Find below helpful Post-16 information, designed to explain some of the key terms and phrases you may come across when exploring Sixth Form study. We appreciate that Post-16 terminology can sometimes be unfamiliar, so this guide aims to provide clear and straightforward explanations to help students and parents better understand the opportunities, qualifications and support available in Sixth Form.

Term	Explanation for parents
GCSE	**General Certificate of Secondary Education**. The qualifications students usually take at the end of Year 11.
A level	**Advanced Level**. A qualification normally studied over two years in Years 12 and 13, often used to gain entry to university.
Level 2	A standard of qualification that includes GCSEs at grades 4–9.
Level 3	A higher standard of qualification, usually studied after GCSEs. A levels, Core Maths and the EPQ are examples.
BTEC / CamTech / Cambridge Technicals	A qualification that often focuses on practical, career-related learning alongside academic knowledge. Assessment may include coursework, assignments and examinations. We offer only Level 3 BTECs can be equivalent in size to one or more A levels.
AAQ	Alternative Academic Qualification. A newer type of qualification designed to be studied alongside A levels. It combines academic learning with more applied or practical elements.
EPQ	**Extended Project Qualification**. An optional qualification that allows students to independently research a topic of their choice and produce a project. Worth 50% of a full A-Level and sometimes leads to lower university offers.
Core Maths	An additional maths qualification for students who want to continue developing their mathematical skills after GCSE without studying a full A level in Maths. Worth 40% of a full A Level.
AS level	**Advanced Subsidiary Level**. A qualification usually completed in one year, covering less content than a full A level. Most students in Gordano do not take AS Levels. Worth 40% of a full A Level.
T Level	A two-year qualification combining classroom learning with an industry placement, broadly equivalent in size to three A levels. Gordano does not offer T-Levels.

Qualification	Typical size / explanation
A level	One full A level, normally studied over two years.
BTEC Extended Certificate	Equivalent in size to one A level.
Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate	Equivalent in size to one A level.
BTEC / Cambridge Technical Diploma	Often equivalent in size to two A levels.
Level 3 AAQ Extended Certificate	Generally equivalent in size to one A level.
A-level Further Maths	An additional A level studied alongside A-level Maths as a 4th option in Year 12. Students must take A-level Maths to study Further Maths.
AS Further Maths	Equivalent in size to half an A level. Further Maths students take AS Further Maths exam at the end of Year 12 and can choose to stop studying Further Maths at the end of that year, gaining an AS qualification. Alternatively, they can continue towards the full A-level Further Maths qualification in Year 13.

Acronym	Meaning
KS3	**Key Stage 3**. Years 7–9, when students are typically aged 11–14.
KS4	**Key Stage 4**. Years 10–11, when students usually study for their GCSEs.
KS5	**Key Stage 5**. Years 12–13, covering the final two years of secondary education, typically in Sixth Form.
Post-16 education	Education or training undertaken after Year 11, including Sixth Form, colleges or apprenticeships.
FE	**Further Education**. Education after secondary school, generally below degree level, including college courses.
HE	**Higher Education**. Study at university or another provider offering degree-level and similar qualifications.