



WILBERFORCE
sixth form college



PARENT & CARER
HANDBOOK

PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME

Welcome to Wilberforce, I am delighted to welcome you and your child to our College community.

I am genuinely proud of everything we offer here – an inclusive and enriching education, outstanding experiences, and a nurturing environment where our students can thrive.

As your child embarks on this next chapter, College represents a significant step up from school. It requires dedication, hard work, and commitment to achieve the best possible results. Rest assured, we are here to provide all the support they need, but it's important that they also give 100% effort.

Parental and carer involvement is crucial to a student's success. A positive partnership between home and college benefits everyone involved. I kindly ask for your support in ensuring that your child maximizes their time with us – attending every lesson and session (on time and fully prepared!), engaging in independent study, taking advantage of the Upskilling & Enrichment programme, work experience opportunities as well as adhering to the College's Core Values and expectations.

Our students' time here is short, and we want them to make the most of every opportunity, both inside and outside the classroom.

I look forward to celebrating all the experiences and successes we will share with your child, and with you, in the years ahead.


Colin Peaks, Principal



**CORE
VALUES**



We conduct ourselves with integrity and respect for all.

We make students' experience central.

We value individuals and promote self-esteem.

We work as a team.

We encourage innovation, creativity and enjoyment.



MEET THE TEAM

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM



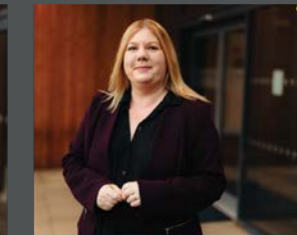
Colin Peaks
Principal



Suzanna May
Deputy Principal
Curriculum



Stewart Edwards
Assistant Principal
Safety & Operations



Rachel Hitchener
Assistant Principal
Quality of Teaching & Learning

You can make contact with the senior team via Vikki Reeve, Executive Office Manager & PA to the Principal by emailing vjr@wilberforce.ac.uk



FACULTY LEADERSHIP TEAM

Faculty Head of
Business & Maths

Teresa George:
tmg@wilberforce.ac.uk

Faculty Head of
Communications & Culture

Kelly McGurk:
kam@wilberforce.ac.uk

Faculty Head of
Creative Practice & Performance

Michael Cook:
mtc@wilberforce.ac.uk

Faculty Head of
Digital & Engineering

David Hastings:
djh@wilberforce.ac.uk

Faculty Head of
Health, Care & Internships

Lois Thorley:
ljt@wilberforce.ac.uk

Faculty Head of
Humanities & Social Sciences

Catherine Johnson:
cej@wilberforce.ac.uk

Faculty Head of
Science & Art

Lynne Quinn:
lq@wilberforce.ac.uk

Faculty Head of
Sport & Public Services

Adam Bolder:
apb@wilberforce.ac.uk

TERM DATES 2025/26

AUTUMN TERM

HALF TERM 1

Monday 1 September
-
Friday 24 October
2025

HALF TERM 2

Monday 3 November
-
Thursday 18 December
2025

SPRING TERM

HALF TERM 1

Monday 5 January
-
Friday 13 February
2026

HALF TERM 2

Monday 23 February
-
Friday 27 March
2026

SUMMER TERM

HALF TERM 1

Monday 13 April
-
Friday 22 May
2026

HALF TERM 2

Monday 1 June
-
Friday 26 June*
2026

*subject to all work and/or exams being completed.

STAFF TRAINING DAYS

There will be occasional staff training days throughout the year where students will be required to undertake independent study from home. Dates will be confirmed nearer the time.

THE COLLEGE DAY

The College day runs from **8:45am** through to **4:00pm**, except on Wednesdays when sessions finish at 2:00pm.

A student's study programme consists of more than just their chosen subject(s).

It includes:

◇ **COURSE/
LESSON TIME**

◇ **UPSKILLING & ENRICHMENT
PROGRAMME**

◇ **DEDICATED STUDY TIME**
(if applicable)

◇ **WORK EXPERIENCE**
(if applicable)

Students are expected to attend and participate fully in all these sessions, and they all contribute to their overall attendance figures.

Students may have a 'free day' on their timetable; however, there may be occasions where they are required to attend additional sessions on these days – this must be made a priority.



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY

EXPECTATIONS

Young people have a 'duty to attend' education or training until the end of the academic year in which they are 18 years old.

Students are required to attend all lessons and sessions on their timetable, on time, as well as any additional activity required by staff between the hours of 8.45am and 4.00pm.

PUNCTUALITY

Any student arriving later than five minutes for any lesson will be marked as late on the register. Persistent and unexplained lates may be subject to intervention.

If there is anything that impacts your child's ability to get to College on time, they should speak with their teacher.

REPORTING ABSENCES

We understand that there will be occasions when a student is unable to attend College (e.g. when unwell). Here are the procedures to follow on those occasions:

- All student absences need to be authorised by a parent/guardian.
- Please report absences by phone or email as early as possible on the day of absence. Unless you notify us of a long-term absence, absence should be reported on each subsequent day.

PHONE

**01482
711688**

Phone lines are open 8am to 4.30pm. A voicemail can be left outside of these hours – please ensure you provide student details and a brief outline of the nature of the absence.

EMAIL

enquiries@wilberforce.ac.uk



MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Absence for medical appointments should be authorised in advance, in the same way outlined on the page opposite.

Where possible, appointments should be arranged outside of lesson and/or term time to avoid missed learning.

LEAVING COLLEGE DURING THE DAY

If a student needs to leave College during the day and still has lessons to attend, they must sign out of College correctly, via the main reception.

Parents/carers will still need to contact the College to authorise this absence.

TERM TIME HOLIDAYS

Students should not take holidays during term time. This can negatively impact learning and may clash with exams and assessments, which take place throughout the academic year. Students are required to be in College and meet all deadlines to complete qualifications.

If there are special circumstances, please contact the Principal in writing, at least three weeks in advance, so we can consider the request and assess the impact on your child's education.



It is no coincidence that students with the best results, also have the best attendance.



HOMework & INDEPENDENT LEARNING

Sixth Form students must become autonomous – or independent – learners who can manage their time, solve problems, demonstrate higher order thinking skills and meet new challenges. This is absolutely crucial, not only for Advanced Level study, but in order to make the transition to Higher Education or the world of employment.

Learning does not just happen in the classroom. At Wilberforce College we use homework and independent study to support learning.



HOMework

Students will be set a **minimum of three hours of homework per week** – one hour per A Level/Extended Certificate course; three hours per full-time vocational course.

Homework will need to be handed in by the deadline given and will be assessed by the teacher.

Additional to this, students should undertake **independent learning**.

Independent learning is defined as: *“when pupils learn with a degree of autonomy, making active choices to manage and organise their learning, while deploying metacognitive strategies in the process”.*

-EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION

INDEPENDENT LEARNING

The benefits of independent learning for students include:

- **Improved academic performance**
- **Increased motivation and confidence**
- **Increased chances to be creative and intellectually creative**

Examples of independent study tasks include:

- **Revision**
- **Completion of assignments**
- **Completion of past exam papers**
- **Essay practice**
- **Research (for assignments and course etc.)**

This work is not handed in or marked, but teachers will monitor the level of independent study taking place.

We communicate with parents and carers regularly via email to ensure you receive all the relevant information regarding your child’s education; we also host parents’ evenings (with in-person and online options) so that parents can meet with teachers and get an update on their progress.

If you do not receive emails, or have changed your email address, please provide updated details via:

- telephone 01482 711688
- email_enquiries@wilberforce.ac.uk
(please include your child’s name and student number).

Attendance and assessment information is readily accessible to parents via the **Parent Portal**. Guidance on how to register for Parent Portal can be found here.

[CLICK HERE](#)

A copy of the **College Parents, Guardian and Carer Communication Policy** can be found here.

[CLICK HERE](#)

A copy of the **College’s Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy** can be found here.

[CLICK HERE](#)

COMMUNICATION

EXAMS & ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

EXAM FAQs

External exams at the College are run in line with the regulations set by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). We encourage you to access the full JCQ information for Students documents below, familiarising yourself with these will allow you to support your child.

CLICK
HERE

JCQ REGULATIONS

Students and parents must be aware that failure to follow regulations could result in disqualification from qualifications.

We run all formal mock exams under full JCQ regulations, this helps students become familiar with exam conditions, develop good habits, and understand the seriousness of exam conduct. By the time they sit their final exams, they will already know what to expect and how to manage the rules confidently. External exams are scheduled nationally so it is not an option to change the date or reschedule. Students are expected to attend all scheduled exams; you should notify us as soon as possible via the college absence reporting process.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Some students may be entitled to access arrangements in exams. These are adjustments, such as extra time, use of a reader or a scribe, designed to remove barriers to assessment. This must reflect the student's normal way of working in lessons and it's the colleges responsibility to make the final decisions relating to suitable access arrangements for students.

Access arrangements are not automatic, even if they have previously been in place at another centre. There are specific JCQ regulations which must be met, detailed evidence is gathered and reviewed by the College's Learning Support Manager before an application can be considered. Access arrangements do not give an unfair advantage. They ensure that students can demonstrate their knowledge and skills on an equal basis with others.

Further information regarding exams and access arrangements will be shared via our termly exam newsletters. If you have any questions or queries regarding exams, you can contact our Exams Team on 01482 711688 or email exams@wilberforce.ac.uk

Why are JCQ rules important?

They ensure all students are treated fairly and prevent malpractice in exams.

What items are not allowed in exams?

Mobile phones, smartwatches, headphones, notes, or any web-enabled device.

What must my child bring to exams?

Black pen (not gel), pencils, ruler, eraser, calculator (if allowed), and student ID.

What happens if my child is late?

They should go straight to the exam room. If they arrive within 45 minutes of the start time, they may still sit the paper.

What if my child is unwell on the exam day?

They should attend if possible. In cases of exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement or severe illness/injury, we can apply to the exam board for special consideration, this must be supported by appropriate evidence, for example, a medical note.

Can my child leave the exam early?

No. Students must stay for the full duration unless instructed otherwise by the invigilator.

What happens if my child talks during the exam?

Talking, communicating, or making contact with others counts as malpractice. The exam board may disqualify them.

How will my child know when their exams are?

Personalised timetables will be published in advance via our student platform Cedar with details of when and where exams are taking place. It's the responsibility of the student to check their timetable for updates.

How does seating work?

Students are allocated seats with candidate numbers. They must sit in the correct place to ensure accurate records.

What should my child do if they need help during the exam?

Raise their hand and wait for an invigilator. They must not speak to other candidates.

Can my child bring water or snacks?

A clear bottle with no label containing water is allowed, no other drinks or snacks are permitted.

SUPPORT

Support services at Wilberforce Sixth Form College are outstanding. Staff work collaboratively to ensure that any barriers to learning are removed, and that our students have the best chance of success.

We are extremely dedicated and committed in ensuring that all students receive the individual support they need to enable their success.

STUDENT SERVICES

The Student Services Team offer widespread and extensive support for any emotional needs that may affect learning at Wilberforce. This includes health and well-being support on a one-to-one basis, or onward referrals to external services.

If a student needs support in any way, they can speak with a member of the team:

Jo Brownlee: jbr@wilberforce.ac.uk

Steph Foston: sef@wilberforce.ac.uk

Helen Robinson: hmr@wilberforce.ac.uk

Craig Elliott: cre@wilberforce.ac.uk

LEARNING SUPPORT

The Learning Support Team provide specialist support to any student that requires additional help with their learning. The team work on a personal basis with students who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), accessibility issues, impairments and other additional learning needs.

If your child has additional needs, feels as though they are struggling or need extra help to support their success, you/they can contact **Ruth Hollands (Learning Support Manager)** by **email reh@wilberforce.ac.uk** or **telephone 01482 711688**. Alternatively, they can speak with one of their teachers who can facilitate this.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial support is available for our students through the **bursary**. The bursary can be provided to fund College meals, travel to and from the College as well as contribute towards trips or educational equipment.

If your household income is **£37.5k or less**, please contact the College on **01482 711688** or email **bursary@wilberforce.ac.uk** to request an application form.

Please note that there is an element of discretion, dependant on the funds available; so if your household income is slightly more than this, please feel free to make an application for consideration.

PROGRESS MENTORS

All students are assigned a **Progress Mentor** who will provide individual, focused intervention and support sessions to ensure they achieve the best grades possible. In a student's second year, their Progress Mentor will provide specific guidance with UCAS applications (for those wanting to apply to university).

Additionally, students will attend weekly **tutorial sessions** led by their Progress Mentor, helping them prepare for life beyond College.

SAFEGAURDING

If your child feels unsafe or threatened, or they are concerned about a friend, they can tell a member of staff our **Child Protection Officers** who are available daily to provide support.

Their details are as follows:

Stewart Edwards: Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Assistant Principal
Email: sde@wilberforce.ac.uk

Jo Brownlee: Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and Student Support Manager
College mobile: 07530 187069
Email: jbr@wilberforce.ac.uk

Helen Robinson: Student Support Officer and Mental Health Lead
Email: hmr@wilberforce.ac.uk

Steph Foston: Student Support Officer
Email: sef@wilberforce.ac.uk



CAREERS & GUIDANCE

All students have access to impartial, individually tailored Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) from our qualified and experienced Careers Team.

Appointments can be made by contacting:
Careers Manager Sarah Didsbury: sld@wilberforce.ac.uk
Careers Adviser Katy Wasling: klw@wilberforce.ac.uk

SUPPORT AVAILABLE

The team also offer a series of specially developed programmes to help students to make informed and realistic decisions about their education and employment goals.

- Advice on career paths and options
- Support with higher education and UCAS applications
- Help with researching and selecting apprenticeship opportunities, including degree apprenticeships
- Work experience and volunteering advice
- Student finance information
- CV writing, interview techniques and employability skills
- Advice on up-to-date job market information

OUTSTANDING EXPERIENCES

Each year, the college secures opportunities through the UK Government's Turing Scheme, giving students the chance to take part in fully organised and subsidised trips to exciting destinations such as **South Africa, Thailand, Malta, Italy, and Portugal.**

These international experiences encourage students to immerse themselves in new cultures, get involved in enriching activities, and explore environments very different from their own.

By stepping beyond their comfort zones, students develop confidence, resilience, and independence, alongside vital life skills such as teamwork, adaptability, and cultural awareness. These qualities not only support their personal growth but are also highly valued by employers, ensuring the benefits of participation last well beyond their time at college.

In addition to Turing Scheme opportunities, the College also offers a variety of faculty-led and course-related trips. All trips will be advertised through class teachers and on the Student Teams channel – so students are encouraged to act quickly, as places are always in high demand!



TRIPS & VISITS



WILBERFORCE
sixth form college

wilberforce.ac.uk

