

December 2020

Dear Parent,

**Re: Year 9 GCSE Option Process**

January sees the start of the Year 9 GCSE option choices process and I am writing to inform you of some key dates relating to this. Obviously, we have had to make some modifications from our normal process but have taken all possible steps to ensure that Year 9 students are in no way disadvantaged this year.

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> – Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January: All Year 9 students have an Options Assembly in tutorial.**

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January: Year 9 Parents Options Information Presentation, hosted on the website.**

During their Options Assembly, students will receive an Option Booklet that describes the different GCSE subjects available. This will be a useful guide in your discussions at home about which GCSE subjects your daughter/son should take. If students and parents wish to look at this booklet before the assembly it is also available on the school website.

In the recorded Year 9 Parents Options Information Presentation available from Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January, we will go through the process for parents and provide further information regarding the GCSE options and how to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum for your daughter/son. This is therefore a very important presentation.

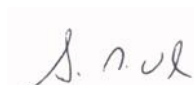
In the weeks following the Parents Option Information Presentation, each student will have an individual guidance meeting with a senior member of staff, in line with safety regulations regarding COVID transmission. In January, students will be completing a personal profile form during tutorial prior to the guidance meetings to help guide these discussions. At this meeting, the student's personal profile will be discussed and the GCSE options they are considering. This discussion will result in an electronic form being filled in, the results of which will be emailed to parents to confirm their choices. This will offer parents and students a chance to have a further discussion about the options before the choices are finalised.

The guiding principle of our process is finding the most appropriate route through Key Stage 4 for each child to give them the best chance of success at 16. Our guidance meeting will focus on the student's interests, current level of achievement, long-term ideas about careers and the way they like to learn.

We welcome conversations with parents during the process and will do our best to answer queries quickly. However, with a large year group, we ask for your patience if some research is required before we can respond. At each stage in the process you will be kept informed. Do not hesitate to contact Abi Welch, Head of Year, with any queries.

We look forward to helping you and your daughter/son through the GCSE Option Process.

Yours faithfully,



Steve Wilson

Headteacher/National Leader in Education

## OPTIONS INFORMATION EVENING

This information sheet will hopefully help you understand the information you will receive during the Option Information presentation available on the school website from Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021

- Your child will receive an Option Information Booklet that includes information about all the courses available to study at GCSE level and an Option Block sheet during their Options Assembly in the first week of term. This is also available on our website.
- All students study English, Mathematics and Science (Core Subjects). The exact Science course students will follow within the core will be decided later in the year, informed by students' achievements at KS2 and the information we have about their progress in Year 9 and potential achievement. Teachers' recommendations and students' expressed preferences will be considered as part of this process.
- In addition to the core subjects, students can select a number of other option subjects. In the Option Information Booklet, each Head of Department has included details of the syllabus and assessment and some comments from students about the types of learning in their subject.
- Students select one subject from each option block (vertical column) – see attached Option Block sheet. Students therefore select 4 option subjects.
- Almost all students take at least one of the subjects highlighted in green.
- Students who opt for the Applied Studies Course will have the opportunity to sample, alongside their academic studies, many different types of career, for example plumbing, electrical work, construction, hair and beauty, in order to develop skills to help them access higher-level courses at a later date. Applied Studies takes up 2 of their 4 option choices and we will advise students for whom this is an appropriate course to consider.
- The choice of courses is decided after a guidance meeting and further discussions if needed. However, we reserve the right to make an informed professional decision about which package of core and option courses is most appropriate and most likely to lead to success.

- The aim of this process is to help students go on to study courses they will enjoy, be successful in and which will allow them to progress on to their chosen Post 16 and Post 18 career or degree intention.

The approach we adopt has been very successful over a number of years.