

## Elena Bobby – studying Medicine at UCL

After staying at Walton from years 7 to 11, I was already very reluctant to leave. Despite having been to open days and taster days for many other sixth forms, nothing felt right compared to the environment I'd been in for 5 years and teachers who I knew would go the extra mile for me and my aspirations. So, when GCSE results day came, I decided Walton was the right place for me.



I initially started A-levels with Maths, Further Maths, English Literature, Chemistry, and Biology. I carried through with Biology, Chemistry and Maths until the end of A-levels, dropping the other two in year 12 due to the time constraints that came with applying to medicine: practising for admission tests, volunteering commitments and, later on, interviews. I thoroughly enjoyed both of the subjects I dropped, choosing not to carry through with them was not at all a matter of dislike; I just had to stick with the subjects best suited for my course. Walton Sixth Form supported me whole heartedly in this decision; giving me plenty of time and advice to help make up my mind.

Due to the sixth form being small, there was a lot of 1:1 attention given to each student, this was one of the major differences I noticed between Walton Sixth Form and the other places I considered going to. This is very different to how things work at university and although not having individual support felt overwhelming at first, I got used to it quickly. At the age of 16 however I wasn't ready to let go of the support system I knew I had at Walton, especially when applying for a competitive course.



I'm now approaching the end of my 2<sup>nd</sup> year at University College London Medical School. London is a very different atmosphere to Grantham but it very quickly became home. When I stayed at Walton for sixth form, I wasn't ready to leave my comfort zone at all but two years later, with all the tools Walton Sixth Form had given me, I knew it was time to move away. You meet people who change your life forever and learn to balance aspects of life you never had to think about before; the home comforts are gone, as is the social security you have from having a friendship group who have shared similar experiences to you.

Yet, university has been the best time of my life, and it is okay if you're scared to leave all you know now, when you're ready to go it will feel right.

### ***So what are my tips for a fantastic post 16 experience?***

1. Instead of doing extra A-levels, take that time for non-academic activities that you can talk about in your personal statement, discuss at interview, and make you a well-rounded, approachable individual. For example, I was volunteering at a nursing home, homeless shelter and working as a tutor at Kumon. Any interactions with people different to your own demographics are advantageous to develop social skills which are essential for most courses.
2. Sleep! I can't stress this enough. A-Levels require you to retain a lot of information and this is way more effective once you've slept.
3. Remember there's absolutely nothing wrong with taking a couple days off. Don't feel guilty, just chill, watch a movie, get a good night's sleep and start again fresh the next day.