



Post-16 Information Booklet

2025 - 2026

Introduction

This post-16 information pack is designed to provide information and guidance for students and their parents/carers in preparation for making applications and decisions for post-16 education and training in 2025-2026.

The [Raising of the Participation Age Law \(2013\)](#) means that all young people must be enrolled on an education or training programme until they are 18 years old. This can include one of the following options: **sixth form**, **college/training** provider or an **apprenticeship**.

Each of these options are explained over the following pages as well as the support and guidance available at Colonel Frank Seely Academy.

Qualifications

This chart shows the different levels of qualifications available. Post-16 options are focused on Level 3 qualifications and below.

Level	Qualification / educational routes		
8	Doctorate (PhD)		NVQ 8
7	Masters degree (MA)		Degree apprenticeship / NVQ 5, 6, 7
6	Bachelors degree BA or BSc		
5	Foundation degree FdA or FdSc	Higher National Diploma (HND)	
4		Higher National Certificate (HNC)	Higher apprenticeship / NVQ 4
3	A levels Grades A-E	T Levels	BTEC (extended) diploma BTEC certificate
2	GCSE Grades 4- 9 (C, B, A or A*)		BTEC first diploma
1	GCSE Grades 1- 3 (D, E, F or G)		Foundation diploma / entry level qualifications
	Academic route	Vocational route	Applied / work route

Post-16 Options

Sixth Form

Qualification levels available: Level 3

Qualifications available: Normally, three subjects are studied over a period of two years.

A Levels are level 3 academic subject-based qualifications similar to GCSE options. These are usually assessed by exams at the end of the course.

Vocational / technical / applied qualifications are also usually available at most sixth forms. These can be taken alongside one or two A Level subjects and are a more practical qualification. These are assessed by a combination of exams and course work. Examples include: Applied Science, Business, Food Science and Nutrition, Health and Social Care, IT, Music and Sport.

Entry requirements: Usually, students require five GCSEs at grade 5 or above, including grade 4 or above in Maths and English Language. This can vary from place-to-place and subject-to-subject so carefully check sixth form websites and predicted grades before applying.

Advice: Students considering sixth form should consult their school's Careers Adviser about what subjects they intend to take, as this can impact on future career and higher education options.

College / Training Provider

Qualification levels available: Entry Level, Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3

Qualifications available: One course is taken over a period of one or two years.

Vocational / technical / applied qualifications are more practical and focus on a job role or industry area. Examples include: hair and beauty, childcare, construction, motor vehicle, business, IT, performing arts, photography, sport and many more. These courses are mainly assessed by completing relevant tasks or coursework and less so by exams.

T Level courses are a relatively new two-year Level 3 technical qualification with an assessed industry work placement, which is worth 20% of the qualification (approx. 45 days).

Entry requirements: These vary depending on the level of the course and the college/training provider. Entry Level courses are the lowest level and Level 3 is the highest available for post-16 students.

Advice: Students should speak with the school's Careers Adviser to determine the most suitable qualification level. They can also research independently by comparing their predicted grades with course entry requirements listed on college or training provider websites.

Apprenticeship

Qualification levels available: Level 2 (Intermediate) and Level 3 (Advanced)

Qualifications available: An apprenticeship is a full-time employment / training programme. The qualification is linked to the job role and usually takes at least 12 months to complete.

Vocational / technical qualifications via apprenticeships are usually assessed by occupational competency related activities. Examples include: observations in the workplace, professional discussions and portfolios of work product. Usually, one day a week (approx. 6 hours) is spent undertaking training towards the qualification. Typically, this day is away from the workplace, for example at a local college or training provider.

Entry requirements: These vary depending on the level of the qualification attached to the job role and are ultimately at the discretion of the employer. Employers outline the required skills and personal qualities they are looking for in the job advert.

Advice: Students considering an apprenticeship should consult the school's Careers Adviser for support with writing a CV, vacancy search and making applications. They should also make additional applications to colleges/sixth forms as apprenticeship vacancies can be fiercely competitive. Apprenticeship vacancies can be searched [here](#). Information on pay and conditions can be found [here](#).

Application Essentials

Researching

Attending sixth form / college open evenings is considered vital to enable students to fully understand the options and learning environments available to them. It also allows students to find out about the wider opportunities and support available for any unique circumstances or interests. Open evenings are a great opportunity to meet the staff involved and ask questions to help students make good and informed decisions.

Submitting Applications

All students will need to make post-16 applications as part of their legal requirement [Raising of the Participation Age law \(2013\)](#). Applications are usually completed online via sixth form or college websites. All post-16 providers can support with applications over the phone, in person or at open evenings if this is preferred.

Application Timeline

Students can use this calendar to keep on track with important dates and deadlines.

Application processes vary from provider to provider, so it is a good idea to check each website for their admissions procedures and deadlines.

Autumn Term

- An appointment with the school's Careers Adviser takes place during this term to discuss future pathways.
- Open evenings at Sixth Forms and Colleges are held to allow students to explore available courses and subjects.
- Applications to Sixth Forms and Colleges should be submitted during this term.
- Mock exam results are used as part of the application process, so revision is essential.
Considering Apprenticeships?
- It is important to begin researching and applying for apprenticeship opportunities as early as possible.
- Larger employers often open and close applications quickly, so early action increases the chance of securing a place.
- Registration with apprenticeship websites such as [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk), [Nottingham College](https://www.nottinghamcollege.ac.uk), and [West Nottinghamshire College](https://www.westnottinghamshirecollege.ac.uk) provides alerts about new opportunities.

Spring Term

- Sixth Form and College interviews take place, sometimes referred to as *Meet the Tutor Events*.
- Conditional offers are issued during this period. These are based on meeting course entry requirements, which are confirmed on GCSE Results Day in August.
Considering Apprenticeships?
- Apprenticeship searches and applications should continue throughout this term, even if applications have already been submitted.

Summer Term

- Some Sixth Forms and Colleges hold taster days to allow students to experience courses before enrolment.
- GCSE Results Day takes place in August.
- Enrolment is completed at the chosen Sixth Form, College or Apprenticeship provider after results are received.
- Careers Adviser support remains available for those uncertain about next steps.
- After leaving school, the Futures Team continues to provide advice and guidance.
Contact: Naomi Kemp, Futures Support – Naomi.Kemp@futuresadvice.org

Personal Careers Guidance and Support

Colonel Frank Seely Academy provides students and parents with access to a Registered Career Development Professional who works in accordance with the Career Development Institute's [Code of Ethics](#). This ensures that all career guidance is impartial, confidential and tailored to the individual needs of each student.

Requesting Support

To make a referral, request support, to raise any concerns, or to provide feedback on the information provided, please contact our Careers Adviser, Yasmin Moon, at the email address below.

Careers Adviser - Miss Moon

Email Address - y.moon@cfsacademy.org.uk