

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY

1. Policy Statement

Sir William Perkins's School is committed to preparing its students to make appropriate choices post-18 and this policy supports the School in actively promoting its students' social and economic wellbeing and contribution to society. The School provides all students with opportunities and experiences which allow them to make impartial, and informed decisions about a wide range of Higher Education options. The vast majority of students proceed to university or college, either immediately or after a gap year.

In line with our Provision of Information policy, this document is available to all interested parties on our website and on request from the school office. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- The Careers, Education and Guidance Policy

SWPS is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory, in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunities policy.

2. Aims

- To enable students to make informed choices about subjects, courses and institutions so that they secure places appropriate to their academic potential and are able to fulfil appropriate career options.
- To provide specific support in specialist areas such as Oxbridge, medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, art, music, overseas applications, and higher or degree apprenticeships.
- To offer an appropriate and efficient university application system, and to train staff and students in its use, currently the UCAS Apply system.
- To advise and support students in preparing appropriate personal statements to support their applications and to provide professional, accurate and supportive references on all candidates.
- To brief students about the financial aspects of higher education support, and to brief them on the application process for this.
- To encourage students to look into options other than university where this is appropriate to the interests of the student.

3. Content of the Higher Education Provision

3.1 Post-16 Subject Choices and Academic Monitoring

Preparation begins in Year 10: all Year 10 students undertake psychometric testing in the summer term by taking the Morrisby Test. This informs their A level choices. In Year 11 they also receive an internal interview with a member of the Leadership Team to ensure their choice of subjects supports appropriate higher education choices. Students are also invited to attend the Higher Education fair in March.

The reporting system regularly reviews students' progress in each subject throughout the Sixth Form. Any necessary action is discussed and agreed with subject teachers and form tutors.

Progress is also discussed with students and parents/carers at Parents' Evenings. The internal milestone assessment monitoring process checks progress against ALIS grades, expected grades and working at grades.

3.2 The Life Skills Programme

The PSHCE programme (Life Skills), which subscribes to the VESPA programme, is geared at various points throughout Year 12 and the beginning of the Autumn Term of Year 13 to guiding students to make appropriate choices of courses and institutions. This is delivered by the Director of Sixth Form, form tutors and occasionally by outside speakers.

Students and parents/carers attend a "Life Beyond SWPS" information evening, which addresses the key issues around choice of courses and institutions. A detailed in-house booklet accompanies this event. Advice on application to universities abroad and to specific vocational courses (e.g. medicine) is also provided where necessary through the MDV programme and the Elite and Overseas University Application programme. A Higher Education fair is held in March where universities visit SWPS to guide the students through the options available. The Head of Careers also organises a variety of talks throughout the year and these are open to Years 10-13. A UCAS Conference Day is run in June where universities, the Director of Sixth Form, the Head of Careers, various HODS and the MDV Co-Ordinator deliver workshops and presentations to students on the application process, writing personal statements, the variety of options available and other post school opportunities.

Students are encouraged to visit Higher Education Institutions at weekends and in the holidays, in order not to miss A level teaching but Year 12 are allowed one day authorised absence during the second half of the summer term to visit open days. Gap year information is provided as part of the PSHCE programme, and local Gap Year Conventions are advertised.

3.3 UCAS

In Year 12, Life Skills sessions cover all topics related to "Life after SWPS" in a carousel of sessions. Students are introduced to the UCAS website at this stage and are encouraged to undertake relevant work experience throughout their time in the Sixth Form that will benefit their Higher Education choices.

Draft UCAS predicted grades are made by Heads of Department at the end of Year 12 and are communicated to students by tutors at the beginning of Year 13 in accordance with the school's UCAS Grade Protocol. All subject staff provide information about students' academic performance to tutors, who compile the first draft of the reference. It is explained to students that, whilst taking into account potential achievement, subject staff need sufficient evidence that the students are on track and are working hard enough to achieve these predicted grades. Further information about extra-curricular activities and contribution to school life is also collected. UCAS references are reviewed and amended by the Director of Sixth Form and, when possible, by the Head of the school before being sent to UCAS or relevant Higher Education Institution or employer.

Where appropriate and relevant, students are encouraged to attend taster courses organised by various universities, or by organisations aimed at specific careers.

4. Competitive Applications

Possible Oxbridge candidates are identified by the Elite and Overseas University Co-Ordinator in the Autumn term of Year 12 and informal discussions are held with each student to find out their intentions. Departments often provide a mentor for applicants to support the student in their application in conjunction with guidance from the Elite and Overseas University Co-Ordinator.

Students wishing to apply for Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Science are invited to join the MDV society in the Autumn term of Year 12. Students in Years 10 and 11 are offered taster sessions to demonstrate the support available once they enter the Sixth Form.

The importance of early application is emphasised and all students are encouraged to submit their UCAS form by half term in the Autumn term if at all possible.

Interview training for all applicants is available; students in Year 13 are encouraged to attend a mock interview given by university admissions tutors or other subject experts in the Autumn term.

Students are supported by form tutors when choosing which firm and insurance university offers to accept in the Spring term of Year 13, and on applying for financial support (means tested fees, loans, bursaries etc.) They are also briefed on procedure following issue of results in August. The Director of Sixth Form, tutors, key academic staff and SLT are on hand on results day to assist any students missing their "conditional firm" or "conditional insurance" offers, including help with the Adjustment and Clearing process if necessary.

Past students making post-results applications are supported; any necessary advice is given, references are provided and applications processed.

5. Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body is ultimately responsible for the effective oversight, review and amendment of this policy and understands its legal obligation to do so.

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually by the Director of Sixth Form or as events or legislation requires.

Next scheduled review date: September 2025		Last reviewed: June 2025	
Key updates in this version:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor changes to text and formatting to aid clarify		