

Open Evening Q&A



As part of our our Open Evening we held a live Q&A session with members of the Sixth Form Team. These are some of the questions and answers.

What time does the college day start and end?

In the sixth form the teaching day starts at 8.50am and ends at 2.50pm. However, the college will be open for study from 7.30 am to 5.30 pm. Students are permitted to leave the college site when they are not required to be in a timetabled lesson, activity or in a meeting with a member of staff.

What support material is available for subjects, do you provide topic booklets for class work like some other sixth form colleges?

Different subjects will use different methods to support the teaching. Some subjects produce topic booklets or revision guides, others use more online materials, others will recommend textbooks. The library also has textbooks and relevant resources to support each subject.

Am I right in thinking that you have to select CSF as first choice to guarantee an offer?

We only guarantee to offer guidance meetings to first choice applicants.

I am looking to take maths - can you advise what the average class size is for this subject?

In 2021-22 the average Maths/Double Maths class size is 12 students. The average across all of our subjects is 15.

With 500 students, what is the % of students attending from outside of Comberton Village College?

We presently have just over 50% of our intake joining us from external colleges. These amount to 25 other colleges from the surrounding areas.

Do Sixth form students have their own canteen with hot food available, do they have their own sports facilities and gym?

The sixth form has its own social area, The Core, which serves a range of hot and cold foods from break to lunch time inclusive. Sixth formers have access to the CSA gym facilities at reduced rates.

How many students are accepted in every year?

At the moment our sixth form is made up of 520 students across both Y12 and Y13. Our individual intakes will be approximately 260.

EPQ - how do you select this option/get involved with it?

You would select EPQ as an additional option alongside your A levels. You can select it at the point of application, or when coming for your admissions guidance meeting.

Are you usually over subscribed and if so what is your policy for making offers?

We have many applicants each year but to date have not had to use our over subscription policy. Due to the large number of applications we receive and our relatively small size, we are only able able to offer places to those who put us as first choice.

Is the bus to college £260 per term from all areas or does this differ for location?

The cost of a pass is dependent on the location you need to catch the bus from. The most expensive pass is currently £350 a term. More information can be found on the Transport page of our website.

How often are the individual academic tutor meetings with pupils scheduled?

You would have a group tutor meeting every two weeks and an individual tutor meeting every half term as a minimum and more frequently if needed.

How many A levels is the BTEC Sport equivalent to?

All of the Level 3 BTEC Extended Diplomas that we offer are the equivalent of three A-levels.

What is the Colleges policy on use of laptops, I can see in some of the videos some student are pictured using them?

Students can bring in their own devices and connect to the school network to use in lessons or study periods. We also have a MacBook and iPad scheme where students can lease or purchase a device to use.

How many hours of teaching are there for each subject?

For an A level subject there are 5 x 50 minute lessons of teaching time per week. For a BTEC course there are 15 x 50 minutes sessions. For extra subjects such as EPQ, IPQ or Core Maths there are 2 x 50 minutes sessions per week. Students also have 2 x 50 minutes sessions of Enrichment per week.

If the IPQ and EPQ are equivalent, how do I decide which to do?

Although they share similar features, they are not exact equivalents as they do have different entry requirements. We would have a conversation with you at your admissions interview to discuss which might be most suitable for you.

How are new students from other schools supported in the transition to Comberton?

We give supportive admissions guidance meetings in February where we will discuss your needs. If you accept an offer from us we then run a Welcome Day in June where prospective students come for the day and take introductory lessons. In the summer we run an after results consultation service if you need to discuss anything with us. We then hold an Induction Day in September where we encourage mixing by having social sessions where you meet other students who do your subjects.

If a place is accepted do you issue work for students to complete over the summer, before starting with you?

Yes, each of our subjects issue preparation information and transition work for students to complete over the summer.

What information is given to parents about their child's progress throughout the year 12 and 13?

At CSF we work to keep parents informed of their son/daughter's progress through a number of official reporting points throughout Yr12 and Yr13. These include a Transition Report in September and a full written report at the end of Yr12. We would also look to communicate with parents at other points if needed via a student's teachers or academic tutor.

When is the deadline for sixth form application and do I need a CV or personal statement for the application?

The deadline is January 11th. Applicants use a standardised online application form, part of which requires a personal statement. The form can be found at www.mychoice16.co.uk

How do you differentiate from other post 16 providers?

Our size is important - we are small enough to offer small class sizes and personalised learning, with high levels of support and pastoral care available for students who need it. However we are also big enough (with 500 students) to offer a wide range of opportunities and activities. We actively promote independence in our students and aim to prepare them well for life post CSF.

Given students may not have had a chance to visit in person, if they put CSF as 1st choice but then change their mind, do they get an option to amend their choices on the application after offers are made?

It will depend on the admissions policy of the other centers you have applied to. You are able to hold offers from multiple colleges and make your final decision in the summer after you get your results.

Is there an LGBT community at CSF?

We have a student Vice President who oversees Equality and Diversity in the sixth form and who leads an active Equality and Diversity group which meets regularly. CSF has an inclusive ethos and works with students to maintain and improve this. As an example, we ask students for which pronoun they wish to use in college.

Do you encourage able students to do more than 3 A Levels? Why/why not?

Students who gain at least 5 grade 7s at GCSE are able to choose to take 4 A levels and this will be discussed at the guidance meeting. All students are offered a range of extra subjects alongside their A levels or BTEC course, such as the EPQ, IPQ and Core Maths. We encourage students to discuss what will be best for them individually in their admissions guidance meeting.

Can you advise how applicants can specify CSF as their first choice when applying?

As part of the online application you are asked to rank each of the applications you make.

Is it common for students to have more lessons on some days than others and if they have less subjects on one day, is it common for them to only come in for their lessons.

Students timetables will depend on the mix of subjects they are taking, so they may well have some busy days and some with fewer lessons timetabled. Students only need to be in college for their timetabled sessions, but many will be in all day as they travel on the college buses, and many students choose to come in and use the independent working facilities.

Must students with an EHCP meet the same entry requirements and complete a minimum of 3 A levels plus extended project?

Students with an EHCP are made a slightly adjusted offer for entry, usually with an adjustment of one grade. This is discussed individually for students with an EHCP so that the adjustment made is the most useful one possible. EHCP students can also discuss a reduced number of qualifications, such as taking 2 A levels and an EPQ. The taking of an EPQ is optional for all sixth formers at CSF.

If I want to take 4 A-levels is any combination possible? And if not, how would I find out whether my selection of A-levels is possible at Comberton.

If you met the entry requirements for your courses we would be happy to try to accommodate any combination. It will ultimately depend on timetabling blocks but there is usually enough flexibility to find solutions.

Is enrichment on a Wednesday compulsory

Yes it is for all of our year 12 students and it makes up part of their timetabled contact time. On occasion this is not the case if other academic studies are required to happen during those periods but this is very rarely the case.

What is the Pre U?

From September 2022 there will not be any Pre-U courses offered (as the exam board has discontinued global perspectives pre-U). From September 2022 we will be offering the Cambridge IPQ in place of the Pre-U course and more information about this course can be found on our website.

Do students who use the Comberton bus to travel find it difficult to attend extra curricular activities - is there any other form of transport available for them?

Special provision for extra-curricular involvement is factored into the timetable through the Wednesday afternoon enrichment slot, within which students can access a wide range of opportunities. Catch-up and revision sessions are usually scheduled to take place at lunchtimes so that students who travel are not disadvantaged.

Can a student stay until 5pm and then be collected by a parent?

Absolutely - students can access the facilities within the sixth form including the social area, the independent study and the library.

What extra curricular activities are there?

Wednesday afternoon is timetabled for numerous Enrichment activities from sports, arts, mentoring and others. There tends to be a choice of about 25. We also run additional activities beyond the curriculum and numerous trips and residentials. These can be found on our website under wider opportunities.