



New Mills Sixth Form Parents' Handbook 2016-17



Parents' Handbook 2016-2017

New Mills School Sixth Form

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Dear Parent or Guardian

Welcome to our Parents' Handbook. Whether or not you are new to New Mills School or you have been a parent of a child at the school for a lengthier period, I hope that you find the information contained within this booklet useful as your son/daughter progresses throughout the next two years.

At New Mills School, we firmly believe that your input is just as vital as ours in ensuring the success of our students both academically and in the wider context of preparing the youngsters in our care for the next stage of their lives. Our aim is that each student has a happy, enriching and successful time in the Sixth Form and that they aspire to achieve the very best that they are capable of. We understand that this is your aim too, and we look forward to developing a strong partnership with you, that will enable us to help support your sons' and daughters' to maximise their potential.

The Sixth Form at New Mills relies upon the support of the parents of the young people we teach. I look forward to building a long and positive partnership with you over the coming two years.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Munn', with a horizontal line underneath.

Nick Munn
Director of Sixth Form

Useful Contact Information

New Mills School Sixth Form

School Website Address:	www.newmillsschool.co.uk
School Telephone Number:	01663 743 284
School Fax Number:	01663 745 134
Some useful contacts:	
Bursary	gcash@newmillsschool.co.uk
Careers Advisor	phil.careers@outlook.com
Examinations Officer	cwakelin@newmillsschool.co.uk
Director of Sixth Form	nmun@newmillsschool.co.uk
Head Teacher	dmcgloin@newmillsschool.co.uk
Head Teacher's PA	jbull@newmillsschool.co.uk
Sixth Form Year Manager (pastoral issues)	mmcglain@newmillsschool.co.uk
Sixth Form Progress Manager	mtaylor@newmillsschool.co.uk
Sixth Form Student Services	studentservices@newmillsschool.co.uk
Special Needs Coordinator	dmcgloin@newmillsschool.co.uk
Tutors:	
Mrs R Quinn	rquinn@newmillsschool.co.uk
Mr D Harbord	dharbord@newmillsschool.co.uk
Ms L Godley	lgodley@newmillsschool.co.uk
Ms J Tracey-Hill	jtraceyhill@newmillsschool.co.uk

Timing of the New School Day

New Mills School Sixth Form

8.45 - 9.10	Assembly/Tutorial
9.10-10.10	Period 1
10.10-10.25	Break
10.25-11.25	Period 2
11.25-12.25	Period 3
12.25-1.10	Lunchtime
1.10-2.10	Period 4
2.10-3.10	Period 5



Our Partnership with Parents

New Mills School Sixth Form

New Mills School expects that students will accept responsibility for their own learning and academic progress. Nevertheless, there remains an important role for parents to play in the process and the School will liaise with parents accordingly, taking into account the differing needs of students in our care.

To encourage your involvement we expect to provide:

- an early opportunity to visit the school to meet with your son's/daughter's tutor and subject staff
- a Parents' Handbook explaining how the school operates
- an on-line calendar of events
- electronic communication of other information using the email addresses and mobile phone numbers supplied during enrolment (please note, we need accurate email addresses and mobile numbers in order to be able to communicate effectively with you. Please email studentservices@newmillsschool.co.uk if you find that you are not receiving emails/texts from us
- annual parents' consultations
- termly Snapshot information detailing progress against targets
- prompt consultation with you if we need to discuss your daughter/son's progress from the Sixth Form Progress Manager and/or Pastoral Manager

To help us, we ask you to:

- encourage your daughter or son to follow the Code of Conduct and expectations as outlined in the Student Handbook
- inform us if you become concerned about your daughter's or son's progress
- inform us of changes in personal circumstances (address/telephone number or domestic circumstances, etc.)
- contact us during any periods of absence by calling 01663 743 284 (ext 164) before 9am
- complete a planned absence form for any known absences e.g. medical appointments, open days, etc....
- encourage good or better attendance (100% = excellent; 98% = very good; 95% = good; 90% = satisfactory)
- avoid taking holidays in term-time
- respond promptly to School communications
- attend parents' consultations.
- Encourage good ojhghg

Essential Information

New Mills School Sixth Form

Pastoral care

The school recognises its responsibility to provide effective support and guidance for all students and to have effective pastoral arrangements in place. The Sixth Form tutor is responsible for the day to day immediate pastoral care of students, although it is important that all members of staff are aware of pastoral care issues and take action to support students. It is vital that a strong sense of trust is developed between these parties so that students feel able to express their concerns. To this end, we expect all pupils to attend registration promptly. The teaching and support staff meet regularly so that academic, organisational and pastoral concerns can be quickly and effectively communicated and discussed.

Most areas of concern are dealt with entirely by the Sixth Form tutor or Sixth Form Student Service Administrator. He/she may consult the Head of Sixth Form where appropriate. Students should feel free to approach any member of staff about a pastoral issue, and this teacher will liaise with the Sixth Form team outlined above.

School Counsellor

Students who wish to discuss any issue affecting their wellbeing or happiness with the School Counsellor may arrange a meeting via the Student Services Administrator. The School Counsellor, Mrs Terri Nestor visits the school on a weekly basis.

The content of the conversations is normally confidential. Parents and teachers are not informed that a student has seen the Counsellor. However, if the student consents and if the Counsellor considers it helpful, information may be shared with parents and pastoral staff. The Counsellor will pass on to the relevant authorities and parents any disclosures relating to violations of the law, child protection or the safety of others.

Computer Files/ICT

No student should ever divulge their network password to anyone. Logging on to someone else's network space is an invasion of that person's privacy and a serious breach of trust.

Copying or tampering with any files in another person's network space calls into question the integrity of all computer-assisted learning within the School and is, therefore, a particularly serious offence. Students are expected to abide by the rules on use of ICT including social medial sites and should refrain from posting comments about others that may be construed as bullying or which undermine fundamental British values. Any indiscretions or attempts to bring the School into disrepute, through the posting of messages or photos on any such site will be dealt with by the Head of Sixth Form.

Family information

Parents are asked to keep the school office informed of changes to their family information: change of address or email address or mobile phone numbers, marital separation or divorce.

New Mills School Sixth Form

Child protection

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where students are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

Full details of the school's Child Protection Policy can be found on the school website. The Child Protection Officer is Mrs D McGloin (dmcgloin@newmillsschool.co.uk). The principles of the child protection policy extend to sixth form students as appropriate under the law.

Rewards and Sanctions

We believe that thoughtful behaviour and academic success are their own reward; indeed, seeking to motivate Sixth Form students primarily through a reward system can be counter-productive. However, we do believe that it is important to celebrate outstanding achievement and progress (in terms of academic work, commitment, or considerate, compassionate behaviour) and we recognise that sanctions need to be imposed in order to help students understand how their behaviour affects the wellbeing of others and the life of the Sixth Form community. We therefore operate a Positive Discipline policy.

We celebrate excellence in tutor group meetings, sixth form assemblies and in the final assemblies of each term.

Teachers deal with unacceptable behaviour in an appropriate way. This might be pointing out the consequences of a certain course or action, or a simple quiet word. If this is not sufficient, the Year 11-13 Pastoral Manager, Progress Leader, Head of Sixth Form and Form Tutor will be informed. The focus will be on finding strategies for overcoming the problems that have arisen. We value and appreciate parents' support in helping us instil a sense of responsibility through the measures we take. We expect all students to be courteous and well mannered; they should hold doors and address members of the community with respect.

Mobile phones

We encourage mobile telephones as a convenient means of communication but to prevent their intrusive and disruptive effect on community life and to ensure their security on the school site, they must be used respectfully during the school day.

Students may keep their phones with them but must ensure that they are on silent during lesson time and must not use them when walking around the school site, when lower school pupils may be around the site. Students are, however, free to use their phones in the Sixth Form Centre at any time, with the exception of the Study Room, where intrusive mobile phone usage is not permitted.

Sixth Form students may take mobile phones on school trips or to away matches so parents can be informed of return times and other important information. It is, however, expressly forbidden for students to use mobile phones to photograph, film or record others at school. The school can take no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, stolen or damaged on the premises.

New Mills School Sixth Form

Lost Property

We ask all students who find items left lying around the School to return them to the owner if it is possible to do this quickly and efficiently. Otherwise, all items found should be placed by staff, students or cleaners with the receptionist in the main block. Unnamed items not collected at the end of term will be passed on to the local charity shops.

Theft

Theft is a serious crime; it destroys trust in the community; it leads to unhappiness and can be used as a form of intimidation. If a student is found to have stolen items belonging to either another student or the school, he or she may be suspended or, in particularly severe cases, permanently excluded.

Vandalism

We expect students to respect property belonging to the School, and we will take serious action against students who damage it.

Smoking and Alcohol

All tobacco products, 'e-cigarettes' and the consumption of alcohol are expressly forbidden in the School Rules, and the purchase of tobacco and alcohol is illegal for all persons under the age of 18. No student may have any such products in their possession at School or in the vicinity of the School at any time during the extended School day. No students may possess or consume any such products on any School trips including residential trips. This includes purchasing such products when abroad even if it is intended as a gift for adults. We interpret "the vicinity of the School" as including within a 50 metre distance from the school gates.

Illegal Drugs

Any student discovered in term time or holidays, at School or elsewhere, and who is recognisable as a member of the School community, to be in possession of drugs, using drugs, under the influence of drugs or promoting the drugs culture, may expect to be excluded. The term 'drugs' includes solvents and legal highs. It is likely that the police will be informed of any student who is believed to be breaking the law.

If any student approaches a member of staff for help or advice over drugs, they shall do everything in their power to be sympathetic. At the same time, there is a duty to protect other students and the reputation of the School and all of the students in it.

Information about drugs will always be dealt with as much confidentiality as possible, and it is hoped members of the School community (parents and students) will see it as protecting others to pass on such information directly to the Headteacher.

Cars/Motor vehicles

Students who have licences to drive may drive cars to and from School, although they may not drive onto the School site.

Frequently Asked Questions

New Mills School Sixth Form

At the heart of the Sixth Form is our belief in the value of each individual student and that the School's responsibility is to help each one to realise their potential.

How does the tutorial system work?

Tutorial support is provided by a specialist team of four dedicated Sixth Form tutors who are overseen by the Head of Sixth Form, Mr Munn. This team includes staff responsible for admissions, careers, study skills and the tutorial programme.

Tutor groups are arranged by year group, and contain about twenty students. Most of the time, students can expect a typical tutorial week to look as follows:

- Mondays all students with form tutors for a taught tutorial programme
- Tuesdays 1-2-1 with form tutor or enrichment
- Wednesdays all students with form tutors for a taught tutorial programme
- Thursdays 1-2-1 with form tutor or enrichment
- Fridays assembly day (attendance compulsory)

In all cases, attendance is compulsory, although not every pupil will have an appointment with their form tutor in the Thursday sessions every week.

The weekly Monday assembly is given either by a member of SLT, the Head of Sixth, one of the Sixth Form tutors, an external speaker or by some of the students themselves.

Attendance is monitored by our guidance team support staff through our electronic registration system (SIMS), with concerns being referred to tutors and the Head of Sixth as appropriate. Tutors are available to see students individually on Thursdays during tutorial time and when they are free of other lesson commitments to meet individually with students.

How do you help students to organise their work?

Students receive a Student Planner (incorporating a diary) each year. This is a useful way of recording homework and dates when work is due and it provides information relating to key dates in the UCAS cycle.

How do you help students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities?

The School welcomes all students who meet the normal admissions criteria and is committed to ensuring that all reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that students with additional support needs are able to achieve their potential.

New Mills School Sixth Form

How does the School monitor the progress of students?

This is done through the Progress Review system.

In November, December and April of Years 12 and 13, the School has subject RAG meetings. Sixth Form staff discuss pupil progress with subject staff and then their overall progress with tutors. Parents are made aware of any issues arising from RAG meetings if necessary.

We will also meet with parents on the Sixth Form Parents' Evening on Thursday, 2nd February 2016 to discuss progress and impediments to progress.

What arrangements are made when staff are absent from School?

New Mills School does not normally organise supply cover for staff who are absent for only a few days. This approach takes account of the age and maturity of our students and the School's expectation that they should be able to work independently within a suitable support structure. Although, in such circumstances, students tend to talk of "cancelled" lessons, the learning is never cancelled; for example, when the absence is a planned absence suitable work is set in advance and can be collected from the Student Support Administrator. When a member of staff is away unexpectedly through illness, the department will set work on behalf of the teacher. In many cases, students will already have work which they can undertake independently for a few days. In cases when an extended period of absence occurs, the School will do its best to arrange full teaching cover.

How does the School monitor the attendance of students?

The School uses an electronic system for the recording of attendance. Guidance team support staff use this data to review attendance daily and weekly to spot any emerging trends. If a student is absent from School they must enter the appropriate absence code in the electronic register. It is expected that this is done on the day of absence. Full instructions are given to students at induction. An acceptable reason must be given for all absences, otherwise the absence will be considered unauthorised and this may affect progression into Year 13.

There is a specific email address and phone number for absences. Contact us before 9am by ...

- Email: studentservices@newmillsschool.co.uk
- Tel: 01663 743 284 ext. 164

The School will send a summary of attendance and punctuality for each Year 12 and 13 student to parents in October, just before the October Census return. After that, such data will be included in the Progress Review information sent home at specific intervals as outlined in the reporting calendar. The school refers back to attendance and punctuality data when compiling references for Higher and Further Education, as well as for employer reference requests.

Do I need to provide written notes for absence?

Notes will not normally be required, as students will be asked to provide reasons for their absence through the electronic registration system. However, there is a form for you to complete for a planned absence. The guidance team support staff will contact you if absences are a cause for concern, and may request confirmation of the reason for absence.

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Will the tutor contact me if there are problems?

If problems are minor, students often put matters right in a short period of time. If problems persist, or are more serious, then the tutor will contact you.

The School normally continues to liaise with parents up until the end of students' courses, including any period after students have reached the age of 18. Students who are 18 or over have the right to ask the School not to release information to parents; nevertheless, this right has rarely been exercised.

Should I contact the tutor if I am worried about my daughter's or son's progress?

Yes. Tutors are the main point of contact between the School and parents and you should not hesitate to get in touch. The easiest way to make contact will be by e-mail. In return, if you haven't already done so, it will be helpful if you can provide an e-mail address for the tutor to contact you. Tutors will always endeavour to reply to email contact as quickly as possible, but this may not be within 24 hours, owing to other commitments. Tutors will also be pleased to arrange a meeting with you, if appropriate.

What happens if a student is taken ill during the School day?

If students are feeling unwell during the day and need to go home they must sign out in the Signing In/Out Book. Students are asked to phone the school to confirm that they have arrived home safely. In some cases it may be necessary for the student to be collected by a parent/guardian or sent home in a taxi if they have some distance to travel.

On rare occasions, e.g. suspected fracture, a School first aider might accompany a student to the Accident and Emergency Department at Stepping Hill Hospital unless the student prefers to be accompanied by a friend. Parents/guardians would be contacted immediately.

How can I support my son/daughter's transition to advanced level study?

We know that families give a great deal of general encouragement to students. School places new demands on students, particularly with requiring more work to be done outside lessons: this should be at least 4 hours of independent study per week for each of their AS or A2 courses. Subject teachers will set essays and various other tasks to be completed outside lesson time, and there will be additional reading, research and preparation in all subjects. Having a suitable room at home in which this can be done helps students a lot. Furthermore, restricting student working hours outside of school, if they have a job, is highly beneficial to their eventual A Level outcomes. OFSTED guidance suggests that working more than 12 hours per week has a significant detrimental impact on final academic achievement.

Can holidays be taken during term-time?

The school requests that all holidays are taken outside of school term time.

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Are there any circumstances in which I might be asked to pay examination fees?

This would only apply if the student, through their own actions, made it impossible for a grade to be awarded by the examination board – for example by failing to complete coursework or by missing an examination. The School can also require the payment of fees where a student fails to observe the Code of Conduct, for example by not attending lessons. Parents would be invited to discuss the situation before any such action were taken. If a student re-sits an examination, then the fees are normally paid by the student. In some cases of financial hardship, applications can be made to the Discretionary Bursary Fund to help cover the cost of these examinations.

What to do should things go wrong?

We hope that your daughter or son will be happy and successful at New Mills and that you will also be satisfied with your own experience as a parent. Nevertheless, we understand that there may be times when we don't get everything right and we shall listen carefully to any feedback which you may have about the Sixth Form.

Feedback

At regular intervals we shall ask students and others how successful we have been. The findings from surveys and the action that the School intends to take in response will be summarised and made available, usually on the School website.

If you feel dissatisfied about anything, you are invited to discuss the matter with an appropriate member of staff. For example, an informal approach to your daughter's/son's tutor may resolve the matter quickly. Should you remain dissatisfied and wish to make a formal complaint, please refer the matter either to the Head of Sixth Form or to the Head Teacher (contact details of whom can be found at the front of this handbook).

Financial Support

New Mills School Sixth Form

Essential textbooks and materials are provided free of charge, unless they are kept by the student after the course. Students are expected to pay towards the cost of field trips and visits, although the charges for these are kept to a minimum. Examination fees are paid by the School for first-time entries, although students normally pay for re-sits. Students will also need to pay for any extra tests required for university entrance purposes (e.g. BMAT, UKCAT for medicine etcetera).

Financial help for students in the academic year 2016-17

The School will receive an allocation of funds (the 16-19 Bursary Fund) from the Education Funding Agency to support students who face the greatest financial barriers to continuing in education or training post-16.

Guidelines about applying for the new 16-19 Bursary Fund will be provided to all students at the start of the autumn term. These will indicate both the eligibility criteria, relating to house-hold income, and also the range of activities for which an application can be made (e.g. transport, essential educational activities linked to chosen AS/A level courses, extra tests required for university entrance purposes.)

The School will conduct an audit of likely demand for the 16-19 Bursary Fund at the start of the academic year, before finalising how much money can be distributed to the various categories of students applying for financial assistance.

If you have any concerns about financial support which you would like to discuss after reading the guidelines which will be provided, please contact the School Business Services Manager, Mr G Cash (gcash@newmillsschool.co.uk; Tel: 01663 743 284 ext 124)



Careers Advice

New Mills School Sixth Form

CAREERS AND APPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER/HIGHER EDUCATION

Throughout the course of the year, a comprehensive programme of careers guidance covering higher education, gap year and employment options will be followed. Students will use a variety of resources and internet sites.

Careers Area

The Careers Area is situated in the Sixth Form Study Room and includes an extensively stocked reference section with information about jobs, further and higher education courses, sponsorships, and gap year activities. The computer network is available for running careers guidance programmes (currently Unifrog), accessing course descriptions and details of career areas, researching offers and rejections in previous years, and there is also a good stock of DVDs of mock interviews that students may borrow and watch.

Making Choices

An important part of our student guidance system involves helping students to make career choices. Help in this is available from our independent careers advisor, tutors and subject staff. Students are advised to research career opportunities as soon as appropriate. A careers programme runs alongside a programme of SMSC and PSHCE during Year 12; by the end of Year 12, most students should have definite ideas of the options available and be researching particular higher education courses or employment routes in more detail.

Visit www.ucas.com for course search, a parents' guide with parental email update option and Course Finder – an online programme which will suggest possible course choices. Unifrog can also be accessed from home using the log on, which will be provided to students from November onwards.

Work Experience

Work experience can be a very valuable activity, adding depth and credibility to either a personal statement for UCAS or a job application. Work experience should give students an insight into a future career or profession and can give them confidence that they are making the right choices for their future. The Sixth Form Student Services Administrator will help students organise a placement for themselves. The School will provide insurance cover for all School approved placements and will check that each placement is safe and suitable for our students. Placements are normally for a week or fortnight and must take place in School holidays or during the final week of the Summer Term. Time off from School is not normally given for work placements.

It can take the School several weeks to authorise a placement and students must remember this if they approach a company about a placement. It is important to realise that **any placement which takes place without authorisation from the School is likely to be uninsured and students may be at risk.**

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UCAS Applications (Higher Education) and References

Applications to universities are normally made in the autumn term of Year 13 and students are strongly advised to have completed their application by the end of September. Later applications are possible where students remain unsure of their choices. Students applying for Dentistry, Medicine, Veterinary Science/Medicine, and Oxford or Cambridge Universities need to have completed their forms by mid-September for the October UCAS deadline. It is essential that students meet the deadline dates agreed with tutors for the submission of their application forms.

A smaller number of our students take a “gap year” between School and university. We offer a post results application day at the start of September to help gap year applicants after they have left New Mills School. It is essential that Gap Year students meet the School’s deadline dates for the submission of UCAS applications (which will be clearly publicised and are different from the dates for Year 13 students) in order for the School to provide appropriate support and a reference.

References will be written by tutors who will co-ordinate statements from subject staff. Predicted grades will be based on the professional judgement of staff, taking appropriate evidence into account, and are not negotiable. All students have the right to see their references.

Employment after A levels

Phil Nelson is the Sixth Form Careers Advisor. Appointments can be made via the Sixth Form Student Services Manager on studentservices@newmillsschool.co.uk or directly with the careers advisor who can be contacted on phil.careers@outlook.com.



Final Thoughts - a Summary

New Mills School Sixth Form

The Sixth Form is a caring learning community which respects the right of each individual student to have a safe, enjoyable and successful learning experience regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race or background. As members of the School community, all students are asked to abide by its code of conduct. Key expectations are:

Show consideration and respect for others and for the school environment

- Help to ensure a safe and secure learning environment
- Accept responsibility for your own learning
- Promote good communications
- Promote the good reputation of the Sixth Form

Abide by all school policies and expectations, including those relating to:

- equality and diversity
- health and safety
- bullying
- acceptable use of IT
- fair play

Thank you in advance for all of your support.



Notes





Photographs by Sara Porter
www.saraporterphotography.co.uk

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www.newmillsschool.co.uk