



Soham Village College

Year 11

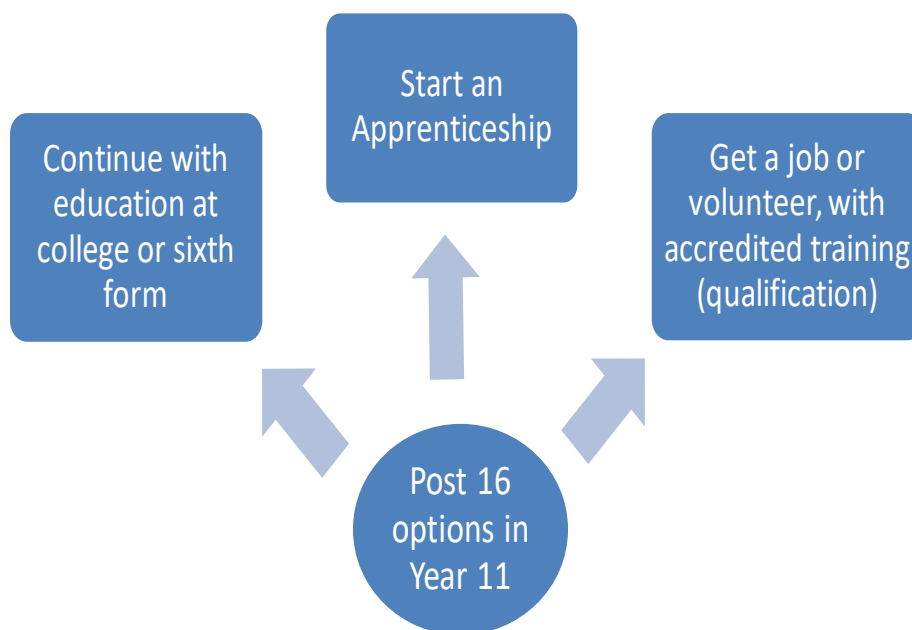
Post 16 Information Guide

www.sohamvc.org



Options

Students are required to remain in education or employment with training until they turn 18.



Research

The key to students making successful decisions about their future is **RESEARCH**. This can be independent, supported, or a combination of both. There are many sources of information available - online, written, tutors and careers staff, Post 16 centres.

A good starting point are the Post 16 centres websites and their digital and or physical prospectuses which show details of each course or subject, including entry requirements. Other useful sources can be found at the end of this guide.

Careers department staff and tutors are always available to talk through options and plans with students.

Examples of qualifications available at the different levels

Qualification Level	Academic qualifications	Vocational/applied/technical qualifications (general & specific)	Apprenticeships (work combined with training & a qualification)
Level 8	PhD	Diploma	-
Level 7	Masters Degree	Diploma	Degree Apprenticeship
Level 6	Bachelors Degree	Diploma	Degree Apprenticeship
Level 5	Degree – yr 2	-HND (Higher National Diploma) -Foundation Degree -Level 5 Diploma	
Level 4	Degree – yr 1	HNC (Higher National Certificate)	Higher Apprenticeship
Level 3	-A levels -IB (International Baccalaureate)	-Extended Certificate -Diploma -Extended Diploma -T Levels -V Levels	Advanced Apprenticeship
Level 2	GCSEs (4-5 subjects at grades 4-9 inc. English & Maths)	Level 2 Diploma (eg BTEC, City & Guilds)	Intermediate Apprenticeship
Level 1	GCSE (some grades 1-3)	Level 1 Diploma (eg BTEC, City & Guilds)	Traineeship (preparation for apprenticeship)
Entry level	Working towards GCSE Entry Level Certificate	-	-

NB After GCSEs it is only possible to move directly onto courses and training up to Level 3. In order to take any qualifications at Level 4 or higher, students need to be at least 18 and have a Level 3 qualification.

Where can students move onto?

A Levels	IB Diploma or Career related Programme	Applied courses	Technical Vocational courses
- Bishop Laney Sixth Form - Cambridge Academy for Science & Technology - Cambridge Maths School - Cambourne Sixth Form - Chesterton Sixth Form - Comberton Sixth Form - Hills Road Sixth Form College - Long Road Sixth Form College - Northstowe Sixth form - The Oakes College	Impington International Sixth Form	- Cambridge Regional College - Bishop Laney Sixth Form - College of West Anglia (Cambridge) - Long Road Sixth Form College - Cambourne Sixth Form - Comberton Sixth Form - Northstowe Sixth Form - The Oakes College	- Cambridge Regional College - College of West Anglia (Cambridge)
	V Levels		T Levels
	- Bishop Laney - Long Road - Cambourne - Northstowe		- Cambridge Academy for Science & Technology - Cambridge Regional College - College of West Anglia (Cambridge)

How do I decide?

Things to consider	More advice or information needed?
- Future plans/aspirations - Subjects you enjoy - Entry requirements v projected grades - Learning style - Assessment methods - Transport	- School careers/transition advisors - Post 16 open evenings/days - Post 16 centre websites/prospectuses https://www.mychoice16.co.uk/ - Family and Friends

What are A Levels?

- Focused on academic subjects with end of year exams
- Some subjects match what you can study at GCSE, others may be new
- 2 year course
- Usually take 3 A levels, or 4 if you feel you can cope with the work
- Usually need at least 5 GCSEs at grades 4-9
- Highly valued by employers and universities

- Colleges that offer A levels:

Abbeygate
Cambridge Maths School
Chesterton
Long Road

Bishop Laney
CAST
Hills Road
The Oakes



What are vocational/applied qualifications?

- BTECs, diplomas or certificates
- Help you learn in a practical way about a specific job area
- A mix of theory and practical learning – so little or no exams
- Ideal if you have an idea of what career/trade you'd like to work in
- Can involve work placements
- You can study at Level 1, 2, or 3 depending on your GCSE grades
- Highly valued by employers and universities

- Colleges that offer vocational qualifications:

Bishop Laney
College of West Anglia
The Oakes

Cambridge Regional College
Long Road
West Suffolk College



What are T Levels?

- Industry-specific vocational qualification
- 2 year course
- 1 T level = 3 A levels or Level 3 diploma
- In-depth industry placement, minimum 45 days
- Focuses on getting you into skilled employment or apprenticeship
- Ideal if you have a strong idea of your intended career/trade
- Covers many of the popular subject areas
- Colleges that offer T levels:
 - CAST
 - Cambridge Regional College
 - College of West Anglia
 - West Suffolk College



What are V Levels?

- Level 3 vocational qualification, studies over 2 years
- 1 V level = 1 A level
- Can be combined with A levels or applied courses
- Designed for applied, broad vocational learning
- Mix of practical and written assessment
- Ideal if you want to explore a sector before specialising
- Designed to support progression to university, apprenticeships or employment
- New from Sept 2027 – Accounting & Finance, Digital Systems & Data, Education
- Colleges that offer V levels:
 - Bishop Laney
 - Long Road



What is an Apprenticeship?

- A paid job combined with structured training – apprentices are employees, earn a wage and receive holiday pay
- School leavers can choose an Intermediate or Advanced apprenticeship
- Vary between 12mths – 4 yrs depending on level
- 80% of time working, 20% of time in college/off-the-job training
- Ideal if you want to start working in a specific industry, whilst working towards a qualification and gaining essential workplace skills
- Vacancies are competitive. You have to be prepared to search for vacancies and be aware of the application process
- Colleges that support apprenticeships:
Cambridge Regional College
College of West Anglia
West Suffolk College

Search for vacancies on college websites,
<https://www.gov.uk/applyapprenticeship>,
or direct with companies

What is International Baccalaureate (IB)?

- 2 year course
- 1 IB = 3 A levels or Level 3 diploma
- 6 subjects studied across a broad curriculum – 3 at Higher and 3 at Standard level
- Final written exams plus assessed coursework/tasks
- Ideal if you are naturally curious and have a wide interest in subjects
- Internationally recognised and respected by universities and employers
- Colleges that offer T Levels:
Impington

MyChoice16

The online college application portal

www.mychoice16.co.uk

- Each student has their own secure log-in details to access to their profile and application.
- Students can access their on-line profile at anytime, anywhere. Parents are encouraged to provide support and show interest in the progress of the application.
- Students will be shown how to log in and complete their application. This will include their personal statement which is a key part.
- Tutors will complete a reference for each student, focusing on staff and student's relationships, learning attitude, behaviour, attendance and punctuality. This will relate to students' time in both Yr 10 and Yr 11.
- For Post 16 centres outside of Cambridgeshire (West Suffolk College, Abbeygate Sixth Form College) applications are direct via their own websites.
- Students are advised to make at least 2 applications so they have a back-up – either 2 different courses at the same college, or for 2 or more different colleges **(to break the myth, 3 choices are not compulsory)**
- Students can hold more than 1 offer and make a final decision after results day. Colleges realise and expect this to happen.
- It is the students' responsibility to submit their own application by the given deadline.

December 11th 2026 –

MyChoice16 APPLICATION DEADLINE

How to Write Your Personal Statement

It should be around one A4 page. This is your opportunity to tell colleges more about you. Just like in GCSE transactional writing, you should be writing a minimum of 5 paragraphs.

What Should I Include?

1) Introduction— This should be a couple of sentences saying where you are studying now, what you are applying for and maybe a sentence on what your goals are and your personality. You can expand on them later. Don't mention your predicted grades as these appear elsewhere in your application. Explain what you would like to study, and why. Be passionate and enthusiastic. Talk about what inspires you and where you see yourself going. Even if you're not sure, show you've considered it and have some thoughts about your future.

2) Involvement in school life — Give some examples of what else do you do other than your subjects.

This is something that can be truly individual. You probably have more than one interest, hobby or passion. Think carefully about what it says about you, in relation to your personality and what you want to study. This can help you decide what to mention and what isn't relevant.

- Inside or outside school, what responsibilities do you have?
- Mention any sports, music or drama awards, Duke of Edinburgh etc
- Talk about something in the college prospectus that you would love to get involved with.

3) Outside of school— This is your opportunity to show that you are a well-rounded individual. For each of these activities, you must explain what it has taught you. For example:

- Voluntary work or charity fundraising.
- If you've had a job, provide details about the role
- Involvement in sports clubs/arts/other groups such as Air Cadets or Scouts
- Hobbies/interests

4) Personal Qualities—Consider what you are like as a person. Talk about your strengths. Be honest, and be positive.

5) Conclusion—Say you're looking forward to studying your subject/s at a higher level. Overall, you want to leave the person reading your statement thinking that you are someone they'd love to have at their sixth form or college.

College preferences

Some of the colleges have tight rules on where students should place them within their MyChoice application. Please ensure your child is aware of these specific requirements

COLLEGE	PREFERENCE
Hills Road	Must be 1st choice, can be 2nd if also applying to a Cambs sixth form linked to a secondary school (Bishop Laney, Oakes, Chesterton, CAST, Impington) Students should include 2 back up A level subjects (so 5 subjects in total) – this allows the college to offer a guidance meeting to consider back up options if a student doesn't meet acceptance criteria for their first choice A level
Oakes	Best advice is to place 1st or 2nd choice. If 3rd choice, guidance meeting won't be offered in first wave
CAST	Best advice is to place 1st or 2nd choice. If 3rd choice, guidance meeting won't be offered in first wave
CRC	Can apply for more than 1 course but will be invited for guidance meetings in order of preference
West Suffolk College	Can apply for more than 1 course but will be invited for guidance meetings in order of preference

Post 16 Open evenings for 2027 entry

AUTUMN 2026/SPRING 2027

COLLEGE	TASTER DAYS	OPEN DAY/EVENING
Abbeygate Sixth Form https://www.abbeygatesfc.ac.uk/news-dates/open-events	29th June 10.45am-1.35pm	8 th Oct 5-7.30pm 14 th Nov 9.30am-12.30pm 17 June 2027 5-7.30pm
Bishop Laney Sixth Form https://www.elycollege.com/page/?title=Sixth+Form&pid=10	7th July	22 nd Oct 6-8.3pm
Cambridge Regional College (Cambridge Campus) https://www.camre.ac.uk/about/events/open-days-2/	16th June 9.15am-2pm	30 th June 4.30-7pm 21 st Oct 4.30-7pm 12 th Nov 6-7.30pm Apprenticeship Info Evening 14 th Nov 9.30am-12.30pm 23 rd Jan 2027 10am-12.30pm 2 nd Mar 2027 4-6pm App, Job & Careers Fair
CAST https://www.cambridgeast.org.uk/sixth-form	No Taster Day held	1 st July 5-7.30pm 21 st Oct 5-7.30pm
Chesterton College Sixth form https://www.eventbrite.com/e/chesterton-sixth-form-open-evening-tuesday-20th-october-2026-tickets-1985061983830?aff=oddtcreator	23rd June 9.30am-12pm	20 th Oct 6-8pm
College of West Anglia (Milton campus) https://cwa.ac.uk/about/open-days	25th June 10am-2pm	22 nd Oct 5-8pm 28 th Nov 9am-12.30pm SEND Quiet Time tickets available for 1 st 30 mins of each event
Hills Road Sixth Form College https://www.hillsroad.ac.uk/sixthform/how-to-apply/open-events	No Taster Day held	4 th July 10am-4pm 6 th July 5-8pm (register via link)
Impington https://www.impingtoninternational.org.uk/	9th July	21 st Oct 5-7.3pm
Long Road Sixth Form College http://www.longroad.ac.uk/open-evenings	No Taster Day held	1 st July 4-9pm 2 nd July 4-9pm (register via link)
The Cambridge Maths School https://cms.tela.org.uk/	No Taster Day held	15 th Oct 3.30-8pm
The Oakes https://oakescc.org/	25th June 9.45am-2pm	23 rd June 6-8pm 22 nd Oct 6-8pm
West Suffolk College https://www.wsc.ac.uk/about-the-college/open-events	Various dates – see below	7 th Oct 5.30-7.30pm 21 st Nov 9.30am-12.30pm 10 th Feb 5.30-7.30pm

PLEASE KEEP CHECKING COLLEGE WEBSITES FOR UPDATES & EVENT REGISTRATION DETAILS

KEY DATES

2026

- Sept onwards – 1-2-1 career guidance meetings continue
- Sept/Oct – Post 16 college virtual presentations during tutor time
- Oct 1st – Post 16 Parents Information evening
- Oct 19th – College application day: Introduction to MyChoice16, personal statement workshops, college and course research
- Oct onwards – Post 16 college Open evenings (see dates)
- Nov – GCSE mock exams
- Dec 11th – **MyChoice16 applications – student submission deadline**

2027

- Jan onwards – Post 16 college guidance meetings (some may take place before Christmas ie West Suffolk College)
- April – Offers made (usually within 4-6 wks of interview)
- May - June – GCSE exams
- August 19th – GCSE results out
- End Aug – Post 16 college enrolment days -
Do not book holidays over this period
- Early September – Induction days start at Post 16 colleges

What does a Careers Adviser do?

- Meets with students one-to-one or in small groups to discuss their career or education options
- Identifies skills gaps and how to recognize opportunities to fill them
- Helps students identify and consider the range of choices available to them
- Helps students develop their own careers management skills
- Draws up action plans
- Discusses with students how to overcome any barriers to reaching their goals



- 1-2-1 meetings are available for Y11 students before they make their college application in the autumn term
- They will help with decision making, and also possibly give you alternative options
- Student can email nhowe@sohamvc.org or visit the Careers Office in the library to arrange a meeting

Transport

- How to get to college is one part of the application process that is often forgotten, or not fully appreciated, by students.
- It is important that this is considered early in the process, as there are options for each college but they do take time to gather all the information such as routes and costs.
- Most colleges have transport information on their websites so look at what they offer or suggest – some have bespoke buses, others recommend train and public bus routes.

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See website for full terms & conditions.

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Key messages to students

- Research, Research, Research.....
- Ask questions whenever possible – develop a curious mind
- Stay calm about the process, and take in all the support opportunities available
- Apply to more than 1 college, or at least 2 courses at same college. You can accept and hold more than 1 offer until GCSE results day
- Be aware of college choice order rules ie Hills Road must be 1st choice

Don't end up saying this in May....

'I wish I had more time'

'I wish I had asked more questions'

'I wish I had started earlier'

Useful websites

College Applications:

<https://www.mychoice16.co.uk/>

Apprenticeship Advice:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

Careers advice and guidance:

<https://www.sohamvc.org/post16careers>

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

<https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/>

<https://www.adzuna.co.uk/>

Other support available at SVC

‘Careers Section’ in the Library

Tutors and Subject Teachers

Mr Nick Oakhill, Careers Guidance Manager

noakhill@sohamvc.org

Mrs Nicki Howe, Careers Advisor

nhowe@sohamvc.org



@SVC_Careers

