



Blanchelande College

The Sixth Form Odyssey



Your Questions Answered

THE SIXTH FORM ODYSSEY

1. What is a ‘Sixth Form Odyssey’?

The word Odyssey may be new to you! An Odyssey is an important journey of the mind, or a physical journey, during which you undergo all sorts of new experiences and challenges. It’s not just about getting from A to B. When you are on an Odyssey you discover who you really are; in fact self-discovery is what it’s all about. In the same way, coming to Blanchelande’s Sixth Form is about more than just studying three A-Levels. You’ll do that – but much, much more.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

2. What GCSE grades do I need to study A-Levels at Blanchelande?

You will need at least 5 GCSEs at grade 4 or above. However, for your chosen A-Level subjects you may need higher than grade 4 and some subjects have more specific requirements. For example:

- If you are studying Combined Science at GCSE, you will need a grade 7 or above in Mathematics to study Biology, Chemistry or Physics.
- For A-Level Psychology, you will need grade 6 in both English and Mathematics.

Our entry requirements are not just about your GCSE grades. In addition, we expect you to be:

- An enthusiastic learner
- Able to work independently
- Keen to contribute to the wider life of the School (e.g. sport, music, drama, DofE).

3. Do I need to pass English and Mathematics at GCSE to enter the Sixth Form, even if I’m not studying those subjects?

A grade 4 and above in English and Mathematics are a requirement for A-Level study at Blanchelande. Even if you are not studying these subjects, they may be a requirement for the subjects you are choosing at A-Level (e.g. as in question 2 above, for Science a strong Mathematics grade is required). However, Blanchelande will, on a student-by-student basis, consider whether a student may be admitted subject to receiving additional support and resitting a GCSE paper in English and Mathematics at the earliest opportunity.

4. Is there an entrance interview?

We do not select students on the basis of interview. If you apply to our Sixth Form and currently attend another school, and assuming you are predicted to meet our entry requirements, you and your parents/carer will be invited to meet our Sixth Form team and

familiarise yourself with Blanchelande. This is a great opportunity for you to ask us questions. We may also invite you to a taster day with our Year 11 when you can make friends and get to know the school.

5. How do I apply if I'm not currently at Blanchelande?

At the end of this document you will find the contact details of our Registrar, Sonia Hollowell. Send her an email or give her a ring.

SUBJECT CHOICES AND CURRICULUM

6. Which subjects will I be able to study at Blanchelande?

Subjects will be arranged in blocks (contained in our Course Booklet, published in November 2019), and you will choose one subject from each block. We will be offering the following subjects to prospective students:

- Art
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Design Technology
- Drama
- English Literature
- Environmental Science
- French
- Geography
- History
- Mathematics
- Mathematical Studies
- Music
- Photography
- Psychology
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Religious Studies
- Spanish

7. How many subjects will I study?

You will choose three A-Level subjects, which is the standard for entry onto most university courses. There will be two other opportunities to study additional Level 3 material which carry UCAS points:

- Mathematical Studies is a one-year course (counting for half an A-Level) with an exam at the end of Year 12.
- The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) enables you to undertake an in-depth study of a topic that particularly interests you; this can tip the balance for your university application.

8. Will I sit any AS examinations in the summer of 2020?

AS-Levels no longer have the value that they once did, and most schools now offer only full A-Level courses. The majority of students will therefore only sit the linear (two-year) A-Level examinations in Year 13. Exceptions to this are Mathematical Studies, which is a one-year course taken in Year 12, Art, and Photography, which are structured with examinations at the end of Years 12 *and* 13.

9. How will I be sure I have made the right subject choices?

The right subject choices for you will be:

- Subjects you excelled in at GCSE and play to your strengths.
- Subjects that excite and motivate you to study and go beyond the minimum expectations of your teachers (e.g. branching off into your own reading and research).
- Subjects that go well together and match up to your interests and university or career aspirations (you will receive plenty of advice from experts to help you to figure out the best pathway for you).

10. What if I don't like my course?

We will do all we can to guide you towards a subject that suits your talents and interests. However, if you start a course and you don't feel it is working for you, it is important that you approach your subject teacher, tutor or Head of Sixth Form (Mrs Moores) straight away. So long as space remains in the class you wish to join, and you have the GCSE grades required, we will try to transfer you to this subject. It is expected that no changes should be made after half term in the Michaelmas Term, due to the amount of missed content.

11. What is the curriculum in the Sixth Form?

Your curriculum will be made up of the following building blocks:

- Four 70 minute (i.e. double) lessons per week for each A-Level subject
- One 35 minute Careers lesson

- One 35 minute PSHE lesson
- One 35 minute EPQ (or Enrichment) lesson (*optional*)
- One 70 minute lesson of recreational activity (e.g. sport)

Plus independent study time, which will be filled with tasks relating to your A-Level subjects or your academic enrichment activities ('Supra-Study', in which you will go beyond the confines of your A-Level syllabus). We will equip you with the organisational and study skills needed for A-Level and undergraduate study at university.

12. What is the Extended Project Qualification?

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is a stand-alone qualification worth half an A-level in which pupils pursue an independent research project in addition to their other subjects. This might complement or extend other subject choices. Pupils completing an EPQ gain a qualification which is highly regarded by universities and this process helps pupils to prepare for independent study at university.

FACILITIES

13. What facilities will there be for Sixth Formers at Blanchelande and when can I visit them?

Many of the classrooms and areas that Sixth Formers will be using are integrated into the whole school and are available for you to visit during a private tour of the school (arranged with the Registrar, Mrs Hollowell). Exciting new areas, such as the Sixth Form Study (library) and Common Room and a A-Level specific Science Laboratory will be completed by summer 2020. Updates will be shared via our Facebook page.

MOVING FROM GCSE INTO A-LEVELS

14. How does Blanchelande College help with the transition into Sixth Form?

The transition process begins in Year 11 and continues into Year 12.

- Students in Year 11 benefit from detailed presentations on all A-Level subjects and the opportunity to engage with teachers to deepen their understanding of their preferred courses.
- Taster days offer the opportunity for students to experience A-Level style lessons.
- Bridging content is supplied to students after they have completed their GCSEs, so that they are prepared for the challenge of A-Level study.
- A full induction programme at the beginning of Year 12 ensures students know what to expect and how to prepare themselves for success.

- Sixth Formers will have an Induction Day on the day before the rest of the school begins in September. There will also be team-building activities and a Sixth Form social.
- All Sixth Formers are allocated a tutor group and their designated tutor is a vital port of call. Sixth form tutors offer excellent pastoral care with a programme of activities to inform, support and guide students through Sixth Form life.
- Towards the end of the first month of Sixth Form, students will take ‘low stakes’ assessments to give them and their teachers an early indication of how they are adapting to A-Level material.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

15. How good is the teaching at Blanchelande?

Blanchelande was rated as ‘excellent’ in all categories when it was inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in 2018, and its GCSE results are excellent.¹ Underlying this is strong teaching by dedicated professionals. Our teachers are experts in their subjects and in delivering academic content to students with different learning styles and needs. Many of our teachers have strong A-Level experience from previous schools, and all have been enthusiastically preparing for the introduction of these new courses.

16. What will lessons be like?

A-Levels will be taught in small groups, enabling deeper discussion with teachers and peers, leading to greater knowledge and understanding. Far more so than at GCSE, you will be encouraged to analyse, evaluate, question, take intellectual risks, develop your own ideas and pursue additional academic interests. Your teachers will advise and encourage you about how to broaden your appreciation of the subjects you are studying. You will be offered and/or can request additional support at any stage.

17. I have particular learning needs. Will I receive the support I need?

Blanchelande offers you a Sixth Form where all your teachers are on one school site. This means you have ready access to your teachers whenever you need support. Blanchelande also has a superb Learning Support department and any student with additional needs should contact our Head of Learning Support (SENCO), Kelly Fay (fayk@blanchelande.sch.gg).

¹ In 2018 Blanchelande was the highest-achieving school on Guernsey for GCSE, with 97% of students achieving at least five grade 9-4 GCSEs. The proportion of students achieving grades 9-7 increased for a successive year, reaching 42% (double the UK average).

18. How will highly academic students be stretched?

In addition to the rigour of the new A-Level courses, students will have a wide range of opportunities to enrich their intellectual development. Opportunities will include:

- Further reading lists and reading groups
- Journals, books and online resources available in the Sixth Form Study
- Talks by visiting speakers
- The Extended Project Qualification
- The Blanchelande ‘Supra’ programme which opens the door to academic enrichment opportunities such as the Massive Open Online Courses
- On and off-island trips
- Academic societies
- National competitions

19. What is ‘Independent Study’?

One of the biggest changes from GCSE to A-Level is that the timetable is not filled with back-to-back lessons. You will have a mixture of lessons and independent study periods. These periods will give you space for self-discovery within your subject areas. Independent study will come more naturally to some students than others, and your teachers will provide guidance on how to use this time fruitfully (e.g. practising skills from lessons or reflecting on taught content). Your tutor will check that you are structuring your independent study time effectively.

A WELCOMING SCHOOL

20. I’m not a Catholic. Will I be welcomed at Blanchelande?

Absolutely! We welcome pupils from all backgrounds, and indeed the majority of Blanchelande pupils are not Catholic.

21. Will I feel as though I belong to a Sixth Form College, or to Blanchelande as a whole?

Anyone joining Blanchelande’s Sixth Form will be part of a school community that includes boys and girls from the age of 4 to 18. Pupils who have come up through the school will be taught by teachers who already know them. If you are new to the school, Blanchelande is brilliant at welcoming new faces, and within weeks newcomers often say that it feels like they have always been at the school. Small tutor groups will ensure that your Sixth Form tutor will get to know you – and your needs – very quickly. While being part of a whole-school community, with lots of opportunities for participation with students of all ages, Sixth Formers will also enjoy the privileges of the Sixth Form Study, Common Room and on-site parking.

22. What links will I have with the younger students?

As important role models, Sixth Formers, will have plenty of opportunities to interact with and lead younger students, ideal for developing not only leadership skills but also community service and your social skills with people of different ages, interests and backgrounds. There will be specific roles of responsibility to apply for, including prefects and subject mentors, but you can also come up with your own ideas and suggestions based on your interests and enthusiasms.

YOUR FUTURE

23. How will Blanchelande Sixth Form prepare me for the next phase of my life?

Sixth Form is all about becoming confident, fulfilled and prepared for adult life, surrounded by encouraging mentors and friends as you journey towards your goals. You will benefit from:

- Committed subject teachers and a dedicated Sixth Form tutor who know your goals.
- Weekly Careers guidance to broaden your horizons and keep you informed regarding the steps you need to take, as well as tips for personal development.
- A fully coeducational environment that prepares you for the world of work in an environment of trust and respect.

24. What opportunities will I have to gain leadership experience at Blanchelande?

As a senior member of the school, you will enjoy increased independence and develop an even greater sense of personal and collective responsibility. The Sixth Form is led by an elected Head Girl and Head Boy, Deputies, and a Sixth Form Leadership Team. Their responsibilities include:

- Organisation of the Sixth Form Ball
- Leavers' Mass
- Leavers' Year book
- School Council feedback
- Social events
- The organisation of charity events

Other opportunities for responsibility include:

- Monitors
- Prefects
- House Captains

- Sports Captains
- Learning Leaders (students who offer regular academic and pastoral mentoring to younger students in specific subjects)
- Clubs, activities and societies (with Sixth Formers taking a leading role alongside teachers)

Students joining our Sixth Form from other schools will have an equal opportunity to apply for these posts.

25. What support and advice will I get for university/job applications?

Your main sources of advice will be your tutor, the Head of Careers (Mr Tabel), and the Head of Sixth Form, Mrs Moores. These teachers will discuss your future plans with you on a regular basis. You will also be able to make full use of the on-line resource MyUniChoices. Weekly Careers lessons will guide you through your decision-making process.

26. Can I do work experience?

We encourage you to schedule work experience and we can assist and advise you in finding opportunities. For certain university applications, particularly Medicine and Veterinary Science, it is imperative that you have work experience in the field, and you should seek to set this up as soon as possible. Students will have the opportunity to participate in the island-wide IOD Management Shadowing scheme.

27. Will I be able to apply to a university outside the UK?

Absolutely. A-Levels are an internationally recognised qualification for university and college entrance. They are very highly regarded by all universities world-wide, including G8 universities in Australia, Ivy League in the US and other high-quality universities around the world. Guernsey students also have the opportunity to apply for one fully-funded place at Brock University, Canada. We will also connect you to experts in the field of overseas applications.

SIXTH FORM LIFE

28. Will Sixth Formers wear school uniform?

Blanchelande Sixth Formers do not wear school uniform. Instead, they enjoy a professional, smart-casual dress code that is purposeful, comfortable and retains a sense of belonging to the school.

Boys:

- Smart navy blazer of your choice
- Trousers: either dark grey tailored trousers, or stone/beige chinos
- Plain black or brown belt
- Plain white, light blue or cream formal shirt
- V-neck navy jumper
- Sixth Form tie
- Dark socks
- Smart black or brown leather shoes

Girls:

- Smart navy jacket of your choice
- Skirt or trousers: plain-coloured grey/stone/burgundy
- Black or brown belt (if worn)
- White, light blue or cream shirt/blouse
- Smart flat shoes: black, navy or brown

This dress code gives students the flexibility to source their own clothes and develop a professional image while feeling comfortable.

29. What time does the Sixth Form day start and finish?

Sixth Formers must all be registered at 8.30 am. Lesson 1 begins at 9.05 am and the academic day ends at 3.45 pm. Optional extra-curricular activities run before, during and after school. The Sixth Form study will remain open on a daily basis until 5.00 pm (with later opening at peak study times of the year).

30. How much Prep (homework) will I get?

This will be much more open-ended than at GCSE. As a rough guide, for every hour of lessons there will be approximately an hour of independent study.

31. What ICT facilities will I have access to?

You will be able to access the wifi network with your own laptop and smartphone, so please feel free to bring these to school for independent study and to lessons to work on. You will also have access to the school PCs. Like other students in the senior school, you will be able to print off work and resources related to your academic studies.

32. Can I bring my mobile phone into school?

Yes; however, there will be guidelines regarding when they can be used, to avoid disruptions or distractions and to promote social interaction with living, breathing human beings.

33. Can I use my laptop in lessons and non-contact periods?

While many students favour a pen and a notebook, increasing numbers of students are expressing a preference to bring their own laptop to work on in lessons. We provide wifi access for your personal devices in and out of lessons.

34. Will I be able to have a part time job whilst I study?

Yes, of course! We suggest that you arrange mainly weekend and holiday hours so that work does not interfere with your learning. As a general guide, working eight hours a week is the upper limit. You have your whole life to work, but only two years to get the most out of your A-Levels.

AND FINALLY....

35. What is the deadline for 6th form applications?

The deadline for September 2020 will be 12th December 2019. If you are interested in making an application, please contact our Registrar, Sonia Hollowell:

Email hollowells@blanchelande.sch.gg

Phone (01481) 232 744

36. I've got a question which has not been answered yet!

Contact Mrs Moores: mooress@blanchelande.sch.gg

TRUST
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JOURNEY



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