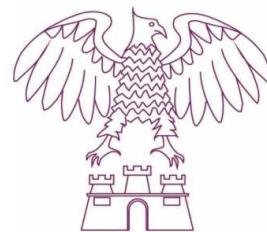


Caerleon Comprehensive School

Ysgol Gyfun Caerllion



Caerleon Sixth Form

Parent & Student Frequently Asked Questions (Updated Feb 2025)

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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.

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 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. **It is important to understand that changing your mind after this process might mean that the subjects you have changed to are now in the same option column and will not be available to you.**

When will the pathway 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. If you have changed your mind since the initial selection, you might find that you are unable to take those subjects as they are in the same option column. I am afraid that we cannot alter the pathways form once it has been created based on requests from students who have changed their minds.

When the final 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 2%. We will contact each student individually who has been affected by this and will discuss alternatives.

I want to change my subjects after my GCSE results, but they do not fit into the pathway form?

At this stage it is impossible for us to move subjects to different pathways as the pathway columns are the foundation building blocks for the whole school timetable. Unless we can find the same pathway through our collaboration route then you will be unable to study that combination of subjects.

My chosen pathway is only available if I take a subject in Llanwern? I do not want to do this?

Post 16 education has been collaborative for many years across Newport with a high degree of success. Students who have access to their preferred choices and reject that because a subject is based at Llanwern cannot expect Caerleon to alter the pathways. We work in partnership with Llanwern and offer a much wider range of subjects because of this. Our past students have performed exceptionally well when taking A-Levels at Llanwern when they were unavailable to them in Caerleon. Something that in the past would not have been available to them.

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 Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales (formally WBQ). Why can't 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 mathematics.

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.

Trial periods for students

If it is available, we do offer the opportunity for students to take an extra subject if they are having difficulty choosing between two. This allows the student a 4-week block of lessons to see which subject they are suited for. However, they will need to choose after this period.

Why is the Advanced Skills Baccalaureate Wales (ASBW) 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 ASBW 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 ASBW have improved their chances of gaining their first-choice university place since its adoption in 2015. (Evidence from universities and employers).

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 ASBW. 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 - ASBW 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 ccs.post16admin@newportschools.wales as soon as you know your child will be absent from any scheduled lesson. This includes ASBW classes, tutorials and enrichment. 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 within a few days 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). If you miss school for driving lessons these will be recorded as unauthorised absences. Please sign out and sign back in.

Why do I need to sign out when I leave the site?

It is crucial that we have some record of where you are during the school day. Although you will register in the morning with your form tutor, we request that all students sign in and out using our digital form. If you leave the site, we **MUST** know this for safeguarding and health and safety purposes. If you go to the village during non-contact time then sign out and sign back in when you return. When you leave the site to go home at the end of your school day you will need to sign out using the digital form. Please ensure that you do this, or we will have to review our policy of visiting the village and being able to go home at 1:20.

Where do I sign out?

There are QR codes in the common room, the sixth form study area (library annex) and by the school gate, to allow you to sign in and out. You will also receive a link to the form via email, this link can be bookmarked on your mobile device for ease of access.

Why do I need to be in school from 8:45 when I have no lessons period 1 and 2?

In Caerleon we believe that being on site and immersing yourself into the 6th form will be a far better experience for you. A-levels are **full-time** education and not part-time, using your free periods well for study is as crucial as attending lessons. We also believe that social interaction with friends and teachers is important for your wellbeing and ultimately your progress. If you are joining our 6th form, we insist that you attend school every day from 8:45. You may leave at 1:20 if you have no lessons or enrichment in the afternoon.

Can I miss lessons to attend my part time job?

No. Students are enrolled in full time education when they join the 6th form. We understand that many like to have a small part-time job and this is fine. However, it should not be in excess of 10-12 hours per week as this will impact their ability to study. Students who miss lessons to attend part-time jobs could be asked to leave the 6th form as they are not fully committed to their studies. Shifts should not be taken at any time during the school day 8:45 to 3:05. This time should always be available for lessons, studying and meetings with staff.

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

Please send your request to ccs.post16admin@newportschools.wales with full details of the absence including reasons and dates. This has to be sent by the parent / carer. Examples could be work experience and open days.

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 form tutor 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.

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 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 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 Sixth Form 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 Sixth Form Team.

There are further wellbeing resources available on the sixth form Team, with links to many self-help, internal support and external support agencies that are there to help.

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 a member of the Sixth Form pastoral team 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 the Head of Sixth form 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 + ASBW + Enrichment = 11.5 hours of lessons per week
- 3 A-Levels + ASBW + 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?

Yes. You **MUST** attend form every day. Study spaces are available across the school for 6th form students.

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

No, you must remain on site until at least 1:20. You should use the lessons productively to study.

What facilities are available on site for studying?

There are two designated spaces for sixth form students. The Common Room and sixth form study area (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 and Chromebooks available in the sixth form study area (library annex) 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.

6th form Study Referrals to the Progress Room

All students will initially be trusted and encouraged to work independently and make use of the time available to them to complete work and complete study. However, there will be times when some students are not meeting deadlines and not making best use of their non-contact time. When we notice this happening staff will request a supervised study referral where students will be placed in a staffed progress room where they can quietly get on with work. Reasons for a referral could be:

- Missing deadlines and non-completion of work
- Poor progress in assessments
- Poor attitude to learning in lessons
- Poor use of non-contact time

There have been occasions where students themselves recognise they struggle to work well in non-contact time and will self-refer. We encourage students to do this. When a student is referred parents will be informed by email and students will be given a schedule that they must adhere to. Students refusing to attend will be considered to be truanting and will be subject to the school's policy on truancy.

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 students 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 Microsoft Teams / 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 Sixth Form Team - 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.

My child is off school through illness, can you provide lessons at home?

We do not have the resources or facilities to create hybrid lessons for students who are off. Students will need to copy up when they are well enough to do so. Staff often post materials to Microsoft Teams / Google Classroom that students can access, however this might not be suitable to their subject or the current module of work. After a period of absence students should approach teaching staff if they are having difficulties catching up with 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 ccs.post16admin@newportschools.wales 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 each individual 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. At a minimum we recommend that you:

- Check the Microsoft Team / Google Classroom with your child on a weekly basis (ask them for the login)
- 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 Microsoft Team / 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 motivates students 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. Staff use this as a starting point to assign a personalised target for each student. These are checked by senior leadership. Target grades can be lowered and increased in consultation with teachers at the start of the academic year. When you receive a progress check you will see the target and a projected grade for you student. Further details on this process are available on the school website.

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. A separate policy will be sent to you.

Microsoft Teams 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.

What is the Sixth Form Resources Team?

In order to get crucial information and messages out to the whole year group we have a Microsoft Team 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 the Team will be shared with students during the enrolment day in September. You can also email ccs.post16admin@newportschools.wales to request them. Students on roll who are not members of the Team 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.

Uniform

Why are you sanctioning my child for incorrect uniform?

The 6th form is not an exception from the whole school policy on uniform. We expect the highest standards from our most senior students and for them to act as role models. Sixth form is also a stage where students should be preparing themselves for work and abiding by a dress code is part of that.

What sanctions are there for incorrect uniform?

The same as for any other student in school. We will expect the correct uniform to be brought in and for the student to change. If this does not happen then the student will be asked to work in reset. If there is a genuine reason for incorrect uniform such as broken shoes please email ccs.post16admin@newportschools.wales to explain.

Uniform does not impact my child's learning, you should not be sanctioning it.

We make it very clear from the outset our expectations regarding the standard of uniform. Sixth form students act as role models and set an example for our younger students. We have a dress code for our sixth form and we expect them to wear the uniform with pride as would be expected in a job that has a dress code.

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 Mrs Danaher the Sixth Form Support Officer. Please direct all questions and queries to her on ccs.post16admin@newportschools.wales

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.

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 are the Heads of Sixth Form based?

Heads of Sixth Form 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.

Who should I approach if I have an issue?

Always speak to your form tutor first during registration or send an email. If they cannot deal with the issue they will refer you to another person. This will usually be the Head of Sixth Form.