality.

11 Sixth Form students are expected to set an example of excellent behaviour and work ethic to the younger students in the school. In particular, behaviour and language should demonstrate a respect for others in our community. In line with the whole school behaviour policy.

12 Sixth Form students are expected to conform to our uniform policy and come to school every day dressed in a professional and business-like manner.

https://www.bst.ac.jp/useful-information/school-uniform

13 When the opportunity presents itself step-up around the school each day. Sixth Form students are expected to take responsibility for younger students and to help them deal with problems and to support them when needed.
Choosing your A Level Subjects

There is some great advice from our Principal on choosing your A Level subjects in our A Level Options Booklet. You can find printed copies at reception or you can read it here:


The Russell Group’s publication, ‘Informed Choices’ is also very helpful for those students aiming for competitive UK universities: https://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/media/5272/informedchoices-print.pdf

The key message is to choose A Level subjects based on strengths and interests you enjoy, and make sure that you’re looking ahead to university admission and keeping your options open. Make sure that your subject combination will enable you to make strong applications to your preferred universities and colleges.

The matter of how many A Levels to study is a very important one, too. Given that UK universities usually make offers based on 3 A Level grades (not four) the best strategy for students is often to focus on three A Levels, and take on an Extended Project Qualification in the subject which they hope to study at university. This will give them the depth of knowledge in that subject which will make application statements easier to write, and ultimately more successful. It is a feature of the UK university system that candidates who have studied independently, and in some depth, showing that they can think through problems and form their own opinions, are at a distinct advantage.

There are cases where students may choose to study four A Levels. For example, in the case of students who have some native competency in a language, such as Japanese, and they wish to add it as a fourth subject, this usually works well. Where a student is hoping to study a subject such as Engineering for example, it is often expected that they will have done a fourth A Level in Further Mathematics, and for this reason, Mathematics and Further Mathematics is a competitive combination for those looking to study Science and Engineering.
Choosing your A Level Subjects

Our experience has shown that focusing on getting the highest possible grades in three A Level subjects, and thereby achieving the grades for your conditional offer of A*AA, for example, is often better than spreading your efforts across four subjects, gaining AAAA, but ultimately missing your first-choice institution. These choices need to be carefully discussed with your Tutor, subject teachers, parents and perhaps the admissions teams of your favoured institutions.
The Sixth Form Dress Code

The dress code, like every other element of our Sixth Form programme, seeks to prepare you for your future. Our expectation is that you will dress as the young professional which you will shortly become. The dress code is the same for all our Sixth Form Students: smart office wear with a Tokyo ‘cool biz’ twist. This means that in the hotter months students can wear short sleeves and need not wear ties. Male Sixth Formers are required to wear a professional-looking tie in the remainder of the school year.

Smart work trousers are fine; jeans are not acceptable. Skirts must be knee length and not in a skin-tight style, but preferably lined, with a zip, and business-appropriate. Blouses or shirts must be smart; other tops are acceptable as long as they would not look out of place in a business meeting.

Shoes should be polishable (and polished!), so canvas pumps or black trainer-style shoes are not appropriate. Being business-appropriate is the guiding principle, so while court-style shoes are in keeping with this, heels should be moderate. Certainly, heels should be no higher than 2 inches or 5 centimeters.

Subtle make up (no bright red lipstick) or nail polish in a neutral shade such as a dusky pink or beige is acceptable - blue is not. Hair should be clean and well-maintained and preferably tied up if it is long. Hair dyed in striking or unnatural colours is not acceptable: this can be quite expensive to correct, so please ask your Tutor before investing time and money in an eye-catching new hair colour!

Piercings, other than a pair of small, subtle earrings, are not acceptable, nor are visible tattoos. Japan is quite a conservative society, and piercings on the body (other than ears) or tattoos are frowned upon. For more detailed information on the Sixth Form dress code please refer to the Sixth Form dress code sections on the school website: https://www.bst.ac.jp/uploaded/docs/Sixth_Form_Dress_Code.pdf.

What you will need for PE depends a lot on what sports you will pursue. If you’re new to BST, it’s better to buy only the basics until you get here; once you start, you can speak to PE staff and decide what else you will need. The basic requirements are a polo-shirt in your House colour (light blue, orange, purple or green), a plain navy polo shirt and navy or dark-coloured shorts. These items can be purchased from the Field Hockey Equipment shop in Shibuya.
What is the Sixth Form Like at BST?

Head Prefects: Sean and Marie

Entering the Sixth Form marks the beginning of the last two years of standard education - it’s exciting and fun, but it also comes with responsibilities and hard work. The Sixth Form at BST aims to prepare students for the ‘real world’ and for university by offering a range of opportunities to develop important life skills, as well as providing as much support as we can.

Of course, a key part of Sixth Form is the A Level course. It would be a lie to say that the transition from (I)GCSEs to A Levels is always a smooth one - the jump in the difficulty of courses for all subjects is very significant. Not only is the content difficult, but there is a lot of it, which is why it is so important to be on the ball from the beginning. The A Level course is structured in a way that requires much more independence from students, such as doing some further reading or listening to relevant podcasts. In addition, like any other examination, mastering exam techniques is crucial, so doing practice essays and past papers will be extremely beneficial. The study periods students have during the day also gives time for personal study - they shouldn’t be mistaken as extra break time though! It may be an idea to plan out study periods just as your timetables lessons are organised. This freedom in how one spends their time is a chance to practice those skills of self-discipline and time-management which undoubtedly will be necessary after leaving BST.

In terms of applying to universities, there are university fairs several times through the year which students can attend. There are also lunchtime university talks, where representatives from universities will give a presentation on their institution. Whilst these university fairs and talks do include many UK universities, other schools from around the world are present as well, including from the US, Japan, Europe, Australia, and more. When it comes to applications, teachers provide strong support for all students and applications outside UCAS are also supported too.

Aside from academics, there are plenty of opportunities available for students to broaden their interests and their skills. Leadership is a big part of the Sixth Form life and there are opportunities left and right to grab, from Sports
What is the Sixth Form Like at BST?

Captain to Subject Ambassador, to House Captain to Prefect roles. As part of our vertical tutoring system, Sixth Form students are expected be examples for the younger students and often take on a leading position in the Tutor Group. Year 12s are also given a leadership course through the Life Skills, which will help to consider different leadership styles, as well as discover what your strengths and weaknesses are.

Volunteering is a very important aspect within the British School community, as it gives students the opportunity to give back to the school and local organisations. Volunteering is also a way in which many individuals discover hidden qualities and skills that they may have never known they had before. At BST, students can volunteer to help younger students with homework, organise events, work on the school allotment, visit the local elderly hospital, and much more!

Every Friday in the Sixth Form Study Room we have a careers lecture starting at 3:45 pm. The lectures are given by senior lawyers, engineers, business executives, successful entrepreneurs and academics. There’s always something to learn, and it’s never too early to build your network of contacts and individuals who may help you decide what you wish to pursue in the future. Sixth Form attendance is optional, but you may find yourself attending a lecture every week - each speaker has something different to offer!

Another great opportunity for Year 12s is the Classroom to Boardroom initiative in Term 2. This programme gives the opportunity for students to be interviewed by senior professionals in Tokyo, ranging from lawyers to academics to engineers to executives in the pharmaceutical industry. The aim of this initiative is to provide us students with the experience of a competency-based interview, in order to identify areas for improvement while there’s still time! During the programme, each student is paired with a mentor; with whom you liaise in order to arrange an appointment for the interview. The interviews last roughly an hour, and include verbal feedback at the end, followed by written, more detailed feedback sent to the School, and then shared with you. Having been through the process myself, I think that the experience was certainly one to learn from, and the feedback received was incredibly thorough and constructive.

At BST, Year 12 students attend work experience placements, gaining precious experience and a more informed view of the professional world. At the beginning of the year, all students select two or three fields in which
What is the Sixth Form Like at BST?

they would be interested in working; then, throughout the year, you will be matched with a company in one of those fields. It’s then up to you to correspond with your contact at the company, send your CV (resume), and respond to any queries about you that they might have. If they agree to take you on, you’ll be working there for a week. Hopefully, they’ll offer you further experience, perhaps during the summer or later, while you’re at university, you might be able to intern with the same company - even if you’re in a different country by then! The tasks that our students are given vary, ranging from market research and updating directories, to making presentations and preparing notes for meetings or attending press conferences. Although each student has a different placement, carrying out different tasks, the experience enables all of us to explore our career interests in a direct and immediate way.

Ultimately, Sixth Form at BST is a great way to spend the final two years of high school life. With the huge amount of support that students receive from their teachers and the various different programmes that are ran in BST, all students are able to graduate from the school being fully prepared for University, and the life ahead of them. With that being said, Sixth Form can be very challenging and difficult at times. The large workload and pressure that Sixth Form students are faced with can be very daunting at first. In order to make the most of Sixth Form and to ensure that the experience runs smoothly, it is important to take on a ‘work hard, play hard’ attitude. By obtaining this balance between academia and wellbeing through leisure, Sixth Form can be a hugely memorable and enjoyable experience!

Sixth Form Prefects: Hana and Mizuki

As Sixth Form Prefects, our primary role is to voice students’ concerns and desires, as well as to organise any activities and events for the Sixth Form pupils. Our duties can vary from organising the Autumn Lecture Series held at BST annually, or even just helping new Sixth Form students in regards to any questions they have in preparation for A Levels. Working closely alongside Mrs Trachonitis is also another predominant aspect of our roles as
What is the Sixth Form Like at BST?

Sixth Form prefects, such as in assisting with the organisation of residential trips, for example. The role of a prefect is not an easy feat, but nonetheless enjoyable and rewarding.

House Prefects: James and Liam
As the House Captain Prefects, we work alongside the Heads of House in overlooking our House Captain teams. Together we strive to unify all parts of the student body, through organising events and Inter-House competitions. Thanks to our vertical tutoring system, we are able to effectively encourage engagement throughout different year groups, allowing students to readily find support and guidance in others.

Wellbeing Prefects: Justin and Sarah
As Wellbeing Prefects, our role is to make sure everyone in the school feels included and encouraged to make the most of their time here at BST. We help with Wellbeing lessons and with teaching students about topics such as maintaining a healthy lifestyle, dealing with stress and building good relationships with their peers. As Prefects we also incorporate opportunities for students to interact and support each other in their day to day school life.
Subject Prefects: Keigo and Nina
As Subject Ambassador Prefects, we are here to assist the Subject Ambassadors in any way possible. We oversee the Subject Ambassadors and support them to deliver assemblies, as well as hold competitions between tutors and/or the whole school. Our main focuses are to encourage students to get involved with subjects they are interested in, and be a platform for students to explore new subjects!

Service Prefects: Alex and Anna
We are Alex and Anna, your service prefects this year! Our role is to work with the Service Ambassadors on potential ideas, organise fundraisers and events for partner volunteering organisations, and develop relationships with new organisations. Finding the ideal service opportunity may be difficult to do independently but we would like to communicate all the variety of options available. Furthermore, we are eager to arrange trips similar to the UWS Cambodia trip and create new connections with organisations so that students at BST can develop a passion for volunteering. Receiving thanks from somebody you’ve helped, accompanied by a big warm smile on their face, offers a most rewarding feeling of accomplishment. In addition, the upcoming 2020 Olympics are also offering innumerable volunteering opportunities - who wouldn’t want to participate? We are very excited for this upcoming year and will try our best to spread the enjoyment of volunteering!
What is the Sixth Form Like at BST?

Student Council Prefects: Antonia and Emi

This year, we are lucky to be Student Council Prefects! Our responsibilities include recruiting a group of students that will cover the breadth of the school, and cooperate with them to organise events that will benefit the school community. Our focus this year is to collaborate with other departments in the school and construct an effective communication system so that students can have their voice heard, and everything the Student Council coordinates is successfully relayed back.
The Sixth Form Residentials

Residentials will continue during your time in the Sixth Form. The Outdoors Programme has a special importance at BST and we firmly believe that, having hiked up a mountain (or skied down one!) together with your classmates will enrich the relationships that you have here and help you to be the self-aware and confident young person we’re aiming for you to be. During these residentials, after a day of helping out local farmers or sea-urchin fishing or paragliding, or whatever it might be, there’s the opportunity for guidance for life beyond Sixth Form. Uninterrupted by the usual busy rhythm of a school day, you will be able to sit down and fully discuss options you may be considering or get vital feedback on a college essay or application statement. Kit lists and detailed information will be sent out in advance of each trip, but if you’re new to BST it will be useful to know that for each of these residentials you’ll need sturdy shoes (hiking boots or similar) and it’s worth investing in a pair of light hiking trousers with pockets: you’ll be glad you did!

Mount Fuji (Year 12 & 13, September)

The Fuji Residential gives the Sixth Form a chance to get to know each other as a distinct community within our school. The programme combines challenging outdoor activities such as paragliding, hiking, rafting and climbing with specific programmes for the two different year groups. Year 13 focus on finishing off their college/university applications, while Year 12 focus on researching what these choices might be, as well as getting their CVs (resume) ready and preparing themselves for A Level study. The September Residential usually happens in the second week of Term 1, and as we always have lots of new students in Year 12, it’s a great way of making new friends. We usually visit the Kanto Plains University Fair on the way back to Tokyo, as this event also takes place at the end of the second week in September.
The Sixth Form Residentials

Moriiumius (Year 12, June)

This trip takes place at the end of year 12. The main purpose of the trip is to firm up higher education choices, draft application statements and draw up a programme of summer reading.

The Moriumius Project gives us a breathtaking backdrop for this 5 day trip: we pitch in with the daily work of local farmers and fisherman and share in the incredible food which is produced as a result.