



PROGRESSION TO MTS SIXTH FORM POLICY

Policy Custodian: *Deputy Head (Academic)*

Approving Body: *MTS Senior Leadership Team*

Approved: *January 2026*

(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 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 – details of the entry requirements for each subject are outlined in the Sixth Form options booklet which is shared with pupils and parents at the Options evening in the Autumn Term of the Fifts.

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 significant 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 Head of Middle School will share a list of names of any pupils at this stage with the Senior Leadership Team at a meeting before the end of Term.

Where the School has concerns that the behaviour of a pupil is such that transition to the Sixth Form is questionable, the Head of Middle School will discuss concerns with the Head Master during the Spring Term. If there is doubt regarding transition to the Sixth Form, the parents of the pupil will be informed of the concerns and be given clear guidance on the necessary improvements the School requires. Where the concerns are sufficient to lead the School to refuse transition to the Sixth Form, the Head Master will meet with parents to inform them of the decision and give them eighteen months to secure a place at another school. 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. The name of the pupil will automatically be added to the Leavers' List, so the parents are not liable for a Term's fees.

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 shared with the School Leadership Team at a 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.

Following the end of Year exams in Divisions academic concerns may be raised with pupils and parents, either by the Head of Middle School or the Deputy Head (Academic). At this stage the emphasis will be on supporting pupils to improve their attainment over the Summer holiday. Any pupils in this situation will continue to be monitored by the Head of Middle School during the Autumn Term of Fifths as outlined below.

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. Entry requirements for subjects are outlined at the Sixth Form Information evening and subject choices made by all pupils are regarded as provisional until GCSE Results Day in August.

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 are exploring 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, if the concern has not been previously identified and addressed as part of Stage One, the Head Master will meet with the pupil and his family. The Head Master will identify a programme of required improvements and state a point at which there will be a judgement as to whether he should have a place in the Sixth Form. If concerns are sufficiently serious, the Head Master may at this point inform the pupil and parents that there will be no transition to Sixth Form and a place at another school should be found.

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 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 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 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 are released. 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 academic 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.