

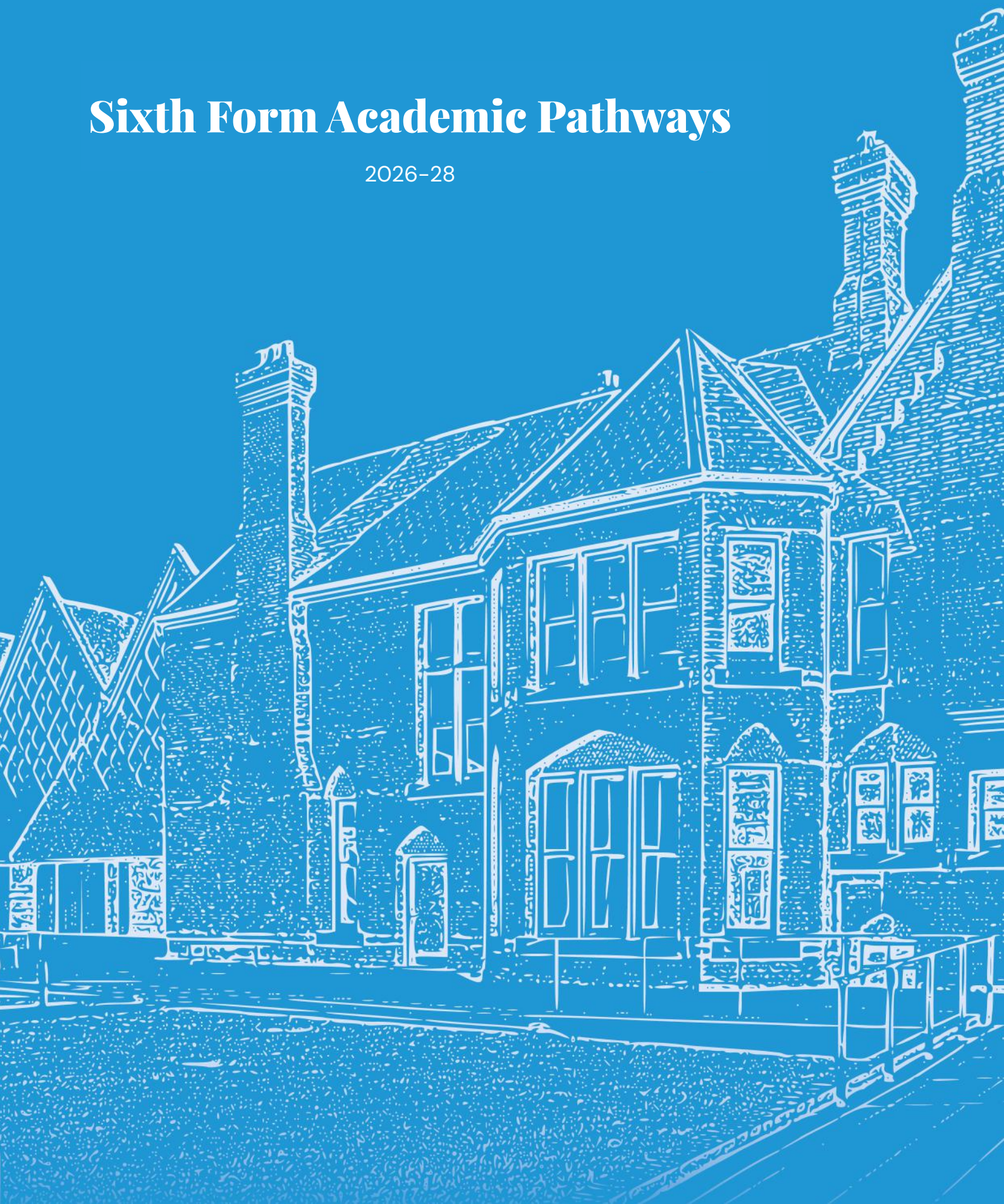


Brentwood School



Sixth Form Academic Pathways

2026-28



Unlock your potential

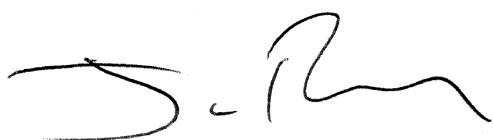
The Sixth Form years are the most exciting and inspiring phase of your school education. It is a time when you will learn to optimise your talents through commitment, creativity and independent learning. Whether you have been at Brentwood for a number of years or will be joining us for the first time, we will support you with an engaging personalised learning programme, bespoke advice about entry to Higher Education, and rigorous preparation to ensure entry to the best universities or to the workplace

In preparation for your Sixth Form years, you will want to give serious consideration to all your academic options and to take the best route to support your individual goals and intellectual growth. You will find a great deal of choice on offer here. There are many subjects to choose from and different curriculum pathways to navigate. You can follow a curriculum based on studying either the International Baccalaureate Diploma, the BTEC Extended Diploma, or A Levels.

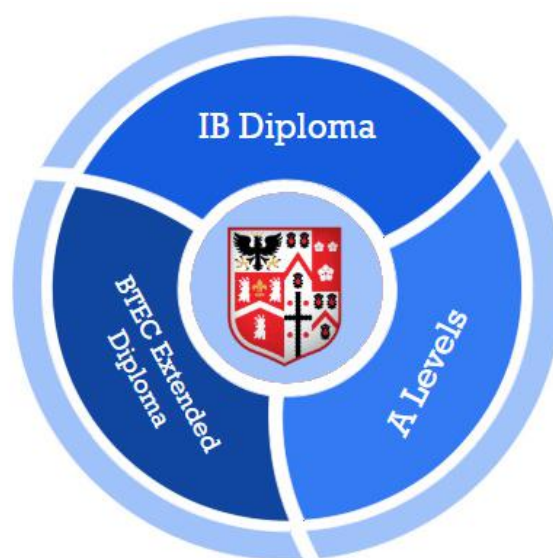
This booklet provides a summary of our academic pathways and will guide you through your choices. It should be read in conjunction with the individual subject information.

Whichever route you choose, you will be expected to work hard and actively participate in the varied co-curricular programme. You will have the chance to complete an extended research project where you can explore a subject beyond the confines of the curriculum and develop your individual study skills. There will be opportunities to join and run school clubs and societies, for leadership roles and to develop life skills. An active network of former students provides help with work experience opportunities and mentoring support. All these aspects provide the very best environment to develop your true potential for intellectual growth, for leadership and for service.

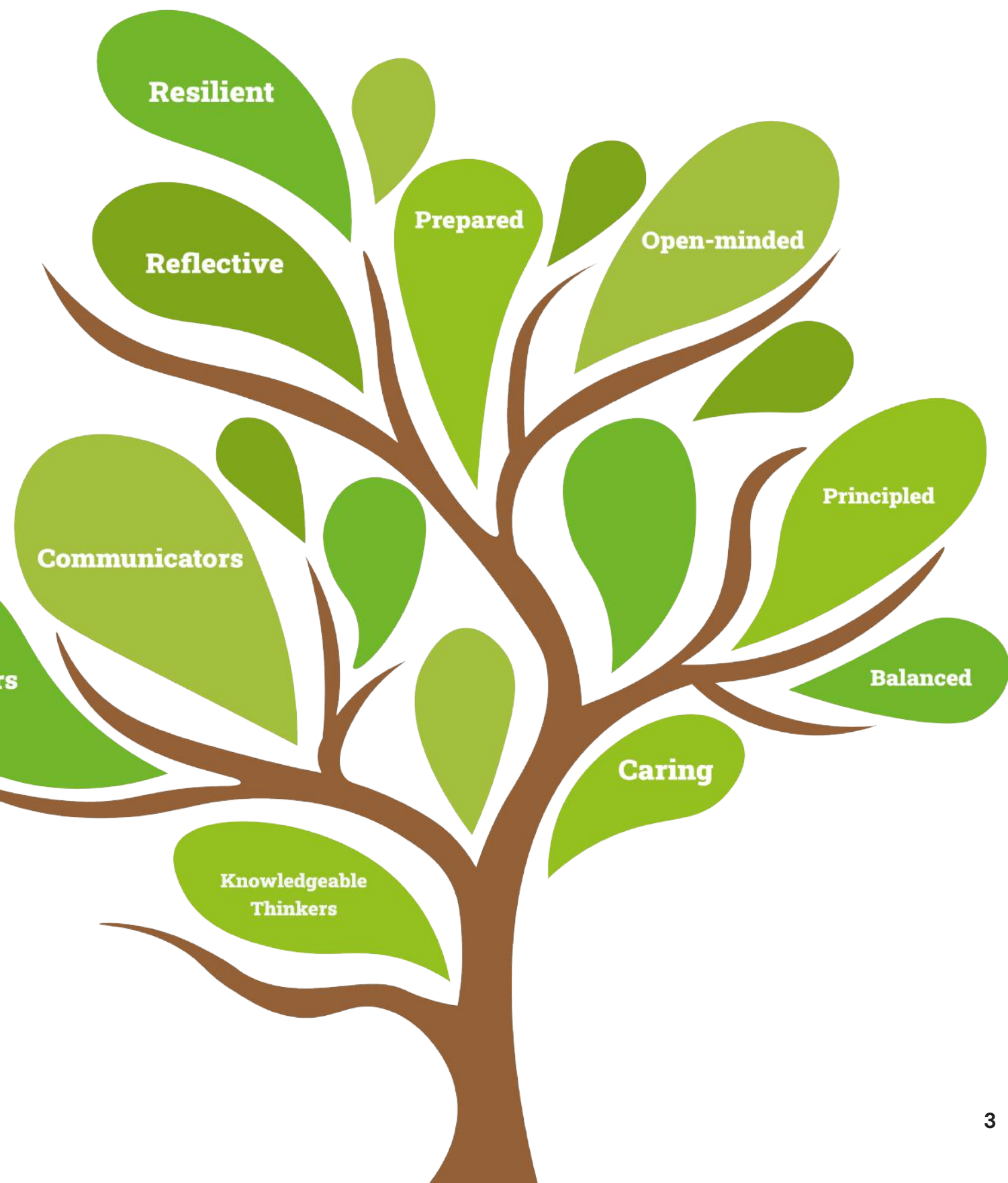
Our commitment to you goes way beyond the Sixth Form: it is lifelong.



Jonathan Barfield Moore
Deputy Head (Academic)



Inquire



Subjec



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[Sixth Form Entry Requirements for 2026](#)

Academic PE/Sport – [A Level](#) / [BTEC](#)

Art – [A Level](#) / [IB](#)

Biology – [A Level](#) / [IB](#)

Business – [A Level](#) / [BTEC](#)

Chemistry – [A Level](#) / [IB](#)

Classical Civilisation – [A Level](#)

Classical Greek – [A Level](#)

Computer Science – [A Level](#) / [IB](#)

Creative Media – [BTEC](#)

Dance – [IB](#)

Design Technology – [A Level](#)

Drama & Theatre – [A Level](#) / [IB](#)

Economics – [A Level](#) / [IB](#)

English – [A Level \(Literature\)](#) / [IB \(Literature\)](#) / [IB \(Literature and Language\)](#)

English as an Additional Language – [C1 Advanced](#) / [IB](#)

Environmental Systems & Societies – [IB](#)

[Extended Project Qualification \(EPQ\)](#)

Food Science – [IB](#)

Geography – [A Level](#) / [IB](#)

History – [A Level](#) / [IB](#)

Latin [A Level](#) / [IB](#)

Mathematics – [A Level](#) / [IB](#)

Modern Foreign Languages – [IB Self-Study Literature](#)

Modern Foreign Languages French – [A Level](#) / [IB](#)

Modern Foreign Languages German – [A Level](#) / [IB](#) / [IB Ab Initio](#)

Modern Foreign Languages Italian – [IB](#)

Modern Foreign Languages Mandarin – [IB Ab Initio](#) / [IB \(B\)](#) / [IB \(Self-Study Chinese Literature\)](#)

Modern Foreign Languages Spanish – [A Level](#) / [IB](#) / [IB Ab Initio](#)

Music – [A Level](#) / [IB](#)

Philosophy – [IB](#)

Physics – [A Level](#) / [IB](#)

Politics – [A Level](#) / [IB](#)

Psychology – [A Level](#) / [IB](#)

Religious Studies – [A Level](#)

*click on the
subject for link
to individual
subject pages*

The IB Diploma



The IB Diploma is a holistic qualification, combining specialist depth for university entry and the wider portfolio of skills valued by employers.

Brentwood is an IB World School. We believe education is about individual transformation, developing character, cultivating human flourishing. We believe in the importance of being outward-looking, encouraging students to think more widely, and preparing our young people for a global workplace. The IB Diploma is underpinned by an aspirational idealistic vision, and an educational ethos that we at Brentwood School share.

The IB Diploma is for students who are curious, open-minded, interested, resilient, adaptable; the programme helps develop communication skills as well as self-management and academic rigour. We have found these character traits to be valued by universities and employers.

The type of student that would study the IB Diploma is someone who enjoys many different subjects, and therefore would like to continue with more than three subjects. This leads to an interesting and varied week.

In the IB Diploma, students take six subjects (the overall workload being about the same as taking four A Levels). Most students take three subjects at Higher Level and three at Standard Level, but we also have a number of students taking four at Higher Level and two at Standard Level. The Higher Level subjects are the things you are specialising in and the things you might take on to university – so if you want to focus on Science, you might study Physics, Chemistry and Maths at Higher Level. Humanities specialists might study English, Spanish and History at Higher Level. The Standard Level subjects allow you to keep up some of your other interests, and keep your academic experience varied, while developing complementary skills e.g. presentation and essay skills for Science specialists; conceptual and systematic thinking for Humanities specialists.

The IB Diploma is out of a total of 45 points: up to 7 points in each of your six subjects, plus up to 3 points for the “Core” of Theory of Knowledge and Extended Essay. As a rough comparison with A Levels, each IB subject is graded out of 7: a 7 is equivalent to an A*, a 6 an A etc. The final total out

a Programme

of 45 compares to A Levels like this: 42 is equivalent to 3 A* grades; 36 is equivalent to AAA. Our 3-year average score is 39 points.

As with A Levels, all IB Diploma examinations are taken at the end of the Upper Sixth year. This allows plenty of time for teaching, and for students to grow and mature. If things go wrong, though of course we hope that they don't, subjects can be re-taken in November after the end of the Upper Sixth. In all subjects, there is an internal coursework element, whether in the form of assessed essays, presentations or practicals – approximately 20–30% in each subject.

Students also take a course in Theory of Knowledge: a fun course where students examine and reflect on questions underpinning the nature of knowledge in their other academic subjects. Students complete an Extended Essay in one of their subjects, involving planning, researching and writing a long project (4000 words): a great preparation for university and something we can really celebrate in your UCAS application. There is also a co-curricular component called CAS, which involves you logging your co-curricular activities.

All of these components combine to create students who are well-rounded, interesting individuals, who flourish in later life, in addition to having the specialist knowledge and skills needed for university.

British universities, European universities, and American universities all want more than students who have merely passed exams. They are looking for students who can manage their time effectively, who are open-minded, who are curious and independent, who are effective communicators, able to cope well under pressure and who have strong global awareness.

University offers for IB Diploma students usually involve an overall points total plus sometimes stipulations at Higher Level. Oxford University make offers of 39 points out of 45; King's College London make offers of 35 points. These compare very favourably. In fact, it is probably slightly easier to get into Oxford or King's College London currently with the IB Diploma than A Levels. We have also found that on average our IB Diploma students are made more university offers than A Level students.

Studies in Language & Literature

- English Literature
- English Language & Literature
- EAL

Language Acquisition

- Chinese
- French
- German
- Spanish
- Latin
- Italian
- Literature for bilingual students

Sciences

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Computer Science
- Food Science
- Environmental Systems





Individuals & Societies

- Economics
- Geography
- History
- Philosophy
- Psychology
- Global Politics
- A second Creative Arts subject

Mathematics

- Mathematics – analysis
- Mathematics – applications

The Arts

- Music
- Theatre
- Visual Arts
- Dance
- A second foreign language, Science or Humanities subject

BTEC Extended



The BTEC National Extended Diploma is a specialist pathway in Sport or Business or Creative Media with an emphasis on vocational skills and ongoing assessment.

The BTEC Extended Diploma courses that we offer, in Sport, Business or Creative Media provide an excellent opportunity for students with a passion for these areas to delve deeper into the subject's core. There is a real emphasis on vocational skills with more hands-on learning through coursework assignments, practical elements, presentations, project based learning and work experience opportunities.

If you have a passion for Sport, Business or Creative Industries, and you know this is what you want to do when you leave Brentwood, then the BTEC is the perfect course for you. Students have the opportunity to specialise and get a better all-round understanding of the subject rather than taking it as one of their A Level or IB Diploma subjects.

BTEC qualifications are the largest, most recognised vocational qualifications for Sixth Form students. Last year, a quarter of UK university applicants presented with BTEC qualifications, according to UCAS. The BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma has the same guided learning hours as 3 A Levels, and most Top 20 universities are equating and valuing it as such.

The BTEC Extended Diploma provides the knowledge, understanding and skills that allow students to gain experience of the sport, business, or creative sectors that will prepare them for further study or training. There are some examinations in the Sport and Business courses, but most of the units are assessed through coursework projects. The Creative Media course is 100% coursework assessed with students showing their understanding by being hands on with their learning and creating portfolios of work. Students are continuously aware of how they are progressing.

If you are a student that prefers continuous assessment, with tasks in manageable chunks, by studying on the Sport, Business or Creative Media courses you will be studying a maximum of three units of work a term. At the end of that term you will know you have completed these units which contribute directly to your overall grade, you will be able to move on, knowing you have secured your grade. The real benefit to ongoing continuous assessment is that teachers, students and parents are aware of exactly what grade students are achieving and whether they are on track; this avoids any unwelcome surprises on Results Day.

Our BTEC Extended Diploma is equivalent to three A Levels and is a two-year programme. The Extended Diploma receives three letter grades on a scale of P = Pass, M = Merit, D = Distinction, D* = Distinction Starred. For context, Exeter University makes offers to students with DDD; Coventry University makes offers to students with DMM.

Diploma

We have smaller class sizes with additional lesson time and better facilities for BTEC compared to other schools and colleges allowing for more personalised support and provision to achieve the very top grades. Our positive learning environment, expertise, and systems of tracking and support, mean our BTEC students have the opportunity to go to Top 20 universities if they wish to do so.

Our BTEC students are part of the Brentwood School Sixth Form and are members of a Sixth Form tutor group; they undertake the EPQ, take a certificated 'General Studies' course, participate in the Sixth Form Enrichment Programme, Senior Games, our co-curricular provision, and also undertake a work experience placement.

Students opt to specialise in Sport or Business or Creative Media.

The Sport course focuses on Anatomy and Physiology; Fitness Training and Programming; Sports Leadership; Coaching; Sports Performance; Sports Psychology; Rules and Officiating.

The Business course focuses on Advertising, Branding and Marketing; Accounting and Finance; Management; Recruitment, Interviews and Human Resources; Pitching for a New Business; Market Research; Corporate Social Responsibility.

The Creative media course focuses students' knowledge and understanding around two modules; Exploring and developing creative media skills and then advancing creative practice. Within these two modules students will gain skills covering broad areas of media such as film and television, web design and app design, digital communication in publishing or advertising.

All three of the courses enable students to develop skills directly relevant to the sector, and will facilitate access to undergraduate courses at Top 20 universities in these fields or apprenticeships and school leavers' workplace schemes.

BTEC units completed in the Lower Sixth will be accredited as a BTEC Foundation Diploma. Progression to the Upper Sixth and the full Extended Diploma will be dependent upon satisfactory performance, and the grades achieved will inform UCAS predicted grades.

Our BTEC Sport students progress to universities and careers in Sport Science, Physiotherapy, Sport Psychology, Sports Management, Coaching, Nursing.

Our BTEC Business students progress to universities and careers in Management, Marketing, Finance, Accounting, Real Estate, Advertising, Human Resources, Business, Criminology, Law.

Our BTEC Creative Media course will enable students to progress to universities and careers in Creative Computing, Media and Communication, Film and Television, Game Design, Advertising.

A Levels

A Levels are discrete 'standalone' qualifications which provide the opportunity for students to really specialise in a reduced number of subjects of their choosing.

Students on the A Level track study three subjects at A Level (four if they elect to take Further Mathematics or both Latin and Greek). All public examinations are taken at the end of the Upper Sixth year. A Levels are discrete stand-alone qualifications which provide the opportunity for students to specialise in a reduced number of subjects. Our A Level students complete an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). This is a research project in a topic of their choosing which promotes independent learning, self-management and research skills. Many of our students receive lower university offers through UCAS, in recognition of their success in the EPQ. Students also receive bespoke personalised advice about study systems, and university and careers preparation.

A Level students benefit from a high level of contact time with academic teaching staff. A Levels are rigorous and demanding academic qualifications, and students need to commit to working consistently over the two years. You have plenty of time to hone your skills and knowledge in your chosen subjects. Having fewer subjects can be positive for many students and many enjoy the specialism it provides. Of course, A Levels still require a considerable amount of work (as do all our pathways), dedication and organisation to maximise your success. There are no 'easy' options.

A Level Subjects

Art

Biology

Business Studies

Chemistry

Classical Civilisation

Computer Science

Design Technology

Drama & Theatre

Economics

English Literature

French

Geography

Classical Greek

German

History

Latin

Mathematics

Further Mathematics

Politics

Religious Studies

Spanish

At Brentwood School, all students sit formal internal examinations at the beginning of the summer term of the Lower Sixth. Progression to the Upper Sixth will be dependent upon satisfactory performance in these examinations, and the grades achieved will inform UCAS grades.

The A Level route enables students to construct programmes of study that complement their intrinsic scholastic interests and supports their future university or career plans. Whilst certain combinations of A Level subjects inevitably provide a more secure foundation for particular degree course programmes, you should not allow the decision-making process to be governed entirely by career plans. In dialogue with members of staff you should also consider enthusiasm, proven ability and academic potential.

Humanities subjects (History, English Literature, and Religious Studies, Politics etc.) serve to reinforce one another. They all require students to engage in a considerable volume of independent study and can be considered 'essay heavy' subjects. Students must demonstrate a willingness to engage in critical thinking and they must develop the ability to offer eloquently articulated, personal responses to philosophical questions.

Similarly, A Level Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Computer Science are all mutually supportive and the skills which you will develop are transferable between the disciplines. All scientific subjects contain a mathematical component and it is often prudent to combine study of the Sciences (especially Physics) with Mathematics. If you are perhaps a little weaker at Mathematics, then it is important to seek advice before electing to embark upon A Level Physics or Computer Science.

University & Careers

Some students will choose to pursue one of their Sixth Form subjects at degree level whilst many others will proceed to university courses or apprenticeships in areas which they will not have previously studied such as Law, Sociology, Anthropology, Accounting, International Relations, Medicine, Engineering, Geology, Real Estate, Japanese, or Arabic.

Some university courses require particular subjects to have been studied in Sixth Form. In other cases, university courses or apprenticeships will not specify specific subjects but will specify an overall level of attainment for acceptance. The following guidelines are based on information from current university admissions websites. If you intend to study a subject that is not listed below then please consult the Deputy Head (Academic), Mr Barfield Moore, Director of Sixth Form, Mr Sellers, or Head of Careers, Mrs Monk.

Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science

Chemistry and Biology, both at IB Higher Level or A Level. The third Higher Level or A Level subject can be free choice.

Engineering

Mathematics and Physics, both at IB Higher Level or A Level. Students usually study Computer Science, Economics, or Chemistry, as their third Higher Level or A Level subject. The most competitive courses require Further Mathematics.

Computer Science

Mathematics at IB Higher Level or A Level in many cases.

Economics

Mathematics at IB Higher Level or A Level in many cases, though there are Economics courses where this is not a requirement.

Law

Strong grades, but any combination of Humanities and Science subjects is permitted.

Architecture

Art at IB Higher Level or A Level, a Humanities subject and a Science subject or Mathematics.

Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE)

Two of Philosophy, Politics, History, or Economics at IB Higher Level or A Level.

Chemistry, Physics, or Biology

At least two of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, at IB Higher Level or A Level.

More information can be found at informedchoices.ac.uk



