



The Sixth Form

November 2021

Dear Year 11 Students, Parents and Carers

Thank you for attending the Joint Sixth Form Information Evening this week at Colfox. It was fantastic to see so many parents and carers attend to find out what the Joint Sixth Form, including the Yeovil Partnership, can offer. Departments, and our Sixth Form helpers, were kept busy all evening giving advice about options, possible subject combinations and future plans.

As we build our option blocks around student demand, I would encourage **all** students to complete and return an application form, even if they are currently undecided about their next steps. A copy of the application form is attached and can also be found, along with the Prospectus, on the Sixth Form pages of the school website. The deadline for application forms to be in is **Friday 10th December**.

If applicable, please do complete the section asking about courses *'that you would like to take but are not included* in our current offer as we will monitor these responses carefully. Hopefully, you can find answers to most queries you may have in the Prospectus, but I am happy to take this opportunity to clarify a few things.

Q: What happens next?

A: Students will have discussions with their tutors, Ms Smith (Head of Year 11) and Mr Donovan (Careers), to discuss their next steps. **Academic Monitoring Day** will also provide an opportunity for discussions to take place with parents.

Students may want to arrange a 'taster lessons' to try out an A Level lesson. This is especially useful if considering a 'new' course such as Psychology, Photography or perhaps Business Studies, and students should see me to organise this. Once students are happy with their choices, they should complete an application form and return it to me. Don't worry if you are undecided at this point - the choices made on the application form are not final as we interview all students about their provisional choices and discuss all the options open to them.

In the spring term, we generate 'option blocks' that have been organised to allow as many students as possible to select the subjects they indicated on their application form. **Priority will be given to combinations from students who have indicated that they definitely intend to return to the Joint Sixth Form.** At this stage, students make their final choices and conditional offers for places will be made. Please be aware that courses will only run subject to appropriate student numbers.

Q: What about the Yeovil Partnership?

A: Students wishing to apply for the Yeovil Partnership should complete the same application form as for Sixth Form, clearly indicating which course they would like to apply for. The Yeovil College Partnership Prospectus has all of this information and copies of it are available from tutors or myself.

Q: What is the difference between A Levels and the Yeovil Partnership?

A: A Levels are academic courses that are two years in length and are largely exam based. Some courses have coursework, but this is rarely more than 20% of the qualification. A Levels *usually* lead to higher education, but not always. Courses offered in the Yeovil College Partnership route are vocational and, as such, are generally not exam based. Courses can start at Level 1, 2 or 3. Level 3 is equivalent to A Levels in terms of qualification 'weight'. Some courses offered in the Yeovil Partnership have compulsory work placement elements, preparing students for the world of work. However, Level 3 students are also able to progress to university with their qualifications if they wish and students studying L3 courses through the Partnership have progressed to degrees at university in the past.

Q: Can I still go on trips?

A: Yes! The New York trip is still open. Going in 2023, students will receive a letter shortly.

Q: How many courses should I take?

A: Following interviews and GCSE results, students will decide (with advice from school staff) on how many courses to study. Most students will study 3 A Levels, as this is what almost all university applications require. A few students may choose to study 4 A Levels, though they should be aware of the demands of this, and Yeovil Partnership students will study one course.

Q: Why do I have to pay for transport?

A: When making decisions about which course, school or college to attend parents must consider how students will travel to school or college. The Joint Sixth Form offers a **free link bus** for students to travel between Colfox and Beaminster and runs a **discretionary bursary that can be used to recoup some (or all) of the costs involved in transport.**

The Partnership bus to Yeovil College is subsidised and organised by the school, and costs £400 for a yearly pass. The same pass to Yeovil College or Weymouth outside of the Partnership usually costs more than £900.

All transport to Dorset Schools that have Sixth Form provision is provided by independent bus companies under contract to Dorset County Council. If you wish to purchase a seat on one of these services, you are required to contact the bus company directly. The availability and charges are at the discretion of the relevant bus company: First Group Wessex Buses: 01305 783645 / dorsetschools@firstgroup.com

Q: What is Core Maths? What is EPQ?

A: Students studying 3 A Levels will be required to 'top up' their timetable with an additional qualification. Core Maths is a Level 3 qualification, worth 40% of a full A Level, and designed to improve students' mathematics after GCSE. It will be taken by students opting for science subjects, Business Studies, Geography, Psychology and Sociology where 'full' Maths is not being taken alongside.

EPQ is an 'extended project qualification' worth 50% of a full A Level. This subject requires students to work independently towards successful completion of a research-based essay of 5000 words, or an artefact with a supporting report.

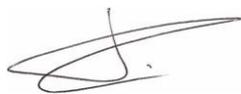
Q: What if I don't get 5 x GCSEs at grades 9 – 5?

A: You can still join the Sixth Form with vocational courses through the school and Partnership. Remember that Mr Donovan and Mr Truyens (Careers Advisor) are available to discuss employment and apprenticeship opportunities, and I am available at any time to discuss vocational pathways.

Thank you again for your continued support.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any further queries and return completed application forms as soon as possible!

Yours faithfully



James See
Head of Sixth Form
Beaminster School