

Name: _____

Tutor group: _____



KS4 CURRICULUM 2026–2028

CHOOSING YOUR OPTIONS

Key dates

Thursday 15 January 6 pm to 8 pm	Key stage 4 options evening (in school)
Wednesday 21 January to Friday 13 March	Guidance meetings
Thursday 26 February 4 pm to 7 pm	Year 9 parents' consultation evening (online)
Wednesday 18 March	Electronic options form deadline

The KS4 curriculum

This is your guide to the key stage 4 curriculum at Comberton Village College. We hope that you find the information interesting, useful and accessible.

The curriculum has undergone very significant changes over recent years, resulting in a much more varied range of choices to suit every pupil's interests. It has been the intention of all staff and governors at the college to produce a curriculum which is interesting, exciting and relevant, and it is our hope and belief that we have achieved this. As the curriculum offers more choices, it also has more complexities, and so the following points will be of some help in outlining the structure of the curriculum and some key considerations.

Examination subjects taken by all pupils

All pupils take GCSEs in the following subjects:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- Combined Sciences (2 GCSEs), unless pupils choose to take GCSEs in the 3 separate sciences

Non-examination subjects taken by all pupils

In addition to their examined courses, pupils study a curriculum in the following areas:

Careers education, information, advice and guidance, including work related learning: This is covered via our pastoral curriculum through assemblies and tutorial activities and through collapsed days. It also includes a period of work experience at the end of year 10.

Physical Education: Core PE is delivered through timetabled weekly lessons. Pupils are given a number of choices and they will pursue these during the whole of year 10. They will choose again for year 11. Further information may be found here: <https://www.combertonvc.org/curriculum/PE-and-Sport.php>

Pastoral Curriculum: Within our year 7 to 11 pastoral curriculum, pupils follow a programme of activities that includes Active Form Time (learning about health, diet and exercise) and work related to the Rights Respecting School, as well as elements of the core RPE curriculum. Pastoral teams also play a vital role in upholding our values and ensuring that pupils receive a full curriculum, exploring pertinent issues in a tutor group context.

Subjects pupils choose

All pupils must make option choices as described on the following page. They must choose at least one modern foreign language, except in exceptional circumstances*.

Modern foreign languages

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, it is important that pupils continue to study a foreign language at a level appropriate with their abilities and interest. Therefore, pupils must take at least one of the options in the languages box on the options form unless there are exceptional circumstances. These options offer a range of languages:

- GCSE French
- GCSE Spanish
- GCSE German
- GCSE Mandarin

Pupils may choose to take two language GCSEs if appropriate.

*An alternative curriculum

For the vast majority of pupils at Comberton, it will be appropriate that they take the full range of core subjects and options. However, for a small minority, it may be appropriate that they take a slightly reduced number of subjects.

Some pupils also benefit from spending extra time on their literacy to ensure that they are fully prepared for exams and to enable them to achieve the best possible results. Pupils for whom this is recommended will receive a letter with further information and should discuss this at their guidance meeting.

Reserve choices

It is assumed that there will be a sufficient number of pupils wishing to take up each option course. However, in the event of insufficient support, certain courses may have to be reorganised if they are not deemed viable to run. This may mean that some pupils may have to study their reserve choice. We will communicate this with individual pupils and their families in a timely fashion.

If a particular option choice is oversubscribed, decisions about who should study the course will be taken by the relevant teachers and senior staff. These decisions will be based on teacher assessment, along with consideration of any other factors we believe relevant in determining the appropriateness of the course for each pupil. Behaviour record and past effort may be relevant. Again, where a pupil is not allocated to their first choice option, we will communicate the decision to them and their families on an individual basis as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Full information about the subjects you can choose

In the 'Our Curriculum' section of the Comberton Village College website, you will find full information about each subject, including:

- what you will study in the subject
- the skills you will develop
- what homework you will get
- the syllabus you will follow
- how the course is assessed
- what jobs or further courses of study the option might lead to.

You can find this section on the website at the address below.

<https://www.combertonvc.org/curriculum/ourcurriculum.php>

Our Curriculum

Art and Design

Business Studies

Computer Science

Computing (Core)

Each subject's page is also linked in the table on the next page.

Subjects to choose from

Pupils need to choose one subject from each block.

A block

[Spanish](#)
[French](#)
[German](#)
[Mandarin](#)
[English Plus](#)

B block

[Geography](#)
[History](#)
[RPE](#)
[Psychology](#)
[Business studies/Enterprise](#)

C block

[Separate science](#)
[Art](#)
[Photography](#)
[Computer science](#)
[Creative iMedia](#)
[Drama](#)
[Health & social care](#)
[Construction](#)
[Geography](#)
[Spanish](#)
[Music](#)
[Hospitality & catering](#)

D block

[Separate science](#)
[Art](#)
[Photography](#)
[Computer science](#)
[Creative iMedia](#)
[Drama](#)
[Health & social care](#)
[Construction](#)
[History](#)
[RPE](#)
[PE/Sport](#)
[Design Technology](#)
[Graphic communication](#)

Pupils will need to choose a reserve option for blocks B, C and D. This will only be used if the chosen options proves impossible to allocate.

Frequently asked questions

Why do I have to make choices?

That is a really good question! As you made your way through key stage 3, you studied all the available subjects, but now we ask you to choose some to stop studying, and we offer you a couple of subjects you haven't previously studied.

The reason is that we want you to concentrate on subjects that are:

- vital to your future – this is why we all continue to study maths, science, PE and English, and
- interesting and relevant to your future: you have the chance to 'specialise' a little bit.

As you travel through key stage 4, you may decide to study further by taking A levels or other qualifications and then you will be asked to 'specialise' even more.

How do I tell you what my choices are?

Following the KS4 options evening and guidance meetings, you will be sent a link to an online form. You will state what your options are using this form by the deadline shown on the front of this brochure.

You will need to log in to their school account when accessing this form. Ideally complete it on your iPad. This is so that the options choices are linked to the correct pupil.

If you submit the form more than once, we will look at the most recent submission when allocating choices.

What is the core curriculum that all pupils take in years 10 and 11?

All pupils continue to study English, mathematics, science and PE through timetabled lessons. RPE, computing, work-related learning, citizenship and personal development also form part of the curriculum through collapsed days, cross-curricular links and other experiences (such as work experience).

What are the core qualifications?

Most pupils will take [GCSEs in English language and English literature](#), [GCSE mathematics](#) and [GCSEs in science](#).

How many option choices do I have?

Pupils must first choose their language (or English plus option if invited). You then need to choose one subject from the three lists for blocks B, C and D.

How much time does each option get?

Each single option choice is taken as three lessons each week (usually one single and one double period).

Are there any after-school options?

We offer GCSE Statistics during year 10 as an afterschool lesson. Pupils sit the GCSE examinations in statistics in May/June of year 10. The lessons run from 3-5 pm once per week. We are usually able to have two classes, each running on a different day of the week.

In order to condense this course into one year, there is prerequisite statistics knowledge required to join the course. It would be most suitable for pupils in these four maths groups: Miss Miles/Mr Dawes, Mrs Carbonero/Mr Law, Mr Garton/Mr Barton, and Mrs Wan/Mr Wood.

Is PE in the core or an option?

Both. All pupils have four periods of PE lessons per fortnight. Within that time, it is possible to follow a range of PE activities. It is also possible to opt for a qualification in PE (where you will either study GCSE PE or BTEC sport) as one of your option choices if you want to.

How do I know what subjects to take?

There is lots of guidance available and you will have a guidance meeting to discuss your option choices. Read the options brochure, look at the subject pages on the website, come to the KS4 options evening and talk to your teachers and parents! As a general rule, choose the subjects which you like most and work hardest in, whilst aiming to keep a broad range.

What happens after I have submitted my online form?

All the options are collected and everybody's option choices are entered into a computer. We then use this to work out the 'best fit' model for the classes. We try to get everybody's first choice to fit together. However, every year we have to speak to some pupils because of a few things:

- perhaps not enough people want an option so we cannot make a class
- perhaps too many people want an option and we haven't got enough teachers to put on an extra class
- perhaps somebody has made option choices that are inappropriate for them.

What is the difference between GCSEs and the other courses offered (L1/2 courses with longer names)?

GCSEs are qualifications where the full range of grades (from 9 to 1) are achievable. Other courses are equivalent to GCSEs but have other titles such as Certificate or Award or Diploma. Some of these can be offered at level 1 (GCSE grades 1 to 3) or level 2 (GCSE grades 4 to 9). However, all of the courses we offer at Comberton are available at **both** levels and so are suitable for all levels of pupil.

Typically, the Level 2 courses offered at Comberton are assessed through work completed during years 10 and 11 rather than by a final written examination at the end of year 11. However, each course is different so please do refer to pages on the school website to find out how each qualification is assessed.

How are subjects graded these days?

GCSEs

For GCSE exams, gone are the letters A to G: we now talk about 9 to 1 (nine to one). The diagram shows how these compare to the old letter system.

Old grades	New grades
A*	9
A	8
A	7
B	6
C	5 Strong Pass 4 Standard Pass
D	3
E	2
F	1
G	
U	U

Other Level 2 qualifications

The table shows how most of these qualifications are graded and their GCSE equivalent grades.

BTEC/L2 grade	GCSE equivalent
Level 2 Distinction*	8.5
Level 2 Distinction	7
Level 2 Merit	5.5
Level 2 Pass	4
Level 1 Distinction	3
Level 1 Merit	2
Level 1 Pass	1

There are slight variations between subjects. For example, some also include *Level 1 Distinction**