



Welcome to Strode's A Parents' Guide

We are delighted that your son / daughter has applied to Strode's College. We would like to take this opportunity to give you a little more information about the College.

The College Community

Strode's is a small sixth form college of around 1100 students, most of whom are 16-18 years old. We also have an Adult Learning programme but this runs mostly in the evenings, so our 'day time' community is made up of students who are all more or less the same age and mostly taking the same sorts of courses. 95% of our students are taking courses at Level 3 (A levels and Level 3 BTECs). A small number of students who didn't get the entry grades for a Level 3 programme are enrolled on a Level 2 programme; many of these students will return for a full Level 3 programme the following year and will therefore spend three years with us.

Our students come from a very wide catchment area. Over 60% come from our six partner schools in Runnymede and Spelthorne whilst the rest come from almost 100 other schools in West London, Surrey, Berkshire and even further afield. This is one of the distinguishing features of Strode's – unlike some other colleges and school sixth forms; no single school dominates our community. Our students say that this is one of the reasons they chose to come to Strode's as it gave them the opportunity to make lots of new friends. Another reason students say they chose to come to Strode's was that it is really easy to get to – the train station is a five minute walk from the College, there are bus stops right outside the College and for those lucky enough to drive and have a car or a moped, there is a student car park.

Egham

Egham is a small town of 6500 residents located in North West Surrey. As well as having excellent transport links, the town is dominated by students - not just Strode's students, but the 8000+ students who study at Royal Holloway, University of London. This means that for a town of its size, Egham is full of places for students to buy food and drinks, including coffee bars, cafés and supermarkets (Tesco, Budgen and Waitrose).

Students are free to go into the town if they do not have a lesson or other commitments. They must make sure they balance their free time and work commitments carefully.

Student Voice

Student feedback is very important to us and there are lots of opportunities for students to make their voice heard! Each student is a member of a tutor group and each tutor group elects a representative to attend the termly Student Parliament. At the first meeting last academic year, we asked students why they chose to come to Strode's. These are some of the things they said:

- Friendly and welcoming
- Individual support
- Inspiring teachers
- Good facilities
- Easy to get to
- Range of people to meet
- Broad mix of courses
- Sport

Study Programmes

95% of students at Strode's are following a Level 3 study programme; the remaining 5%, who do not have the right GCSE grades for a Level 3 programme are following a Level 2 programme. Many of our Level 2 students progress to a two year Level 3 programme upon successful completion of their Level 2 qualifications. Others progress to different colleges or school sixth forms.

We offer two types of courses at Level 3 – A Levels and Level 3 BTECs. The key differences between these two types of courses are the way they are taught and the way they are assessed. Both are taught over two years. In a small number of subjects, students will take an old 'AS Level' at the end of their first year, which will contribute 50% of the marks for their final grade. Most A Levels, however, will be assessed (largely through examinations) at the end of the two years.

FACT: Over half of Strode's Level 3 students take one or more Level 3 BTEC qualifications as part of their Study Programme. Students need to think about the way in which they like to be assessed. BTECs are assessed throughout the course rather than all at the end. They are also taught in a more practical way in many subjects. They are not easier than A Levels, but many students like the way that they are assessed throughout the course. Unless a student is considering medicine, veterinary science or going to Oxford or Cambridge, we advise keeping an open mind when choosing their mix of subjects and qualifications.

Level 3 Programmes

- A Levels
- L3 BTECs
- Mix of A levels and BTECs

Level 2 Programme

- L2 BTECs
- GCSEs in Maths and/or English
- Numeracy/Literacy qualifications

NOTE: Any student without an English or Maths GCSE at grade C will have these subjects as part of their study programme.

How many courses will they take?

Most **first year Level 3 students** (A1 students) will take the equivalent of **THREE** courses over two years (a few courses count as two courses e.g. BTEC Diplomas and the Extended Diploma counts as three).

A1 students who need to re-take Maths or English may take this as a 3rd or 4th course, depending on their GCSE grade profile.

An A1 student who wishes to take **FOUR** level 3 courses must have A/A* in at least **half** their GCSE subjects. In most cases fourth courses will be selected from non-linear A levels; Extended Project Qualification and BTEC Certificate courses.

Students who have fewer than 4 Cs but at least 3 Ds and 1 E are enrolled onto our **Progression Pathway:**

Either: 2 BTEC Certificate courses plus Maths or English if required

Or: 1 BTEC Certificate course plus 2 GCSEs including Maths and/or English if required

Enrichment opportunities

Alongside a student's core study programme, they might be interested in taking one of our enrichment courses. Most of these take place on a Wednesday afternoon. Students can choose their course at the Fresher's Fair which takes place in late September. We offer a wide range of enrichment opportunities including lots of sport and music.



Our timetable

We start our day at 8.45 and finish at 4.00. Each subject has three lessons of 1½ hours a week, so students will spend at least 13½ hours each week in lessons. In addition, a student will have a weekly 1½ hours tutorial.

An example timetable below is for a first year student who is taking A levels in Sociology and Psychology together with a BTEC Sub Dip in Forensic Science. This student is taking the extended Project Qualification (EPQ) as a fourth course which is considered to be a very useful qualification for those thinking about university as it develops a range of research skills. This student is also taking an enrichment course on a Wednesday afternoon.

All students have gaps in their timetable. We call them 'study periods' (students tend to call them 'frees'!). At Strode's, students have 4½ hours per week in the classroom for each subject they take. We expect each student to do the same amount of work outside the classroom per subject each week. This will be a mixture of homework, coursework and independent work. As students have chosen the subjects they want to study we expect them to be motivated and work hard. Overall, we expect each student to work a full week on their studies – between 35 and 40 hours a week on average. We get all students started with their 'Independent Learning' by putting one lesson per week onto their timetable. Students can work in either the Learning Centre or Coopers' Hall during this time.

All our departments use Moodle to set homework, so as long as your son/daughter has access to a computer and the internet, they can work anywhere they like for their independent learning. For the student timetable below, we might expect this student to work in College on a Monday 12.45 – 14.15, Thursday 10.30 – 12.00 and Friday 10.30 – 12.00 as this is what is called ‘trapped time’. However, we don’t check up on each student as we are trying to get them to develop their own good study habits. We will, however, check that they are doing the work to the best of their ability and handing it in on time.

	M	T	W	T	F
08:45 – 10:15				Psychology	Forensic Science
10:15 – 10:30	B	R	E	A	K
10:30 – 12:00	Forensic Science	Psychology	Sociology		
12:00 – 12:45	L	U	N	C	H
12:45 – 14:15		Independent Learning	EPQ	Sociology	Tutorial
14:15 – 14:30	B	R	E	A	K
14:30 – 16:00	Sociology	Forensic Science	Duke of Edinburgh Award		Psychology

Support for students

We pride ourselves on the level of support we provide for our students. Students benefit from:

- **Tutor / Tutorials** – all students belong to a tutor group. Tutors are teachers at the College and most tutors have three tutor groups, so it is an important part of their job! Students meet their tutor on a weekly basis as a group and approximately four times a year on a one-to-one basis to discuss their progress. Attendance at tutorial is compulsory as it is the main way in which we communicate with all students and help them to develop their study and employability skills. The student’s tutor will write their reference for jobs and/or higher education.
- **Careers** – our careers staff are located in the Student Services department above the Café. Students can book an appointment with them and where they provide advice and guidance on areas such as writing applications and CVs. They also organise the annual Higher Education and Alternative to Higher Education evenings.
- **Support for Learning (S4L)** – this is not just for students with specific learning needs, it is the support we offer all our students outside of their lessons to help them reach their potential. The S4L team includes the Learning Centre Staff as well as the Learning Support Assistants. Whether students need help with essay writing, time management or just want somewhere quiet to work, the S4L team are there to support each individual.

- **A*spire** – this is our programme for students who have very good GCSE grades and who are considering applying to Russell Group universities.
- **Counsellors** – students can book an appointment to see one of our two student counsellors who are based in the Student Services department.
- **Financial Advice and Assistance** – if a student needs to talk to us about a bursary or other financial needs, they should visit the Student Services department where friendly advice is available.

Attendance & Progress

Our expectation is that all students attend 100% of their lessons and other College commitments - there is a proven relationship between attendance and results. However, we don't want students in College if they really are ill. We expect all students to treat us as a place of employment – if they didn't tell their boss that they weren't coming into work they would get the sack pretty quickly! If a student is ill their parents/carers must contact the College and let us know they aren't coming in.

Registers are taken in all lessons and attendance information is available on-line for students and parents/carers to view. Unexplained absences are followed up by College staff and if we become concerned, we will contact parents/carers.

Progress is regularly monitored by tutors and subject teachers and there are several opportunities during a student's study programme for them to discuss their progress with teachers. Regular reports about your son/daughter's progress are posted on the Parent Portal.

What happens at the interview?

Please be reassured that your son/daughter's interview is not a 'selection' interview but it provides an opportunity for them to discuss their potential Study Programme on a one-to-one basis with an experienced member of the College's staff.

Whilst parent(s)/carer(s) are very welcome to attend, we advise that they do not attend the interview itself. The main reason is that we want to hear what *the students* enjoy and want to study, as opposed to what *they* think you would want them to do! The best people to take advice from are teachers and careers experts rather than friends and family.

We hope that your son/daughter will have visited our website and attended one of our Open Evenings to find out more about the subjects we offer. If you are unsure about your son/daughters' course choices, don't worry – they are not committing themselves to a set programme at the interview. There will be several opportunities to find out more and make changes to their Study Programme before enrolment. They may even be able to come back to a future Open Evening and talk to relevant teachers and students to help them make up their mind.

Making an Offer

If we think we have a suitable study programme for your son/daughter, we will make them an offer at the end of the interview. Their choice of subjects will be provisional and subject to achieving the necessary entry requirements in their GCSEs. The offer from the College will also be emailed to them within two weeks of the interview.

Your son/daughter will need to decide whether or not to accept our offer and to let us know their decision. Please reply to the offer email to accept or decline your place within two weeks.

Confirming subject choice

Once your son/daughter has accepted their offer, the College will keep in touch and will invite them to our Introduction Day in late June/early July. Hopefully by then they will have decided upon their final subjects, but if not, they may request a change. We can't guarantee to meet their request, as some subjects may be full and some combinations of subjects may not be possible. We will confirm your son/daughter's choices at enrolment in late August when their exam results are known. If they don't get the required GCSE grades, they should contact the College immediately and they will be given advice about their options.

Please make a note in your diary of the following dates as it is important that you attend these events:

Tuesday 28 June	New Parents' Evening
Thursday 30 June	Introduction Event
Wednesday 31 August/Thursday 1 September	Enrolment of new students
Monday 12 September	Induction of new students
Tuesday 13 September	Start of teaching

Further information about your course choices can be discussed with the individual departments at our Open Evenings the following dates:

Thursday 3 March (5-8pm)
Thursday 7 July (5-8pm)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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