

# **Sixth Form Applications**

# **Advice for Year 11 Students**

**2025-26**

# **Sixth Form Applications**

## **Entry Requirements:**

**A minimum of 2 x grade 6 and 3 x grade 5  
Maths and English (Literature or Language) grade 5 or higher**

## **Key Dates:**

**Open Evening – Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January  
Application Deadline Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February**

# Sixth Form Application Process: 2026 Admissions

**Attend Balcarras Sixth Form Open Evening (no need to make an appointment)**

**\*Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026, 7-9pm\***



**Spend some time thinking about your post-16 options and the subjects you wish to study, review the materials available on the Sixth Form tab of the school website, utilise your subject teachers, tutor and Sixth Form team for advice**



**Fill in the Sixth Form Application Form (this will be live the day after the open evening)**

**\*Deadline: Midnight on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026\***



**Attend a consultation meeting with a member of the Sixth Form team or SMT (the date and time will be emailed to you nearer the time)**

**\*March/April 2026\***



**Following a successful consultation meeting, receive a conditional offer letter detailing grades required**

**\*May 2026\***



**Attend Sixth Form Induction day**

**\*Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026\***



**Receive results and confirm to Sixth Form that you would still like your place**

**\*Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2026\***



**First day of Year 12, Balcarras Sixth Form**

**\*Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2026\***

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**Although the minimum basic entry requirement is 2 x 6, 3 x 5 (including Maths and English 5), many subjects have additional individual subject-specific requirements in order to secure a place on the course:**

<b>Art</b>	<b>6 in Art</b>
<b>Biology</b>	<b>66 in Science, or 6 in Biology, and a 6 in Mathematics</b>
<b>Business Studies</b>	<b>5 in Business Studies preferred. 5 in Maths and 5 in English.</b>
<b>Chemistry</b>	<b>66 in Science, or 6 in Chemistry, and a 6 in Mathematics</b>
<b>Computer Science</b>	<b>6 in Mathematics and a 6 in another IT qualification</b>
<b>Drama &amp; Theatre studies</b>	<b>5 in both English Language and Literature / 5/C in Drama if studied at GCSE/IGCSE</b>
<b>Economics</b>	<b>6 in Mathematics and English Literature or Language. GCSE Business not required</b>
<b>English</b>	<b>66 in English Language and Literature</b>
<b>Environmental Science</b>	<b>55 in Science, and a 5 in Maths</b>
<b>Food Science</b>	<b>5 in Food Technology, Home Economics or Catering, or a 6 in Nutrition and any other DT subject</b>
<b>French</b>	<b>6 in French GCSE</b>
<b>Further Maths</b>	<b>8+ in Mathematics.</b>

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<b>Geography</b>	<b>6 in Geography</b>
<b>History</b>	<b>6 in History, 6 in English if History not studied at GCSE</b>
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>7 in Mathematics.</b>
<b>Music</b>	<b>6 in Music and instrumental and performance skills to at least grade 5. (Expected to take lessons on their specialist instrument)</b>
<b>PE</b>	<b>6 in PE and minimum 55 in science. (If PE not studied at GCSE, evidence of a high standard in two sports)</b>
<b>Photography</b>	<b>6 in Art. If Art GCSE not taken, sketchpad / portfolio must be submitted</b>
<b>Physics</b>	<b>66 in Science, or 6 in Physics and a 6 in Mathematics</b>
<b>Politics</b>	<b>6 in English and / or History or RS</b>
<b>Product Design</b>	<b>6 in any Design Technology subject</b>
<b>Psychology</b>	<b>5 in Maths and English.</b>
<b>RS</b>	<b>5 in RS, 5 in English.</b>
<b>Russian</b>	<b>6 in Russian GCSE</b>
<b>Spanish</b>	<b>6 in Spanish GCSE</b>
<b>Textiles</b>	<b>6 in Textiles or Art GCSE</b>

# **Sixth Form Applications**

**If you are unsure of your GCSE target grade, or are concerned that your current level of progress will prevent you from being successful in your application, discuss this with your subject teacher, tutor and mentor as soon as possible.**

A-Levels	A-level Equivalents
A*	Distinction *
A	Distinction
B	-
C	Merit
D	-
E	Pass
U	U

**Remember:**  
**Food & Nutrition, and**  
**Health & Social Care**  
**are Cambridge**  
**Certificate / B-Tec**  
**courses, not A-levels.**  
**They are A-level**  
**equivalents, graded**  
**Distinction\* to Pass:**

## **As part of the Sixth Form you will:**

- Study 4 A-level subjects in Year 12 and sit terminal end-of-year assessments for these at the end of Year 12.**
- Complete the Extended Project Qualification (AS-level equivalent).**
- Use our amazing study facilities. These are also available before and after school. This is a rare resource, fully supervised and offering vital pastoral support, and key to our success.**
- Participate in Games & Enrichment on a Wednesday afternoon (any sport you wish – within reason).**
- Receive Speaker sessions once a fortnight to support your study skills and plan for your post-18 destinations beyond Balcarras.**
- Wear our smart, but more casual uniform.**
- Have a tutor who will be your base of contact for your entire time in Sixth Form.**
- Have numerous opportunities to stretch and challenge yourself – The Law Society, The Hawking Society, Boost, DofE Gold, Paired Mentoring, STEM Ambassadors, Young Enterprise to name but a few!**
- Have an incredibly enriching, fun and successful time.**

# Sixth Form Applications

## Planning your option choices to facilitate post-18 Degree and career ambitions

When selecting your options, you do need to make sensible choices with regard to key subjects that have specific relevance to a planned post-18 career ambition.

However, the most essential criteria for your option choices must be if you can answer 'YES' to the following questions:

- Am I interested in this subject and the A-level syllabus content?
- Do I currently enjoy this subject at GCSE level?
- Am I mastering the skills and knowledge relevant to this subject?
- Do my choices offer me the breath and range of topics and skills that I want?
- Are my option choices going to assess me in a way that is likely to bring out the best of me?
- Are my option choices going to enable me to stay on course to pursue a future career in the professional field to which I aspire?

## **Planning your option choices to facilitate post-18 Degree and career ambitions**

# **New Subjects:**

- **Economics**
- **Environmental Science**
- **Photography**
- **Politics**
- **Psychology**

If Balcarras does not offer a subject that you were keen to study (Creative I-Media, Criminology, Film Studies, Law, Media Studies, Sociology) you can still pursue elements of these in an EPQ if you choose to do so.

# **Sixth Form Applications**

**You must do your research!**

- **Use Unifrog!**
- **Complete an Application Choices Matrix!**

**Do not opt for any subjects unless you have thoroughly researched all that is involved.  
They may not be as you expect.**

**If a subject you are very keen to study is missing from our current offer, come and discuss with Mr Leatherbarrow.**

**Do discuss with subject teachers and Heads of Department, and also Mrs Lewis and Mrs Towers in Careers.**

**Feel free to see Mr Leatherbarrow, or email any queries to: [dl@Balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:dl@Balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk)**

# Post-16 Application Subject Choices Matrix

<b>Enjoyment</b> Which subjects do I most enjoy? Why?	<b>Aptitude</b> In which subjects am I progressing best? Why?	<b>Aspiration</b> Do I have particular career I aspire to? Most relevant subject choices (if any)?
<b>Enjoyment</b> Which subjects do I least enjoy? Why?	<b>Aptitude</b> In which subjects am I progressing least? Why?	<b>Questions?</b> Is there anything I want to ask the Sixth Form team?

# **Sixth Form Applications**

## **Other things to consider**

**When thinking your post-16 options, we understand that you do need to look at a range of sixth form providers. However, there are a few things we do want you to think about our sixth form offer:**

### **Why am I expected to study four subjects in Year 12?**

**We firmly believe that our broader offer in Year 12 helps students keep their options open and ‘future-proofs’ good academic progress and wellbeing. By studying 4, with the view to dropping a subject into Year 13, students are able to continue with the three courses in which they are making most progress, most enjoy, and which are most relevant to future university and / or career choices.**

**Each and every year, @75% of students discontinue a subject which was NOT their original ‘fourth’ option!**

# Sixth Form Applications

## Other things to consider

**When thinking your post-16 options, we understand that you do need to look at other sixth form providers. However, there are a few things we do want you to think about our sixth form offer:**

### **Why doesn't Balcarras offer more subjects?**

**We believe that we have a very comprehensive range of academic subjects – with even greater access due to our offer of 4 subjects in Year 12, and modest entry requirements. However, we acknowledge that we cannot offer **EVERY** qualification. We do not offer a wide range of BTEC courses, for example, or T-levels. There are some notable A-levels which we do not offer currently are due to advice from university admissions teams as to their validity and usefulness:**

- Students looking to study law at degree level are advised NOT to study law at A-level for example.**
- Similarly, the overlap between Psychology, Criminology and Sociology could potentially narrow post-18 options.**

# Sixth Form Applications

## Other things to consider

**When thinking your post-16 options, we understand that you do need to look at a range of sixth form providers. However, there are a few things we do want you to think about our sixth form offer:**

### Why is EPQ compulsory?

**We expect all Year 12 students to begin an EPQ for a multitude of reasons:**

- It helps students broaden their knowledge and skills;**
- It helps students continue to pursue a subject interest which cannot be accommodated in their A-level choices;**
- It is a fully accredited qualification, and many universities make more generous contextual offers for students who complete an EPQ at A\*-B grade;**
- University and employer feedback tells us that students who have completed an EPQ are more likely to succeed post-18 due to the independence and resilience the qualification engenders.**
- If you like learning it is a fun and richly rewarding experience.**

# Sixth Form Applications

## Other things to consider

**When thinking your post-16 options, we understand that you do need to look at a range sixth form providers. However, there are a few things we do want you to think about our sixth form offer:**

### **Why do Balcarras students have supervised Study, and not 'frees'?**

**We believe that our Study provision is crucial on many levels:**

- **Supervised academic study helps students to make a successful transition from GCSE to A-level, and to foster academic rigour and routine;**
- **Supervised academic study ensures that subject staff and our supervisors can work with students to help overcome issues linked to knowledge and understanding, the application of skills, organisation or meeting deadlines;**
- **Supervised study allows students pursuing practical subjects such as Art, Photography, Textiles, Product Design or Music to have more access to classrooms, staff and resources;**
- **Supervised study offers you much more contact with Sixth Form staff for pastoral support and careers guidance as and when relevant to you;**
- **By managing your work effectively in the day, it frees up time for sport, music, leisure and paid employment! Furthermore, it really helps build our community!**

# **Sixth Form Applications**

## **Other things to consider**

**When thinking your post-16 options, we understand that you do need to look at a range of sixth form providers. However, there are a few things we do want you to think about our sixth form offer:**

**I don't want to go to university – so I should I be looking to leave Balcarras?**

**I want to go to an Oxbridge college – so I should I be looking to leave Balcarras?**

**On both counts – not at all! The majority of our students – @ 85% – do make applications to UCAS in order to go on to join university courses, and each and every year we have a number who are successful in applying for high-profile and competitive Oxbridge places or medicine, dentistry and veterinary courses.**

**At the same time, we fully support all destination options – Degree Apprenticeships, Higher Apprenticeships, Foundation diplomas (such as in Art), Gap Year opportunities and employment.**

**Between tutor guidance in Personal Development, Boost and the Careers team you will be FULLY supported.**

# Sixth Form Applications

## Other things to consider

**When thinking your post-16 options, we understand that you do need to look at a range of sixth form providers. However, there are a few things we do want you to think about our sixth form offer:**

**I want a change of scenery – so I should I be looking to leave Balcarras?**

**Again - not at all! Joining Balcarras Sixth Form is a fresh start in lots of ways! All the lower school tutor groups and House affiliations end – and we anticipate that up to 75 new students will be joining the Sixth Form – from other local 11-16 schools, and some from out of county or even out of country!**

**You will be selecting your own curriculum – you get to choose what you study! Furthermore, all the courses we offer are full Level 3 courses – so after your two years you will be fully prepared for the next fresh start at university or in a profession.**

**As a Sixth Form student here, you will be treated differently to the way you are now in lots of ways.**

# Sixth Form Applications

## Other things to consider

**When thinking your post-16 options, we understand that you do need to look at a range of sixth form providers. However, there are a few things we do want you to think about our sixth form offer:**

**No, I REALLY want a change of scenery!**

**In some cases there may be very valid reasons for looking elsewhere. This may be because you are worried about not meeting our entry requirements. It may be that you are desperate to study a course we do not offer. However, do make sure YOUR reasons are fully valid, and that the pros outweigh the cons. Questions to ask yourself:**

- How does the quality of teaching and learning, and student progress, compare?**
- Will all the courses I study be full Level 3 courses? What will this mean for me post-18?**
- What will my daily / weekly / termly travel commitments cost you – both in terms of time and money? What impact will this have on your academic progress / social life / work commitments?**
- Am I confident that I will receive the same level of pastoral support at a different institution?**

# Sixth Form Applications

**Planning your option choices to facilitate post-18 Degree and career ambitions**



**Interested in Engineering?**

**Recommended A-levels:**

**Mathematics and Physics essential, and sometimes Further Mathematics too.**

**Product Design also highly recommended.**

**Interested in Business and Economics?**

**Recommended A-levels:**

**Economics. Mathematics very useful, as is Business Studies.**



# Sixth Form Applications

**Planning your option choices to facilitate post-18 Degree and career ambitions**



**Interested in Midwifery, Nursing, Social Care?**

**Recommended A-levels / BTECs:**

**Health and Social Care will provide the necessary experience for applications. Biology or Environmental Science also very important. Psychology a sensible accompanying option.**

**Interested in Physics:**

**Recommended A-level:**

**Physics. Mathematics also very important, Further Mathematics beneficial too.**

**Well worth considering other sciences like Chemistry.**



# Sixth Form Applications

**Planning your option choices to facilitate post-18 Degree and career ambitions**

**Interested in Medicine or Dentistry?**

**Recommended A-levels:**

**Chemistry is more important than Biology. Studying both would be sensible.**

**Mathematics is also absolutely essential.**



**Interested in Law & the Bar?**

**Recommended A-levels:**

**History, English highly recommended.**

**Politics, any MFL, and Economics all relevant and useful additional options.**

**(Law A-level disapproved by some universities)**

# Sixth Form Applications

**Planning your option choices to facilitate post-18 Degree and career ambitions**

**Interested in Psychology and Criminology?**

**Recommended A-levels:**

**Psychology.**

**Biology recommended, and strong maths GCSE required. English also recommended.**



**Interested in Veterinary Science?**

**Recommended A-levels:**

**Much like with Medicine and Dentistry, Chemistry, Maths, and Biology all strongly advised.**

# Sixth Form Applications

**Planning your option choices to facilitate post-18 Degree and career ambitions**

**Interested in writing and Journalism?**

**Recommended A-level:**

**English, History, Politics, Philosophy & Ethics  
(the former two in particular).**

**MFL subjects also well worth considering.**



**Interested in Physical Education, Sports Science,  
Physiotherapy?**

**Recommended A-levels:**

**PE. Sciences recommended, in particular Biology (these  
two A-levels go particularly well together).**

# **Sixth Form Applications**

## **Planning your option choices to facilitate post-18 Degree and career ambitions**

**The Russell Group – a prestigious group of UK universities issued the following guidance a number of years ago:**

**If you are not sure about what course you want to study at university then traditionally, you would be encouraged try to choose at least two from the following list (known as 'facilitating A-levels) to keep your options open:**

**Mathematics**

**English Literature**

**Physics**

**Biology**

**Chemistry**

**Geography**

**History**

**Languages:**

- **French**
- **Russian**
- **Spanish**



# **Sixth Form Applications**

**Planning your option choices to facilitate post-18 Degree and career ambitions**

**Traditional 'facilitating' subjects:**

**Mathematics**

**English Literature**

**Physics**

**Biology**

**Chemistry**

**Geography**

**History**

**Languages:**

- **French**
- **Russian**
- **Spanish**



**This advice has been challenged in recent years, and students are increasingly encouraged to look for a balance of skills and knowledge that is appropriate.**

**Do not dismiss subjects solely because they are not on the traditional list of 'facilitating' subjects – do consider STEM, STEAM, SHAPE, and other options. Most of all, think about enjoyment and interest – if you don't want to study something for two years, it is unlikely you will want a career in a field in which such knowledge and skills would need to be applied!**

# **Sixth Form Applications**

**Planning your option choices to facilitate post-18 Degree and career ambitions**

**Do what you ENJOY!**

**You will get better results and have more fun if you pick some subjects just because you enjoy them.**

**Get the balance right between academic rigour and enjoyment**



**COMPLETE YOUR APPLICATION FORM**

**THE LINK TO THE MICROSOFT FORM IS ON THE WEBSITE – LIVE FROM 10.00 FRIDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025**



**Still have questions?**

**Email Mr Leatherbarrow [dl@Balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:dl@Balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk), or come to the Sixth Form Office.**