

15 October 2021

Dear parents and carers,

GCSE Options

We hope that you and your family are well and look forward to a restful half term. As we are approaching the time of year when Year 9 students choose their GCSE Options, we are writing to explain how the process works.

In order to guide your child through the GCSE options process, and given that making decisions can be challenging at times, we will deliver specifically-designed PSHCE sessions entitled 'Informed Choices' during Term 2. This will include guidance on choice making, careers and pathways research, input from Heads of Department for a range of Options subjects, study skills and reflective case studies from current Sixth Form students.

Please find listed below the key dates for this important period:

- **1 November 2021:** 'Informed Choices' launch to students during assembly and PSHCE sessions and GCSE options booklet released on website
- **17 December 2021:** Year 9 Reports issued to parents and carers
- **11 January 2022:** Year 9 Parent Consultation Evening via SchoolCloud
- **18, 19 and 20 January 2022:** Virtual GCSE Options Presentations (see details below)
- **21 January 2022:** GCSE Options Online Form live
- **31 January 2022:** Deadline for submitting online GCSE Options Form

As part of their GCSE Core Subjects, all students must study English Language and Literature, Mathematics, 3 separate Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics), a Humanities subject (either Geography or History), Core PE and PSHCE.

In addition, all students must choose 3 Option Subjects out of the following choices: Art & Design, Business, Computer Science, Drama, Design & Technology, Food Preparation & Nutrition, French, German, Music, PE (GCSE), Religious Studies, Spanish, or another Humanities subject (Geography or History).

We will ask you to have in mind a reserve Option Subject, although we will not request this on your option form. Very rarely we are unable to offer the 3 choices made by a student, and should this be the case for your child, we will make contact to discuss how to move forward, including consideration of a reserve subject. This therefore means that, unless you hear from us, your child will be able to study the submitted GCSE Option Subjects.

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Due to the risks and uncertainties linked to the pandemic, the school has again this year decided not to host our traditional Options Evening in school. Following on the very successful virtual GCSE Options Events run last year, we would like to invite you and your child to attend virtual live events where the Heads of Department of GCSE Option subjects will present their respective subject and will take the opportunity to answer your questions. These events will take place between 16:30 and 19:00 as follows:

- **18 January 2022:** Art & Design/Drama/Design & Technology/Food Preparation & Nutrition/PE
- **19 January 2022:** French/German/Spanish/Computer Science/Music
- **20 January 2022:** History/Geography/Business/Religious Studies

All events will last 20 minutes and will be staggered in a way that you can attend as many as you wish, with none of them overlapping. For your information, all events will be recorded and made available via your child's SharePoint account from 24 January 2022. You will receive a Teams invitation in January to all these events as well as a link to a pastoral and academic presentation which again will be accessible via your child's SharePoint account.

You will receive another letter closer to the time detailing how your child's GCSE Options Subject choice should be submitted using our online GCSE Options Form.

We would also like to remind you that following the publication of your child's report on 17 December 2021, you will have the opportunity to speak to your child's teachers during the Year 9 Consultation Evening which will be taking place online via the SchoolCloud system on 11 January 2022. If you have any specific questions with regards to the progress of your child and choice of option subjects, this will be the appropriate time to speak to teachers.

Finally, we are aware that this time of year can add stress to students as they make choices which impact their future. With this in mind, we would like to recommend the following useful links:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>
<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/subject-choices-year-10>

Yours sincerely,



Mrs V Ricks
Deputy Headteacher



Mr C Love
Assistant Headteacher (Year 9)