



Ref: U:\HoY\9\Y9-PE/Options
November 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your son is now approaching Year 10 and is required to choose the optional subjects he wishes to pursue to GCSE. Our aim over the years has been to develop a broad and balanced education for pupils in Year 10 & 11 and thereby provide a sound base for success and happiness in A Level studies and future life.

Your son's education will comprise compulsory examination subjects taking up about 55% of the week, compulsory non-examination subjects 10%, and optional examination subjects 35%.

Compulsory examination subjects are:

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| Mathematics | All students will study one GCSE in Mathematics. Some students will also study GCSE Further Maths. |
| Science | A Science course comprising Physics, Chemistry and Biology, normally certified as three GCSE passes |
| English | Two GCSEs comprising both Language and Literature |
| Religious Education | Short course GCSE |

Compulsory non-examination lessons are in:

Games
Personal and Social Education

In addition your son will choose four options from:

French, German, Geography, History, Music, Art, Resistant Materials, Religious Education, Graphics, Business Studies, Physical Education, Computing and ICT. Thus your son will be able to gain a maximum of **eleven GCSE** passes in total.

We would anticipate that most students would choose a language and either Geography or History in their choice of options. The government recently introduced a new performance indicator for schools called the English Baccalaureate, which measures the percentage of students in a school who pass five GCSEs at Grade C or above in English, Mathematics, Science a Modern Language and History or Geography. We must always consider the individual strengths and needs of each pupil however, and therefore this pathway will not be the correct choice for some.

The process of making Optional Choices:

Year 9 Careers Workshop

Your son will attend a Careers Workshop during the school day on either the 5 or 6 December depending on which form he belongs to. Each workshop will last one hour and normal lessons will continue around the workshops.

Pupils will complete two interactive activities which will help them understand the links between Year 9 option choices and careers.

Year 9 Options Evening

There will be a Year 9 Options Evening on Monday 9 January at 6.30pm where we will issue the Key Stage 4 prospectus. Please regard attendance at this evening as essential for your son's future success. Pupils are expected to attend the evening with a parent and I hope the evening will put pupils in a position where they will be able to make informed decisions of their own. Due to limited space in the School Hall, we ask that only one parent attends with their son.

Year 9 Parents' Evening

The Year 9 Parents' Evening will take place on Wednesday 18 January between 4.15pm and 7.15pm. Your son will have made appointments for you using the relevant pages in his planner. This evening will enable you to discuss your son's progress and present a further opportunity for pupils and parents to gather the necessary information to assist them in making the right options for GCSE. Questions can be asked and, hopefully, answers given to any concerns that may be troubling you. By that date you will have had a chance to peruse the Key Stage 4 prospectus at your leisure and discuss preliminary option inclinations. We expect pupils to sit alongside their parents at this evening so they can take an active part in the discussions on their current progress and option choices.

Student Interview

Every Year 9 pupil will have an individual interview with a senior member of staff to discuss GCSE options between Monday 23 January and Friday 27 January. We shall expect that he will bring a completed Key Stage 4 application form with him to this meeting. The prospectus will have been distributed on the 9 January and I hope this will allow plenty of time for discussion at home. All pupils will need to have completed the application form by Monday 23 January.

Once pupils have a provisional programme of study we shall pass the information to Subject Leaders to ask for their opinion on course viability. We shall organise an additional interview for any pupil who is deemed to be unsuitable for a subject. We must ensure that every pupil has a viable programme of study.

GCSEs are important to your son's future. They are more difficult, studied at a higher level and in more depth than Key Stage 3 subjects. Therefore, it is important that he chooses the right subjects and that he is happy, well motivated and hard working from the outset. Success will only come from two years' hard work.

If there are any questions relating to this letter that you would like to discuss in more detail please do not hesitate to contact me. Miss Bieber (Head of Year 9) will also support and guide your son through this process and will be happy to offer advice to parents.

Yours sincerely



J A Dixon
Deputy Headmaster

Return to: Form Tutor by Friday 9 December 2016

YEAR NINE OPTIONS AND PARENTS' EVENINGS

Pupil's Name: Form:

- I confirm that I have received the letter on issues relating to Year 9 GCSE options []
- I expect to attend the Year 9 Options Evening on the 9 January with my son []
- I expect to attend the Year 9 Parents' Evening on the 18 January with my son []

Parent/Guardian Signature: Date: