



Caerleon Sixth Form

Parent & Student Frequently Asked Questions

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Options & Enrolment FAQs

My child qualifies to attend 6th form but cannot take a certain subject, why?

To qualify for a place in Caerleon Sixth Form all students must have 5A*-C GCSE or equivalent grades. However certain subjects require a higher threshold of prior learning and attainment in order to make them suitable choices for our students. This might include certain stipulations such as a B grade at GCSE or the student must attain a grade on higher tier papers. This is common practice across all sixth forms and is in place to ensure students are placed on courses that are suitable for them. Any student not making entry requirements will be counselled to offer alternative provision if available. The entry requirements are downloadable from the Post 16 area of the school website and they are in each subject guide.

What is a free choice survey?

Traditionally schools offer students a pathway/options form that has columns of subjects within it. A student can only choose ONE subject from each column. The reason for this is that those subjects in a certain column are taught at the same time. However in Caerleon we do this in a slightly different way. Our initial trawl of subject choices after the options evening allows students to **PROVISIONALLY** choose the subjects they want to study in a free choice. This data is then used by the school to build the pathways form with as few clashes as possible.

When will the pathways form be available?

The pathways form that shows which subjects are in which column is generally published in early June. If you have a clash we will contact you. If everything is OK with your choices then you will not hear from us. No news is good news.

When the pathway form was released my child cannot take the subjects they have chosen, why?

Unfortunately the nature of these systems has always meant that some students do not always get to choose the combination of subjects they wish to take. The system we use to construct the options form after the free choice has meant a significant reduction in clashes from around 20% to 5%. We will contact each student individually who has been affected by this and will discuss alternatives.

A subject that was initially offered has now been withdrawn, why?

In order to be financially viable subjects need to have certain interest from students to be staffed. If a subject has very little interest, it **might** be withdrawn from our offer. If this is the case students affected will be informed and alternatives will be discussed. This is why it is important to understand that all initial choices are provisional and can be withdrawn at any time.

I want to study 4 A-Levels plus WBQ. Why cannot I do this?

This programme of study is only followed by students who have shown significant abilities to cope with a large demanding programme of study. Therefore only students with 7 A* grades will be allowed to take this pathway. Exceptions may apply for students studying further maths.

The reason we do this is that significant past experiences have shown that an over taxing academic programme of 4 A-Levels has a detrimental effect on a student's ability to meet their targets and can impact their wellbeing.

Why is the WBQ compulsory?

Caerleon school along with all other schools in Newport have decided to universally adopt this qualification. This has been made clear to all students and parents prior to your decision to apply for a place in the sixth form. The WBQ allows a student to gain an equivalent A-Level qualification that is included in **ALL** university offers except for Oxford, Cambridge and Durham. These institutions value the skills developed in the qualification and will allow students to develop their super-curriculum profile as well as gain a qualification. The Individual project is an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in a chosen career that enhances future applications and it allows welsh students to compete with students from England who are studying the EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) alongside their A-Levels. Our data also shows that students with the WBQ have improved their chances of gaining their first choice university place since its adoption in 2015.

What do I need to do to be accepted into year 13?

Making the entry through your GCSE grades guarantees you a place in year 12 only. In order to be accepted into year 13 you must have at least 2 E grades in 2 subjects alongside studying WBQ. If you get a U grade in an AS you will not be allowed to continue with that subject into year 13. You can only come back to year 13 if you have a minimum of 2 E-grades - WBQ does not count as it is a two year course and does not have an AS element.

Attendance FAQs

What should I do if my child is unable to attend school?

Our preference is for you to please send an email to post16@caerleoncomprehensive.net as soon as you know your child will be absent from any scheduled lesson. This includes WBQ and enrichment classes. If you are unable to send an email please call the school on 01633 420106 ext. 203 by midday.

Absences will be followed up by our admin team and you will receive an email if we have an unexplained absence. We recognise that errors on registers occasionally occur, If you believe that absence is an error then we ask that you politely reply to our admin team who will investigate.

Can I book a driving lesson during school hours?

Yes, providing you do not have a scheduled lesson at the same time. You may miss lessons for your driving test (theory and practical).

I wish to make an application for a leave absence? What should I do?

Please send your request to Post16@caerleoncomprehensive.net with full details of the absence including reasons and dates. This has to be sent by the parent / carer.

UCAS & Careers FAQs

What support will my child have with their careers / UCAS planning?

ALL students will have tailored support throughout their two years in Caerleon Sixth Form. In year 12 we will start to collect information on Post 18 intentions such as university or apprenticeship. We will run weekly enrichment sessions that build on the skills and knowledge needed to make competitive applications post sixth form. We will do this for all pathways and not just for competitive courses such as Oxbridge and Medicine. At the end of year 12 we begin the process of supporting application forms to UCAS and other pathways. We will prepare students to write personal statements and application letters through enrichment sessions, external webinars and guest speakers. Completed personal statements and applications will be checked by the student's mentor in year 13 providing our internal deadlines are met (these will be given to parents and students). Students application forms for UCAS will be checked by staff for accuracy and we will make sure that they have selected suitable courses. All students will have a reference written for them by a member of the sixth form team or their mentor.

Throughout the two years we will actively promote suitable courses, webinars, events and open days to all students to ensure that they are fully briefed and aware of all resources available to them to make stand out applications.

My child has no idea what they want to do after they leave school?

Many students are still in the dark when it comes to what they want to do for a career. We will offer support to these students through our partnership with Careers Wales and the UniFrog system that the school has recently invested in.

What is UniFrog?

Unifrog is the one-stop-shop for destinations, allowing students to explore every university course, apprenticeship and college course in the UK plus other around the world opportunities such as European and US undergraduate courses. They can make applications using Unifrog and receive feedback from teachers along the way. This includes creating personal statements, CVs and much more. To discover more visit the webpage at <https://www.caerleoncomprehensive.net/unifrog>

What is the super-curriculum and why is it important?

At Caerleon we want students to develop a passion and love of learning which will not only help them be more successful in school but also beyond. We want them to delve deeper into the subjects that they enjoy most and tackle activities which will enhance their normal curriculum studies. **We will regularly post super curriculum opportunities for all students through the Unifrog platform.** It should be noted that students who are aiming for the top universities and competitive courses such as medicine and many apprenticeships should engage in appropriate super curriculum activities in the subjects they enjoy and excel at.

What is a 'virtual' tutorial?

The Covid19 pandemic has changed the way we will deliver some of our tutorials and enrichment sessions. Many of our talks, study skill sessions etc. will be held online. Students can access these sessions from home or in school. If they wish to access them in school devices will be made available. A major benefit of this method of delivering our tutorials is that sessions can be recorded to watch back again and we can partner with many specialists from around the UK without the need for travel. We treat attendance to virtual sessions in the same way we would treat face to face sessions.

What is the October 15th deadline?

Students applying to Oxford, Cambridge, medicine, dentistry and veterinary science have an earlier UCAS application deadline than students applying for other institutions and subjects.

What is the January 15th deadline?

This is the UCAS deadline for all other students. By this deadline all applications must be submitted. We will set and publish internal deadlines for students that need to be adhered to in order for staff to manage the workload of checking applications and writing detailed bespoke references for over one hundred students. Students who are late with applications and miss our deadlines will hinder their applications.

Pastoral Support FAQs

My child is struggling with their wellbeing. What can be done?

If you have concerns regarding your child's wellbeing please contact the Head of Year with details of your concerns and we will do our best to provide help and support. Students can also self refer to our external counselling service. The link to do this is in the Post 16 section of our website.

The school also runs a wellbeing classroom that has links to many self help, internal support and external support agencies that are there to help. The code for this classroom is **gdtrape**

Why does my child not have a form tutor or a regular registration period?

In the sixth form our pastoral structure works slightly differently to the lower year groups. Each student will be allocated a mentor. The mentor will be the first port of call for students if they have any issues. Mentors will regularly meet with the students one to one to discuss wellbeing and progress. They will also support the students with their UCAS /career applications. Instead of a scheduled 15 minute registration period with a whole group, mentors will book appointments with students.

Collaboration FAQs

What is collaboration?

In Caerleon we run a common Post 16 timetable with our preferred partner school Llanwern High. This means that students are able to select subjects offered in Llanwern as well as in Caerleon. This allows a much wider range of subject choice and subject types. Students in Caerleon who might not meet the entry requirements for a certain subject may have similar options available to them in Llanwern. Also students who find that two subjects they want to take might be in the same option column in Caerleon become available to them again as the subjects that clash are available in Llanwern in a different option column.

I am taking a subject in Llanwern, how will I get there?

Students who are on collaboration courses will have access to free transport between the sites. They will be issued with a bus timetable after enrolment.

What happens if I have turned up at Llanwern and the teacher is absent?

During the induction phase for collaboration students will be shown where they can go to study if this happens. As with staff absence in Caerleon we will do our best to inform students before they travel, however we cannot guarantee this.

I am worried about attending lessons in Llanwern, what support is available?

A full induction and transition programme will happen for collaboration students. You will be taken over to Llanwern with the Head of Year and shown around by a member of staff in Llanwern. You will also be given access to a Llanwern IT login.

Who should I contact if I have concerns about the lessons I have in Llanwern?

Please speak to Mr Meredith or your Head of Year if you have any concerns about your collaboration courses.

Teaching & Learning FAQs

How many hours a week should each student be working?

A-Level study is full time education. A working week for most people is between 32 and 40 hours. Students in KS3 and KS4 will have 25 hours of lessons a week with homework. This changes in KS5 to:

- 2 A-Levels + WBQ + Enrichment = 11.5 hours of lessons per week
- 3 A-Levels + WBQ + Enrichment = 15.5 hours of lessons per week

As you can see students doing A-Levels have a lot more non-contact time than they are previously used to. This should not be regarded as free time but independent study time. Through the **VESPA** programme we will teach students to transition from solely teacher led learning to becoming more independent students who understand how to use that non-contact time productively, which in turn will see an improvement in outcomes.

What is independent study time?

Students have a lot of time in the day when they do not have contact time in lessons. Successful students need to use their non-contact time productively and wisely. Students who **fail to study ‘full-time’** are on the whole not as successful as those that manage these sessions well. We will build your independent study skills through our VESPA programme in enrichment lessons.

I have no scheduled lessons periods 1 and 2. Do I have to come to school?

No. You are able to stay home and study if you so wish and come to school when you have lessons. If you come to school on scheduled transport you can use the common room or the Library Annex to study.

My lessons finish after period 2? Can I go home?

Yes you can leave the site and go home to study if you so wish.

I struggle to study at home as there are too many distractions. What should I do?

This comes down to your personal motivation and organisation to prevent this from happening. However there are strategies we can help you with to try and improve this. Common pitfalls are:

- Having no lessons during period 1 and 2 and using it as a reason to have a lie in. Those hours will add up.
- Having a day with no lessons and seeing it as a day off. Those days should be productive for studying.
- Making a study timetable and sticking to it.
- Coming into school to study if distractions at home are too much
- Finding another place to study e.g. local library, grandparents home

What facilities are available on site for studying?

There are two designated spaces for sixth form students. The Common Room and the Library Annex. Some departments may have a space for students to go and work in their non-contact hours. Students will be informed if this is the case.

What IT facilities are available in school?

Sixth Form students have access to a dedicated Wifi Network throughout the school called 6thformBYOD. Students are able to link any internet ready device to this network and use it. If students bring in devices such

as laptops they are responsible for their safe keeping. The school has a limited number of PCs available in the library that students can use.

I am unable to make a deadline. What should I do?

Speak to the teacher to explain why. Always be honest in these discussions. We want to create a good working relationship between teachers and students. The need for honesty and transparency is key to a successful mature working relationship.

I have missed an important deadline. What should I do?

Explain this to your teacher to try and resolve the issue. However, teachers often set deadlines to manage workload with other classes. It is policy that students will have to wait for feedback or forfeit feedback if they continually miss deadlines (this was in the learning contract you signed). It is important for students to take responsibility for their learning in order to better prepare themselves for university and the world of work. Time management and meeting deadlines is a key skill that you will need to master to be successful in A-levels.

I only have 1 lesson scheduled on a given day. Do I need to attend?

Yes. Sometimes this occurs depending on the subjects you choose. It is important to attend all lessons, we cannot alter the whole timetable to enable you to have a lesson free day.

My teacher is absent for my lessons, what should I do?

Due to the specialist nature of A Levels and the fact that students should be mature enough to study independently there are no cover teachers employed to cover absent colleagues when they have A Level lessons. (*Colleagues who will be absent long term will be replaced with a specialist teacher*).

Staff absence is sometimes planned as a teacher knows beforehand that they will not be in school on a certain date. That member of staff will assign work for that student to do in those hours prior to the absence. This can be completed in school or at home. Occasionally absence is not planned - for example a teacher is ill and is unable to attend school on that day. The member of staff **might** be able to set work on the Google Classroom or a colleague in the same department **might** be able to set work. If this does not happen students will be expected to use that time productively for studying. When we find out a colleague is absent we will try and inform students through our notice board on Google Classroom - however we **cannot** guarantee that this will be in time to stop students travelling to school. Students who have travelled to school and find out that the teacher is absent should go to a study area and complete work.

Monitoring & Progress FAQs

How are students monitored?

We track and monitor sixth form students' progress regularly with a progress check at the end of every term. This data is then used to decide on the level of support that each student needs and which pathway they will go into for mentoring.

Sixth Form reports are issued three times per year for both year groups and there is a whole sixth form parents evening once per year. In addition, parents who are concerned about their students' progress are welcome to contact the sixth form on post16@caerleoncomprehensive.net and request an update.

We have just had a progress report and my child is not doing as well as expected. Why was I not told sooner?

It is common for students to struggle in the early stages of year 12 as they come to terms with A-Levels. If a member of staff has **serious** concerns regarding a student they will normally flag this before a progress check is due. However staff do not have the means to contact home on an ongoing basis. The termly data drops are there to inform you of your child's progress and all students will be mentored after this data drop. If at any time you have concerns about your child's progress please contact us and we will investigate.

I am unhappy with my child's progress, what can I do at home to help?

There are many strategies that you can use to assist your child with their A-Level studies. Many of these will be posted to the parents section of the website and emailed to you. At a minimum we recommend that you:

- Check the Google Classroom with your child on a weekly basis
- Ask them to show you recent homework marks or test results (if your child is not forthcoming and you are worried then you can contact us)
- Request to attach yourself as a parent to the Google Classroom (**Warning you will get a lot of notifications**)
- Help your child navigate Unifrog to improve their knowledge of career options and to increase their exposure to the super-curriculum. Having a goal spurs students on to perform better in their studies.

My child had an A at GCSE and is currently only achieving a C at A-Level?

Studies across the UK show that past performance is not a guarantee for success in A-Levels. In fact only 8% of students nationally continue along the same flight path. It is crucial for students and parents to recognise this fact and not assume that success at GCSE automatically means success at A-level. We will assign sessions in our enrichment slots to improve skills needed to be a successful A-Level student.

How are target grades calculated?

Target grades are initially calculated based on prior attainment from GCSE results using a system called ALPS (A-Level Performance Systems). GCSE results are inputted into the ALPS system, this then generates a MEG (Minimum expected grade) by comparing those GCSE results with data from tens of thousands of past students across the UK. The MEG is aspirational as it compares the students results with the Top 25% of students who had the same results at GCSE. Target grades can be lowered and highered in consultation with teachers after each progress check.

What is the difference between a target grade and a current grade?

When you receive a progress report you will have the target grade which is the target your child is aspiring to achieve at the end of the 2 years. Also with this is the current grade - this is an average of how they are currently performing up to the point where the progress check was made. The key piece of information is whether the student is **ON TRACK** to achieve their targets. This is the professional judgement of the subject teacher(s). Students who are not on track are given special mentoring to find out why and to provide interventions to turn this around.

What is a UCAS predicted grade?

UCAS predicted grades are highly aspirational and are given to students in order for them to receive offers from their chosen universities. They reflect what subject teachers believe the student could get on their very best day. However they need to be realistic to ensure offers given by universities are achievable.

Google Classroom and Email Communication

I am overloaded with email notifications. What can I do?

Email is an important tool for all our sixth form students. It will be one of the main ways we communicate important information to you. Students are required to check their email regularly during term time. However because of Google Classroom students can get quickly swamped with emails. Students should watch this tutorial and adjust their notification setting accordingly.

<https://www.loom.com/share/886816c777d64aa0ae10590a73e7ab45>

What is the student communication classroom?

In order to get crucial information and messages out to the whole year group we have Google Classrooms setup for year 12 and year 13. This is where important announcements are communicated to students such as teacher absences, deadlines, school wide announcements.

Codes for these classrooms are on the notice board in the common room. You can also email post16@caerleoncomprehensive.net to request these. Students on roll who are not members of the classroom will be contacted to ensure they become members.

I emailed my teacher and they have not got back to me? How long should I wait?

Teachers will endeavour to answer all emails within 72 hours. If after this time you have not heard back please politely resend. Staff can often be inundated with many emails and occasionally one may slip through the net or have ended up in the spam/ junk folder. Please do not email if you have an emergency or need to speak to a member of staff quickly.

General FAQ

Do I qualify for EMA?

Details of EMA can be found here. <https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/fe/ema.aspx>

EMA is overseen by Ms Cumner the Sixth Form Support Officer. Please direct all questions and queries to her on Post16@caerleoncomprehensive.net

What extracurricular activities are available?

A list will be published at the start of the year to sign up to the wealth of activities run in the school. Due to Covid-19 we are currently reviewing and adapting what we can offer.

Can I use card payment in the sixth form coffee shop?

Yes. The Coffee Shop located in the Common Room takes contactless card payments.

Where is my Head of Year based?

Heads of Year are based in the office in E1. If you need to speak to them urgently then you can go there. If it is not urgent please email them to request an appointment.