Sandy Secondary School

Empowering Our Students To Shine

Prospectus

Executive Principal's Welcome

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am delighted to welcome you to our extremely successful, caring and happy school, where every individual is highly valued.

At Sandy Secondary School we are totally committed to academic excellence and we passionately believe that every child is entitled to a first rate education regardless of ability, so that they can fulfil their ambitions and achieve everything they are capable of. We aim to ensure that every child is extremely well prepared to pursue their career aspirations and lead a highly successful, happy life.

We combine the traditional values of good manners, exemplary behaviour and smart uniform, with the very best of modern teaching and learning and an innovative curriculum which provides opportunities for academic, technical, sporting and arts excellence. Our students are highly successful and courteous young people, who have the desire and drive to succeed in the 21st century – as individuals, team players, active citizens and leaders in their chosen fields. Our students are smartly presented, kind, compassionate and thoughtful and they know that, through hard work and determination, they can achieve anything and everything they set their minds to. We are extremely proud of our outstanding achievements and the remarkable progress we have made. We have ensured that our vision for an outstanding school has become a reality.

At Sandy Secondary School we have created a unique team of students, staff and parents/guardians, who work together as one united team to do whatever it takes to achieve success.

Our staff team is made up of high-performing professionals who go 'above and beyond' to ensure our students receive the best possible education and pastoral care. We aim to provide fantastic life opportunities for our students and as a result our students are highly motivated, hard-working and successful.

My team and I look forward to working in partnership with you to ensure your child has a highly successful and fulfilling future at Sandy Secondary School.

Miss K Hayward
Executive Principal

Empowering Our Students To Shine

High Aspirations and Outstanding Achievement

One of our primary aims at Sandy Secondary School is to provide the best possible education for all of our students. We set ambitious target grades in all subjects and across all year groups, increasing the aspirations and expectations of all our students. We proactively support students who may experience difficulties, as well as stretch and challenge our 'more able' students through our Top Achievers Programme. Dialogue with teachers is encouraged as a framework for students to develop ideas, ask questions and apply a meticulous approach to their learning. Students work together to build team skills, strengthen individual talents and encourage a passion for lifelong learning. Our students leave the School with the best possible results, equipped for further learning or training, able to think creatively and with the confidence to handle the pressures of a fast-changing world.

Our Aims

The aims of our School are the foundation of all we do and offer for our students, parents/guardians and the community.

Therefore we aim to

- Enable each individual student to feel happy, healthy, safe, valued and able to achieve their best
- Provide a full range of interesting, challenging and enjoyable learning opportunities for all, within and outside the School day
- Offer a caring, orderly and supportive learning environment, in which all stakeholders treat each other fairly and with respect, and feel proud to belong to such a community
- Develop the self-confidence, self-discipline and self-awareness of our students to help them become independent and responsible members of the School, local and wider community
- Promote in students a love of learning through opportunities that encourage them to think, imagine, feel and interact, and give them control of their learning through choices that meet their individual interests and needs
- Prepare students for their future lives and occupations by helping them to achieve the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding in all their areas of study
- Develop their employability skills and prepare students for the world of work
- To create a safe and stimulating learning environment

Teaching and Learning

Excellent teaching at Sandy Secondary School means planning and executing rigorous and engaging lessons, as well as using data to assess student achievement. Great things come to those who work hard and at Sandy Secondary School we have no short cuts in ensuring that all of our students succeed. We aim to instil high standards of effort, attitude and endeavour within all of our students in all lessons. By developing a student's independent skills we guide students on a journey to further and higher education or skilled employment. Our lessons encourage independent thinking, self-reliance and social responsibility. Students grow in confidence and are able to take responsibility for their learning outcomes. Moreover, the School works closely with parents and guardians to encourage their support and involvement in the development of the student's unique talents and competencies.

The Curriculum

At Sandy Secondary School we develop our students to display key characteristics at all times to become valued members of the School and wider community, to allow them to fulfil their potential and to achieve their dreams. Sandy Secondary School offers a diverse and stimulating curriculum to engage student interest and optimize academic achievement.

Students joining the School in Year 7 will undertake a curriculum where the main focus is to develop their love of learning whilst preparing them for the rigour of the GCSE qualifications. They will study all the required components of the National Curriculum along with additional subjects that enable them to develop both in an academic and a personal sense. The subjects that students will follow will include the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science and PE.

Students joining the School in Year 9 study GCSE qualifications from the moment they join the School. The curriculum ensures that students are taking qualifications that pioneer 21st century learning and directly link to required employability skills. In addition to the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science and Physical Education, students are provided with opportunities to follow the English Baccalaureate which includes Humanities (History and Geography) and Modern Foreign Languages (French and Spanish). Students can also select GCSE courses from a wide range of subjects that suit individual interests, abilities and career aspirations. Subjects included in these choices are: Art & Design, Business Studies, Computer Science, Dance, Drama, Catering, French, History, Geography, Media Studies, Music, Philosophy & Ethics, Physical Education, Psychology, Resistant Materials, Spanish, Textiles and Travel & Tourism.

Whatever your child's academic interests, strengths and ambitions, Sandy Secondary School provides an exceptional springboard to future success. Our curriculum lies at the heart of all that we do and is constantly under review to ensure that it offers courses and skills for young people in this ever changing world. Our staff very much focus on teaching children rather than just subjects and seize every opportunity to develop a curriculum which is personalised, as much as possible, to the interests and needs of the student.

> *The teachers here constantly encouraged me to achieve my best at GCSE which has allowed me to follow my chosen career path.*
>
> Student

Personal Support and Pastoral Care

Traditional values including respect, outstanding behaviour and self-discipline are the foundation of our community. Our School is organised into four Houses whose names reflect the values that we want to see develop in our students - Courage, Determination, Excellence and Inspiration. Each student is assigned to a House as they enter the School and this forms their pastoral base for their time with us. We work in vertical tutor groups encompassing students in Years 7-11, which enables peer mentoring and support, as well as easy integration into the School community. Form time is an essential start to our School day and provides a programme of Literacy, Careers Information, Advice and Guidance, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Citizenship education focused on developing students' skills. Students are encouraged to participate in a range of community events, where fundraising activities develop their planning, decision making and organisational skills. For most students, pastoral and mentoring support is provided by the staff in their House; however, there will be times when students require additional support. This support may include SEND support, language development, behaviour support, counselling and alternative curriculum provision. We also host a range of services which offer confidential support including counselling.

Uniform and Attendance

We strive for excellence in all that we do, and all students are expected to dress to a very high standard at all times. Correct uniform and smart appearance is indicative of the fact that students are in the correct frame of mind for learning. At Sandy Secondary School we believe that, for our students to gain the greatest benefits from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly. The aim should always be for 100% attendance.

Open Days and Transition

The transition process begins with our Open Evening for prospective parents/guardians in the first half term of the academic year. Anyone wishing to complement this with a visit to the School during the normal day should contact the School to arrange an appointment and a tour. Our support for students starts when we make our first visit to feeder schools. From that point on, there will be regular updates on our website and, as soon as students choose us as the next step in their educational journey, we begin our work to prepare them for an exciting future with us. There will be further opportunities to meet our staff, find out about our curriculum and get to know the Sandy Secondary School community. If you have any questions or queries about the transition process at any time, contact us using our dedicated email address transition@sandysecondaryschool.com

Admissions

If the number of places in a year group at the School is not sufficient to meet the requests of all the parents/guardians, then the following Local Authority criteria will be applied (in the rank order shown) to determine how the places will be allocated:

- To children 'looked after' in the care of Central Bedfordshire Council or resident within the catchment area
- To students living in the catchment area
- To other children 'looked after'
- On 'very exceptional' medical grounds
- To siblings of students currently attending the School

The admission number for each year group is 269.

For all admissions enquiries contact:
School Admissions, Central Bedfordshire Council,
Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable LU6 1LF.

T. 0300 300 8037
E. admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Empowering Our Students To Shine

Inclusion

The School recognises that many students have some degree of special educational needs for part or all of their time at Sandy Secondary School. The School aims to address these needs in order to ensure that all students are able to achieve academically and socially. We are an inclusive School that stretches all our students to achieve their best.

Student Illness or Accident

If a student feels unwell, they will be directed to the medical room and assessed by a First Aid trained member of staff. Parents/guardians will be contacted and in the rare event of serious ill-health an ambulance will be called.

Medicines

Medicines, prescribed by a doctor, can only be administered during school hours by prior arrangement with the School, and only if no alternative arrangement can be made. We have several qualified First-Aiders who are able to respond to low-level medical problems. General pain relief medication can be left in the School office for staff to administer.

Sandy Secondary School Sixth Form

Sixth Form is an exciting and challenging opportunity to enable students to develop the academic and social skills for the next stage of their careers, either at university, in an apprenticeship or employment. We offer an extensive range of A Level and Level 3 and 2 BTEC courses for students to study. All students are expected to take three A levels along with either IFS (a financial studies qualification), Core Maths or EPQ (Extended Project Qualification). If studying at Level 3, students are set challenging and aspirational targets and their performance is monitored on a regular basis. As part of the enrichment programme there will be: university visits, talks from external speakers and former students, careers and university guidance and the opportunity to join a Scholars' Programme focussing on students going to Cambridge, Oxford and Russell Group universities. There are many other enrichment opportunities for Sixth Form students, particularly in their leadership roles within the wider context of the School, and we will encourage them to take on additional responsibilities and broaden their experiences.

Gifted & Talented

At Sandy Secondary School, we anticipate to monitor, extend and celebrate the talents, aptitudes and abilities of students who have been identified as academically gifted, or those who have shown exceptional talent at a specific subject. By doing so, we aim to enrich and inspire the entire school community to aspire to achieve beyond expectations.

We achieve this through careful planning of a range of activities within the School from lesson content and additional enrichment activities such as subject master classes. There are also subject-specific opportunities available beyond the School such as the Maths Challenge, Sky Sports Academy, Dance East and A STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) project in collaboration with the Shuttleworth Collection, where students have had the opportunity to fly in a vintage bi-plane. Additionally, students are targeted for exclusive visits to universities such as Cambridge, Oxford and Northampton across all year groups to encourage and inspire progression to university.

Top Achievers

In 2016, Sandy Secondary School launched its 'Top Achievement' programme with a pilot of 30 Year 11 students. Every year students enjoy 1-1 mentoring sessions, form time revision sessions and educational visits and journeys. The focus is on giving the students grade 8–9 skills and raising their attainment across the core subjects giving them the tools needed for further study. The group enjoy many team building challenges while visiting Grafham Water Centre and during their residential at Wyboston, they are involved in intense skill sessions aimed at examination technique. We are now extending this programme from Year 7 upwards.

Facilities

We have a range of specialist classrooms for Technology, Science, Music, Business and ICT, with access to computers for students across all subjects. We are fortunate to have a Lecture Hall which is used for assemblies and for the many Expressive Arts events we offer each year, including dance shows, musical concerts and our annual productions.

There are large grounds where students can relax, socialise and get some fresh air at break and lunchtimes. The Dining Area is open from 8am to 3pm offering a range of healthy meals and snacks at break and lunch by our professional catering service. Parents/guardians can pay for meals using ParentPay, our online finance service or students can use our machines in School to upload credit (cash) on to their account.

SEND

The SEND Department at Sandy Secondary School consists of a dedicated team: the SENCO and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). The support on offer is tailored to meet the individual needs of students. The School follows the Code of Practice in implementing the graduated approach of assess, plan, do, review so that each student's progress is carefully tracked and appropriate support provided where necessary. Our LSAs provide in-class support and act as Key Workers for a number of high needs students. Specific students may require support throughout the year through our reading schemes, Mathematics schemes or our social studies sessions. A range of technologies are on offer for those with specific needs. Homework club is available for all students, as well as support at break and lunch times. For some of our students, our Pathway B offers a more appropriate curriculum. Transition is managed well; there is close liaison with feeder schools and our students are supported to successfully transfer from us on completion of their examinations. We work closely with our School Nurse and Counsellor, as well as our Advisory Teachers for those with Autism, Visual Impairments or Hearing Impairments. In addition, our Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist and Medical Needs Team have provided valuable support for our students.

> *Teachers are positive about their subjects, and the structured lessons have helped us to excel academically.*
>
> Student

Enrichment and Educational Visits

Sandy Secondary School is a vibrant learning community. Work starts before school with breakfast clubs and intervention activities. At lunchtime, students can participate in a range of activities, including sport, drama, dance, school choir, jam club and intervention classes for a wide range of subjects. After school, learning and enrichment continues into the early evening with a range of rehearsals, dance performance groups, sports activities and additional study classes.

We provide a wide range of opportunities for our students to extend their learning via educational trips. Visits planned include the World War One battlefields, Disneyland Paris and skiing in Andorra to name just a few. In addition, there are numerous careers, university, theatre and dance visits planned.

Partnerships with Parents/Guardians

Research has shown that the most significant impact on outcomes for students lies in the way in which parents/guardians engage with their child's education.

At Sandy Secondary School, we provide regular opportunities for parents/guardians to work with staff so that they know how to support their son or daughter on their achievement journey.

> With the support given to me during my GCSEs I was able to achieve grades I never thought possible.
>
> Student

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