Pate's Grammar School

Pate's Sixth Form Access Programme 2026-27

Extra Support for Eligible Students

Aim

Our aim is to make the Sixth Form at Pate's as supportive as possible to all our students. We want to reduce any worries that potential students and their parents/carers may have about applying to join our Sixth Form.

The Sixth Form Bursary Fund already exists to provide financial support for Sixth Form students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Full details of the fund, including eligibility criteria and how to apply are shared with all Sixth Form students at the beginning of each academic year. In addition to this financial support, we also provide the highest quality support and guidance possible to facilitate Pate's students from all backgrounds to thrive and excel, and access routes for life beyond school.

Context

Educational research (Tikly et al., 2016[1]) has identified that schools have an important role to play in supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds or those from families where going to university is not the norm. This is particularly true when it comes to the provision of advice and guidance relating to university admissions:

"The provision of advice for students should be timed to coincide with 'crunch' points in students' decision-making processes: such as choosing degree subjects; making UCAS applications; receiving predicted grades; and receiving offers from universities. Students would benefit from a sustained relationship with school staff and being able to access holistic support at each of these stages"

These students tend to be underrepresented in applications to university and elsewhere. Consequently, an increasing number of higher education institutions use 'contextual offers' to encourage applications from those students who are, generally, less likely to apply. Contextual offers tend to be one or two grades below the standard entry requirements. In addition, many higher education institutions and organisations also provide additional outreach opportunities and admissions support for underrepresented students as part of their work to widen access.

[1] Tikly, L et al. (2016) *Widening access to university: Step change needed to support talented learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.* University of Bristol, Policy Briefing 29/2016. https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/policybristol/briefings-and-reports-pdfs/pre-2017-briefings--reports-pdfs/PolicyBristol_Briefing_29_2016_Widening_Access_To_University.pdf

Eligibility Criteria: Pate's Sixth Form Access Programme

Pate's Sixth Form has developed the Pate's Sixth Form Access Programme to identify those students who may be eligible for these access opportunities and who may require additional support.

To join the Pate's Access Programme, students would usually meet one of the following criteria:

- First generation applicant to Higher Education
- Parents, carers, or self in receipt of a means tested benefit
- Young people looked after by a Local Authority, or who have been in care or looked after for three months or more
- Young people estranged from their families
- Young people designated as young carers
- Young people who are classed as refugees
- In receipt of a 16-19 bursary
- Resident in an area with a postcode which falls within the lowest 20% of the IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation), or a member of a travelling family
- In receipt of free school meals at any time during Years 10-13 (normally for a minimum period of at least one school term/2 months).

Pate's Sixth Form Access Programme: Support

As part of our promise to those students who join the Pate's Access Programme, we commit to offer the following support:

- Bespoke support and guidance from the wider Sixth Form Team, particularly relating to the process of applying for future courses or destinations
- Support with application forms and references when applying for outreach or widening participation programmes
- Priority access for Careers/HE interviews or events
- Access to a mailing list where relevant opportunities will be signposted, particularly those where they may meet the entry requirements.

This is in addition to the extensive range of co-curricular and super-curricular activities, Careers guidance and Higher Education support already on offer to all Pate's students.

Pate's Sixth Form Access Programme: Application Process

Students will be invited to apply for the programme at the start of Year 12. For students who are eligible for the Programme but who don't apply, discussions will take place about whether they wish to opt in or out of the programme.

Applications will be reviewed by the Sixth Form Team and students will be invited for an informal discussion to help identify their needs and aspirations. This conversation will help identify the most appropriate support on a student-by-student basis. By joining the programme, students will be committing to fully engaging with the support provided to them.

Please email access@patesgs.org with any questions regarding the Pate's Sixth Form Access Programme.