



Bishop Wordsworth's School

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Website: www.bws-school.org.uk

Head Master: Dr S D Smallwood BSc (Hons) PhD NPQH

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Dear Parents/Guardians

Science A Levels at Bishop Wordsworth's School

We are delighted that your son has chosen to study one or more of the Science A Levels and we hope that he enjoys his science studies. The Science Faculty organises a wealth of science enrichment opportunities which will provide him with the additional skills and experiences to move beyond BWS into the competitive university or work environment. I have summarised below some of the key aspects of the courses with some information which I hope you will find useful.

We look forward to working with you and your son in supporting their further studies in Science in the Sixth Form.

Kind regards

Dr Emma Baker
Director of Science

Course Assessment: A levels in Biology, Chemistry and Physics are now linear which means that the final grade is determined entirely by the three exams at the end of the course. Geology remains modular for another year. We are lucky at BWS because many of the Science teachers taught A Levels pre 2000 so have the experience of teaching linear A Levels. This was the method of assessment prior to that date. Linear A Level study does mean that the Year 12 study is very important in ensuring that students have a very solid knowledge and understanding of the foundation work covered in Year 12. Strong achievement in Year 12 is essential to enable students to have a sufficiently strong knowledge and understanding on which to further develop and consolidate in Year 13, without this the outlook at the end of the 2 year course is unlikely to be positive.

Practical Endorsement replaces coursework in Biology, Chemistry and Physics:

Practical skills are teacher assessed via the 'Practical Endorsement'. The endorsement does not contribute to the Year 13 assessment/grade and is reported separately. Practical skills are a fundamental aspect of science study and students will build a portfolio of evidence documenting their developing practical skills throughout the two year course. This portfolio will be a documented record of their skills which they may wish to share at job or university interviews. Practical skills will be assessed in the external examinations and the portfolio of evidence will also be an essential revision resource. All students who undertake the courses at BWS will have sufficient opportunities to achieve a pass in the Practical Endorsement.

Students will need:

- A scientific calculator, a lever arch file with dividers for each of their sciences
- A textbook – the boys know which is the recommended book and details are on the website.
- **To be organised and hard working from day one – it is a big jump to A Level!**



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Use of 'self supported study' time: This year the Science Classroom is available as an area for silent study for VI Form students to use during their 'self-supported study periods'. This room has textbooks, scientific journals, past papers and a growing number of other resources which the students will find helpful. Self-supported study periods are not supervised by staff and students need to take individual responsibility to ensure that they are using them effectively. Students should be using this time to do their homework and/or do further reading to prepare them for the subsequent lessons. For each topic that the students are studying they are given an overview and this should help them to identify further reading that would be helpful. This additional reading enables students to get the most from their lessons and helps them to consolidate ideas whilst making links to wider aspects of their studies.

We believe that how effectively the boys use their self-supported study periods and time at home will be a major factor in their success in their studies.

Assessment: Students are given an 'expected grade' which is based on their average GCSE grades correlating this to the national achievements of students with the same average GCSE grade to their achievement in the science. This 'expected grade' is only an indication and all students are set an aspirational target grade which is one above this 'expected grade'. Every year, like students at all centres, some students achieve more highly than the expected grade with achievement at the aspirational target grade. Many achieve in line with the expected grade with unfortunately some achieving below the expected grade. Students are given significant guidance and advice on the study attributes to provide them with the best chance of being one of those students who achieves more highly.

In all the Sciences students will be given regular tests. These tests are based on past A Level questions. These tests give teachers and students an accurate indication of whether students are meeting the 'expected' or even 'aspirational target grade'. Students who underperform are given guidance and encouraged to resit. Students will also sit exams in January and an end of year exam in June. All of these assessments will inform decisions about further study in Year 13 and UCAS predicted grades.

Enrichment: The Science Faculty provides extensive enrichment opportunities. Last year there were over 40 external visitors, many of whom spoke to VI form students. Students are expected to attend the monthly BAYS science talks. Students are supported in entering the different Science Challenge and Olympiad competitions. Students are regularly given links and information regarding other external opportunities that they have to develop their own skills and strengthen their future career/UCAS applications. Many students were supported in their application with attendance on Sutton Trust, Headstart and Smallpeice Trust courses last year.