

Q3 Academy Sixth Form

Student and Parent/Carer Handbook 2024-25



ACADEMY
GREAT BARR



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Personnel & Contacts

Q3 Academy, Wilderness Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham B43 7SD

Telephone: 0121 358 6186 ext. 8533

Role	Staff	Email Address	Ext.
Head of Sixth Form	Miss M Benning	m.benning@gbr.merciantrust.org.uk	8624
Assistant Head of Sixth Form	Mr P Crawford	p.crawford@gbr.merciantrust.org.uk	8647
Sixth Form Administrator	Mrs L Devane	l.devane@gbr.merciantrust.org.uk	8533
Sixth Form Academic Champion	Mrs A Henson	a.henson@gbr.merciantrust.org.uk	8246
Careers Officer	Mrs C Meredith	c.meredith@gbr.merciantrust.org.uk	8264
Examinations Officer	Ms F Evans	exams@gbr.merciantrust.org.uk	8337
Attendance Administrator	Mrs D Duckett	d.duckett@gbr.merciantrust.org.uk	8288

Sixth Form Agreement

WE WILL UNDERTAKE TO:

- Provide the teaching and assessment necessary for you to complete all courses;
- Arrive at lessons punctually;
- Set work regularly, mark and return it within an agreed time;
- Ensure appropriate work is provided if teachers are absent;
- Ensure that you and your parents/carers know the progress you are making;
- Devise strategies to support you if you are not making satisfactory progress.
- Monitor your attendance.

Sixth Form Agreement

EXPECTATIONS

The Sixth Form smart dress policy is detailed below. It is expected that every student starting at Q3 Academy Great Barr Sixth Form will adhere to this policy.

EXAMPLES OF SMART DRESS

Tailored suits, or tailored blazers (optional);
Smart trousers;
Skirts and dresses (knee length or below);
Tailored shirts worn with a tie are optional;
Polo shirts (no logo);
Smart sweatshirts (no logo);
Blouse;
Smart shoes or boots;
Smart jumpers or cardigans;
A natural style of make-up is permitted;
Nail varnish is permitted, false nails should be of a sensible and workable length;
Jewellery size needs to be suitable for a workable environment;
Natural colour hair/eyebrows – no extreme colours or styles;
Suitable clothes for Sport/Recreation;
ID Badge – issued by the Academy;
Mobile phones are only allowed in the designated Sixth Form study area.

Trainers or hoodies will not be permitted.

Sixth Form Agreement

REGISTRATION GUIDELINES FOR ALL SIXTH FORM STUDENTS

- 100% attendance is expected of you as detailed on your timetable. Registration will be taken at all lessons. A register will be maintained by the Attendance Administrator for Private Study lessons.
- Students must arrive punctually to the Academy by 08:50.
- When an absence genuinely could not be foreseen in advance, you must telephone the Attendance Administrator, on 0121 358 6186 extension 8288, before 08:30, to report why you are absent and to give an indication of the length of time you will be away for. This information will be passed onto the Head of Sixth Form.
- When you arrive late to the Academy you must report to the Attendance Administrator to record the time you arrived and the reason why you are late. Equally if you need to leave the premises for any reason you must report to the Attendance Administrator, to record the time you leave the Academy site and the reason.

Examples of authorised absences:

- An evidenced medical appointment which cannot be arranged outside of Academy hours, i.e. hospital or orthodontist;
- Attendance at a funeral of a relative or close friend;
- An official religious holiday, pertinent to your faith;
- Attendance at a university open day or a careers-related appointment;
- Attendance at a probation meeting, a court hearing or police interview;
- Participation in an activity which reflects a significant personal achievement, e.g. territorial army or cadet events;
- Organised college trips – notification in advance.

Examples of unauthorised absences:

[This list is not intended to be exhaustive]

- Holidays during term time;
- Part or full-time work which is not part of the student's programme of study;
- Leisure activities, birthdays or similar celebrations;
- Shopping;
- Babysitting younger siblings;
- Driving lessons or tests;
- Suspension from your course;
- Revising at home instead of being in the Academy.

Tutor Time

Attendance at Tutor Time is compulsory.

Sixth Form Agreement

YOUR WORK ETHOS:

- Deadlines for work to be completed, as negotiated between staff and student, will be met on time;
- All students will be willing to undertake work experience, voluntary work and attend residential;
- When not in scheduled activities or lessons students should make effective use of time for private study;
- Students must be available to teaching and tutorial staff during Academy hours and part-time work should not impinge on students' availability;
- Students should behave in a mature way in the Sixth Form Study Room and appreciate that this is part of a work environment;
- We expect all students to understand and comply with the ethos of Q3 Academy Great Barr, with an emphasis on self-discipline, commitment, motivation and success. Mutual respect should operate at all times and at all levels;
- Students must behave respectfully towards their peers and all staff. Students should display good manners and courtesy towards staff, e.g. in answering or asking questions or otherwise directing remarks towards staff.

It is your responsibility as a learner of Q3 Academy Sixth Form to comply with these guidelines. Failure to do so will result in a meeting being arranged between you and the Head of Sixth Form, Miss M Benning. At this meeting Miss Benning will address your issues and, if deemed necessary, will inform you that a letter is to be sent home to your parent/carer inviting them to attend a meeting in which your issues will be discussed and resolved.

Should any student fail to adhere to any aspect of this agreement, the Academy reserves the right to apply sanctions, including withdrawing students from roll.

Procedures

Students and Visitors

It is a safeguarding requirement for all Sixth Form students to visibly wear their personal ID badge. This is essential as Sixth Form students do not wear Academy Business Dress, and it is important that they are recognisable to main Academy students and staff. All students will be issued with their own personal ID badge and will be responsible for its safe keeping/replacement, for which there is a charge. All replacement items need to be ordered and paid for using the ParentPay system. For security reasons, students must not bring external visitors onto the Academy site. All visitors to Sixth Form must report to Reception and their identification must be visible at all times.

Mobile Telephones, Headphones and MP3 Players

Mobile phones must be switched off during lessons and not used on the Academy site. Students should note that there are very strict rules concerning mobile phones in examinations. Any mobile phones/headphones seen around the Academy will be confiscated.

Personal Belongings

Students must be aware that Q3 Academy Great Barr will not be responsible for any loss or damage to any personal equipment.

Smoking

The Academy buildings, grounds, and all nearby residential streets are strictly no smoking areas for all students.

Drugs and Illegal Substances

It is the Academy's policy to inform the police in cases involving the possession, sale or consumption of controlled drugs within the Academy grounds. In addition, students must not enter licensed premises during the Academy day. Alcohol/drugs must not be brought onto the Academy site under any circumstances.

Withdrawal

We understand that occasionally, Sixth Form study may not be for everyone. If you choose to withdraw from the Academy, it is essential you notify the Head of Sixth Form in writing. She will arrange for you to complete an **End of Study** form as well as ensure you have fully thought through your decision.

Sixth Form Life

Changes of Course

It is strongly recommended that changes of course are discussed and implemented prior to the start of term in September. Changes after this will only be considered in weeks 2 and 3 of the term. Students wishing to change must first discuss this with the staff whose subject they intend to change from and to. Agreement must be made with these staff, and the Head of Sixth Form notified. The Sixth Form Administrator will then re-issue a new timetable as soon as possible.

Communication

The Sixth Form Team will convey information such as examination dates, trips etc. to students via the following:

- regular **compulsory** assemblies;
- notice boards around the Academy;
- messages via your Personal Tutor;
- email direct to students;
- letters and phone calls to parents/carers;
- students are responsible for informing the Sixth Form Administrator of any change to email, contact telephone numbers or postal addresses immediately.

The Academy website/internet also has up-to-date information regarding dates for your diary.

Private Study

This is essential to students' development as an independent learner. Part of their timetable comprises private study time. In addition, all non-contact 'free' time should be used for private study, reading, research and homework.

Part-Time Work

This should be kept to a minimum and should never exceed 7 hours per week. If students exceed this limit, they will be putting their results in jeopardy. The Sixth Form programme is very busy, and students will soon find themselves fully occupied and struggling with deadlines should they fail to devote the appropriate time to their studies.

Examinations

Any query relating to examinations should be directed to the Examinations Officer, who can be contacted on extension 8337 or email exams@gbr.merciantrust.org.uk.

Leadership Opportunities

Applications to become Prefects will be invited during the first half-term, and students are encouraged to apply for this post. In the Autumn Term applications are also invited to apply for the position of Senior Prefect; this is a voluntary opportunity to represent Q3 Academy Great Barr at the very highest level. Your Year 12 programme of study will also include the unique ASPIRE course, designed to develop your independence and leadership qualities.

Maximising Learning

A Levels are a big challenge. Despite having fewer subjects and fewer lessons, the workload increases. Students must be determined to succeed if they are going to do well. Expecting GCSEs that are “a little bit harder” is unrealistic. However, here are a few tips to ensure students can maximise their learning power.

Be Ready to Learn

- Have you arrived to your lesson on time?
- Have you brought your equipment?
- Have you brought your research/independent study?
- Are you ready to participate actively in the learning?

During lessons

- Do you make notes, even if not directed to?
- Have you answered all the questions that you can?
- Do you have questions for your teacher?
- If you're not sure about something, have you asked for more help?
- Have you got a positive attitude?
- Have you recorded your homework and independent study?

Private Study

- What work do you have to do?
- What more can you do to deepen your understanding?
- Can you “get ahead” of the rest of the class?
- Can you “read around” the topic you are studying?
- Have you consolidated your notes?
- Are your notes well organised?
- Is the quality of your work acceptable?
- Can you try applying your knowledge to exam papers?
- Have you tried on-line revision packages?

Getting Stuck?

- Have you gone back over your notes?
- Have you talked to your teacher? Or your classmates?
- Have you completed additional research?
- Have you used study and learning websites?
- Don't give up!

Maximising Learning

Worried...?

Worries at home and in the Academy can arise at any time during your time in the Academy. You need not just “get on with it” – there is someone to help ensure your worries don’t get bigger and you are properly supported. Consider speaking to one of these people:

- Head of Sixth Form (Miss M Benning)
- Assistant Head of Sixth Form (Mr P Crawford)
- Sixth Form Academic Champion (Mrs A Henson)
- Careers Officer (Mrs C Meredith)
- Your Personal Tutor
- Lead Inclusion Professional (Mrs C Court)
- One of your teachers

The 16-19 Bursary

Students who are interested in receiving the 16-19 Bursary will find the relevant application forms and guidance which are available on our website.

After Sixth Form: HE & Careers

Higher Education

A formal programme to prepare students begins in the Summer Term of Year 12. This will start with preparation for University and UCAS (the method of application) during Private Study sessions and visits from universities during Inspire sessions.

In Year 12, students will register with UCAS and begin completing the online application form during the Summer Term. They will be advised about entering subject details and, specifically, about drafting their Personal Statements. Careers information will be available for all students whether they intend to go to university or not, along with advice about writing CVs and presentation at interview. For students aspiring to Oxbridge, a programme tailored for preparation to such institutions includes visits and one-to-one mentoring.

In addition to this programme, we are fully aware that students benefit from having a wide range of responsibilities and evidence of leadership on their CVs and personal statements. We support this through:

- Senior Prefect role
- Prefect role
- Sports Leaders
- Duke of Edinburgh
- Work Experience
- Learner Support

Future Study

When choosing subjects to study, it can be important to consider your plans for the future. If you already have a definite career or university course in mind, ensure that you are choosing the right post-16 courses, whether they are A Levels or Level 3 BTECs. Up to date advice can be obtained by speaking to Miss M Benning, Head of Sixth Form, Mr P Crawford, Assistant Head of Sixth Form, Mrs A Henson, Sixth Form Academic Champion, or Mrs C Meredith, Careers Officer.

Grades/UCAS points	A* (BTEC distinction*)	A (BTEC distinction)	B	C (BTEC merit)	D	E (BTEC pass)
A Level or L3 BTEC	56	48	40	32	24	16
AS Level		20	16	12	10	6

Your Academic Progress

Target Grades

All A Level target grades are calculated using their GCSE results – we take the average GCSE point score (APS) and plot it on a line of progression to the end of Year 13, based on national rates of expected progress. These will always be a *minimum* expectation and we will raise targets if appropriate. When it comes to writing university references, we use predicted grades, which are created by our teachers based on your son/daughter's actual progress.

Monitoring Progress

Student progress will be monitored very carefully in the Sixth Form to ensure all students get the best from their learning programme. Monitoring will be on going with students, subject teachers, Personal Tutors and the Sixth Form Leadership Team all fully involved and informed. Students will discuss their progress with Teachers, Personal Tutor/and or Head of Sixth Form on a regular basis. We expect **students** to take responsibility for evaluating their **own** progress and setting targets for improvement. In addition to this, there are four interim reports.

If a student is having difficulty in any of his/her studies, or problems with time management, he/she is advised to discuss this at the earliest opportunity with a member of staff. This may be his/her subject teacher(s), one of the Heads of Year and/or a member of the Sixth Form Leadership Team. **Remember we are here to support you.**

ParentPay

The Academy operates a “cashless” system at lunchtimes. **No student can hand over money to the catering staff when purchasing their food or drinks.** All purchases are performed via the student’s ID card, which is part of their Sixth Form Smart Dress. To make a purchase, money must first be loaded onto the student’s account. Free School Meal (FSM) allowances are automatically assigned to a student’s account for the lunch period only. These take priority over any cash on an account at the point-of-sale.

Money is loaded onto a student’s account using ParentPay at ParentPay.com. This system allows parents or carers to log into the ParentPay website and securely load your child’s account by credit/debit card.

Parents/carers of new students to the Academy will be informed of their username and password for ParentPay via email.

If you experience any difficulties accessing the site, please email parentpay@gbr.merciantrust.org.uk.

Work Experience

Year 12 students at Q3 Academy Great Barr are required to complete a week-long work experience placement during the academic year. Students are provided with the opportunity to experience being in a real workplace environment and practising the skills required in the workplace such as teamwork, time management and organisation. Providing our students with the opportunity to complete work with employers will enable them to develop a better insight into the different careers available to them and to raise their aspirations.

For more information about aspirations, careers and employability available to you as a Q3 Academy Sixth Form student please contact Mrs C Meredith, Careers Officer.

Unifrog

In keeping with our commitment to provide students with outstanding careers guidance and tailored support when choosing their next step after leaving the Academy, we will be using Unifrog; an award-winning, online careers platform. All students in Years 12 and 13 will have access to the Unifrog website.

Unifrog brings into one place every undergraduate university course, apprenticeship and college course in the UK, as well as other opportunities, such as Leaver Programmes, MOOCs and every college at Oxford and Cambridge. This makes it easy for students to compare and choose the best university courses, apprenticeships or further education courses. They can also explore exciting opportunities further afield by looking at English-taught undergraduate programmes available in Europe and the USA.

Additionally, the platform helps students successfully apply for these opportunities by writing their personal statements, applications and CVs and guiding them through the process, allowing teachers to give live feedback.

Under UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018, we require your consent to share your child's data with Unifrog. By signing the Sixth Form Agreement contained in the Data Collection Pack you will be providing your consent.

Once the signed Sixth Form Agreement has been returned, students will be able to access the tool for the first time using a sign-up code which is unique to their Tutor Group. They then log in using their Academy email address and password and they can do so from any computer, tablet, or smartphone. We would encourage you to use the platform with your child so you can support them through the process of deciding their next step.

You can withdraw your consent at any time by submitting a request in writing to Miss M Benning to ask that we stop using and sharing your child's data with Unifrog.

For more information, please visit www.unifrog.org.

ICT Acceptable Use Agreement

When using TMT ICT systems and accessing the internet in the Academy or on any other TMT premises I will not:

- Use them for a non-educational purpose
- Use them without a teacher being present, or without a teacher's permission
- Access any inappropriate websites
- Access social networking sites (unless my teacher has expressly allowed this as part of a learning activity)
- Use chat rooms
- Open any attachments in emails, or follow any links in emails, without first checking with a teacher
- Use any inappropriate language when communicating online, including in emails
- Share my password with others or log in to the Academy's network using someone else's details
- Give my personal information (including my name, address or telephone number) to anyone without the permission of my teacher or parent/carer
- Arrange to meet anyone offline without first consulting my parent/carer, or without adult supervision

If I bring a personal mobile phone or other personal electronic device into the Academy:

- I will not use it during lessons, Tutor Time, clubs or other activities organised by the Academy, without a teacher's permission
- I will use it responsibly, and will not access any inappropriate websites or other inappropriate material or use inappropriate language when communicating online
- I will connect it to the Academy's Wi-Fi, if available.

I understand that the Trust will monitor the websites I visit.

I will immediately let a teacher or other member of staff know if I find any material which might upset, distress or harm me, or others.

I will always use the ICT systems and internet responsibly.

Parent/carer agreement: I agree that my child can use the ICT systems and internet provided by The Mercian Trust (TMT) when appropriately supervised by a member of Academy staff. I agree to the conditions set out above for students using the TMT ICT systems and internet, and for using personal electronic devices in the Academy, and will make sure my child understands the rules above fully.