



RICHARD
TAUNTON
Sixth Form College

WORKING TOGETHER

GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS

2023-24

INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOKLET PROVIDES YOU WITH KEY INFORMATION THAT WE THINK YOU WILL NEED DURING THE YEAR, TO MAXIMISE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR PARTNERSHIP OF SUPPORT. WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK ABOUT THE SERVICE WE OFFER AT RICHARD TAUNTON SIXTH FORM COLLEGE AND ALWAYS CAREFULLY CONSIDER ANY COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS OR CONCERNS AS WE STRIVE TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE.



PARTNERSHIP OF SUPPORT

We want all of our students to enjoy their time at Richard Taunton Sixth Form College and to be successful in their chosen courses. The college's adult atmosphere is a result of fostering responsibility in our students and we believe that a positive partnership between students, staff, and parents/carers is key to their success.

Recent national changes to data protection law, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), mean that we need to seek permission from our students to share their information with anyone, including parents/carers. We will promote the clear advantages of students giving this permission but will respect their decision if they choose not to do so. For the vast majority who will give their permission, we will also need to secure your permission to hold your contact details.

Please note that if we do not get permission to communicate with you about progress in college, some content in this booklet will not apply to you. However we hope the general guidance and information will still be helpful to you.

If we have been given permission to communicate, one of the main members of staff who may contact you is your child's Progress Tutor. Progress Tutors will always try to sort out problems with their students themselves initially. However, they will contact you if punctuality, absences, behaviour or late work become a serious issue. Progress Tutors welcome contact from you if you have any concerns.

We will send regular automatic notifications to you about any absences if we have your email address or mobile phone number as next of kin (see below). We hope you will find these emails helpful in supporting your daughter or son to succeed.

PARENT PORTAL

The Parent Portal is our online student record system, which will allow you to get more information about your child's attendance, timetable, punctuality, exam entries and progress reports throughout the year.

An account will be set up for you with the log in details to be sent to you directly. Access to the Parent Portal will be via the college website, www.richardtaunton.ac.uk with the relevant link titled Parent Portal at the top of the home page.

PROGRESS TUTORS

Every student is allocated a Progress Tutor. These staff are key members of our Student Support Services and they are responsible for overseeing each student's programme and are their first point of contact for advice, guidance and support.

Students will have a timetabled session each week with their Progress Tutor, during which time they will access Upskill, our new Skills Builder and Development Programme which balances 1-to-1 progress reviews and target setting with a selection of group activities linked to their development as young adults and preparing them for living and working in modern Britain.

The Progress Tutor should be your first point of communication with the college. The specific details of your sons/daughters Progress Tutor will be sent to you once enrolment and timetabling are completed.

HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD

- Register for and regularly check the Parent Portal for updates and information
- Contact your child's Progress Tutor if you have any queries or concerns. Details regarding who your child's tutor is will be sent to you following the completion of enrolment and timetabling in early September
- Help them with time management - the change from school to college is sometimes hard to handle, for example not having to be in college the same time every day and a timetable that has varied lesson times each day, can be challenging for some students. Students will see their timetable on their own ProPortal system and it is available to via the Parent Portal
- Talk to them about their work and progress. Ask if they are up to date with everything. If you are concerned about their progress, don't wait for a progress review evening, call their Progress Tutor or subject lecturers to talk about it. Contact us on 02380 511811
- Try to find them some space at home where they can study in peace and quiet. The college has a number of areas with computers where your child can study, so encourage them to use those facilities in their study time
- Please attend parent liaison events. It may not always seem this way, but young people do like parents/carers to attend; our experience shows these meetings can be a launch pad for a really successful year
- Make sure that your child realises that asking for help is not a sign of weakness – if they are struggling with anything, including any anxiety, low confidence or self esteem issues, contact their Progress Tutor
- If your child feels that they are on the wrong course, get them to talk to their Progress Tutor or the Careers Team, they may be able to help them change to a more suitable course – but do encourage them not to make snap decisions. We are unlikely to approve course changes in the first two weeks of term
- Finally, praise your child for their achievements, a parent's praise is worth its weight in gold

STUDY PROGRAMME

THE COLLEGE IS COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING THE ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EVERY STUDENT IN ORDER TO DO THIS EACH STUDENT ACCESSES A STUDY PROGRAMME WHICH INCORPORATES VARIOUS ACTIVITIES.

Whether your child is studying A-Levels, T-Levels, BTECs, GCSEs or Enhanced Provision, they will be provided with the following learning and development opportunities:

- Courses – this will be the subject or subjects your child is studying
- Upskill - this will consist of a tutorial session once a week with their Progress Tutor. This is a key part of a student's study programme that will help them develop the skills needed to support their progression, educate them about the wider work and support them with their plans for their next steps
- Extended Learning – these are timetabled and supervised study sessions for students in which they will be set work for completion and can use for personal study, collaborative work with peers or progression planning
- Enrichment – these are additional activities that may or may not be linked to the subjects they are studying. They are an opportunity for students to learn new skills try new things and make new friends
- Work Experience – All students should gain some experience of work as part of their study programme. In most cases this will be a work placement or there may be other activities that give student the opportunity to experience what the world of work is like
- Careers Information, Advice and Guidance – our Careers and Progression Team work with all students to provide tutored activities, one to one guidance and support and assist with progression planning

STUDENT SERVICES

The Student Services Team at Richard Taunton Sixth Form College provides a range of services to support students.

We offer help and advice in a number of areas:

- Additional Learning Support
- Careers advice
- Counselling
- Faith matters
- Financial support including childcare and free meals
- Health and wellbeing
- Higher Education (UCAS) applications
- Safeguarding
- Student enrichment, events and representation
- Travel to college
- Wellbeing and welfare
- Young carers and looked after children or care leavers support

Students will be provided with a full orientation regarding these services, where to locate them and how to access support in a quick and easy manner.

STUDENT PROGRESS

The Parent Portal will contain regularly updated information on attendance and course marks. Details relating to this will be sent to parents and carers on a regular basis.

Please feel free to call our Progress Tutors or teaching staff to discuss progress at other times, if you have any concerns or questions.

EXPECTATIONS

Our students will all be made aware of the college commitment, included later in this booklet, in their first week via Orientation. This outlines our joint responsibilities and expectations. We expect students to respond positively to our intention to treat them as adults, by behaving as if they were in employment.

Attendance, punctuality and commitment are therefore very important. Please help us by reinforcing this and call the college if students are ill or unable to attend for other reasons. Also avoid booking holidays and appointments that would take students away from their lessons – our college term dates and holidays are included in this booklet.

ATTENDANCE

Your son or daughter will have received a course timetable outlining the times and location of their classes. Students must attend all classes as well as a weekly Upskill and Extended Learning sessions. Parents will be notified of absences that have not been authorised and where appropriate support and interventions to assist in attendance improvements will be provided. If a student's attendance presents a concern this will trigger the Attendance Policy and parents/carers will be advised of action being taken to support your child. This may require involvement from yourself to support this.

If they are unable to attend college, due to sickness for example, it should be reported by telephone before 9am to reception by phone on 023 8051 4777.

It is not considered appropriate to arrange appointments or driving lessons during classes and every effort should be made to arrange holidays outside of term-time.



ATTENDANCE & LINKS TO SUCCESS

LEARNERS WITH ATTENDANCE RATES OF MORE THAN 90 PER CENT ARE THREE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO PASS THAN LEARNERS WITH AN ATTENDANCE RATE OF LESS THAN 90 PER CENT.

If you wish to discuss your son or daughter's attendance at any time you should contact the relevant Progress Tutor.

- We record and monitor students' attendance closely
- Intervene straightaway if a student's attendance is unsatisfactory
- Encourage students to take responsibility for their attendance
- Make sure you are fully informed of your son/daughter's attendance

THE TABLE BELOW OUTLINES THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF LOW ATTENDANCE AND SUCCESS:

Attendance	Impact on Course Completion	Impact on Achievement
95 per cent to 100 per cent	You are likely to complete your course successfully	If you work hard in the lessons you should be able to get the most out of your studies
90 per cent to 94 per cent	You are likely to complete the course	By missing lessons you are likely to get a lower grade than you should – make sure you catch up missed work
80 per cent to 89 per cent	You risk not completing your course	You are very likely to under - perform and seriously risk getting one or two grades below your potential – or failing your course
Below 80 per cent	There is a high probability that you will withdraw from your course or be asked to leave	Missing the equivalent of 1 day a week or more means you seriously risk failing your course



SAFEGUARDING & SECURITY

SAFEGUARDING

The college prioritises the safeguarding of our students. All staff are trained to understand their legal responsibilities in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults following the statutory guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. They all have DBS checks. We have a Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), a full time Student Support Manager and a team of Safeguarding Officers who have extra training to support students who have concerns.

SECURITY

The college is a safe learning environment and we intend to keep it that way. Access to the college is limited to only approved personnel with access to college buildings only permitted via ID card entry. Staff regularly patrol the estates and we also work with local Police Community Support Officers to minimise and potential criminal activity in the locality.

Lanyards and ID Badges - Students must wear their college lanyards and photographic ID badges at all times. Anyone not wearing the appropriate ID when walking around the college will be challenged. Replacements Lanyards and ID Badges are available for £5. They are required in exams, to receive support from any of the Student Services and other support teams, to use printers/photocopiers and to take out resources from the learning resources centre. We have a 'no badge, no service' approach.

ONLINE SAFETY

The internet and online resources provide fantastic educational opportunities but also carry risks. The college prioritises online safety by providing excellent learning resources to support the short qualification for all students in online safety, offered as part of our Upskill programme.

Helpful information for students and parents/carers is available on many websites including <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk> and <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>.

BULLYING

The college does not tolerate bullying and provides advice, guidance and support to students on bullying issues. Bullying is never ignored but it may sometimes be difficult to resolve. We hope that parents and carers will support our efforts and approaches on the few occasions when this issue is raised.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The college is committed to enabling all students to participate fully in student life. The college creates an atmosphere of mutual trust, harmony and respect, where differences are recognised and everyone's contribution is equally valued and respected.

We do not tolerate discriminatory behaviour on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief (includes lack of belief), sex or sexual orientation.

We aim to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between all. Anyone who experiences difficulties will get support. They should speak to a member of staff, e.g. their Progress Tutor.

Students have a right to express their individuality. They also have an obligation to respect other peoples' values and beliefs and take responsibility for their behaviour.

BRITISH VALUES

The college prepares students for successful life in modern Britain and actively promotes the British Values, defined by the government as: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different backgrounds, faiths and beliefs.

Please encourage your child to take part in democratic processes in the college, by volunteering for Student Voice activities with the student executive or being a group representative.

STUDENT HEALTH & WELLBEING

COUNSELLING

To support the rising need of students for access to specialist support, the college will be introducing an in-house counselling service from October. The counsellors provide confidential support to students who require higher levels of support in order to access and succeed at college. This is usually restricted to a maximum of six appointments but can be extended under particular circumstances. We ask students seeking this support to prioritise the appointments. Students will forfeit their appointments if they miss more than one without good reason.

WELFARE OFFICERS

We have a team of Welfare Officers who support referred students who have particular concerns such as anxiety which may be a barrier to them accessing their lessons. These staff are located in our Student Support Centre.

HEALTHY EATING

The college restaurant provides a range of healthy eating options. There are drinking water fountains around college. The catering team are happy to discuss provision for those with particular dietary requirements. Eligible students can qualify for free meals in college, contact the Bursary Officer or visit our website for more information.

SMOKE FREE SITE

Smoking, including vaping, is not permitted within the College grounds except in the designated areas.

SPORTS FACILITIES

The college has excellent sports facilities including a fitness suite, sports hall and full sized grass football pitch and sports field.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The college seeks to help students from lower household incomes with the cost of going to college by helping to cover essential course related costs.

The college can provide financial support for the following:

- Discounted bus pass
- Refund ferry tickets
- Lunch card
- Subject related resources
- Travel cost to work placement
- Exam fees (where applicable)

If you are 16 to 18 years old and under local authority care or are a care leaver, or living independently or receive Disabled Support Allowance or PIP and Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit, you may be eligible to a higher level bursary. Please note the cost of the bus pass and the daily use of the lunch card will be deducted every term.

You can complete the application form via our website and send it to the email below with the relevant evidence attached. The link for this is [here](#).

Evidence of all income will be required at the time of application, please note we are unable to process your application without the evidence. We encourage you to complete and return your applications as soon as possible to enable funding to be allocated before the start of the academic year.

Please allow up to ten working days from submitting your application form and the supporting evidence.

You will need to re-apply for this bursary, with new evidence, each academic year.

Please see the FAQs on the last page of the application form to assist with any queries you may have.



SUPPORTING & REWARDING ACHIEVEMENT

LEARNING SUPPORT

Our team of Learning Support Team Leaders and Learning Support Assistants provide one to one sessions, small group workshops and in-class support to help students achieve their learning goals.

Our Learning Support Centre (located within our Learning Centre and Study Spaces) provides drop in support options. Team members will support students to use appropriate learning technology particularly if this is identified as appropriate for exam access arrangements. The team's philosophy is to support students to become more independent learners.

PRIVATE STUDY

Our Learning Resource Centres have great spaces students can use to study in their own time. IT devices can be loaned and accessed along with a range of reading resources and study spaces.

REWARDS SCHEMES

We have a number of student reward schemes to celebrate and reward full attendance as well as achievements or contributions to college.

EXAMS & ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

MOST STUDENTS HAVE EXAMS AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS REGULARLY IN COLLEGE. THEY MUST TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENSURING THEY HAVE BEEN ENTERED FOR THE CORRECT EXAMS AND THAT THEY CHECK TIMES AND ROOMING ON THE EXAMS NOTICE BOARD AND VIA THE STUDENT PORTAL.

EXAM CONDUCT

Students must bring their student ID badge to all exams. Mobile phones, pagers and other communication devices are not allowed in the exam rooms and severe penalties are applied by the exam boards if students contravene these regulations. We recommend that students do not bring these items to the exam rooms as we cannot look after them securely. Students are also now required by the exam boards to take off any wrist watches and display them clearly on their exam desk.

If students completed part of a qualification at another school or college eg part of a BTEC Diploma, it is vital they see the Examinations Team to ensure the two parts of their qualifications are combined properly.

ACCESS TO EXAM ARRANGEMENTS

If students have had any special exam arrangements (such as extra time, use of a word processor or rest breaks) in school, it is very important that you let us know about this as soon as possible. Please contact our Exams Access Arrangements Officer on 02380 514713 and be prepared to provide any necessary medical evidence or educational psychologists reports. Be aware that it may not be appropriate for arrangements used in school to be continued.

If new circumstances dictate the need for special arrangements, we must be informed as soon as possible. Recommended 'access to exam arrangements' which make use of technology such as laptops or reading pens, or involve readers or scribes, will only be confirmed if students attend required workshops with our additional support team. We also have to evidence that this is their 'normal way of working'.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

If students experience events in their life, close to or during exam periods, such as a family bereavement, a serious accident or an event during one of their exams, which has a serious impact on their concentration, this should be reported to the Exams Manager as soon as possible, as she may be able to apply for 'Special Consideration' from the exam board(s). The deadline for this is early in July for summer exams so it is best done at the time of the exam.

ENQUIRIES ABOUT RESULTS

When results are received by students, information regarding options for remarks and so on is available on the Student Portal. The exams team and subject teachers can advise on the best options.

SUPPORTING PROGRESSION & EMPLOYABILITY

CAREERS & PROGRESSION ADVICE

Our qualified careers advisors help students to research and make key decisions about work and higher education. Individual advice and guidance sessions will be provided for all students but can also be accessed upon request.

ENRICHMENT

Students should try to take part in the programme of activities and short courses which include sports, music and drama. Employers and university admissions tutors value this type of activity. Students will find out more about these exciting opportunities in our Freshers' Fair in early September.

PART-TIME WORK

We recognise that many of our students will wish to take up some form of part time work while they are college. We see this as a useful way for them to show responsibility and gain knowledge of the world of work. There is however an important balance to be struck between part time work, study time, and leisure. Studies suggest that success in subjects can be reduced, if students work outside college for more than 10 to 12 hours per week on average.

WORK PLACEMENTS & WORK RELATED LEARNING

Our careers team works with teaching and support staff to arrange work placements and other work related learning opportunities linked to their study programme and career aspirations.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

STUDENT UNION, STUDENT COUNCIL, STUDENT REPS & TASK FORCES

The Student Council is made up of an elected Executive, including a Student President as well as Student Representatives. The Student Council works with the student body to identify ways in which we can improve the college experience and support their development and then will work with staff to make those changes happen. Students also have the opportunity to form Task Forces. These groups identify potential improvements or developments in college or the local community and work with members of staff or external specialists to bring about positive changes.

COLLEGE COMMITMENT

We ask all students to contribute positively to the college by respecting each other and by looking after our college facilities and environment. We would rather spend money on learning than on clearing litter or repairing damaged property.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE

There are great opportunities to take part in voluntary service in the local community, helping in schools, hospitals, charity shops and environmental projects. Voluntary service is a key part of some qualifications.

THE STUDENT VOICE

We welcome the opportunity to improve by responding to feedback from students. They can use feedback forms which are available around college and are asked to complete surveys or take part in focus groups.

CHARITY EVENTS

Our students support national charity events such as Children in Need and Comic Relief as well as other specific projects.

TRAVEL TO COLLEGE

THE COLLEGE IS SERVICED BY SEVERAL BUS ROUTES AND HAS PLENTY OF PARKING FOR CARS, MOPEDS AND BICYCLES AVAILABLE ON SITE.



TRAVEL BY BUS

Our free shuttle bus service is available to all students. The service runs in the morning, lunchtime and afternoon, stopping at the Isle of Wight Red Jet terminal (for students travelling for the Isle of Wight), West Quay and Southampton Central train station.

Students enrolling with us will benefit from a range of bus travel options. Information to purchase a bus pass is available on the First Bus Website.



CAR, MOTORCYCLE AND BIKES

We are easily accessible by car, via local routes and nearby motorway links at the Chilworth interchange M27 (J4)/ M3 (J14). We have 155 parking spaces available to students at a cost of £20 (non-refundable) for the duration of their time at college. Whilst the college is conveniently located for parking, we must be respectful to our neighbours and encourage parking within the college to reduce street congestion.

Richard Taunton has extensive car and motorcycle parking facilities and secure cycle storage facilities on-site which are accessible to all students every day, plus showers and changing facilities located in the Sports department.

It is illegal to use privately owned e-scooters in public spaces. As such, there are no facilities for storing e-scooters on the college grounds and we request that students refrain from bringing them to college.

Students are responsible for the safe storage and security of their property and the college assumes no responsibility for any damage or loss that may be incurred on college grounds.



TRAVEL FROM THE ISLE OF WIGHT

We offer a free shuttle service for students catching the ferry from the Isle of Wight. We are also able to help with travel costs for students coming from the Isle of Wight. Please call Student Services on 02380 514720 for more information. For further information on travelling from the Isle of Wight visit the Red Funnel website.

There are three terms per academic year and our prices are very competitive. You may be entitled to help with travel costs depending on your financial circumstances. If you have any queries about travelling to college, please call our travel experts in Students Services on 02380 514720.

Please note:

We reserve the right to amend timetables or fares at any time during the academic year

Changes to public services are at the discretion of the bus operator.

For more information about our travel support please call **02392 588 311** or email bursary@lighthouselearningtrust.ac.uk

KEY DATES

Date	COLLEGE EVENT
Thursday 7 September	RE-ORIENTATION FOR LEVEL 3 YEAR 2 STUDENTS
Friday 8 September	ORIENTATION FOR NEW STUDENTS AND THOSE STARTING NEW COURSES
Monday 11 September	START OF TEACHING
Wednesday 18 October	INSET DAY - COLLEGE CLOSED FOR STAFF TRAINING
Monday 23 to Friday 27 October	HALF-TERM
Monday 30 October	TEACHING AND FULL TIMETABLE RESUMES
Monday 20 to Friday 24 November	MOCK EXAM WEEK FOR LEVEL 3 WORK EXPERIENCE WEEK FOR LEVEL 2
Monday 18 December to Monday 1 January 2024	WINTER BREAK - COLLEGE CLOSED
Tuesday 2 January	TEACHING AND FULL TIMETABLE RESUMES
Friday 26 January	INSET DAY - COLLEGE CLOSED FOR STAFF TRAINING
Monday 29 and Wednesday 31 January	PARENTS EVENING
Monday 12 to Friday 16 February	HALF-TERM
Monday 19 February	TEACHING AND FULL TIMETABLE RESUMES
Friday 29 March to Friday 12 April	SPRING BREAK
Monday 15 April	TEACHING AND FULL TIMETABLE RESUMES
Monday 6 May	BANK HOLIDAY - COLLEGE CLOSED
Monday 27 to Friday 31 May	HALF-TERM
Monday 3 June	TEACHING AND FULL TIMETABLE RESUMES
Friday 5 July	LAST DAY OF TEACHING
Thursday 15 August	LEVEL 3 RESULTS PUBLISHED
Thursday 22 August	LEVEL 2 RESULTS PUBLISHED

SUGGESTIONS & COMMENTS

We are very keen to improve our service. Your views, whether positive or critical, about any aspect of the college are very important. You can send suggestions to the Principal by e-mail at email@richardtaunton.ac.uk, telephone, post or dropping your suggestions in writing at the college reception.

COMPLAINTS

If you or your son/daughter have a complaint we would encourage you to try to sort the problem out informally wherever possible. However, if the matter cannot be dealt with satisfactorily in an informal way, please write to the Principal. All complaints will be dealt with as swiftly as possible in line with our Complaints Policy and you will be told in a letter what action is being taken.

All complaints and associated correspondence and/or action taken are reported to the governors annually.



YOU CAN EXPECT:

- to receive regular updates and information via email bulletins
- access to the Parent Portal unless your daughter or son have asked for this to be withheld
- an opportunity to attend progress review events and meet subject lecturers to discuss progress reports
- an invitation to the Higher Education Information Evenings at the College (for parents/carers of students on level 3 courses)
- a prompt response to any enquiry
- an opportunity to make an appointment to meet with any member of staff regarding student progress
- emailed information about any absences or course changes on a regular basis if you have provided your email details (paper copies mailed if you tell us you have no access to the internet)
- contact from the Progress Tutor if attendance, punctuality or progress become a serious problem

WE EXPECT YOU TO:






- support us in our drive to produce independent learners who strive to achieve their full potential and get the most out of life at College
- support the College's commitment to full attendance, punctuality, meeting deadlines and good behaviour
- contact the college and report any absences for your child each day of their absence
- respect term dates and arrange holidays and appointments outside term time and avoiding the summer exam results day
- inform the College of any change of address, telephone number or other contact details
- inform the College if you are concerned about progress
- attend progress review events evenings where possible
- treat College staff in a courteous and respectful manner
- use the Parent Portal to support your child's progress

PLEASE NOTE THIS LIST OF EXPECTATIONS ASSUMES STUDENT GRANTING OF PERMISSION TO SHARE INFORMATION UNDER GDPR. (SEE EARLIER INFORMATION ON GDPR)



WORKING TOGETHER **RICHARD TAUNTON** **SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**

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