

# Merchant Taylors' School



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## PROGRESSION TO MTS SIXTH FORM POLICY

**Policy Custodian:** Senior Deputy Head (Academic)

**Approving Body:** MTS Senior Leadership Team

**Approved:** September 2023

*(This policy does not apply to Merchant Taylors' Prep.)*

Merchant Taylors' School assumes that all Fifth Form students will wish to transfer to the Sixth Form. For the overwhelming majority of the year group, such a transition is entirely the right move for them. As such, parents should operate on the 'no news is good news' principle. If they have not heard otherwise from the School by Christmas of the Fifth Form, then they can assume that they and the School are in agreement that the Sixth Form at Taylors' is the right place for their son.

Merchant Taylors' prides itself on marrying academic excellence with a strong focus on wellbeing. This is often the reason we, as teachers feel that the Sixth Form at Taylors' may not be the right place for a pupil in the Middle School. Merchant Taylors' School is a school where the Sixth Form offering is, entirely, A Level/Pre-U focused and it is academically demanding. The subjects offered are towards the more traditionally academic end of the subject spectrum. It can become apparent during a pupil's time in the Middle School that he may benefit from a somewhat different offering. This may take the form of a more vocational course or A Levels which are newer and more focused on a given career path. It can be the case that a pupil's performance in the Middle School marks him out as being unsuited to the sort of subjects that are offered in the Taylors' Sixth Form. If a pupil's subject choices are not seen as likely to lead to his success at A Level then the School reserves the right to question or, in some cases, refuse him a place in the Sixth Form. It will normally be necessary to attain at least a 7 at GCSE to access the subject, and an 8 in the case of Maths and Science A Levels.

There may be pastoral reasons why a pupil may be unsuited to the Sixth Form at Merchant Taylors'. The Sixth Form community at Merchant Taylors' relies upon the pupils being able to operate independently within the, relatively traditional, structures of our School. Some pupils may prefer to move to a less formal educational establishment such as a Sixth Form College. Good behaviour in the Middle School is a *sine qua non* for transition to the Sixth Form. The relationship with the School by Sixth Formers is one which relies upon mutual respect and the School's ability to trust the pupils. Where that respect and trust is not seen to be valued by a pupil, then the Sixth Form may well not be the right place for him. As such, the School reserves the right to question or, in some cases, refuse a boy a place in the Sixth Form on the grounds that he may not have shown himself to value his place in our community.

It is a condition of entry to the Sixth Form for all pupils, that school fees from previous years must have been settled in full before they begin their Sixth Form study.

In all cases where a pupil's transition to the Sixth Form may be in doubt, it is right and proper that any such doubts are identified as early as possible and communicated clearly to all concerned. The following is a timeline by which the School hopes to communicate their concerns and worries about a pupil's transition – whether those concerns are behavioural or academic:

## **Stage One**

### ***Divisions - Spring Term***

Towards the end of the Spring Term, the Divisions receive a set of Subject Reports, with a Tutor Report. Where the School has concerns about a pupil's ability to transition to the Sixth Form, it may be expected that the Tutor, on the advice of the Head of Middle School, makes reference to his academic progress or his behaviour calling into question his ability to transition in eighteen months' time.

The list of pupils in whose reports this prospect has been raised, will be spoken about at the School Leadership Team's meeting before the end of this term.

## **Stage Two**

### ***Divisions - Summer Term***

The Head of Middle School will write to the parents of those pupils about whom the School has concerns and invite them and their son into School to meet with the Head of Middle School and discuss their son's progress and, where appropriate, attitude and behaviour. If deemed appropriate, the pupil's suitability for the Sixth Form at Merchant Taylors' will be questioned and the parents and boy will be asked to ensure that they have explored a range of other options. The Head of Section will also liaise with the Head of Careers to request an early post-Morrisby Test pupil/parent meeting.

If the parents and boy are in agreement that a move away from Merchant Taylors' is the right one, then the School will make all of the necessary arrangements with the future school to ensure that they have all of the information they need to make the pupil's transfer as seamless as possible. Parents will be encouraged to ensure that their son's name is on the Provisional Leavers' List so they are not liable for a Term's fees (form here: <https://forms.office.com/r/W9GUHC1GFa>). They will be contacted with information on how to do this by the Head of Middle School.

The list of pupils to whom the Head of Middle School has spoken, will be spoken about at the School Leadership Team's meeting before the end of this Term. The Head of Section will also make sure that the boy's Tutor and Head of House are aware of the situation.

## **Stage Three**

### ***Fifth Form - Autumn Term***

At the Sixth Form Information evening in the first half of this Term, the School's Progression to Sixth Form Policy will be explained to all parents and pupils in attendance. Around this time, pupils will also be encouraged to discuss their possible A Level choices with their Tutors and teachers in order to begin to gauge suitability.

After the Head of Middle School's Triage meeting at the Half-Term break, the Head of Middle School will arrange a meeting with the parents and pupils about whom there are still concerns regarding their transition into the Sixth Form. The Head of Middle School will ensure that the parents and pupils have explored a range of other options for Sixth Form education. If the parents and boy are in agreement that a move away from Merchant Taylors' is the right one, then the School will make all the necessary arrangements with the future school to ensure that they have all the information they need to make the pupil's transfer as seamless as possible. Parents will be encouraged to ensure that their son's name is on the Provisional Leavers' List so they are not liable for a Term's fees.

In cases where the primary concern is one of behaviour, the Head Master will meet with the pupil and his family and will make a judgement as to whether he should have a place in the Sixth Form, as per the School's Terms and Conditions.

The list of pupils to whom the Head of Middle School has spoken, will be spoken about at the School Leadership Team's meeting before the end of this term. The Head of Section will also make sure that the boy's Tutor and Head of House are aware of the situation.

#### **Stage Four**

##### ***Fifth Form - Spring Term***

After the Fifth Form Trial Examinations, the Head of Middle School will conduct a further Triage meeting and identify pupils where there is a doubt about their suitability to transition to the Sixth Form.

In cases where the primary concern is academic suitability, the Senior Deputy Head (Academic) will work alongside the Head of Middle School, Director of Studies and Heads of Department to assess the suitability of the pupil for the A Levels he is proposing to take. The Senior Deputy Head (Academic) or the Head of Middle School will communicate with all parents and pupils who have been spoken to by the Head of Middle School at Stages One, Two or Three; in addition, contact may be made where any pupil's subject choices look questionable. Communication will be received before the start of the Summer Term. If the School is unable to support their choices and the pupil does not wish to change them, they will be advised that they should be looking to move schools to one of the options they have been encouraged to pursue in the previous stages, so they have an alternative, should the pupil not meet the GCSE thresholds outlined above. Whilst not all pupils will be contacted in this manner, entry criteria still apply in the case of unexpected underperformance in the GCSEs. In this last instance, pupils will be given an option of selecting alternative courses in the MTS Sixth Form.

In every situation above, the School will make all the necessary arrangements with the future school to ensure that they have all the information they need to make the pupil's transfer as seamless as possible. Parents will be encouraged to ensure that their son's name is on the Provisional Leavers' List so they are not liable for a Term's fees.

The list of pupils to whom the Senior Deputy Head (Academic) or Head of Middle School has written, will be spoken about at the School Leadership Team's meeting before the end of this term. The Head of Middle School will also make sure that the boy's Tutor and Head of House are aware of the situation.

#### **Stage Five**

##### ***Fifth Form – Summer Term***

The School will have a complete list, based on the work done in Stage Four, of which pupils are intending to leave Taylors' at the end of the Fifth Form. Where there is uncertainty, the Head Master's secretary will write to the family and seek confirmation as to whether they wish to turn their provisional notice into formal notice, or to withdraw it. The Head Master will be available to see each of these pupils and wish them the best of luck on Results Day, giving them their OMT ties and leavers' information pack and ensuring that they leave on good terms.

For a few pupils, the final decision as to which subjects they will take at A Level will be finalised after GCSE results, but not the question of whether or not he has a place. Where the pupil has indicated that they will leave if they do not get the GCSE grades necessary to do their preferred subjects, they will remain on the provisional leavers list until Results Day. Once the final decision is made, if they are leaving the Head Master will invite the pupil and their parents to school to see them, give them their OMT ties and leaves' information pack and wish them the best of luck for their future study.

### *Accelerated process*

Whilst the above process operates across five terms, it is possible that a pupil's attitude or progress causes concern after the dates outlined above, and an accelerated progression through the stages may be appropriate.

In accordance with the published policy on School Sanctions: Mechanisms and Procedures, three Saturday Detentions in an academic year, or the fourth across two years, will automatically prompt a meeting between Head of Section and parents and a warning that progression is at risk unless behaviour improves.

In such circumstances, the school will work with both pupil and parents to ensure that the pupil is appropriately placed before the beginning of their GCSEs.

Senior Deputy Head (Academic)  
September 2023