



THE DOWNS SCHOOL

Learning together, learning for life

The Downs School Virtual Open Evening FAQ

Admissions

1. Do catchment areas apply at Sixth Form?

No, catchment areas do not apply for Sixth Form admissions.

2. Will I be offered a place at your Sixth Form if I apply?

We are a non-selective state sixth form; therefore, everyone who applies before the start of the September term will be offered a place, subject to there being space on the course. There are entry requirements for doing specific levels of study, which are explained in our Course Guide, as well as entry requirements for specific subjects, which will have to be met to be able to take up that place. Late applications are always subject to availability within the chosen subjects.

3. When will I hear back after my application?

You will receive an acknowledgement of your application and will be invited to an Admissions meeting in March to discuss your application and subject choices.

4. When will I hear if my subject choices fit into the option blocks?

We will discuss your subject choices at your Admissions meeting in March, when we will discuss the availability of your chosen subjects within the option blocks.

5. Do the option blocks stay the same each year?

No, we do not create the option blocks until we have processed all the applications, to allow us to ensure we are catering specifically for the requirements of each individual year group. If you make a late application, your subject choices will not be processed as part of this procedure.

6. What do I do if I am unsure which subjects I want to study?

There are two key elements to making subject choices. They are firstly, studying subjects that you enjoy, and secondly, studying subjects that you are good at. Start by looking at the entry requirements for all the subjects you think you might like to study and be honest with yourself about whether you are going to get those GCSE grades. Also, think hard about which subjects you like studying. You need to be able to enjoy the subjects because you are going to have to work really hard in the Sixth Form, and this will be very difficult for subjects that you do not really like.

You should watch the subject presentations on our website to gain further understanding about the content of the subject at this level, but also speak to your subject teachers to gain their advice about whether their subject is right for you.

You can further discuss your concerns at your Admissions meeting in March. Remember that it is possible to discuss changes with your subject choices at any time until the middle of September.

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thedownsschool.org

Headteacher: Mr C R Prosser BSc (Hons)
Deputy Headteacher: Mr P Wilson BA (Hons)
Deputy Headteacher: Ms D Allen BA (Hons), MA



7. Can I study more than four subjects and/or less than three?

No, you have to study either three or four subjects. For most students we would recommend that you study three subjects. These can be a mixture of A levels and Level 3 BTECs, or all A levels or all BTECs, depending on meeting the entry requirements.

8. If I study four subjects, do I have to continue taking four for two years?

No, however, there are no AS level exams anymore, so if/when you drop the fourth subject you will not gain any qualification for that subject.

9. What if I want to change my subject choices after application and/or after interview?

You should email Sixthform@thedownsschool.org to request a subject change.

10. When will I receive my offer pack?

In April, normally just after the Easter holidays.

11. Will I be offered a place if I do not meet the subject entry requirements at the application stage?

You will be offered a place subject to you obtaining the correct entry requirements on results day. We will discuss this with you in your Admissions meeting. If we feel it is unlikely, based on your most recent Progress Report, that you are unlikely to obtain the entry requirements, we will discuss your options at this meeting. It is important that all students are aware of the entry requirements before selecting their subject choices.

12. Who do I contact if I have any questions about my son/daughter's application?

Please contact sixthform@thedownsschool.org

13. How can I book in for a tour?

Unfortunately we are presently unable to offer tour of the sixth form, however, we are hoping to be able to offer them in the near future, so please refer to our website for updates. If the lockdown continues, we will be offering virtual tours.

14. Where can I find information about courses/bus routes/application forms etc?

The information regarding all aspects of our Sixth Form can be found on the Sixth Form pages of our website <http://www.thedownsschool.org/404/join-the-sixth-form>

15. Do you accept late applications?

Yes, but we cannot guarantee a place on a particular subject to a late applicant, and their subject choices will not be taken into consideration when creating the option blocks. There is the further concern that we may have already taken the decision to not run certain subjects with low numbers, before receiving the application. It will not be possible to re-instate those subjects.

Sixth Form Life

1. What is the structure of the school day?

There are 5 periods a day. Sixth formers attend morning registration from 8.50am to 9.05am in their tutor group. We have 20 minutes for break and 40 minutes for lunch. The school day ends at 3.15pm

2. Are Sixth Form students allowed to leave the school site during the day?

In Year 12 students are allowed to leave the school site at break and lunchtime but are expected to be on site at all other times.

3. What is the Sixth Form dress code?

Sixth Formers do not wear a school uniform. We have a dress code, which provides a professional, work-focused environment in the Sixth Form. Further details are available in our uniform policy, and is provided in your Offer Pack issued in April. We have Dress Down Friday each week, which allows Sixth Formers to have a more casual approach to their dress on Fridays.

4. What trips are available to Sixth Form students?

We run a bi-annual expedition, which next year is going to Borneo. We also run a bi-annual Ski Trip. There are also additional subject based trips such as a New York trip for Performing Arts and Media students, an Iceland trip for Geographers, a Russia trip for Historians, as well as many UK based trips for a number of other subjects.