



PARENT AND CARERS' GUIDE

SUCCESS ALL DEPENDS
ON THE SECOND LETTER



Ranked in
the top 10%
of all colleges
nationally

PARENTS - WHY CHOOSE US?

The Sixth Form Bolton is the only specialist sixth form in the town. Our state-of-the-art town centre campus provides students with the very best facilities to support their chosen programme of study.

The Sixth Form Bolton has a culture of high aspirations and expectations. We are very proud of our students and their exceptional levels of achievement and progression.

We support and guide students to achieve the best qualifications and experiences possible, to ensure that our young people are well prepared to move on to university, apprenticeships or employment. Students benefit from high quality teaching and outstanding student support.

'We are the only specialist Sixth Form in Bolton, our teachers only focus on 16-19 year olds'



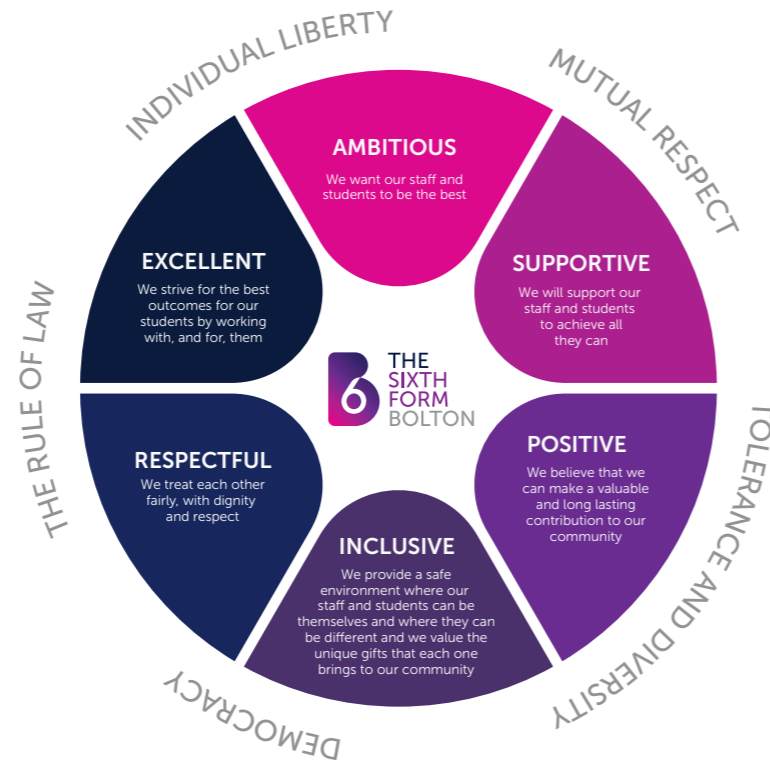
THE SIXTH FORM ETHOS

Supportive
Inclusive
Caring
Aspirational

We firmly believe in **'excellence in everything.'**
This means we set very high expectations for ourselves and our learners:

- 100% attendance and punctuality
- A 'high grade habit'
- Hours owed must be repaid
- Commitment to work hard
- Prepared to learn
- Good manners, politeness and respect
- Participate in the wider Sixth Form experience
- Parental engagement
- Having high aspirations
- Seeking out support in order to achieve academic success
- Employability and life skills well developed
- Development of the wider student character
- Personal development and growth is a key focus

OUR KEY VALUES



EXCELLENT RESULTS AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The Sixth Form Bolton prides itself on its desire to constantly provide excellent teaching & learning experiences and development opportunities for our students. This begins at pre-enrolment and continues throughout their time in The Sixth Form including:

- Careers and employability - all students undertake relevant work experience placements
- Futures Academy for students aspiring to work in health-related industries
- World of Work Careers Programme - boosting career prospects for all students
- University taster days
- Women into Leadership programme
- Range of residential trips and visits
- Preparation for Medicine
- Strong academic links with Russell Group Universities and Oxbridge
- Superb enrichment programme including Duke of Edinburgh Award and podcasting
- Outstanding Learning Support Services
- Excellent pastoral care
- Specialist Academies for Law, Science, Performing Arts and Sport as well as our Policing Academy.
- Honours Programme for high achieving students (with GCSE grades 7, 8 and 9) aspiring to progress to Russell Group Universities and Oxbridge.
- Charity work
- Peer Mentor schemes
- Young Leaders programme
- Queen's Award

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Our ethos for teaching and learning has its foundations in fostering curiosity. Students who are immersed in their subjects and work with genuine interest will always have better outcomes.

For The Sixth Form, learning is a process and one that enables students to develop essential skills and knowledge over time. Students will undertake sequenced learning programmes that build upon each other and ensure that knowledge is recalled often and that skills are tested in context frequently. We have formal assessment windows whereby students test their progress and understanding of key elements of their courses. Individualised feedback is an essential part of this process, but so too is the reflection that our learners undertake in order that they learn and grow and carry out focussed and deliberate practice to improve the areas that have held them back.



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Sixth Form very much welcomed the new Ofsted framework since this looks at more evidence-based learning. The Sixth Form believes that it provides significant high-quality opportunities for our young people to develop as a whole.

Opportunities are broad based and built into our curriculum offers. Each department, and indeed individual courses, offer enrichment opportunities to all their students. These might include project work, research, trips and visits, work placements and links to key organisations.

There are also a number of days built into the curriculum where personal growth and a focus on skills for the future are at their heart. These include our Skills Days, PREVENT, British Values Day and Enrichment Day. Beyond these are other opportunities to undertake enrichment, join the Student Council, become a Peer Mentor or Young Leader, take part in Duke of Edinburgh, be a Student Ambassador, join our Podcasting group, join our Women into Leadership programme or join a society.

Opportunity is available for all, irrespective of their interests or time available, to engage in college life. There is something for everyone.



POST 16 OPTIONS

SIXTH FORM COLLEGE, FE COLLEGE OR SCHOOL SIXTH FORM?

SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

- Sixth Form Colleges are much smaller in size than FE Colleges, with an average size of 1,700 students
- High quality pastoral care
- Excellent parental engagement
- Sixth Form Colleges are half-way between school and university
- They only focus on students aged 16-19 years old
- Teachers are specialist A Level and Vocational A Level academic teachers
- Sixth Form Colleges are more relaxed than school but still have a structured timetable with a more adult environment
- Wide breadth of course choice
- Specialist university advice and guidance
- Specialist career advice and guidance
- Sixth Form Colleges are the highest performing sector of Post 16 education
- Greater opportunity to undertake a mixed programme of study (A Levels and BTEC combined)

FE COLLEGE

- FE Colleges are very large and are similar to a university campus, with an average size of 3,400 students
- They offer a vast array of courses at various levels including adult courses
- There will be a wide age range of students on campus
- FE Colleges may offer more Vocational Courses such as Construction, Hairdressing and Agriculture

SCHOOL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

- A familiar environment, surrounded by teachers and students you already know
- Smaller intake of students, with an average size of 209 students
- Smaller choice of courses which may restrict pathways and opportunities
- Fewer specialist teachers

OUR COURSES WHO DO THEY SUIT?

A LEVEL OR VOCATIONAL A LEVELS?

The main difference between these courses is that A Levels are assessed mostly through examinations, with coursework modules in some subjects, whilst Vocational A Level courses are mainly coursework based, with examinations in some units. Deciding whether to study an A Level or a Vocational A Level course can be a difficult decision.

To maximise options, we offer students the opportunity to mix Vocational A Levels with A Levels to create a broader combination of qualifications, skills and experience. Universities welcome applications from students with both Vocational A Levels and A Level qualifications.

Whichever pathway a student takes, the skills development that we undertake with all of our learners prepares them fully for exams, completion of coursework and becoming an independent learner in preparation for their 'next steps', whatever route this may be.

Ultimately, we consider all our students simply as Advanced Level 3 learners. Teaching and learning is the same on both courses, it is the assessment method that differs.



'Universities welcome applications from students with both Vocational A Levels and A Level qualifications'

ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

- A Level
- Choose three (occasionally four) subjects
- Two years

MIXED PROGRAMME

- Two A Levels & one Vocational A Level or two Vocational A Levels and one A Level
- Choose three subjects
- Two years

TRIPLE VOCATIONAL A LEVEL (BTEC EXTENDED DIPLOMA)

- One Triple Vocational Programme
- Equivalent to three A Levels
- Choose one subject
- Two years

SINGLE VOCATIONAL A LEVEL

- Equivalent to one A Level
- Can be taken alongside A Levels and other Single Vocational A Levels
- Choose three subjects
- Two years
- Or two subjects + one A Level

CAREERS TIPS FOR PARENTS

Deciding what and where to study after high school is a big decision for students, parents and carers play a key role in their child's decision making. If you are unsure of how to support your child with their post-16 options, the following tips might help:

- Encourage your child to focus on what they enjoy and what they are good at. If students choose their subjects based on their interests and skills, they are more likely to succeed.
- They don't have to have a fixed career goal at the age of 15 or 16. This can be an overwhelming prospect for someone at such a young age.
- Encourage them to be open minded and curious. They still have ample opportunity to explore the many career options that relate to their chosen subjects. They may well uncover careers that they hadn't even heard of before!
- If your child does have a set career in mind, encourage them to seek advice from their school careers adviser, or contact careers@bolton-sfc.ac.uk, to ensure they are picking subjects that will keep this as a viable option.
- It's important to bear in mind that whatever they choose to study, they will always have lots of options in terms of their future career. The careers programme provided by The Sixth Form Bolton, is designed to help students explore a wide range of opportunities and develop key employability skills.



Dillan Kerai, studied A Levels in Mathematics, Computer Science and Vocational A Level in Information Technology and is now studying Computer Science with Artificial Intelligence at The University of Leeds

"The B6 careers team are amazing and approachable. They can help you with anything careers-related, from identifying skills to completing university applications. If you require any help with your career planning, you can always visit them and they will support you every step of the way."

Useful websites to help you support your child with their post-16 options and future career plans:

<https://www.bolton-sfc.ac.uk/careers-pathways/>

<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/careers-advice-for-parents/>

<https://careermap.co.uk/careermag-parents/>

<https://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/what-qualifications-are-there-16-18-year-olds>

<https://careerpilot.org.uk/parent-zone/all-questions/what-are-the-choices-for-my-child-at-16>



SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S PROGRESSION

YEAR 9

Ensure they choose subjects that support their career aspirations. For some careers, a young person will need to choose the right courses now e.g. Science for Medicine, Dentistry and so on. Be aware, even this early, what the grade and course requirements are for competitive courses at university. For example, to study Nursing a student will need a grade 5 at GCSE in Science and Maths. To be considered for Medicine, a student will need five to seven grade 8/9s at GCSE. Encourage them to choose GCSE options that they enjoy, not what their friends are choosing.

YEAR 10

Students have made their option choices so their focus should be on acquiring and practising the skills they need to pass their GCSE courses: varied and practical revision techniques, tackling past paper questions on their own and studying with a partner to stretch and challenge themselves. Depending on their chosen career path, they should be undertaking work experience or voluntary work. This is a must for Teaching, Social Work, Medicine and Medical related disciplines such as Optometry. Duke of Edinburgh and sport or hobbies broaden their general development. Encourage them to research potential Sixth Forms carefully and review the types of course on offer and their preferred learning styles.

Do not choose exam-based subjects for Advanced Level study if your child struggles with examinations. Look at programmes that are mainly assessed through coursework or practical activities. Your child is likely to be more successful in this pathway, which will lead to progression to good universities, higher level apprenticeships or employment. A further consideration might be travel time when considering which Sixth Form to attend. Additionally, review which wider opportunities for enrichment, work experience and the development of personal skills are available.

YEAR 11

Anxiety may well be something to be anticipated in the final year. Encourage your son/daughter not to worry if they make mistakes: they learn from them. Mastery of a subject does not simply happen, they need to keep working at it. When they say they 'can't do something' tell them they 'can't yet!' With some effort and practice, it will improve. Encourage them to talk to their teachers and seek support and reassurance. Help them to reflect on their course choices for Post 16 to ensure they have clear reasons for the choices they are making. Make sure they have opted for the right kind of course or subjects. Have they chosen subjects because of peer pressure or parent pressure? If you are unsure, talk to The Sixth Form Bolton. We are happy to help students make the right choice. Encourage them all the time and listen when they are worried.



MEng Engineering Science

Krishna Lilley - Previous School: Westhoughton High School
A Levels: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry & Honours Programme

"If I was going to give any advice to prospective students that are looking to gain acceptance into the University of Oxford, it would be to take Further Mathematics. It will help you with your entrance exams - especially if you want to take a subject in the field of Science. I would also like to add that the support from the staff at The Sixth Form Bolton has helped me get where I am today. They will always support you no matter what pathway you choose."



The University of Manchester



BSc Psychology

Nour Eleman Abdisalam - Previous School: St. James's CofE High School
A Levels: Psychology, Law, Sociology & Honours Programme

"I loved all of my chosen subjects for different reasons, for example: With Psychology, I found it fascinating to learn about the human brain and behaviour. I enjoyed it so much that I want to become a clinical psychologist. As for Law, I found it really beneficial that the exam formats were always similar - it made me comfortable with the exams. Like Psychology, Sociology is a human science and provides you with a different perspective which in turn broadens your mind."



The University of Manchester



BSc Physics

Will Kyle - Previous School: The Deanery CofE High School, Wigan
A Levels: Physics, Mathematics, Geography & Honours Programme

"I came to The Sixth Form Bolton for a fresh start. I did attend the New Student Taster Day which gave me a clear expectation of what A Levels are and what would happen once I enrolled. From my first visit I could see that it is an attractive building, with great courses and really supportive staff. Due to the support I have received, I progressed to the University of Manchester studying Physics and explored the possibility of obtaining a PhD in Finance. I would like to assure anyone looking to attend this Sixth Form that the staff will always put you and your future first."

BTEC MYTH BUSTING

There is a lot of confusion around the different academic qualifications and pathways that students can take, and where certain qualifications can lead.

Myth: You have to do A Levels if you want to go to university.

Fact: You can progress to university whether you study a BTEC or A Levels. The Triple Vocational A Level (Level 3 National Extended Diploma), is completed over two years at the Sixth Form and carries UCAS points just like A Levels. Depending on the subject you want to study, a BTEC may be preferred to A Levels as it shows that you can intensively study one subject over a period of time and that you are passionate about and interested in that subject.

Myth: A BTEC is the easy option. A Levels show you are much more clever than if you are just doing a BTEC.

Fact: The concept of BTECs as an 'easy option' is based on the fact that they have more coursework and fewer exams than A Levels. In reality the level and content is just as difficult. Vocational courses all require students to sit some examinations and controlled assessments as well as completing coursework.

Myth: You should always choose A Levels over a BTEC if you have the choice.

Fact: A Levels are often academic subjects such as History or English, whereas BTECs are often more career-related courses, like Public Services, Business or ICT. So, choosing whether to take A Levels or a BTEC depends a lot on what the student wants to pursue after Sixth Form. A BTEC course is much more practical, with a more hands-on approach to learning. It should involve plenty of work experience and practical opportunities as part of the course, giving students direct experience of the industry they want to work in.

Whether your child studies A Levels, BTECs or a mixed programme, the important thing is finding the course that's right for them. Make sure they are studying something that they are passionate about. Remember - young people now have to stay in education, work or training until the age of 18. Your child could do three A Levels, or a BTEC or a mixed programme of some BTEC and some A Level subjects. By the time they have finished their course, they will be in perfect position to decide whether to go to university, do further study in a related area, or go into full time employment.

99% HIGH GRADE PASS RATE FOR BTEC NATIONAL DIPLOMAS

'The Sixth Form Bolton is placed 10% above the national rates for Post 16 Advanced Level providers'

PATHWAY MYTHS & TRUTHS

MEDICINE

Becoming a Doctor is an incredibly popular career choice and with around 10 applications made for every university place, competition is tougher than ever. It is not enough to have top A Level grades and evidence of work experience – to be in with a chance you need sound knowledge of current medical issues and to be able to demonstrate true commitment to a career in Medicine. At The Sixth Form Bolton, we are dedicated to assisting our students with accurate up to date information and opportunities to enhance their application. Students can also apply to join our Medics Academy. Our Careers Team support students to find relevant work experience or volunteering in an environment that will allow them to develop the core skills needed for Medicine such as communication and empathy.

TYPICAL A LEVELS

Although entry requirements are variable dependent on the university you are applying to, generally high level GCSEs and A Levels are the requirement. For details on universities of choice, please refer to UCAS to determine individual entry criteria.

ADMISSION TESTS

Nearly all Medical Degrees use an Admissions Test as part of their entry requirements. For undergraduate applications there are two admissions tests, the UCAT or the BMAT. Universities have different requirements, so it is important to consider this when researching universities. Students in the Medics Academy will receive extra guidance on how to prepare for these tests. Students who impress on their application and have a high score in their Admissions Test may be invited to an interview and our Careers Team are on hand to help students to prepare for this, offering a workshop to students each year which is run by an expert from a Russell Group University.

PHARMACY

Pharmacy is the science and technique of preparing and dispensing drugs. It is a health profession that links health sciences with chemical sciences and aims to ensure the safe and effective use of pharmaceutical drugs.

TYPICAL A LEVELS / BTEC LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA

Entry requirements for Pharmacy Degrees vary between different institutions, but you will almost certainly need to have studied Chemistry, either Mathematics or Biology, and one further rigorous academic subject. For details on universities of choice, please refer to UCAS to determine individual entry criteria. Entry into Pharmacy through a BTEC Applied Science route is possible at a select few universities but you would have to work very hard for two years to secure the maximum grades.

We have links with several local Pharmacies, and it is important that students considering this as a career undertake some work experience in this field, to gain a better understanding of what the day to day job role is like. Having work experience in a Pharmacy will also enhance a students application for university.

OPTOMETRY

The role of an Optometrist involves using a range of instruments and traditional tools (such as reading charts) to test and measure a client's vision. An Optometrist would then make a diagnosis and give advice. This could include prescribing, fitting and supplying spectacles or contact lenses, and discussing the suitability and shape of spectacle frames. Using their knowledge of eye diseases, if an Optometrist detects abnormalities – including conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure – they would refer clients to specialists or Ophthalmologists (Eye Surgeons) when necessary. This role may focus on a particular area, such as Paediatrics (working with children), contact lenses, sports vision or low vision.

TYPICAL A LEVELS / BTEC LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA

Most universities ask for high grades at A Level which must include a minimum of two sciences. For students studying BTEC Applied Science there are a small number of universities who accept this on their entry criteria, but they may wish to consider other careers in this field such as Orthoptics or Ophthalmic Dispensing. There are also opportunities to start a career in this field via an Optical Assistant Apprenticeship. Places on Optometry degrees are competitive so having relevant work experience can help students to stand out on their applications. Our Careers Team support students to secure meaningful work placements within the local community.

ALLIED HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONS

The allied health professions (AHP) are a family of specialist roles who use their knowledge and skills to help patients live the fullest lives possible. They work directly with patients, so they can see the difference they make every day. Studying to become an allied health professional is very hands-on. You'll help real patients as you earn your degree, and graduate ready to start a fulfilling career. There are 15 Allied Healthcare Professions which includes Audiology, Radiography, Paramedic Science, Speech and Language Therapy and Physiotherapy. Students studying many of the AHP courses at university will be eligible for the NHS Learning Support Fund where they will receive a training grant of £5000 per academic year.

Students will be encouraged to secure a work placement or volunteering experience in a setting which will allow them to develop their caring nature, and display the core skills needed to work as an AHP, such as communication, compassion and commitment.

TYPICAL A LEVELS / BTEC LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA

Entry requirements differ depending on which AHP course students are applying for, so it is important to check individual requirements on UCAS. Generally speaking we recommend students consider BTEC Health and Social Care or BTEC Applied Science. For students wishing to study A Level we recommend a mixed programme which could include Biology, Sociology, Psychology and a Vocational A Level such as Health and Social Care. For students considering a career in Physiotherapy, most universities will require an A level with Biological Science content such as Biology, Sports Science or PE.

ENGINEERING

Engineering is the creative application of science, mathematical methods and empirical evidence to the innovation, design, construction, and maintenance of other structures, machines, materials, devices, systems, processes, and organisations. Engineers can be found in every aspect of our lives and as such there are several areas of engineering that students can specialise in, such as Aerospace, Manufacturing, Civil, Electrical and Chemical. Engineering skills are in high demand so this career path gives students real earning potential, career progression and scope for working across many different industries. It is important that students are able to demonstrate their passion for their preferred area of engineering, so taking part in relevant extra curricular activities, enrichment or work experience would be advisable.

TYPICAL A LEVELS

For Engineering, it is especially important that you pick the right A Levels. These should be Maths, Physics and Further Mathematics, Chemistry or Computer Science, depending which area of engineering the student is interested in. For details on universities of choice, please refer to UCAS to determine individual entry criteria. For students choosing to study BTEC Applied Science they may be able to secure a place on an engineering degree via a foundation entry, or may wish to consider an advanced apprenticeship where they will earn and learn at the same time, with the employer covering the cost of their education, they will not accrue student loan debt.



'Two thirds of employers would be more likely to hire a young person with work experience'

ACCOUNTANCY

Accounting or accountancy is the measurement, processing, and communication of financial information about economic entities such as businesses and corporations. There are different areas of Accounting which students may specialise in such as Tax, Audit or Assurance. Students are supported by the Careers Team to secure work experience placements with local businesses and accounting firms to help them stand out on applications for university or apprenticeships. Students are encouraged to take a keen interest in world news and economic developments to show their interest and knowledge in this field.

TYPICAL A LEVELS / BTEC LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA

Accounting, Economics, History, Business, English, Maths and/or Further Mathematics. For details on universities of choice, please refer to UCAS to determine individual entry criteria. The Sixth Form Bolton offers a specialist accounting pathway in the second year of the BTEC Business Level 3 Diploma. Another progression route for students once they have finished their A Levels, is to secure a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship in an area of Accounting where they will earn and learn at the same time, with the employer covering the cost of their education, they will not accrue student loan debt. Taking the Apprenticeship route often means that students will qualify as an Accountant more quickly than if they had taken the university route.

LAW

Law is a system of rules that are created and enforced through social or governmental institutions to regulate behaviour. Law is a system that regulates and ensures that individuals or a community adhere to the will of the State and is a vital part of our society that affects all our lives. The Sixth Form Bolton have strong links in industry and bring in a range of guest speakers for students to learn more about careers in Law. We encourage students to be proactive in securing some relevant experience which could be via our Law Society, Work Experience, Volunteering or attending Bolton Magistrates or Crown Court as a member of the public, to watch a trial.

TYPICAL A LEVELS/BTEC LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA

Law, English Literature, History, Business, Politics or Geography. Please refer to UCAS to determine individual entry criteria.

APPRENTICESHIP ACADEMY

Our Careers Team run an Apprenticeship Academy for students wishing to choose this progression route, offering support in the process of searching and applying for apprenticeships with those top employers.



FINANCIAL SUPPORT

THE SIXTH FORM BOLTON OFFERS THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS TO STUDENTS:

- All courses are free
- Essential trips/educational visits are free
- Other trips/educational visits may be subsidised
- Transport to essential Sixth Form related activities will be free
- Examinations will be free for the first entry

FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING:

- Financial support
- Free travel for students living more than 4 miles from the Sixth Form if students are not in the receipt of the GM 'Our Pass'
- Means tested Bursary to help with the cost of attending the Sixth Form.
- Free meals for eligible students



'The Sixth Form Bursary enabled me to go on an amazing trip to Barcelona'



PARENT PORTAL

The Parent Portal is available through the website and in addition to the information on attendance and progress, provides regular news updates and reviews for the year. A Parents' Welcome Evening takes place in September where help is provided to register and log on to the Parent Portal.

On the Parent Portal you can:

- Check if your son/daughter is attending lessons
- Access online trackers that show grades achieved for all subject areas
- Get priority access to Parents' Evening appointments
- Report an absence
- Update any medical conditions that The Sixth Form needs to be aware of
- Check the progress of your son/daughter
- See your son/daughter's timetable including their exam timetable
- Track any payments made to your son/daughter including Bursary/Travel Payments or payments received by The Sixth Form Bolton
- Update your contact phone numbers
- Access electronic copies of the Parent and Student handbook
- Access important exam information
- View subject specific homework for certain subjects

THE ROLE OF PARENT GOVERNOR

The Sixth Form needs enthusiastic and committed people to become governors.

The Governing body of The Sixth Form include people drawn from a range of backgrounds reflecting the community we serve. Parent Governors play an important role in the development of The Sixth Form.

Governors help us to drive forward and meet strategic objectives with their understanding, skills, perspective and experience. Becoming a governor provides many opportunities to contribute to your local community and is a highly rewarding voluntary role. Governors have the opportunity to express their own views, listen to the views of others representing The Sixth Form and its community and to influence our students' education for the better.

What does it involve?

- To become a Parent Governor you must be a parent/carer of a current student
- Commitment to improving education
- Ability to work as part of a team and take collective responsibility for decisions
- Commitment to The Sixth Form's core values
- You must attend Full Corporation meetings (four per year) and three other committee meetings
- All Governors must complete satisfactory safeguarding checks (DBS)

How to apply

In order to apply to be a Parent Governor at The Sixth Form Bolton or to discuss the role of governor in further detail please email: Governance@Bolton-sfc.ac.uk in the first instance. We hope you will consider taking up this important and worthwhile role.



Helpful Websites

www.ucas.com/
www.aqa.org.uk/
www.ocr.org/uk/
<https://qualifications.pearsons.com>
www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

Support Groups

www.youngminds.org.uk
www.familylives.org.uk
www.youthaccess.org.uk/

The Sixth Form Bolton, Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5BU

T: 0800 052 1460 **E:** enquiries@bolton-sfc.ac.uk

www.bolton-sfc.ac.uk