

This is an accessible version of the College Prospectus. This document covers the first third of the printed prospectus. Links at the end of this document give access to two further documents, which complete the prospectus.

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Over the course of the past few years, the College has, of course, followed all the relevant government guidance regarding the delivery of our curriculum, adjusting to the demand for remote learning as the need arose, but it is important to confirm that the College remains deeply committed to the provision of the complete "sixth form college experience". Enrolment at the College demands full onsite participation in all aspects of a full 5-day week programme of study, activity, and tutorial support. We understand that many students have had to adapt to aspects of remote learning or 'part-time' attendance in their education in recent years but the College does not offer such arrangements, unless specifically requested to do so by the government in response to a changing national situation.

Page 4: **WELCOME**

Thank you for your interest in studying at The Sixth Form College from September 2024.

The decisions you make for the period after Year 11 will shape the next few years of your life and influence your preparations for success in continuing study in Higher Education, future employment and, more widely, your adult life.

We strongly advise you to take the necessary time to explore your range of post Year 11 progression options properly and to think well ahead.

If you decide to apply to the College, your application will be for a programme of full-time general education focused on academic study – including provisional choices of specific academic courses that have been well considered and fit in with your talents, interests and future aims. There is, of course, a jump in the academic level required to be successful for study at A Level from GCSE and it is important that prospective students are aware of the need for academic interest and consistent focus and engagement.

We believe studying a full-time sixth form programme of continuing general academic education at the College represents an excellent choice for a good proportion, but certainly not all, Year 11 students following the completion of their GCSEs.

In your considerations and when you are undertaking your research please do talk to our current and former students and their parents as this will provide much useful insight. In addition to information provided in this Prospectus, our website, YouTube site and the Open Evenings or Information Mornings will provide much valuable information and perspective.

All applicants will be helped in their considerations, including through a one to one interview and advisory meeting.

We look forward to helping you find out more about the exciting and flexible range of opportunities at the College.

**Ian MacNaughton**  
**Principal**

Page 5: Image of a student in the chemistry lab

### **TEXT BOX: PLATINUM AWARD WINNING SCIENCE COURSES**

Last year staff and students celebrated the achievement of a prestigious Platinum Level Science Mark Award. We understand that we are the first sixth form college in the country to achieve such an award. It is quality standard designed to recognise and celebrate inspiring practice in science departments across the UK.

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### **WHAT DOES THE COLLEGE OFFER?**

The Sixth Form College, Colchester provides prestigious full-time academic education for 16 – 19-year-olds, combined with excellent pastoral care and an exceptional range of personal development opportunities and wider activities. The aim is to enhance your future progression opportunities – university, employment and life.

Image of a student studying.

There are two alternative academic programmes of study: A Levels or the Advanced Foundation Programme (AFP).

A wide range of academic course choices, together with options from the large number of additional studies and other extra-curricular activities, enable our students to devise personalised programmes that suit their individual needs and aspirations. The College continues to work to provide a broad and relevant curriculum for its students. We encourage our students to set their sights high and expect them to study and engage in demanding programmes of sixth form study to support their future progression and to develop a good

range of skills. Additional support is offered to students including those who wish to stretch

themselves, for example, help with preparing for Oxbridge entrance and university applications. All students are encouraged to use the support and extension activities run by academic departments, together with the wide range of resources available on the College intranet. There are a range of learning support opportunities, either one-to-one or in small groups, and help with study skills is also available from our learning support team.

Our tutorial programme and review systems enable students to set themselves challenging targets and to take responsibility for their own learning. Students are expected to have, or to

work to develop, the resilience and skills required to complete their courses successfully, so that they can move on to the next stage of their young adult lives with confidence.

Page 7: Image of two students at a desk writing

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## STUDY PROGRAMMES AND COURSES

There is much to consider when you are planning for further academic study and we hope that the following 'question and answer' section will help you in making the decisions that are right for you: Will I be able to study the combination of academic courses that I want?

Yes. The College timetable will enable any combination of A Level subjects to be taken, and this is also generally the case on the Advanced Foundation Programme (AFP).

Maintaining coherence, breadth and balance when making choices is important. The College also offers one of the widest selections of A Level courses in the country (including, for example, four different History A Level courses) thus providing excellent options. Given the size and breadth of our provision, we are able to ensure that you can select the combination of subjects that you want without worrying about whether they conflict with other choices on the timetable, nor will they be withdrawn due to low demand (please note that there are a small number of 'disallowed' course combinations – usually to ensure that you do not narrow your course choice too much).

Students taking an A Level programme of study, especially those seeking places on prestigious degree courses, are advised to include at least one traditional academic subject (formerly termed "facilitating subjects" by Russell Group Universities) within their programme – and a good proportion of students will include two or three such subjects in their choices.

All provisional course choice considerations will be discussed with you at your interview and then again at Induction. They will then be finalised at enrolment in late August, after your GCSE results have been received.

### Will all my courses be taught on one site?

Yes. At the Sixth Form College, we teach all of our courses in specialist sixth form accommodation on one purpose-built site, located in a very accessible central area of Colchester. Those of you who have passed the entrance on North Hill, but have not yet visited our site, may be surprised to find that there are seven separate buildings, all specifically focused upon the academic teaching, learning and wider experiences appropriate for 16–19-year-olds – and without the distractions of other activities applicable to younger or older age groups.

Many visitors to Colchester will be familiar with the iconic view of the main building, sitting on top of North Hill, which can be seen when arriving at the south of the town centre – including the huge windows of the Art Department that span the top of the entire building. Less immediately visible are the range of other modern, purpose-built buildings and facilities. There is the Syd Kent Pavilion, with its 'living roof', student social and study spaces, as well as the specialist buildings for languages, performance and ICT.

A tour of the College might include a visit to: a sound studio, a student run charity café, the fitness centre and astro turf pitch, science laboratories, the visual arts areas, an

electronics workshop, the radio station and dance rehearsal rooms or any of the seventeen specific departmental teaching or learning areas.

Image of a student working

Page 9: image of students.

**Text box one:** “There are about one hundred additional studies to choose from: I took an extra course in finance, to go alongside my Accountancy A-Level” Temi - who joined us from St Benedict’s College.

**Text Box two:** “It was great that I could play soccer for the college, alongside studying for my A Level courses” Niall - who joined us from St Benedict’s College.

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Students may find themselves spending time in vibrant social spaces one minute, or seeking out a quiet area for study or support facilities the next. Apart from those who choose the options of sports, work and community placements or field work and visits, all our activities take place within the ease and security of one site in the heart of Colchester.

**Will I be able to change my provisional course choices?**

Yes. The provisional choices that you make during your application are only the beginning of a process of getting you onto the right courses.

If there are particular courses that you very much wish to study, it is important that you make this clear at your interview as a very small number of courses each year are declared ‘full’ after the interview process has been completed and a waiting list system then commences.

There is usually a great deal of flexibility available regarding provisional course choices and we are in a position to help you review your options at induction and enrolment in order to ensure that your choices match your skills, interests and aspirations. At induction in June, there is the chance to meet members of the different departments and think potential options through before you firmly commit to a course.

At enrolment a good deal of time is spent on a one-to-one basis getting the course choices right. Even in the early weeks of teaching we can explore the option of making early changes, although once the teaching year is fully underway, we do expect all students to complete all the individual courses that they have enrolled upon.

**How well do College students achieve?**

We are extremely proud of our students’ success; over many years their examination results have been very impressive, by both local and national standards. Consistently, year after year, thousands of our students have obtained the necessary qualifications

to be able to proceed onto university degree courses, including a very large cohort who have achieved the grades required for offers for places on prestige degree courses including medicine, veterinary science, dentistry, engineering, maths, sciences, modern foreign languages, economics, architecture, law, English and history. Many have taken places at Oxford or Cambridge or Russell Group universities or medical schools or for other highly competitive universities or degree courses, drawing upon the specialist support that we offer to applicants in these areas. Other students have achieved excellent opportunities in employment and training. We value all of our students and encourage them all to realise their full potential; as part of this process, we have helped students' progress to hundreds of universities and countless career paths.

Full details of all of our results are published on the College website every year, alongside profiles of some of our many high-achieving students.

Image of former student Alex. Text Box: Alex, who joined us from Tendring Technology College, achieved a stunning four A\* grades in chemistry, maths, further maths and physics and is now pursuing a course in aerospace engineering (with an industrial placement year) at the University of Sheffield

Image of former student Jiya. Text Box: Jiya, who joined us from the Stanway School has now progressed to King's College London to study medicine. She did an extraordinary job at College, leaving us with an A\* grade in psychology, alongside A grades in biology, business and economics, and a B in chemistry. She also achieved one of the highest UKCAT scores we've seen in a long time!

Image of former student Nathan. Text Box: Nathan, who joined us from Chelmer Valley High School, is now off to Cambridge to at The University of Sheffield. The Sixth Form College read mathematics, having achieved a stunning four A\* grades in Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Chemistry and French.

Page 11: Image of former students Joe and Tev. Text Box: Twins Joe and Tev, who joined us from Honeywood Community School, between them achieved a stunning seven A\* and three A grades. Joe is now reading economics at The University of Nottingham, whereas Tev is at Manchester University reading computer science.

Image of former student Joe. Text box: Joe, who joined us from Colchester High School, is now studying history at The University College of London, having achieved A\* grades in English Literature, History and Religious Studies A Level.

Image of former student Kitty. Text Box: Kitty, who joined us from St. Benedict's College, is now studying veterinary medicine at Surrey University, having achieved two A\* grades in Biology and Psychology, alongside her A grades in Chemistry and EPQ.

Image of former student Amelia. Text box: Amelia, who joined us from Felsted School, is now reading law at The University of Bristol, having gained A\* grades in her politics and psychology A Levels, alongside an A in history, as well as an A grade in her finance diploma.

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## What academic grades will I need?

The Sixth Form College is a relatively inclusive academic institution that welcomes students from a wide variety of educational backgrounds, who bring with them a broad range of academic skills and prior achievements. Our published entry criteria for the different academic programmes of study and individual courses ensure that we are able to offer appropriate courses, which meet the needs and capabilities of students. Sixth form academic study builds upon knowledge and skills gained at school and moves students through academic programmes, which normally culminate in written examinations. This is why your performance in GCSE examinations is a key interest to us, as we need to establish that a foundation of knowledge and skills is in place for us to build upon.

For an A Level programme of study, we normally require students to have a range of at least five to seven GCSE passes at grade 4 or higher, ideally including English Language (or English Literature) and Mathematics, but students must also satisfy the minimum entry criteria for each individual A Level subject (or equivalent). Entry onto certain subjects will require a specific GCSE subject at grade 5 or 6, or, in a small number of cases, a grade 7 or 8. For example, A Level Biology and Chemistry require GCSE grade 6 in two GCSE sciences and Mathematics. In the same vein, many 'written' subjects such as A Level English Literature or Philosophy require one (or two) GCSE grade 5's in those GCSE subjects that demand a high level of written ability (English Language, English Literature, History or Religious Studies).

It's important to note that, without a range of GCSE grades 5, or even 6 for many sciences, it will often not be possible to course an individual student upon any programme of study at the college, and all students, whatever their goals and aspirations, are very much advised to put in place an alternative "plan B", especially in a situation where performance in key subjects is a concern.

It should also be noted that government expectation is that students should not undertake more than one alternative 'Extended Certificate' course as part of an A level programme of study.

Full details of all entry criteria for each of our courses are published in the second part of this prospectus and it is really important that you check these before making any provisional course choice decisions and that you are aware that these are very much 'minimum' expectations.

## What if I do not achieve the GCSE grades that I need?

During the application process we will work closely with you to ensure that any academic courses offered to you are realistic and in line with your plans and aspirations, in the sense that you should be able to manage each course and succeed if you work hard.

We will also be clear about the grades you need to achieve for each course choice. Sometimes students are unable, for a variety of reasons, to achieve the grades that they need and, in this case, we will be available, on GCSE results day and beyond, to discuss further options. Students are expected to achieve the minimum GCSE grades required for each individual subject, but adjustments often only require some amendment to your course choices. If there is a significant likelihood that you will not get the grades that you need to achieve your initial goals, please discuss this at your interview. We offer a very wide range of courses and it is often the case that a range of possible alternatives can be considered.

Image of the College female cross country team with medals.

Page 13 Image of students. Text Box one: “The College is a really positive, welcoming environment to work in, and to meet friends” Quentin (College Council Chair) – joined us from St Benedict’s College. Text Box two: “The lessons are always really useful in covering what you need to know” Ratish (College Council Treasurer) – joined us from Philip Morant School.

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## COLLEGE LIFE

### How will College be different to school?

First of all, compared to Year 11, you will study a smaller number of subjects but in a more specialist way and at a higher academic level. Otherwise, many of the familiar aspects of school life carry on in a similar vein at the College, but in a specialist young adult sixth form environment. You will join academic subject classes, on average, of approximately 17 or 18 students in size (with nearly all classes in a 15 to 21 range). You will regularly meet with your teachers for a pattern of 4 double lessons per week in each A Level subject. You will also have a Personal Tutor who you will see every day. The College timetabled day for all academic classes is from 9am to 4pm and all academic classes are held on the excellent college campus.

The routines of registers, target grades, homework, mock exams, etc. will all seem very familiar to you from school.

Your work in the classroom will also build upon and extend the style of work that you adopted for your GCSEs. You will have more need for independent study – this will include you organising some independent study time outside of term time – particularly in the periods ahead of coursework deadlines or public exams.

College is a young adult environment experience, providing a maturing transition from school onto the worlds of higher education or employment at age 18. As part of this journey, it is important that we adopt a more ‘adult’, organized and self-motivated approach to your learning. Staff will make clear demands of you in terms of attendance and achievement and work closely with you and your parents if needed. You will find that the way you talk to and work with staff will reflect a more adult approach. Students



call all staff by their first name and work closely with them in such a way that they increasingly take more responsibility for their own learning.

## What will my weekly timetable be like?

The College only offers full-time general academic education programmes of study. As a student enrolling at the College, you are committing to participate in a full five-day timetabled week of varied activities including timetabled academic lessons, a daily tutorial and any Additional Studies or other wider activities that you have chosen. There will also be a need for regular independent study. The College academic day starts promptly at 9am and runs until 4pm (Monday to Friday). A good number of students travel from a considerable distance to study with us and we therefore work hard to ensure that all academic lessons and many of the choices of other activities take place within the main 9am – 4pm college day. However, a wide range of optional extra-curricular activities, such as sports and performing arts (including residential fieldwork and evening events) will also be offered outside of the timetabled framework to those who wish to participate.

Lessons are 70 minutes in length (these are 'doubles') but, for some courses, there are also some single lessons. On any given day, students are likely to attend lessons in three, possibly four, of their different subject areas and on some days students will participate in their chosen Additional Study. In total, most first year students are likely to be involved in between 17.5 and 22 hours of timetabled classes each week, depending upon the specific choices that each individual student makes. Alongside this there will be an expectation of approximately 16 hours per week of individual study.

You will be given an individual timetable after your enrolment. Your timetable will be unique to you, based upon the specific course choices you have made at the conclusion of the Interview, Induction and Enrolment process. It is important to highlight that all students are expected to fully attend and complete every course upon which they enrol.

Any flexible time during the college day (9am – 4pm) will need to be carefully managed, including use of a proportion of this time spent on independent study to complete assignments, as well as recreational and social time.

You do not need to be present on the College site when you do not have timetabled commitments. This means that you may not always be required in college for the start of each day at 9am and you may have an afternoon when you can leave before 4pm. Effective use of time is a key part of becoming an independent learner and the journey towards developing the skills necessary for university or employment.

It is not permissible for students to engage in any part-time paid employment before 4.30pm Monday to Friday in term time periods. If students have non-timetabled flexible time before 4.30pm they should be using this time for wider college activities or independent study.

Page 15: Image of two students sitting outside. Text box one: "I really like the fact that it is a much more "grown up" style of working with teachers" Ruby – who joined us

from Philip Morant School. Text Box two: "It's been really good to make new friends from different schools here" Emily – who joined us from Philip Morant School.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT COLLEGE LIFE - SEARCH FOR COLCHSFC ON INSTAGRAM.

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### Will I make friends?

One of the very positive aspects about joining the College is that, on your first day, everyone else in your year group will also be starting on that day – so everyone starts on an equal footing and everyone is keen to make new friends. The College offers an excellent opportunity to make an exciting fresh start in a new environment and, as part of this, the opportunity to widen the group of friends from those made at school.

Students attend the College from a variety of backgrounds with different skills and experiences and there are bound to be others that share your interests and outlook. Of course, it will take a little time in the autumn for people to get to know the College and each other, this is why we organise a number of activities during Induction and Enrolment; we will work hard to ensure that you will soon feel at home. Change is an inevitable part of life and students who attend sixth form colleges generally develop very good skills which help them deal with the changes that lie ahead.

The College aims to provide a supportive inclusive environment for all students qualified to undertake the programmes of study we are able to offer. The College has a strong commitment to, and an excellent reputation, for its pastoral care and guidance systems. Maintenance of a friendly and happy atmosphere is valued as an important part in contributing to our students' success.

### Will I be able to carry on with my other interests or add new experiences?

Yes. A very wide-ranging programme of Additional Studies and extra-curricular activities is available. Students should make decisions based upon their own individual needs, interests, skills and aspirations.

You should look upon the College as providing an opportunity to develop and broaden skills and experiences but also to develop some new skills. The number and type of courses chosen will be determined by many factors, including the demands of your academic programme, together with your particular interests and career aims.

You are required to choose one additional study or other "fourth" course in the first instance, although you may choose to take part in further activities if these are available and fit into your overall programme. Personal Tutors will help with advice and guidance in this area. Additional study courses normally run for two terms. Most involve a commitment of one or two periods per week. There are also a broad range of clubs, societies, field trips or expeditions and extracurricular activities.

In addition to the option of studying academic sports courses (A Level Sport & PE or Applied General Certificate or Extended Certificate in Sport) and the Coaching Sport and Physical Activity (Level 2) a range of sports options open to all students include:

Badminton  
Basketball Academy  
(men's and women's squads)  
Equine Studies – theory options and Equestrian events  
Netball  
Rugby (men's and women's squads)  
Running  
Soccer (men's and women's squads)  
Table Tennis  
Tennis  
Trampolining  
Volleyball  
Weights and Fitness

Whether you just want to try to keep fit and have some fun, or you take your sport very seriously and compete at a high level, we have something to suit you. On-site sports facilities include a sports hall, fitness centre and all-weather pitch. For sports requiring specialist sports fields or other facilities we will continue to provide free transport to a range of high-quality sports venues around the town.

There are regular Wednesday afternoon matches for our teams in all the major sports and the College enters teams for local and national competitions in many other fields, including cross-country and volleyball.

A wide range of sports teams take part in the British Colleges Championships with regional events followed by national finals, moving to a different venue each year. An Annual Sports Award event helps us to celebrate the tremendous contributions and achievements of our individual sportsmen and women and our successful teams.

There are a wide range of excellent Performing Arts facilities, and opportunities for students to create music, or perform in dance or drama at the College. Whatever your current level of performance, and whatever type of music, dance or drama you are interested in, you should be able to find ways of taking part. You do not have to be an A Level Music, Dance, Drama or BTEC Performance Studies student to become involved in one or more of the wide range of Performing Arts additional studies. All who are interested and enthusiastic are welcome.

Examples of Additional Study performing arts choices available include:

Band  
Choir  
Contemporary Dance  
Dance Choreo Lab

Drama Clubs – Shakespeare and Contemporary  
Music Instrumental Tuition  
Orchestra  
Performance Activities  
Productions  
Rock Music Workshop  
Theory of Music

The wide range of college concerts, productions and plays are not the only opportunities for you to perform: ‘Unplugged on the Concourse’ events, the annual Battle of the Bands competitions and a series of student led activities have also continued to produce student performances of a very impressive quality.

A good audience is important, so even if you don’t feel you have the skills to take part you will be very welcome to attend these events.

The Performing Arts Department organises a good number of visits to productions, hosts external productions and has significant levels of engagements and support from former students now working professionally in the field of performing arts. The department also organises an annual Performing Arts Awards Evening.

Page 17: image of student in art department. Text box: “I’ve worked with three departments: computing, product design and performing arts – and the facilities have been excellent in all of them” Ronnie – who joined us from Colne Community College.

Page 18: The range of clubs and societies give you a chance to spend more time on activities connected with your studies or to follow interests that are outside your main timetable.

Examples of Additional Studies or clubs and societies (other than those previously mentioned) include:

Arts and Culture Committee  
Ceramics  
Charities Committee  
Christian Union  
Conservation Group  
Creative Writing  
Debating Society  
Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award  
Financial Studies Certificate  
Friends not Foes Group (Citizenship)  
Introduction to Japanese or Mandarin  
Chinese  
Lawyers  
Medics  
Signing  
Storm Radio

The College is a vibrant young adult community and there is a great deal going on. If your particular interest does not seem to be offered then you could get together with others who share your ideas and start your own society. Full details of the wide range of Additional Studies courses for 2024/25 are provided later in this Prospectus on page 96.

## How will I get to College?

The College is located in central Colchester and benefits from very good bus and rail links, which enable students to travel to the College from a range of areas in much of Mid and North Essex and South Suffolk. There are two railway stations within easy walking distance as well as a large network of buses to central Colchester which bring students in from a range of locations. Every year we are pleased to see a significant number of students join us from areas including Ipswich, Braintree, Chelmsford, Witham and Tendring - but a good number come from beyond.

We recognise that, for some students, travel to and from the College represents a major consideration. For many the 'travel to learn' journey to Colchester, from a different part of the local area will represent an exciting first step in their journey towards the young adult world of work or university in a large town or city. It is a chance to broaden horizons. For some this must of course be balanced against practical and financial considerations.

A range of transport advice, guidance and support is available for students and their parents. The railway operator and many local bus companies offer our students relatively low cost (heavily discounted) termly season ticket concessions. During our Open Evenings staff are available who can advise upon transport issues – alternatively they can be contacted via the College switchboard. There is also a regularly-updated 'Transport' page accessed via the 'Parent' section of the College website. We would certainly advise that students and their parents take the opportunity to further consider any travel arrangements.

For those who make an application, Induction Days in June give students the chance to give their proposed travel arrangements a 'test run'.

In terms of financial support, the College is not able to directly subsidise transport. However, there are bursaries available to those on a low income. These can amount to several hundred pounds of annual support and some families have made the decision to use such bursaries to help with transport costs (further details of the bursary award scheme can be found on our Parents Page on the College website).

In addition, the College does regularly negotiate preferential discount rates for termly travel passes with a number of transport companies and, in some cases, arrangements can be made to pay for termly passes by instalment. In all cases, it is well worth further discussion with staff here at the College.

## What are the class sizes?

The average academic class size at the College remains at an average level of just over 17 students. This will, of course, vary a little by subject and specific class, but it

is rare for any individual A Level group size to be less than 12 or more than 21. Indeed, nearly all academic teaching groups are between 15 and 21 in size in the autumn period.

### **What will the teachers be like?**

The College focuses upon the delivery of A Level courses specifically designed for 16–19-year-olds. We have been able to build up a teaching team of staff who are specialists in 16-19 education and in their subject areas and are able to concentrate exclusively upon their field. For example, an A Level teacher in any of our departments is likely to be working just with this one qualification type and with just the 16 – 18 age group.

Across all of our departments, it is highly likely that the team will include staff involved in examining and moderation for exam boards and there are also staff who have responsibilities in areas such as textbook writing and staff training in other schools and colleges. The fact that there are large teams of staff involved in teaching areas provides excellent opportunity for exchange of ideas and methods, and enables students to benefit from a range of skills and perspectives.

All teaching staff take part in a regular programme of personal training and development, as well as an ongoing process of lesson observation, where everyone across the College can observe everyone else teach and work to suggest improvements.

As one of the largest A Level centres in the country, we have amassed a considerable amount of expertise and influence with regard to curriculum change and have played an active role in adapting to recent changes in the A Level curriculum.

Page 19 – image of students in the chemistry lab wearing lab coats and goggles. Text box: "The advice and support available for students, for example in guiding them towards careers such as medicine, is excellent" Anna - who joined us from Colchester County High School.

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### **Where will I work and socialise?**

When not engaged in timetabled lessons our students are free to use their flexible time across virtually the whole range of facilities on the College site. There are plenty of independent study facilities including the Library and the Pavilion Study Area and a significant number of other general or specialist study facilities throughout the College. Some areas are silent, others are quiet areas and others are suitable for group or interactive work.

This includes a large number of 'drop in' areas for use of computers or a wi-fi system if you wish to bring your own tablet or laptop. In addition, the College also has comfortable social areas which offer more relaxed accommodation where students can meet and chat, alongside quieter areas for pair or group work.

The library is well stocked with both physical and online resources selected to meet students' requirements and is a pleasant working environment for silent private study. The library staff are helpful, experienced and well qualified.

### Where will my lessons take place?

The College is situated on a very historic site just inside the Roman wall. The important heritage of the site has been preserved whilst still delivering superb facilities for our students. The College has a range of specialist teaching facilities, specifically geared towards the provision of one of the broadest ranges of A Level provision in the country; as an example, the main South Site building has specialist facilities for science, mathematics, art, performance, etc.

The Mid-Site area provides us with sporting facilities, including: a state-of-the-art sports hall, fitness room, all-weather pitch and lecture theatres, as well as a restaurant and thirty-three humanities teaching rooms. A key feature of the Mid-Site building is the energy efficiency and recycling facilities, which are a high priority.

Also, on the lower portion of the site, close to the Mid-Site building, is The Pavilion study and social area, the ICT Centre, which provides a suite of eight computing and ICT rooms and the Language Centre, which includes six specialist teaching rooms.

### Where will I eat lunch?

The College has an excellent in-house catering service with two refectories on site. Both refectories offer vegan, gluten free and dairy options.

Our staff provide very good value, freshly produced healthy food options for students, staff and visitors.

We are committed to using, wherever possible, fresh, locally sourced produce; buying low salt, sugar and fat content ingredients; baking rather than frying, and reducing fat, sugar and salt in our prepared dishes.

We offer breakfast, snacks, vegetarian and meat main courses, plus a homemade selection of salads. Freshly baked and filled rolls are also available - filled to the customer's own requirements. We offer a selection of hot and cold snacks, including filled jacket potatoes and toasted paninis.

### What are the financial costs of College life?

There are no tuition fees for enrolment at College (for those who meet the criteria outlined in the College Admissions Policy).

As with any other state sector school or college, there are a number of other costs that need to be considered (The figures below represent the current levels of charge and may be amended slightly for 2024):

Stationery is not provided, but textbooks, relevant equipment and apparatus are loaned for the duration of College courses without charge.

A learning resource/information technology contribution of £50 is requested – £25 of which is refundable on completion of the student's course, less the cost of any losses, damage or outstanding fees. The remaining £25 is to cover insurance costs, unlimited printing and the provision of information learning technology (use of college computers).

Parents/Carers are also invited to donate £10 to the College Fund for one year, or £15 for two/three years. This fund is used throughout the year to support student facilities and activities at the College.

Some courses will involve students providing appropriate materials. Please consult individual subject information details in this prospectus and on the College website for details of any additional expenses that may be involved when studying particular subjects.

### **Is there financial support available?**

The College receives Government funding to support both a bursary award and a contribution to food costs scheme for eligible students from families on low incomes (generally those receiving a means tested state benefit and with income below certain thresholds). A discretionary award scheme for students in extreme financial hardship is also in place.

Evidence of family financial circumstances will be required to access these funds. Further details of support arrangements for 2024/25 year will be published online for Induction 2024.

Students may also be eligible for some support towards travel costs to attend HE and employment interviews - see the 'How will I travel to College' section for further details regarding transport costs and support.

### **Will I be able to learn outside the classroom?**

Yes. You will need to undertake a good deal of independent learning and study to succeed at A Level. All students will need to be regularly involved in independent study outside of their timetabled courses. A guideline of 15 hours a week independent study is appropriate for most students. Students have a number of opportunities to become involved with learning activities

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outside the classroom: In addition to arrange of outside speakers, use of the onsite research facilities and practical workshops. Academic departments are encouraged to make use of the whole college site as part of their schemes of work. Recent activities have included students using their mobile phones to measure optic flow in Psychology, the "Modern Foreign Languages Got Talent" show and the recording of spontaneous conversations in the refectory for English Language.



Departments are also encouraged to engage with the local area and businesses, with a wide range of learning taking place within Colchester itself; these have included: The Sociology taster day at the University of Essex, the Environmental Studies Department's use of our town centre location to study traffic and pollution, English students writing creatively about locations in the town and the Biology Department fieldwork day at Colchester Zoo.

We also aim to promote work-based learning, giving guidance on applying for and undertaking placements for students of all abilities and interests, such as in the field of Health and Social Care, Teaching, Sport and Medicine.

There are a range of trips and visits, some connected specifically to the curriculum and others aimed at broadening student experience. In previous years, these have included Stratford Shakespeare weekend, the India Expedition, the Paraguay Expedition, Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award, departmental visits to places such as Arran, Arizona and New York, a series of language exchanges and visits and many more besides.

Most students will have opportunities to participate in residential field trips and day or part day visits through the study of specific subjects. For example, there are annual field trips organised by the Biology, Environmental Studies, Geography, Geology, Art, Music, Drama, Art History, Sociology and English Departments. The Modern Languages Department regularly offers Spanish Exchange visits.

In the past, groups have visited Arizona, Hawaii, France, Ecuador, India, Belgium and Germany. All departments build visits into their programmes of study and there are many more general opportunities for theatre, sport, dance and music trips. These do involve students making a financial contribution, but for families receiving benefits and those with difficult financial circumstances a subsidy from the College may well be available.

The College aims, where reasonably practical, to enable those with financial hardship or accessibility matters to participate in learning outside the classroom and students should, in the first place, discuss any difficulties or concerns with their Personal or Senior Tutor.

Image of students on a Duke of Edinburgh orienteering trip.

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## COLLEGE SUPPORT

Image of Number 58. The building in which learning support can be found.

### Will I have my own Personal Tutor?

Yes. When you enrol at the College in Late August, you will join a tutor group of around 25 students and you will see your Personal Tutor every day. There will be group activities but there is also a considerable amount of time spent with Personal Tutors on a one-to-one basis.

Your Personal Tutor, who is responsible for your group, will guide and advise you and help you to settle down quickly and enjoy your time with us. Your Personal Tutor also helps you to plan your programme of study and is responsible for your welfare throughout your time at the College. Regular individual reviews of progress are a key element of this support. Your Personal Tutor also ensures that you receive the necessary specialist advice, when the time comes for you to consider your second-year programme of study, career choices and applications for places in higher education or employment. Normally students have the same Personal Tutor throughout their time at the College. Tutor groups are organised into ten 'Divisions', each of which is led by a Senior Tutor. If any problems arise or you need advice, both your Personal Tutor and your Senior Tutor are available to help you.

Those following the Advanced Foundation Programme will be catered for in specialist tutor groups made up only of students following that programme.

The excellent College Careers Department will also provide important further support for individual students. The College also has its own counselling team and health workers and can help you gain access to outside support services where appropriate.

### **What if I need extra help?**

Most subjects offer support classes and workshops for A Level student, as well as teachers providing some individual 'out of class' support. In addition, the Learning Support Department supports students with higher learning needs and offers drop-in support classes to any students who could benefit from some extra help with study skills or getting started on homework. The drop-in support is student driven and areas covered could include essay planning, proofing, literacy skills, exam revision, research skills and note taking. Other possible support includes the provision of equipment where appropriate, academic mentoring and one-to-one support.

We recognise that many students will need some extra support with welfare issues or their emotional wellbeing. In addition to the help and advice available from Personal Tutors and Senior Tutors, students can drop into the Welfare Hub to seek support or request an appointment with a counsellor. We will always aim to work with you to overcome or manage any difficulty.

### **Will the College cater for my learning support needs?**

Yes, the College will aim to meet your learning needs as far as possible within the context of the resources that the government makes available. Students with a SEND or learning need can access support in college via our learning support team. Those that have exam arrangements will be assessed at College. Previous reports or assessments will be considered and arrangements for exams put in place as necessary. The transfer from GCSE to sixth form study at age 16 can be really exciting, but some initially find it a bit of a worry. It is important that we work together to try to get this right for all students, particularly those with learning support needs/exam access arrangements.

We welcome applications from all suitably qualified prospective students including any student with learning support needs, and/or an EHCP, as long as the student meets the academic entry criteria for their chosen programme of study and other criteria as laid down in the College Admissions Policy. We will work together to ensure that we anticipate any support needs so that, wherever possible, support is in place and ready for enrolment.

There are a number of opportunities for you or your parents to provide relevant learning support/exam access arrangements information, including on the College application form, then at the admissions interview, at the Induction Days, at Enrolment, and in the autumn term. We cannot help if we do not know of a learning support need or an existing exam access arrangement - so please ensure we are kept updated.

**For more information please email: [enquiries@colchsfc.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@colchsfc.ac.uk)**

Page 23: Image of student studying at a computer

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**Where do students move onto after College?**

Most of our student leavers directly progress to university or specialist continuing education or employment with training – but some choose to have a ‘gap year’ prior to progression to a degree course or a career opportunity. Each year approximately 1000 of our students, upon completing programmes of study at the College, proceed to study at a university or medical school before entering career pathways. This includes several hundred students who, each year, achieve places on prestigious degree courses such as Architecture, Economics, Engineering, English, History, Law, Mathematics, Medicine and Sciences and gain places at Cambridge and Oxford or other top ‘Russell Group’ universities or medical schools. There are other students who successfully achieve places on more specialist or vocationally focused degree course areas including computing, creative arts, education, environmental science, finance, management science, media, nursing and performing arts.

Other students will progress to study specialist non-degree courses in the visual arts (art schools etc) or performing arts (drama, dance or music colleges), or finance courses (e.g.AAT). Approximately 200 students each year will progress to employment with training – locally, nationally and, for some, internationally.

**Will I get help moving on to university or employment?**

Yes. There is considerable help and support for each individual student regarding future employability – whether it be from a university degree course or directly after completion of a programme of study at the College. For most students, the two years will seem to pass quickly and there is much to consider during this time. Our students benefit from a rolling programme of support for university and employment applications, including higher education fairs, the ‘Two Day Programme’ in the summer term, drop-in support, facilities guidance and support through the tutorial programme and the ongoing services of the Careers Department and senior tutors.

There is specific support for different groups of students such as aspirant teachers and lawyers, or for medics through the 'Medics Course' or those seeking to apply to Oxbridge or other Russell Group universities or even to organise a gap year.

The College has links and relationships with a wide range of universities in the UK, including Emmanuel College and Christchurch College Cambridge, Hertford College Oxford as well as most universities within a 100-mile radius of the College.

We are pleased to have particularly strong links with the University of Essex and we work with them, for example, to deliver conferences, extension facilities and support to our Extended Project Programme.

The College Careers Department organise a range of events throughout the year to help students decide upon their future options for careers and further study. As an example, they oversee the 'Two Day Programme' of careers events that takes place towards the end of a student's first year of study. There are also activities throughout the year such as briefings for students and parents about Oxbridge entry and higher education finance.

The 'Two Day Programme' involves students taking part in a structured programme of sessions to help them develop their career and academic aspirations. Sessions, mainly provided by specialists, include guidance regarding progression beyond college. Presentations, workshops and activities involve a huge range of visiting speakers. These include professionals talking about their career paths and advice ranging from banking, finance and accountancy to engineering, computing, fashion, media, sport, law, food, hotel management, journalism, physiotherapy and the armed forces. A key part of the event is the input from a huge number of representatives from higher education providers –these come from local universities, including the University of Essex, but also from further afield, including Dundee!

To give an idea of the scale of the event, there are usually 44 sessions purely devoted to the completion of university application personal statements, delivered by representatives from more than nine different universities. In total, over the two days, the overall number of progression sessions available for students to choose should be in excess of four hundred.

### **Will I get help in aiming for aspirational courses or careers?**

Yes. The College recognises that all of its students with varying individual circumstances, talents and potential will at times, require additional and specific one to-one support. A range of specialist programmes and activities are provided to suit each individual student; this includes guidance for those students with very high academic potential and aspirations, and those who are likely to be pursuing applications for the most competitive academic courses. This will involve those applying for places at Oxford, Cambridge and other 'Russell Group' universities and for the most competitive degree courses in the fields of law, medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, physiotherapy, architecture, mathematics, science, engineering, English, history and languages.

Support available to students with high academic aspirations will include:

One-to-one academic mentoring from a senior or specialist member of staff.

Individual guidance regarding all aspects of the university application process, with specialist programmes for potential applicants for Oxbridge, medicine and law.

Specialist advice regarding university admissions requirements, and a carefully tailored programme of study with regular target setting and reviews.

Page 25: Students dressed as cats for a College performance. Text Box: GOLD ARTS MARK AWARD: Last year staff and students celebrated the achievement of a prestigious Gold Arts Mark Award in partnership with The Royal Opera House; this is a quality standard accredited by Arts Council England in recognition of our commitment to raising the profile of arts and culture across all departments.

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Formal guidance and preparation for university interviews, including practice sessions.

Support to help students in preparation for relevant university entrance exams or extra tests including STEP, BMAT, UKCAT, LNAT and the range of Oxford subject tests.

The opportunity to pursue an individual 'university style' Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), in an area of particular academic interest for degree level study, often with full support from an appropriate academic mentor. EPQs are very favourably viewed by competitive university courses.

Opportunities for visits, lectures, discussions and support sessions together with specialist careers guidance. This includes opportunities to discuss career choices with university admissions staff and other practising professionals.

Opportunities to participate in a variety of accelerated specialist one-year academic courses to support and extend an individual student's academic portfolio relevant to specific progression pathway.

### How does the College work with parents and carers?

The College seeks to work closely with parents and carers in order to ensure the success and wellbeing of students.

A Parents' Handbook is made available to parents and carers at the start of the academic year – it provides parents and carers with much information and guidance useful to them. Our Parents' Page on the College website is updated periodically and provides information and guidance useful to parents and carers of students currently enrolled at the College, as well as those of students considering making an application. The College also seeks to keep in touch with parents and carers of students and prospective students via email.

Parental email addresses are provided by students on their application form and again, at enrolment. We would be grateful if parents and carers could ensure that the College is informed of any changes of email address, postal address or other relevant details.

### **Who should I contact if there are any queries or concerns, especially those linked to a particular student?**

For all enrolled students, the first point of contact should be the student's personal tutor, who can be contacted via email or the College switchboard on 01206 500700.

For students yet to enrol, all queries should be directed to the Admissions Team on 01206 500743.

More general queries can often be dealt with by the College General Office Team on 01206 500700.

Details of all forthcoming events can be found in the Principal's Newsletter which is prepared for students and their parents and carers and aims to provide important information, guidance and advice, review recent activities and highlight a number of forthcoming events and dates.

The College provides regular opportunities for parents and carers to meet with teaching staff, normally in November and July.

Students are asked to make appointments on behalf of parents and carers at such events.

### **How does the College work with and listen to students?**

Student activities are organised by the College Council, which consists of an elected student representative from each tutor group as well as members of the College teaching staff. The Council provides a focus for discussion of matters of concern to students.

The Council has six main subcommittees: the Social Committee, Arts Committee, Charities Committee, Sports Committee, Environment and Science Committee and Culture Committee. All of these are very involved in encouraging student activities.

The College Council works to: organise social events for College students; provide good facilities in the student social areas; control College Council finance and decide on the use of the money to benefit students; represent student views on various College administrative committees; promote good relations with the people of Colchester; support a range of international, national and local charities.

Events organised by the College Council have included a large range of theatre and concert visits, charity fund-raising events and a variety of College sports tournaments. The College Council makes an important contribution to College life and provides students with a number of lively and interesting opportunities, as well as offering the

chance for students to take on posts of real responsibility. New ideas are always welcome.

## What are the values of the College?

We want everyone to feel welcome, safe and supported throughout their studies. The College is proud to be designated a “College of Sanctuary”: a safe and welcoming place for all, especially those seeking a place of safety. It is also a college that helps its students, staff and wider community understand what it means to be seeking sanctuary and to extend a welcome to everyone as equal, valued members of the College community. These principles inform the work of our staff and the activities of our students in a number of ways, including our applications and admissions processes, our tutorial programme and the activities of student groups, such as the award-winning college ‘Friends Not Foes’ group.

Page 27: Image of a student working in the Art Department

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We appreciate that some young people experience difficulties and face challenges in their lives at times and any one of us may find they need to seek support or sanctuary.

Please let us know if your parents or carers need help communicating with College or accessing parents’ evenings. We will do the best we can to support them and make them feel comfortable and welcome here.

The College is committed to taking account of the diversity of the communities it serves, advancing equality of opportunity for everyone, using positive action where necessary and providing support and sanctuary on an individual basis. To this end, within the context of the resources available, the College will:

**Treat students, staff, applicants, parents, carers and members of the wider communities with dignity, respect and fairness.**

**Provide an inclusive, personalised learning environment in which students are treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential and are valued as individuals.**

**Be committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its members and visitors. Students and staff have a right to expect protection from harm.**

**Not tolerate bullying, victimisation and harassment, including hate speech.**

**Value diversity in respect of race, ethnicity or national origin, gender, religion and belief or none, socioeconomic background, gender variance, marital status or family circumstances, pregnancy and parenthood, political opinions and affiliations, physical attributes or appearance, disability, sexual orientation and age.**

**Educate students and staff on the importance of equality and human rights, fostering good relations between individuals and groups within the College.**

**Welcome applications from all students, including those with a disability or learning support needs, or mental health difficulty providing those students meet the admissions criteria (in order to help the College to provide students with appropriate support it is helpful if relevant information can be provided at the earliest possible opportunity).**

We place a high priority on keeping our students safe. All our staff are trained to spot the signs of a young person at risk, and take action to protect them. Safeguarding includes adhering to the Government's "Prevent" strategy.

All educational establishments must promote values which are opposed to extremism. These "fundamental British values" are:

**Democracy**

**The rule of law**

**Individual liberty**

**Mutual respect for, and tolerance of, those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.**

These values are also College values. We promote them in many different ways including our work on equality and diversity, College elections and student voice, a classroom culture of intellectual curiosity, questioning, freedom of expression, tolerance and respect. We also offer enrichment activities that promote the development of resilience, determination, self-esteem, and confidence, which will enable students to engage positively with the wider world.

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## COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

### How do I find out more?

In the early part of Year 11, you and your family are very welcome to visit one of our Open Evenings, which we plan to hold on 18 and 19 October 2023. Please check website to confirm arrangements nearer the time. This will give you a chance to visit the College, see our range of specialist facilities and meet our staff and students. On each of the two evenings, there will be over 200 staff and approximately 400 students available to help you find out more about the College.

A College Liaison Tutor will visit most of our Partner and Link schools during years 10 or 11 to provide you with further information on the application process and guidance on course combinations. You will also find our website useful ([www.colchsfc.ac.uk](http://www.colchsfc.ac.uk)). This contains a range of information, including specific entry criteria for particular courses, as well as course content and exam boards.



You will also find lots of details regarding student activities in the 'News' section and the 'Documents' section also contains useful information for current and prospective students and their parents or carers. All applications must be submitted via our website.

If you are unable to attend an Open Evening you may wish to attend one of our smaller and shorter 'Information Mornings' which take place fairly regularly on dates between November and February. Advanced booking is required for Information Mornings – please contact [admissions@colchsfc.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@colchsfc.ac.uk) or telephone 01206 500743 for further details or for help with any other queries.

For those students who receive an offer of a place, there will be further opportunities to discuss their potential course/courses at both Induction (late June) and Enrolment (late August).

### How do I make an application?

Applications are online and should be submitted between 20 October 2023 and 31 January 2024. If you do not have internet access, please telephone the Admissions Office (01206 500743).

The application process will take less than ten minutes. You will need to have with you details of the GCSE subjects you are taking and their predicted grades and any other qualifications you have achieved.

### When you are ready to apply:

Go to [www.colchsfc.ac.uk](http://www.colchsfc.ac.uk) and follow the instructions on the homepage; this will guide you to our online application form.

Carefully complete the various sections on the form, giving as much detail as you can. You should apply for just one of the two programmes of study (A Levels or Advanced Foundation Programme). If you are unsure which to apply for, please do not be concerned as, if your choice later proves unsuitable, this can be changed as part of our interview process.

The form will ask you for information regarding career and subject choices. This is to help us at your interview and does not represent a definite commitment on your part and can be added to, amended or discussed further at your interview.

If you are considering a particular career path such as teaching, law or medicine, or are aiming for a particular degree course, it is important that you mention this as part of the application or interview process, so that your programme of study can be constructed accordingly.

Submit your application.

If you realise that you have made a mistake, please do not submit a second application as this can cause confusion. You should telephone or email the Admissions Office and explain the changes that you wish to make.

Once you have completed and sent your online application form, you will receive an email confirming that your application has been received.

What does it mean to be an 'Out of Area' applicant?

**The College Admissions Policy identifies two categories of applicant:**

#### **First Priority Applicants**

If you attend one of our partner or link schools, or live within the catchment area of a partner school or in the Colchester area, or attend a Colchester Secondary School in Year 11, you will be identified as a 'first priority' applicant. For such applicants the interview is focused upon ensuring that you are choosing the most appropriate programme of study; however, the interviewer may only be able to make a firm offer of a place if they have good evidence from your report or a school reference that you are likely to achieve the full entry criteria for your chosen programme of study.

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#### **'Out of Area' Applicants**

If you do not attend one of our partner or link schools, or do not live within the Colchester area, you will be identified as an 'out of area' applicant.

The College has been oversubscribed for many years, but many places are offered to students in this category every year. We welcome applications from a broad range of students and, given the impact of the "demographic dip" in the current Year 11 age cohort, we may be able to offer places for the 2024/25 academic year to 70-80% of such applicants.

Applicants who apply by 31 January 2024 will be given priority.

What happens once I have submitted my application?

All applicants who meet the appropriate College admissions criteria will be invited to an interview by email. The majority of interviews take place by telephone between November 2023 and March 2024.

Please email a personal statement a few days before your interview. The personal statement should outline your main achievements (in and out of school) and your current career plans, including any university course ideas.

Please see guidelines on how to write your personal statement and what to include on the Admissions Department area of the College website.

It is also important that you take the opportunity during the application and interview process to inform us of any educational, learning, personal or domestic issues or concerns that might affect your educational progress. This enables us to ensure that we have appropriate support in place right from the start.

We prefer to interview students on their own, but parents are welcome to attend if there are any special circumstances which make it important that they are present. If there are circumstances that might need particular attention or privacy, please don't hesitate to contact the Admissions Team to discuss this matter prior to interview and we can then ensure that arrangements are made accordingly.

First priority applicants will be clearly informed at the end of their interview if they are to be offered a place and a written offer letter will be completed at this stage.

Occasionally, where there is significant uncertainty about likely GCSE results, or other matters, the interviewer may put the application 'on hold' to await a school reference or to review the situation at a second interview.

For "out of area" applicants the interview will also be part of the selection process. Decisions about places for "out of area" applicants are not finalised until the interviewing of first priority applicants is completed in late February/ early March. Decision letters are emailed to all "out of area" applicants at the same time in mid-March.

### **What happens once I am offered a place?**

It is important that, once you have put your plans in place for the following year, you take a step back from the process and focus upon achieving the highest possible grades in your exams.

Your plans can then be revisited once exams are finished at the end of June, when we will invite you in for an Induction Day. This offers you an important opportunity to spend a day at the College and get a real sense of what college life is like, including meeting your Personal Tutor and spending time within various academic departments.

As part of this day, you can re-examine, and possibly amend, your choice of courses.

After Induction Day, the next significant date is GCSE Results Day. We hope that you are delighted by your results, but if you have made an application and then find that your results need further discussion, please do not hesitate to contact us at that point by emailing the Admissions Office on [admissions@colchsfc.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@colchsfc.ac.uk). Senior staff and other specialists will be on hand to help you.

The Autumn Term will begin with your Enrolment Day at the end of August. At this point and for a week or two afterwards, there may still be the opportunity to adjust your course. It is important to note, however, that once courses have commenced, you will be expected to complete all courses upon which you enrol.

### **What if I can't currently decide which school or college, I wish to attend for sixth form study?**

We recognise that the North Essex and South Suffolk area offers a range of progression opportunities for young people. Many students will have a choice of

schools or colleges or employment and training opportunities to choose from. We would recommend that you think carefully about your options and work closely with every institution that interests you, as well as seeking advice from staff at your current school, independent advisors and your parents, carers and family members.

The most important factor is to make the decision that you believe is right for you to prepare for your future young adult progression to higher education, employment and adult life.

Every year some students will make multiple applications to a number of schools and colleges and eventually decide where to go upon the publication of their GCSE results. We would certainly recommend a multiapplication approach if you are at all unsure. Please feel free to take the opportunity to find out more by making an application and please do not be afraid to discuss your options with us. The most important thing is that you find the right course for you. Attending an Open Evening, Interview and an Induction Day here at the College will play an important role in helping you decide.

Page 31: Image of students working in the library. Quote box one: "Alongside my A Level courses, it was really good to have the opportunity to explore my interest in psychology further, as part of my extended project course" Eddie – who joined us from St Benedict's College. Text box two: "I'm applying for pharmacy, and the extra session designed to improve my performance in A Level Biology really helped" Leslie - who joined us from St Benedict's College.

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## YOUR PROGRAMME OF STUDY AT THE COLLEGE

### What sort of opportunities does the college offer?

The College offers our students two alternative full-time academic programmes of study.

**1. A Levels:** For most students this is a two-year academic course, which forms a path from school to university or employment.

**2. Advanced Foundation Programme:** This is usually a one-year programme which offers students with academic potential the opportunity to do further work at GCSE level, often with a view to then progressing onto A Level or Applied General Certificate/Extended Certificate courses in the following year.

You apply for only **one** of the academic programmes, although the most appropriate academic programme of study will be discussed at interview and there is flexibility, including after GCSE results have been received.

Within each of the academic programmes of study students are able to choose an individual combination of courses that meets their needs, interests and aspirations, and which offers the best opportunity for success and progression.

As part of their overall education, all students will add a programme focused upon their personal development, including pastoral care alongside support in areas such as preparation for progression (including Higher Education and employment) as well as wider experiences developed through our wide selection of Additional Studies and extracurricular activity options.

**What should I do if I am not certain that I will get the grades that I need for my chosen academic programme or specific academic courses?**

Please don't be afraid to discuss any issues or uncertainties about potential GCSE grades at interview. Often it will be the case that the individual courses that you choose will be offered to you subject to you achieving the specific GCSE grades that you need for that A Level course.

If you then do not achieve the required grades, we will discuss this further with you once GCSE results are published. At this point, for example, some students may switch from A Level to the AFP course and others may simply change an individual A Level subject choice. Where A Level applicants have 'just missed' the grades that they need, it is often possible to make modifications to the courses offered, especially if applicants are happy to be flexible regarding subject choices (please note that many individual A Level courses do need a GCSE grade 5 or above to have been obtained in mathematics or English or other predominantly written subjects).

Where students have not achieved grade 4 or higher in a key GCSE subject such as mathematics or English or have achieved a more modest overall GCSE score (but which exceeds the entry criteria for the AFP Programme), it may be possible to take a combination of A Levels and one or more GCSEs.

There will be some students who, when GCSE results are published, find they are not qualified for their chosen programme, or for alternatives here at College. We therefore urge all applicants to hold open other offers of post 16 pathways until the GCSE results are known in late August.

Page 33: Image of student playing a saxophone in the music room

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## **PROGRAMME 1**

### **A LEVEL PROGRAMME:**

#### **What grades will I need for A Levels?**

A Level examinations are taken at the end of the two-year course in each A Level subject. In addition to the general entry criteria for an A Level programme of study (listed on page 12 in this Prospectus) many individual A Level subjects will require students to have specific GCSE grades in specific subjects – and some will expect students to have taken the higher tier of entry at GCSE.

A few A Level courses will have a specified level of skill requirement as well as specific GCSE grade requirements. Please see the information regarding the requirements for each subject course in later sections of the Prospectus (from page 38 to 89).

Please note, that for 2024 entry, IGCSE's continue to be an acceptable alternative equivalent qualification to GCSE for entry into the College.

### **Will I need to pass the 'English Baccalaureate' to study at the Sixth Form College?**

No. The "English Baccalaureate" provides an excellent opportunity for school pupils to develop a broad range of GCSE qualifications, all of which are useful in progressing onto college courses and beyond. However, we recognise that a number of students will not have the skills, interest or subjects required to achieve the English Baccalaureate qualification. For this reason, whilst we very much recommend that, wherever appropriate, students give serious consideration to the qualification, we do not formally expect passes in all of the English Baccalaureate Diploma subject areas.

### **How will the college view my 14-16 non-GCSE qualifications?**

Most A Level assessment is through examination, whilst non-GCSE qualifications are often assessed with a strong element of coursework.

For a full A Level programme of study the College therefore requires 5-7 good pass grades at GCSE (4 or better) in core academic subjects as the main entry requirement. If the majority of your programme at school is made up of non-GCSE qualifications it is likely that you will be advised to continue with a skills progression route at Level 3.

If you do decide to switch to a general academic programme we will continue to assess your suitability based mostly on your core subject GCSE grades. Merit and Distinction awards at Level 2 will be given some consideration for progression for Applied General courses and a few A Level subjects. Merit and above achievements in Level 2 non-GCSE qualifications will normally be treated as the equivalent of one extra GCSE pass.

Some Year 11 students who have not studied many GCSE subjects may need to study more GCSE courses before being able to progress onto A Levels.

All A Level exams are required to include 'stretch and challenge' questions to allow the most able students to maximise their potential. A Level assessments in all subjects cover both years of work.

An A\* grade is awarded to students who achieve a high average % score in the A Level exams. Applicants should be assured that the College, as a very successful centre that specialises in A Level study and benefits from close links with examination boards and other professional bodies, is very well placed to successfully adapt to any national changes to the A Level system as they arise.

### **How many A Level courses will I take?**

Most students will study three A Levels – although some will choose to study four. All of the courses detailed in this section of the prospectus and online are offered at A Level - except where identified as a ‘Certificate’ in the course title – in which case the qualification is offered as an Applied General Certificate (AS Level equivalent), with Extended Certificate in Year 2 (A Level equivalent) and can form part of an overall package of A Level qualifications.

#### 4 A Levels

This programme is suitable for those with a very strong set of GCSE results (8 or 9 subjects at GCSE grade 7, 8 or 9). It is also the required programme for any student wishing to include Further Mathematics in their programme of study. It is a very good programme for those wishing to apply for the most competitive places at university. Students studying four A Levels must be committed to completing all four A Levels at the end of the two academic years (with the exception of Further Mathematics where students will study for one year and take the AS Level, before deciding whether to continue Further Mathematics to A Level). Many students will also choose to take an Extended Project Qualification. Most students opting for this demanding set of four A Level courses will be part of our Academic Aspiration Programme; for example, many students with medical career aspirations will also take the Medics Programme or potential ‘Oxbridge’ applicants will follow the Oxbridge Programme.

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#### 3 A Levels + a 4<sup>th</sup> Academic Choice

This programme is suitable for those with a relatively strong set of GCSE results (e.g. 7 subjects at GCSE grade 4 - 9) or significant strength at GCSE in some curriculum areas. Alongside three A Levels an additional GCSE option could be taken by those who wish to take up a new foreign language, such as Spanish or Italian, or those who need to, re-sit a key subject.

Many students will also choose to take an Extended Project Qualification, to start at the end of their first year. We normally require students to have a minimum grade 4 or better passes in English and Mathematics (although many individual courses may require higher grades) and to have a good profile of GCSE passes.

#### 3 A Levels

This programme is suitable for those with a relatively good profile of GCSE results (i.e. at least 5 GCSE subjects at grade 4 - 9).

This programme will be combined with selections from the Additional Studies Programme. The option of taking an Extended Project Qualification, generally between June of Year 1 and February of Year 2, is available.

All A Level students will normally complete two years of study. Progression to Year 2 is dependent upon good attendance, satisfactory reports and pass grades in a formal late spring assessment.

For Applied General Certificate courses students would normally be expected to achieve a Merit in order to progress to the Extended Certificate in Year 2.

An image of two students standing outside the main reception.



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Period 1 9.05 - 9.40	Core Mathematics D	A Level Italian E	A Level History (Early Modern) A	A Level Chemistry B	
Period 2 9.40 - 10.15	Core Mathematics D	A Level Italian E	A Level History (Early Modern) A	A Level Chemistry B	
10.15 - 10.35	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
Period 3 10.35 - 11.10	Italian (Language Assistant) C	Core Mathematics D	A Level Italian E	A Level History (Early Modern) A	A Level Chemistry B
Period 4 11.10 - 11.45			A Level Italian E	A Level History (Early Modern) A	A Level Chemistry B
11.50 - 12.00	Registration	Registration	Registration	Tutorial (11.50-12.30)	Registration
12.00 - 12.40	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12.40 - 1.20	Extended Lunch	Netball Training L2	Extended Lunch	Lunch	Chemistry Mentor L5
Period 5 1.25 - 2.00	A Level Chemistry B	Netball Training C	Netball (Squad) D	A Level Italian E	A Level History (Early Modern) A
Period 6 2.00 - 2.35	A Level Chemistry B	Netball Training C	Netball (Squad) D	A Level Italian E	A Level History (Early Modern) A
2.35 - 2.50	Break	Break	Break	Break	Break
Period 7 2.50 - 3.25	A Level History (Early Modern) A	A Level Chemistry B	Netball (Squad) C	Core Mathematics D	A Level Italian E
Period 8 3.25 - 4.00	A Level History (Early Modern) A	A Level Chemistry B	Netball (Squad) C		A Level Italian E
Period 9 4.15 - 5.30	T	T	T	T	T

The remaining two sections of the prospectus can be found using the hyperlinks below:

Details regarding [individual courses available at The Sixth Form College](#) Colchester

Details regarding [Additional Studies courses at The Sixth Form College](#) Colchester