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December 2018

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your son is now approaching Year 10 and will soon be making his optional subject choices for GCSE. We aim to provide a broad and balanced education for students in Year 10 & 11 and thereby provide a sound base for transition and success 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:

Further Maths.

Science A Science course comprising Physics, Chemistry and Biology, certified as three GCSE

passes.

English Two GCSEs comprising both Language and Literature

Compulsory non-examination lessons are:

Religious Education 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.

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 5 or above in English, Mathematics, Science a Modern Language and History or Geography. We always consider the individual strengths and needs of each student and recognise that this pathway will not be the correct choice for some students.

The process of making Optional Choices:

Year 9 Careers Workshop

Your son will attend a Careers Workshop during the school day on either the 3 or 5 December depending on which form he belongs to. Each workshop will last one hour and normal lessons will continue around the workshops.

Students will complete 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 14 January at 6.30pm where we will issue the Key Stage 4 prospectus. This evening will provide you with essential information for your son's future success. Students are expected to attend the evening with a parent and I hope the evening will put them in a position where they will be able to make informed decisions of their own. We shall be asking parents to sign up for the presentations they wish to attend with their son prior to the evening. Presentations will be selected through an online booking system and we shall send a web link to parents after the Christmas holiday. 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 23 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 students 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 students 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 Meeting

Yours sincerely,

Every Year 9 student will have an individual meeting with a senior member of staff to discuss GCSE options between Monday 28 January and Friday 1 February. 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 14 January and I hope this will allow plenty of time for discussion at home. All students will need to have completed the application form by Monday 28 January.

Once students 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 student who is deemed to be unsuitable for a subject. We must ensure that every student 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.

| J A Dixon Deputy Headmaster | | |
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| YEAR 9 OPTION AND PARENTS' EVENINGS | | |
| Name of student: 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 14 January with my son |] |] |
| I expect to attend the Year 9 Parents' Evening on the 23 January with my son | [|] |
| Parent/Guardian Signature: Date: | ••••• | |