



Bishop Laney
Sixth Form

STUDENT HANDBOOK

ACADEMIC YEAR

2025 - 2026

Contents

Welcome to Bishop Laney Sixth Form.....	3	Enrichment and employability activities.....	10
Introduction.....	3	Examinations.....	10
Our Vision.....	3	Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)	11
Our Values.....	3	Facilities	11
Our Expectations.....	4	Holidays	11
How to contact staff or find information.....	4	IT facilities and systems	12
BishopLaney.me Portal	4	Learning Support.....	12
Attendance.....	4	Maths and English.....	13
Unavoidable absence from College.....	5	Off-site Study	13
Planned Absence	5	Part – time Employment	13
Bursaries & Financial Support	6	References	14
16 – 19 Bursary	6	Signing In/Out.....	14
Professional Pathways Maintenance Allowance.....	6	Smoking and Vaping.....	14
Free School Meals	6	Student ID Card and Lanyard	15
Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance	7	Student Council.....	15
Work Placements.....	7	Study Periods.....	15
Cars, Bikes and Mopeds	7	Study Programme Changes.....	16
Code of Conduct.....	8	Support for your health and wellbeing.....	16
College Day	8	Textbooks.....	17
Communication.....	9	Travelling to college on public transport.....	17
Dress Code	9	Tutor.....	18

Welcome to Bishop Laney Sixth Form

We know the transition from school to sixth form is a huge step and we are here to help and support you as you become an independent and successful lifelong learner.

The purpose of this handbook is to help you with this transition and to let you know what we expect from you as a Bishop Laney student. Please make sure you find time to read this handbook and keep referring to it during your time here.

The sooner you adopt the more independent approach and the greater depth of study required of being a sixth form student, the more likely you are to achieve your full potential.

Year 12 will be a key year in your development, and it is important to start the year with a positive approach and determined work ethic.

Introduction

As part of the Meridian Trust, we share the following Vision and Values.

Our Vision

High-quality educational provision for all at the heart of local communities.

Our Values

We truly value the success of every student and place the sharing of excellent education practice at its core. We embed the core values of the Meridian Trust in everything we do:

- Achievement for All
- Valuing People
- A High-Quality Learning Environment
- The Pursuit of Excellence
- Extending the Boundaries of Learning

Every member of our community is known, valued and supported to become successful and confident lifelong learners.

Our Expectations

We offer high standards of teaching, support and development opportunities. In return, we expect high standards of commitment, effort and attendance from our students.

We want you to develop your existing talents but also be willing to try new experiences and make the most of the opportunities you will be given.

You should actively participate in discussions in class, be proactive about your studies by planning your time, extending your knowledge of your subjects and actively engage development activities including Enrichment and the PLEDGES Plus scheme.

Ultimately, we expect that by the time you leave, you will have developed the skills and knowledge that will prepare you for higher education, further training or employment.

How to contact staff or find information

Staff can be contacted via email using the address book in the email system and within Microsoft Teams

Email: office@bishoplaney.org for general enquiries

Email: absence@bishoplaney.org for absence reporting

Tel: 01353 652818

Bishop Laney Sixth Form

Downham Road

Ely

Cambridgeshire

CB6 2SH

My BishopLaney Portal

My BishopLaney is the online student portal, providing access to a range of online services including:

- Health and wellbeing resources
- Academic mentoring records
- PLEDGES+ and Induction records
- Email, timetable, absence records
- UCAS and apprenticeship info

Attendance

Our expectation is that you attend 100% of all timetabled commitments including subject lessons, tutor meetings and any assigned study periods. You are also required to arrive on time to each session.

Your attendance and punctuality will be monitored, and action taken where attendance falls below 96%.

Poor attendance to all or any combination of sessions will be investigated with you and your parent(s) or carer(s); managed through our attendance and/or disciplinary procedures.

As well as being a disciplinary matter, poor attendance significantly impacts on your ability to perform academically. It may also result in:

- Financial assistance being withdrawn
- The college being unable to support entry for examinations
- You not being able to progress to the next level of study.

You are additionally reminded that frequent periods of unexplained absence can give rise to safeguarding concerns.

Holiday must not be taken in term time as this adversely affects progress.

Unavoidable absence from College

In the case of unavoidable absence, you **must report your absence on each day you are absent** through My BishopLaney or by email to absence@bishoplaney.org before 8.30am, providing your name and details about the absence and the expected duration.

You may also call 01353 652818 and leave a voicemail.

If you become unwell during the College day

If you need to leave College owing to illness or any other issues, you must visit the Bishop Laney Office to discuss this with a member of staff, not just simply leave the site.

Planned Absence

Routine medical and dental appointments and driving lessons **must not be** scheduled during timetabled sessions. Requests may be made for such authorised absence during a student's non-contact sessions and the timings should be noted on the request.

Unavoidable planned absence must be discussed in advance with the

Curriculum Lead and will require the completion of a Leave of Absence Request.

Further information about attendance expectations

How we deal with attendance concerns and the policies and procedures relating to this are outlined in our Code of Conduct of which all student and parent(s) or carer(s) receive a copy, and which can also be accessed via the BishopLaney.me portal.

You, along with your parent(s) or carer(s) are invited to check attendance records regularly by using the MCAS app.

Bursaries and Financial Support

You may need financial assistance during your time with us, for you to access college and your study programme.

Information about financial support bursaries and an application form is provided as part of the Induction Programme. If your circumstances change whilst studying with us, you can apply for this bursary at any time,

and if you have any questions, please visit the staff in the Front Office.

16 – 19 Bursary

You may be eligible for the Government funded 16-19 bursary. This is a sum of money which could help you buy books, course materials or pay for trips etc.

There is an application process, and you will have to meet certain eligibility criteria based on household income or **your** personal receipt of some benefits.

Professional Pathways Maintenance Allowance

This is our own bursary scheme which is to support young people into higher education or high-quality local apprenticeships. Qualifying criteria apply and an application may be made via the same process.

Free School Meals

If you were entitled to Free School Meals at your previous college, this eligibility continues at Post-16 study, which may be subject to an eligibility check.

Please be sure to declare this as part of the information gathered during the enrolment process.

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance

During your time at Bishop Laney, we will give you the opportunity to develop your personal talents and to advance your academic and/or technical qualifications.

Your tutor will not only advise you on your course but will also monitor your progress and give you initial careers advice. We hold a wide range of a careers literature which can be found in the Library Resource Centre (LRC).

It is your tutor who will get to know you well and will be responsible for preparing references for higher education or employment. You will be offered at least one, and often a second, follow-up meeting with a specialist careers advisor. We urge you to make the most of these opportunities.

The My BishopLaney portal and Progression 'Teams' contains links to resources and relevant information. Keep checking the resources on a regular basis and make sure you

participate in the various events and activities which will be planned throughout your time here.

Work Placements

Work placements enable you to spend some time out in the world of work, so you can gain practical experience and help in career decision-making. As part of your study programme, you be asked to complete a work placement, the number of hours and commitment dependent on your study programme.

Cars, Bikes and Mopeds

If you wish to bring a car or moped on to site, you must apply for a parking permit and will need to provide the following:

- Driver's Licence
- Current MOT certificate
- Valid Insurance certificate
- Registration number

At present there is no charge for a parking permit, though a small termly charge may be introduced in due course.

Any abuse of this privilege including poor parking, driving at speed, playing loud music will result in your

permit being revoked and being subject to disciplinary procedures.

Bikes should be locked securely to the bike racks provided outside the Main Reception Building.

Code of Conduct

We expect our students to be the exemplar of what is acceptable behaviour whilst at Bishop Laney and most students appreciate the atmosphere which values them as young adults. As our expectation is that incidents of poor behaviour and the need for interventions will be minimal.

Should there be any incidents of unacceptable conduct, whether related to your work, engagement or wider behaviour, you will be subject to our disciplinary procedures which are discussed and shared with you as part of the Induction Programme, and available to view on our website. Sanctions include:

- A verbal warning
- A first written warning
- Suspension
- A final warning

In the most extreme cases, permanent exclusion by the College Principal. Suspensions and Exclusions are implemented in line with the appropriate policy.

College Day

Period 1 starts at 8.50am and the day finishes at 4.00pm, though most teaching sessions are finished by 3pm each day. **We hold an assembly at 8.30am every Monday which students, unless advised otherwise, need to attend.**

You are expected to arrive in good time and be ready to learn at the start of each period. Students arriving five minutes after the start of class will be considered absent.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary for sessions to be held outside the College Day, e.g. practical sessions to which the public or family members are invited; in which case you will be notified in advance.

You will have regular meetings with your tutor who will be your academic mentor, which may require you to come into College outside your timetabled hours.

The Bishop Laney Centre is open to students from 8am every day during term time. Students are welcome to remain in the centre after the end of the College until 4:00pm Monday – Thursday; and until 3.15pm on Friday.

Communication

Each day you are in College, you must check the information screen located on the ground floor of the Bishop Laney Centre. These are used to communicate important messages to students.

We also use your student email account, text messages and Microsoft Teams to communicate with you so please make sure you set up notifications to be alerted to messages or check your inbox **every day**.

Dress Code

Bishop Laney Sixth Form students enjoy a more relaxed dress code than secondary school students. There is an expectation students dress appropriately – think whether your dress would be acceptable in the world of work and use this as a guiding principle.

Our dress code is “smart/casual” and the following applies:

- Modesty must be considered. Very short skirts/shorts/hot pants/low cut top or vests must not be worn
- Clothing with large rips, tears and/or with inappropriate logos/diagrams must not be worn
- Words and diagrams on clothing must not be offensive or could be considered offensive e.g. references to drugs or sex
- Shorts must be smart and tailored where not as part of a uniform or kit
- Footwear must be appropriate for the lesson. Open shoes (including flip flops) or excessive high heels are not permitted for health and safety reasons
- Caps and hats must not be worn indoors.

Students failing to comply with the dress code will be asked to cover up or sent home to change. The final decision as to what is deemed acceptable dress, rests with the Curriculum Leader.

Students may be required to attend organised events and activities in “business” attire. Prior notice will be given to students and parents/carers

and advice as to what is appropriate given if requested.

Enrichment and employability activities

Studying at Bishop Laney Sixth Form is not just about gaining a qualification, we help prepare you for life beyond college through an enrichment programme designed to develop and showcase a wide array of skills, strengths and understanding.

Engaging in enrichment is a core expectation of our students; and includes your timetabled personal development, enrichment, tutorial and Core Programme sessions as well as the PLEDGES+ scheme.

You will also be offered the opportunity to link with an Industry Mentor. Each mentor is fully trained to work with young people. They can help nurture the skills you need to land your first job or first choice university place: interview skills, support with CV and application writing and advice on how to secure work experience.

More information is provided about the opportunities and expectations

for enrichment during tutorial and assembly sessions.

Examinations

Before your external exams you will be able to view the exam timetable for most exams you take via the MCAS app. If there are any mistakes or clashes, it is your responsibility to advise the Exams Office as a matter of urgency.

Before and during the Exam Period

- Full details of exams will be posted on the noticeboard in the BL Entrance Foyer.
- Morning exams start at 9.00am and afternoon exams start at 1.00pm, unless otherwise stated.
- Please arrive fully equipped for your exam, **at least 15 mins before the start time.**

Bishop Laney will pay for your exam entry but if you wish to re-take a subject or a unit, you may be required to pay the additional fee yourself.

If you have been entered for an exam and you later withdraw, or are absent on the day without good reason, you will be invoiced for the exam fee.

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

Those students working on the Extended Project Qualification will receive support and guidance during individual sessions.

Year 12 students who are interested in completing the EPQ are invited to attend information sessions run during the Autumn Term, prior to the programme start in the Spring Term.

Facilities

The ground floor of the Sixth form provides students with an opportunity to relax throughout the day, as well as areas for informal study. The cafeteria is open for periods of the day, opening times are advertised each term.

Music is played in the Common Room during the day – **no other music is permitted**. You are welcome to play your own music **but** must use earphones etc.

The ground floor study room is open from 8:00 am until 4:00pm Monday to Thursday; and until 3:15pm on Friday (unless timetabled for lessons).

The Library Resource Centre (LRC) in the Adelaide building is open to students every day until 4.30pm until during term-time and has a dedicated Sixth Form area stocked according to subject with textbooks, supporting materials, relevant periodicals, newspapers and magazines. Books may be borrowed for up to two weeks. Study in this area should be undertaken silently, and no food, mobile phones or music equipment are permitted.

Please respect all facilities by behaving responsibly and keeping the area clean and tidy for everyone by placing rubbish in the bins provided and reporting any damage.

Holidays

Holidays must not be taken during term-time. If there are exceptional circumstances, a request, must be put in writing to the Head of Year 12/13 at least two weeks in advance by your parents and/or carers using the Request for Extended Leave, available by contacting the BL office.

If permission is not granted any absence taken during that time will be recorded as unauthorised.

IT facilities and systems

IT facilities are provided for the benefit of all our students. When lessons are timetabled in the IT room, these have priority and access to spare computers will be at the discretion of the member of staff teaching at that time.

IT faults should be reported to the BL Office, including any difficulty with accessing your account.

The computers are to be used for studying and other college – related purposes only. If computers are being used to access inappropriate material, action will be taken. We use Microsoft Teams, as a tool to share home and independent learning activities. The service is available as a webpage but also can be downloaded to be accessed via the app on your mobile devices.

As a student you have free access to the Microsoft Office suite of software whilst you are enrolled with us. Just visit www.office365.com and enter your college username and password to download applications or access them in a web-browser.

Laptops are available for use within the college and personal laptops can also access our online resources.

Laptops and mobile devices can connect to WiFi. If you need help with this, please see the BL Office

Once you have logged in you will be able to use the same details to access the wireless network from personal devices, simply search for Meridian-BYOD on the available networks button.

Learning Support

If you received learning support in your secondary education and/or received exam concessions (extra time, a reader etc.), it is likely that you will still be entitled to receive this support whilst studying here, but the entitlement will need to be reviewed.

If you have not already informed us of any additional needs, you should declare this at enrolment. This is so arrangements can be made to support you at the start of your studies and in well advance of any assessments or examinations.

Students who received support of any form are asked to book a brief appointment with Belinda Lennon early in the autumn term to discuss the support and any ongoing needs.

The head of the SEND department supporting Bishop Laney students,

known as the SEND Co-ordinator is Laura Thatcher who, along with a dedicated TA, Lorraine Perring, provide support for our sixth form students. Lorraine is based on the ground floor of the Bishop Laney Centre.

Maths and English

Achievement in English Language and Maths is key to future success in further study or employment. Government policy means you need to continue with studying one or both subjects if you have not achieved a GCSE Grade 4 by the end of Year 11 or subsequently. If required appropriate courses will be provided for you.

Attendance at these lessons is closely monitored.

Off-site Study

Year 12 students are permitted to arrive at any time up to their first contact session of the day; and able to leave site between sessions, unless your tutor believes that better progress would be made by studying on site in all available sessions.

Year 13 students are permitted to be offsite outside of their contact sessions unless their performance

towards target grades as monitored by staff, suggests that better progress would be made by attending managed study sessions on-site.

Part – time Employment

We recognise the many benefits of students working part-time and periodically gather information about your part-time work. However, we strongly advise that the hours you work be controlled. You commit yourself **to no more than 12 hours paid work per week.**

You must not work during the College Day, between the hours of 8:00am and 4:00pm. College events and occasionally timetable changes will mean that from time to time the hours during which you are expected to attend college will change.

If we feel that part-time work is impacting on your studies, you will be asked to discuss this with the Curriculum Lead, and similarly we are able to provide advice if you find yourself struggling to manage competing demands on your time.

References

When undertaking part time work or applying for work placements, summer internships, work experience etc. you are likely to be asked for details of a referee from your current College. In this case, you should provide your tutor's details, ensuring that you have asked them first – they are unlikely to say no!

You should give your tutor's college email address and the Bishop Laney telephone number: 01353 652818.

Over the coming weeks and months your tutor will get to know you well, however until this time, they will provide a reference based not only on their own knowledge of you, but also the views of your subject teachers and the sixth form leadership team, as well performance and other data which is available.

You will be asked to sign a form to confirm that you are happy for us to provide references during your time with us. For additional verification we require you to notify your tutor of any reference request before we will complete it.

Signing In/Out

For safeguarding reasons, you must sign in and out each time, using your ID Card every time you enter or leave the college site. If you have forgotten your lanyard/card you will be given a temporary ID Card and **are required to sign in and out with the office staff.**

If you continue to arrive without your card, you will be asked to purchase a new one at a cost of £5.00 as a condition of continuing to access the college.

Smoking and Vaping

Smoking or vaping is not permitted on site. Any student observed smoking or vaping will be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Conduct.

Support is available to reduce tobacco and vape use and we would encourage all students to look after their health and wellbeing.

Smoking or vaping is not permitted close to the college. An acceptable distance is defined as being **out of sight of the main college gates** and:

- Beyond the footpath on Downham Road adjacent the nursery when heading towards the Leisure Park.

- Beyond the Highfields School boundary on Downham Road, when heading towards the city centre.
- Beyond the bend in the road on St Andrew's Way.

Students represent the college at all times and must ensure their conduct outside the college does not cause annoyance or distress to members of our community.

Student ID Card and Lanyard

You will be issued with your student ID card at the start of your programme. It has several important functions and must be looked after carefully. For safeguarding reasons, **you must wear your ID card whilst on site.**

Students taking part in sporting activity, wearing College or Norwich City kit may carry their ID card in their belongings at those times.

If you lose your card, you must report its loss to the BL Office and obtain a replacement. You may be charged £5.00 for the replacement, payable by debit card.

Your student card is used in the following ways:

- To identify yourself as a student of the college to staff and other students.
- To sign in and out of college
- To gain entry to areas
- To borrow resources from the college

Student Council

The Student Council consists of a group of students each holding a responsibility for a particular area of life, student experience or student group within Bishop Laney.

These are:

- Student Experience
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Student Support
- Charity & Community
- Student Recruitment

You can find out who are the current role-holders by looking at the Student Council noticeboard.

Returning and new students are encouraged to take up these roles and to suggest additional roles which they feel might be appropriate.

Study Periods

Developing effective use of time is an essential skill. You will have

timetabled study periods included throughout the college day and you are required to register for this at the BL Office.

How you use this time will significantly impact your progress and final grades. Alongside keeping up with work, use this time on a range of activities which will help you not only with your studies but what you will do after leaving us. Your tutor will run a tutorial session on making the best use of study periods.

There is always *something* you can do in your study periods and at home. You should focus on:

- Planning – how you are going to complete your assessments and make time for revision
- Completing homework and assignments
- Reading – extra reading around your subject area and reflecting this in your work will help improve the level at which you are working.

Study Programme Changes

Once you receive your timetable changes will require discussion with a member of the Bishop Laney Leadership Team.

Once you have started your study programme, if you feel it may not involve the right course/s for you, you should talk your tutor and subject teacher in the first instance. You will then need to meet with the Curriculum Leader to discuss the change and seek their agreement.

You may be asked to attend a CEIAG meeting as part of this process. Course changes take place at set times and you will be required to attend lessons for your current course until the change takes effect.

Support for your health and wellbeing

We know studying and life can present challenges and it's important if you start to feel worried or that you are not coping you talk to us.

There are lots of reasons why you may feel like you are struggling and we will do all we can to support you but it is vital you tell someone as soon as you can.

We can help you with issues such as anxiety, exam-related stress, bereavement, family problems, drugs and alcohol and other mental and physical health concerns either in-

house or by signposting to support outside the college.

We understand young people can be reluctant to talk about such challenges but please be reassured we can help and will keep your circumstances confidential, on a need-to-know basis.

As a starting point you can speak to your tutor or Gina or Belinda who can provide some initial advice.

You can find out more about coping with emotional ups and downs by visiting the NHS Choices Moodzone website and there are many resources advertised on posters throughout the college and on the BishopLaney.me Portal.

Textbooks

If you are provided with textbooks, please take care of them. These are very expensive and need to be returned in good condition. Your teacher may request a deposit before supplying a textbook.

Alternatively, departments may recommend or request books are purchased. Students who are in

receipt of bursary funding will be supplied with relevant textbooks as part of the scheme.

Travelling to college on public transport

Make sure to check bus/train times so you arrive in time for sessions and please discuss the issue with your tutor if it is causing concern.

You can check Cambridgeshire County Council's website to check whether you are eligible for council operated transport., and if you are eligible for a bursary, you can also ask for a contribution towards travel costs as part of the bursary funding.

Great Northern Trains operate a discount scheme offering between 35% and 50% discount for students travelling to colleges in Cambridgeshire with a monthly (or longer) season ticket. This often represents better value than local bus services. For more information, search 'Cambridgeshire Student Connect' to visit the scheme's webpage.

The Tiger Bus Pass gives students unlimited travel in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough for just £1 per trip. For full details go to:

www.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/onepoundbusfare

If you are entitled to travel as part of a support plan, please contact Cambridgeshire County Council Social and Education Transport Team on 0845 045 5208.

Tutor

Your tutor plays a vital role in helping you achieve the success you desire from your studies. They will meet with you regularly to assess your progress and help you with your next steps.

Meetings with your tutor are a compulsory part of your studies and will enable you and your tutor to:

- discuss any aspects of work or other issues of concern to you
- monitor your academic progress
- discuss your progress, targets and development
- prepare external reports and references

- talk about how you think you are progressing
- discuss study techniques
- research Higher Education courses and to fill in UCAS/application forms
- discuss careers and future opportunities.

You and your parents/carers can contact your tutor via e-mail at any time and will be invited to meet with your tutor during the year.

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The most important thing to remember is not to worry about anything on your own, there are lots of people who are willing and able to help!

Whatever it is that is concerning you, whether it's college work, other work, friends, family, or something else entirely, there's always someone to listen.

