

# WELCOME

## The Sixth Form College Colchester- PARENTS BRIEFING

### SLIDE 1 - THE COLLEGE ETHOS

A 'traditional sixth form experience, in a college environment.

A vibrant young adult community that cares for the individual.

An impressive range of course choices and extra activities – with many study opportunities that are otherwise not available in this area.

Flexibility that meets the needs of the individual.

Lessons that take place upon one purpose-built site.

Teacher expertise in sixth form education – A level and AG courses, student support and welfare, wider activities.

A clear focus upon success.

Excellent student progression outcomes – extensive guidance and support for applications to university and employment.

### SLIDE 1 – Senior Staff Commentary: (Jo Cadman)

Hello, my name's Jo Cadman and I want to welcome you to this parent briefing which is designed to give you some key information about the college.

Even though all our students have moved on from school and they'll be adults by the time they leave us, we do recognize that parents still have a big role to play in the success and the well-being of our young people at college.

We are keen for you to be involved and we hope that we will be able to keep you well informed.

I'm going to come back a little later in the presentation but I'm handing over to my colleague Adrian Frost now who's going to tell you a little bit more about the college.

Hello my name's Adrian and I've come along to talk about the ethos of the college, about the approach that we take in working with young people moving them through their A Levels and on to wherever they're going in life.

In many ways this is quite a traditional environment I think many things you'd expect from a traditional school sixth form experience you'd see with us. I teach a religious studies class, I share it with my colleague Sarah and between us we see that group for four big double lessons a week and it's our group, there are 17 of them in there at the moment. We mark their work and we work with them on their mock exams, we talk to people's mums at parents' evenings, we do many things that anyone would expect in a very traditional school environment. I think maybe where we are different is that this is also in many ways an adult college environment something like a small university people aren't wearing uniforms, we're all calling each other by our first names and there is that general sense of moving up into something like an adult environment moving people towards the workplace, towards university life and so on. As part of that there is just the sheer size of the place.

This is a big college and it means we've got a lot to offer, there's a huge performing arts culture, there's great big emphasis on sport and all sorts of other activities here, lots for people to get involved in. Sometimes I fear that people think oh well we're going to get lost in that somehow. Every student that comes here will have their teacher on their psychology course and these are

people that you are going to be talking to at parents' evenings and will write their reports and so on, people who know will know your son and daughter really well.

Don't forget there's also of course the form tutor so someone whose job it is to worry about how people are doing, to see students every day and so again something like the traditional sixth form experience that I talked about at the start. All of that is about us urging everyone to move towards achieving the best they can in terms of their grades, there's a real emphasis upon success and people moving on to all sorts of different places in life, be that universities, employers and all sorts of other routes that our students take forward.

## SLIDE 2 - YOUR COURSE

PASTORAL AND TUTORIAL PROGRAMME, including; support, Careers and H-E and Employment guidance, personal development, safeguarding, work related learning, citizenship, and health awareness.

Daily contact with Personal Tutors – supported with more specialist support from Senior Tutor and other specialist staff and other external agencies / organisations.

### SLIDE 2 – Senior Staff Commentary: (Adrian Frost)

I'm going to talk a little bit about how the courses are made up and I've put here on the first slide the tutorial program because it really is the sort of centre of what we're going to do. I'm going to leave it a little bit though to my colleague Jo who I know will talk about this a bit more towards the end of this presentation.

## SLIDE 3 - YOUR PROGRAMME OF STUDY

THREE A LEVEL COURSE + A FOURTH COURSE

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), Core Maths

For some very able, organised and motivated A Level students, a fourth A Level can be chosen  
Financial certificate (with a Diploma level option in Year 2)

Coaching Sport and Physical Activity (with a Higher option in Year 2)

Arts Mark Award (Gold/Level 3)

Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award

Music Exams (ABRSM)

### SLIDE 3 – Senior Staff Commentary: (Adrian Frost)

I'm going to move on to think a little bit about the way the courses work, about the structure of the courses here. Most of the students who come to us will come to A Level and most students will do three A Level courses or equivalent. They might do certificates, diplomas, which for us work in many ways e.g. an applied law or applied business course, it's kind of the same size and the same shape and in many ways does the same job as an A Level would do in terms of the way we put courses together. Most people will come to us and take three of those A Level or equivalent courses. Some people that have done really well at GCSE, they want to do further maths and they've got big plans in certain areas they may well come to us and do four and that is an option we can explore with people who've done really well in their GCSEs.

Most people come to us they'll do the three and they'll do something called a fourth course, an extra, this isn't as big as an A Level, it's a lesson or two a week and it's the opportunity to do something alongside the A Levels to broaden out the CV, to broaden skills, to have some fun and so on. There's all sorts of things in there, I'm not even going to make a dent in trying to explain to you what we've got available on this program. There are about a hundred different options if you look in the additional studies booklet which everyone gets at induction and also is available online. There are a lot of options in there, career progression courses for lawyers or teachers or medics, extra qualifications in coaching, maths, finance, opportunities to be creative, to perform, to develop

sporting skills, to join teams, all sorts of different things people can do so I'm sure there'll be something in there for everybody.

## SLIDE 4 - THEN MAYBE A 'FIFTH'?

Extra curricular activities

Many options – both regular and 'one off's' including;

Clubs, societies, field trips, expeditions, conferences, the range of College Council committees, radio station, Friends not Foes group, Amnesty, peer mentors and support (in subjects and for other areas of support).

'Unplugged' on the concourse music performance programme, theme days/weeks, charity activities etc.

### SLIDE 4 – Senior Staff Commentary: (Adrian Frost)

Then there's something again called a fifth. We're asking everybody to do a fourth course and as I say there are huge range of opportunities available there. There are also things that students get involved in maybe on a slightly more ad hoc basis, for example we've got an arts and culture festival coming up just as I'm recording this and many students will get involved in that people will get involved in all sorts of different clubs or societies or activities or performances and maybe they won't do that all year maybe that's something they'll pick up and and put down and so on and that's fine and often those things are advertised through the bulletin and so we're calling that a fifth, just something extra. There are many examples of these kind of activities that people can get involved in across the course of the two years.

## SLIDE 5 – THE TIMETABLE

This slide is about the college timetable, which runs 5 days a week from 9-4pm with two big double lessons before lunch and two after. Most students have at least one lesson that is designated private study every day.

### SLIDE 5 - Senior Staff Commentary: (Adrian Frost)

I'm also going to give you some sense of how the timetable works. In my example someone is doing Italian and History and Chemistry as A Levels but also that fourth I mentioned, they have got involved in the netball squad as well so there's some sport on their timetable. Also we've got a registration every day at lunchtime. On one day a week that registration is actually bigger, it will be a tutorial and so there's contact with the tutor every day and that's a really important part of what we do here.

This adds up to a busy week but how students use these private study periods are really important as part of their work and how successful they are and so we work hard with students to encourage them to use all of their time effectively.

Your son or daughter will have a paper copy of their timetable that they'll bring home, it will come home just shortly after enrolment and so that's the time to nab a copy and see if you can get one on the fridge. Tutors will always help with that as well if you're unsure about timetabling arrangements

## SLIDE 6 -PASTORAL CARE

PERSONAL TUTOR

SENIOR TUTOR

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Other support: Counsellors, Student Welfare workers, Access Skills Workshops and Learning Support provision.

### SLIDE 6 – Senior Staff Commentary: (Jo Cadman)

Thanks Adrian

I want to tell you a little bit about pastoral care here at college. This is something that we place a lot of importance on, every student has a personal tutor who monitors their academic progress and their welfare. The personal tutor will be the key person in college for your son or daughter. Ordinarily they'll see their personal tutor every day so they should get to know them well. In this little diagram you can see that the person in the middle is a senior tutor and that's the person who oversees your son or daughter's progress and welfare and who'll step in if there are any difficulties. At the bottom is the assistant principal and that's me, Jo Cadman, and I'm responsible for all pastoral matters at the college and for safeguarding.

For any students who need a bit of extra help we have lots available. We have learning support provision to help with study, but also counsellors and welfare staff who can help with emotional well-being and most of our extra help can be accessed by students in a number of ways. Students can drop in or refer themselves as well as seeking help via their personal tutors.

## SLIDE 7 – EXPECTATIONS

Motivation and commitment to study

Co-operation

Maturity – being part of a young adult environment, thinking about our impact on others

Making the most of academic potential – including a consistent commitment to independent study

Each student engaging in the full and broad educational and experience provided by the College

Striving to achieve, laying the ground for happy and successful futures

Attend all timetabled lessons regularly and punctually

Complete all set work to deadline

Participate in lessons and get involved in the learning process

Engage regularly in independent study and background work (reading etc.)

Prepare properly for tests, assessments, and examinations – including significant use of time in the Easter break period before summer exams

Be organised

## SLIDE 7 – Senior Staff Commentary: (Jo Cadman)

So what do we expect from our students?

Coming to college does mark a change and a step up from school the work's likely to be more challenging and there's also more freedom. Your son or daughter will have free periods on their timetable and although they'll be expected to go to all their lessons they will be managing their own independent study time. I think independence is a key word, we know they're not there yet but by the time they leave us, and believe me those two years really will fly by, they need to be ready for higher education or the world of work, so we aim to help them become independent and take responsibility for their learning with our help.

We also want them to engage and get involved to make the most of the incredible range of opportunities they'll have when they're with us.

## SLIDE 8 - CONTACT WITH PARENTS

Email

Parent handbook (online from September)

Progress reviews (November and February)

Full reports – June (year one students), February (year 2 students)

Parents Consultation Evenings – Year 1 November/December and July (Students also encouraged to attend)

Higher Education Briefings – February, June

Principal's Newsletter – each term (October/ February/ May). Sent by email but paper copy can be requested

Parent Governor opportunities

College Friends membership

College Website – the best source of up to date information including regular news items and all key documents: [www.colchsfc.sc.uk](http://www.colchsfc.sc.uk)

(Please provide us with your email address and let us know if it changes!)

SLIDE 8 – Senior Staff Commentary: (Jo Cadman)

Having talked about students becoming independent I should probably just reiterate that we don't expect them to arrive as fully fledged adults and just as we don't expect them to develop without help from us they'll also still need help from you. I think you'll find that contact between college and home is a little bit different than between school and home. If we have any concerns we'll generally talk to the student first and we'll tend to deal directly with your son or daughter, either face to face if they're here in college or via email or phone if we need to contact them that way, but we will also keep you in the loop.

As you can see here there are lots of points of contact including the traditional parents evenings and written reports. You're also very welcome to contact us about any issues so the personal tutor would normally be the first point of contact but you can also get in touch with your son or daughter's senior tutor or with me. I'd also recommend that you have a look at the website, there's lots of information there about all the things that we've mentioned and more

Thank you for listening, I hope that this briefing has been useful and I look forward to meeting you at one of our college events once your son or daughter joins us in the autumn.

Thank you bye bye