Emerging Talent Student Policy

Introduction

Sevenoaks is lucky to have a number of exceptionally talented boys and girls in areas such as sport and music. The general principle is that such pupils should participate fully in all areas of the school: pastoral, academic and co-curricular. However, we also recognise that elite performance requires great dedication and we want to assist these pupils in fulfilling their potential. Therefore in exceptional circumstances we will agree to special arrangements with certain students and their parents, and they will form part of our “Emerging Talent” register.

How we define Emerging Talent?

Each case will be looked at on individual merits, but as a general rule it is defined as regional (above county) representation. Examples where special arrangements might be made include:

- High national tennis rankings and ratings with aspiration to play in national qualifiers
- Futures Cup hockey selection
- A speaking part in a national play/film
- National Youth Orchestra
- Membership of a specialist music programme, e.g. JRCM

Requests will be considered if students are on a clear ‘pathway’ to this standard.

Permission for Absences

Specific arrangements regarding absences from school may be made for children on the ET register. These should be requested by the parent(s) to the Deputy Head Co-Curriculum. Agreed arrangements will be confirmed in writing and will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Head Co-Curriculum, in consultation with the Form Tutor, Divisional Head and Head of Department.

Such arrangements will always depend on:
1. satisfactory academic results;
2. progress in the particular area of elite performance;
3. continued commitment to the school and their specialist activity.

The school requires students to represent the school in their specialist area. A tennis player for example must represent the school tennis team and a musician must play in the relevant ensembles. They cannot substitute external activities for school representation. If it does not clash with a school commitment, they may be granted exceptional permission to represent their activity in a commitment i.e. county football match on a Saturday afternoon or requiring a trial at a higher level for regional or national representation, such as England Hockey trials or auditions for theatre productions.
What special arrangements can be made?

Each case for absence will be looked at individually but as a guideline:

**Music**
Musicians will be allowed to attend music college on a Saturday.
Other individual arrangements will be considered on their merit.

**Drama/dance**
Students may be allowed to miss some pre-agreed and non-essential aspects of school for essential rehearsals and performances, or for dance lessons that cannot be provided at school.

**Sports**
The expectations in these sports are that students will be doing a high level of training from a young age, so there may be flexibility with timetabling provided as they pass through the school, as described below.

Different age groups may be dealt with differently, as appropriate:

**Years 7-9**
- There is flexibility with certain timetabled subjects such as P.E and swimming and other timetabled lessons.
- Very few exceptions will be made to academic core lessons, or ‘team sports’ in game sessions, as it is important that all students experience a full range of school team sport.
- Exceptions may be made for an individual who is Nationally Ranked or holds International Honours.

**Year 10 and above**
- During GCSEs there is less flexibility with timetabling. Students may be allowed to opt out of school Saturday afternoons during the ‘off term’ to play club sport or further their individual specialism. They will be expected to represent the school in their sport during the ‘on’ season, or in activities which apply to their area, such as the school play, or the orchestra.
- There may be flexibility in opting out of Thursday afternoon activities, as long as they arrange and undertake service at a different time, as agreed in advance with the Director of Service.

**Year 11 and above**
- Students may be allowed to opt out of all of Saturday afternoon school completely during the ‘off term’ to enable them to play club sport or further their individual specialism. They will be expected to represent the school in their specialist area during the ‘on’ season or in activities which apply to their area, such as the school play, or the orchestra.
- There may be flexibility in opting out of Thursday afternoon activities, as long as they arrange and undertake service at a different time, as agreed in advance with the Director of Service.

Sally Walmsley, October 2021