



BEECHEN CLIFF

Lower Sixth Welcome Guide

Firstly, we would like to welcome all Lower Sixth students joining the Sixth Form in September. Although the build-up has been unusual, we are doing our best to make the next year as normal as possible. Below, the Senior Prefect Team has come up with some general advice for doing well and settling in to the Lower Sixth. This will help make the transition from Year 11 seem as easy, simple, and successful as possible.

Beechen Cliff's Core Values:

The core values of any school are important and ours try to encapsulate the spirit of the school. At Beechen we try to embody them to improve the school environment and teach vital life values which hopefully each student can carry forward into life.

- First is independence. Crucial for life in the Sixth Form especially now, the new term in these unusual circumstances will only allow students to be in school for their lessons. This means home learning and the independence for students to learn is a required skill. During your time at Beechen Cliff we develop the skill and instinct to learn which equips you well for future life of work or study.
- Another is compassion, looking out for others and empathising with them. A simple lesson of life that our school thinks is vital for our students to use all the time. When people and students get along it makes for a great learning environment.
- Aspiration. This is aiming to achieve everything we are capable of. We hope everyone in the Sixth Form will strive to reach new heights be they academic or not.
- Finally, the fourth core value is balance. This is where the school encourages keeping up extra-curricular activities alongside schoolwork. This may include sport, participation in the arts, or progressing through life with your friends. As a school we find the right mental and physical balance is needed to excel at school.



Beechen Cliff's School Ethos:

- The value of independence; this is embodied throughout the whole school and has been needed in the recent months. This independence can be either reading round your chosen A Level subject or taking your studies out of the classroom and furthering them at home and developing your skills.
- Use your teacher's guidance as an extra learning asset. This might be by looking for help during a lesson or asking a more detailed question after. This will help you in your studies and develop your personal learning progression in the Sixth Form. Also, the general Sixth Form office is always available and happy to talk to students and give them advice on Mental Health or educational help, never hesitate.
- Next, the school takes great pride in allowing our Sixth Form students to be more independent thinking and idea leading. Ideas are always welcome! This may be students making an event like a cake sale for charity or raising awareness about global issues.
- Finally, Beechen Cliff takes mental health extremely seriously and offers a wealth of support and resources for those who need it. The school has linked up with the charity "Boys in Mind" which provides great help for all our students. Of course, pastoral care is all the more important considering the past few months we have all been through. All students will have access to these services and more this year.



School Life At Beechen:

Whether you came to Beechen lower down the school or are coming new from elsewhere, life in school will be very different to how it was in your previous years. You get so much more freedom to do your own thing. We know how daunting it can be in a new setting but we can assure you that Beechen is a friendly and welcoming environment with plenty of teachers happy to help you out if you find yourself needing it (not to mention your fellow students in Year 13). When we start in September school life will not be completely normal and that will be new even for the everyone. Here we have answered some questions about school life that you might ask:

- What would a typical day look like? You could have anywhere from none to five lessons during the day, but you would likely have between one and four. Any free periods you have could be spent socialising in the Sixth Form common room or studying elsewhere (more on this below). There are also two breaks and lunchtime.
- What food is there? In the breaks you have the choice of hot baguettes and cold drinks served in the refectory or sweet cakes and hot drinks served by the lovely Allison in the common room. Hot meals are served in the refectory at lunchtime. Vegan and gluten-free options are available.
- Are there social events at Beechen? Naturally, mass gatherings will not be possible at the start of the year. But this does not mean there are not plenty of opportunities to get involved in the Sixth Form's vibrant social life. Our Social Secretaries are always active on Instagram (**@beechencliffsixth**) and Twitter too.



Students Stories:

We know that joining a new school can feel like a giant leap into the unknown. Thankfully, plenty of students have taken this jump before you! Here is what they have to say about the transition to Beechen.

- *"I was feeling quite nervous joining such a big school and one that differed so much from my previous. But I was soon reassured that the decision I had made was the right one! The immediate atmosphere of the Sixth Form was upbeat and welcoming - one I instantly felt a part of. The teachers were aware of the change many of us were facing and were always on hand to help if needed. I can honestly say it has been nothing but a positive, exciting first year and I can't wait for next year." - Year 13 student*
- *"I came to Beechen knowing only one person, and into a year of 33 girls, so I was very nervous at first; it was a completely different and new environment for me, and I was most definitely scared for the first few days. Fortunately, the pastoral team and many other members of staff did all they could to ensure that my transition (and that of all the students) to this new school was as easy and comfortable as possible. Within the first few weeks I had settled in, made many friends, and felt welcomed and comfortable; the initial nerves were long gone! Thanks to the amazing teachers, pastoral team and social events I felt as though I belonged to Beechen in no time." - Year 13 student*

Home Learning Tips:

During the last few months, the global pandemic has meant students have been forced to study at home which can be difficult at first. Listed below are a few ways to make studying at home easier.

- First key thing to note is turn off all distractions from around you. Whether it is your phone, the TV, a gaming device, or anything that might distract you.
- Secondly, we would advise designating an area which is non-leisure associated to be your study area. If you study in the lounge or bedroom this may cause your brain to subconsciously relax and not fully take in all the information required.
- Finally, we would advise a good set routine for work; relaxing is key as well. Although school is important, keeping a life balance remains vital.

So, you should try to balance studying with time to relax. If a repeat of lockdown did occur, we would recommend making a timetable or a routine reflecting the school day to help keep you on track and focused as best as you can.



General A Level Studying Advice:

Studying A Levels is more independent than GCSE's. So outside of lessons it is really up to you how you use your time. Managing this is crucial to stay on top of the workload. It may seem difficult to imagine yourself working independently at the moment, but it becomes second nature when you plan it and give it a go. Below are some ideas about how best to manage sport or social life with schoolwork.

- Firstly, your timetable will for the first time include free periods, which can be used to your advantage. By using your home as a place of focused work will help keep you on track and allow more time to socialise outside of school.
- Next, many past students have always recommended keeping on top of revision early, every time you finish a topic do some revision notes. This will one make you more confident on that topic and allow more revision time before bigger mock exams.
- Finally, the school runs Study Skills sessions throughout the whole year. This will entail general study guidance and setting goals for the week ahead (aspirational ones) and have an academic mentor to guide you through the Lower Sixth during these sessions. Lastly, you can use these sessions for super-curricular research and wider reading to help progress your grade and to let students in the group to share advice.

In summary, Beechen Cliff helps all students through the Sixth Form whether that is work, mental health, physical health, or exam technique. These are uncertain times but hopefully this year Beechen Cliff can give some stability. Finally, from our Senior Prefect team we all wish you a happy and successful first year at Beechen Cliff.