

# St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School



## The Wider Curriculum

## Life at St Bernard's: the wider curriculum

Sixth Form students make a valuable contribution to the sense of community within the school.

We rely on the Sixth Form to help with events such as the Activities Days, the Disco for the New Intake and a Christmas Party for Senior Citizens.

Students are very involved in sports, theatrical and musical productions and public speaking, and they produce a school magazine. These activities provide opportunities for students to develop their leadership qualities and interpersonal skills, and grow in confidence.

“The St Bernard's community is what makes this school special. The support you get, to both get the grades and develop as a person is amazing.”

## EPQ and Enrichment

In Years 12 and 13, students will have a compulsory one hour slot where some area of enrichment is explored. This may be preparation for living away from home with a short cooking course; managing your finances and budgeting or outside speakers. There will also be the opportunity for students to undertake the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Students will be assigned a mentor and undertake a study of their own choosing. EPQ allows each student to embark on a largely self-directed and self-motivated project. Students must **choose a topic, plan, research and develop their idea** and decide on their finished product.

We encourage creativity and curiosity. A project topic may be directly related to a student's main study programme, but should look beyond the specification. A **finished product** may take the form of a:

- research based written report
- production\* (eg charity event, fashion show or sports event etc)
- an artefact\* (eg piece of art, a computer game or realised design).
- A written report must accompany these options.

Students must also record their project process in their Production Log. The process of recording and completing a project is as important as the finished product. Both the Production Log and Product will be assessed.

## General Physical Education (Compulsory)

General Physical Education is a compulsory component of the Year 12 curriculum for all students unless the lesson clashes with your timetabled course. The course is one period each week and is not examined. It is seen as an extremely important part of the Year 12 curriculum as it both contrasts with and complements the students' academic commitments.

The activities undertaken are largely recreational but some do involve direct coaching from either St Bernard's staff or appropriately qualified coaches. Activities that have been offered include football, hockey, netball, basketball, table tennis, badminton, volleyball, dance, squash, rugby, swimming, fitness

suite, body conditioning, and golf, with the latter two employing external coaches or instructors.

The activities have been based at St Bernard's, Iver Golf Club, Montem Sports Centre and Thames Valley Athletics Centre.

Some of the activities which the students can opt for, namely those involving external coaches or those held off-site, incur a cost which we will endeavor to keep to a minimum. In all activities, any necessary equipment is provided, but students are expected to wear their own appropriate sports clothing. The activities offered are carefully chosen to cater for a variety of interests and it is possible (depending on demand) to specialise in one activity or pursue a number of different interests.

## Religious Education

All non A Level students undertake a programme in Religious Education. This is designed as a series of 10 week modules, tackling a diverse range of topics and disciplines, and aims to help students develop a spiritual, ethical, moral and theological foundation from which to address the ultimate questions of life. Religious Education post-16 encourages students to use and develop the academic skills they have acquired across the curriculum, e.g. critical reflection, analysis, evaluation and reason, to examine the role of faith in the rapidly developing world in which they live.

Each student is expected to follow five modules. Some of the courses on offer include:

**The Catechist Course** which prepares students to take responsibility for a group of younger children either in school or in a parish setting, in order to share with them some aspects of the Christian faith through the teaching of a planned and supervised programme. This course covers TWO modules, i.e. 20 weeks.

**Life and Morality** which examines how and why we think the way we do about important moral issues. This course examines the key principles of ethics and morality, and explores how people make moral decisions. Students will debate questions such as, 'Is stealing *always* wrong?' and 'Is truth-telling always morally right?'

**Religion during a Media Age** takes a look at how the media forms our understanding of the world around us, in particular our view of our own and others' religious beliefs and values. This course looks at the pervading influence of the Press, Advertisements, the Internet and Social Media, and explores its capacity to affect our values.

The main purpose of pastoral work in the Sixth Form is to provide a supportive environment for the students in which they develop a sense of responsibility for their own lives. They need security and some freedom.

In fulfillment of the Aims of the School we encourage them:-

- to learn more independently
- to strive for academic excellence
- to make wise choices about career and courses in Higher Education
- to be sensitive to the needs of others
- to develop their intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual qualities in a balanced way.

Students often have to take difficult decisions and cope with complex problems outside school. They are encouraged to discuss any anxieties with their Form Tutors.

Tutors strive to build relationships within the group and to be available for individuals in order to discuss any help to overcome of difficulties.

When necessary they refer students either to the Head of Sixth Form or Deputy Head of Sixth Form.

### **Community Service**

In Year 12, students are encouraged to be involved in some form of service in the local community. This is a time when students have more opportunity to be of service on a regular weekly basis. Some of the areas of community service work are with the elderly, in residential homes, at day centres and visits to the housebound elderly; with people who have a handicap, usually at learning centres or social clubs; working for charities in administration, in shops and working on projects; many student support younger students with literacy and mathematics.

### **Tutorial**

All students will be placed in a tutor group. Their tutor will be there to guide and direct them through the Sixth Form. The Tutorial programme is an essential element to ensure all students are loved and nurtured in accordance with the school's mission statement. The tutor will be responsible for delivering essential guidance on careers and UCAS applications and advice on life beyond education.