

Year 8 into 9 Options Brochure 2024 - 2025



Pathways to your future.

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Dear Parent / Carer,

Year 9 Courses and Options 2023-2024

Throughout the first two years of their secondary education your son/daughter has received a broad and balanced curriculum. This broad curriculum and development of foundation knowledge will continue into year 9, whilst allowing students to make some curriculum choices about **Level 2 qualifications** that will be studied fully in years 10 and 11.

In Year 9, students follow a broad curriculum of 12 core and 2 option subjects, which supports the development of domain knowledge and transferable skills and lays the foundations for GCSE studies in Years 10 and 11. In Year 9, students continue to study a broad range of compulsory core subjects: **English, Mathematics, Science, Geography, History, Music, Art & Design, Design Technology, Computer Science, a Modern Foreign Language, PE and RE / Ethics**. Students can then select 2 further subjects from a range of option subjects available.

This booklet provides details of the subjects available to our students in Years 9, 10 and 11 together with the options process and timescale for choices to be made. We want each student to choose wisely, having considered his or her own aptitudes and abilities, and hope that you will be able to support them in making these important educational decisions.

We recommend that families consider what lies beyond KS4 when making choices. All students will progress to Post-16 education. Most will follow A Level or equivalent courses whilst others will wish to move to work-based learning at 16 so it is important to plan ahead when making choices for Year 9.

Towards the end of Year 9 we will guide students along one of three broad pathways according to their current performance at school to ensure they are stretched and challenged but also able to cope with the demands of their Level 2 courses.

This booklet provides details of the options process, timeline, frequently asked questions and subject pages. If you have any subject specific questions after you have read through this brochure then please email the appropriate class teacher or subject leader. ([link to emails](#))

Mr Newbey, Assistant Headteacher, will oversee the overall process and help students arrive at the final option choices. Please remember that whilst we will do our utmost to provide all the subjects offered and to accommodate all reasonable choices, financial, staffing or timetable constraints can occasionally make this impossible. We will engage you throughout the process and enter into a dialogue should we need to revisit option choices.

This is a crucial period for your child and I cannot stress too strongly the importance of the decisions being made. In response to parental feedback, the final Option Choices Form will now be available on our website, within the Student Zone: Options. The process must be **completed online no later than Friday 22nd March 2024** and confirmation of choices will be issued as soon as possible after this date.

Yours faithfully,



G R Mullings Headteacher

General Information

Curriculum Structure

The Year 9 Transition Year allows students to focus on future Level 2 qualifications, whilst strengthening foundation knowledge in preparation for KS4 studies in Years 10 & 11. It consists of compulsory Core Subjects and Option Subjects. Students choose two Option subjects at this stage.

Non Examination Courses

Students will continue to follow a Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme, consisting of themes that form a natural progression from Year 8. These include, but are not limited to, personal development focusing on social and moral responsibility, Relationship and Sex Education, Mental Health Education and First Aid.

Careers/Work-Related Learning aims to ensure that you are fully prepared for the next stage of your educational journey as well as the world of work, while **Personal Progress** involves Action Planning and planning for your future. This revolves around the School's policy of building your social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding (SMSC).

All students do Physical Education.

GCSE Religious Education (Short Course) will be studied by all students in Years 9 and 10, with the exam being taken at the end of Year 10.

Examination courses

Our KS3 curriculum is designed to allow students access to a wide range of courses in Year 9 that will then support informed decision making about final GCSE options, taken in Year 9, to be studied in Years 10 & 11. Students should consider their two Year 8 options carefully, in line with any future aspirations they may have. For example, a student wishing to study GCSE Music in Years 10 & 11, should take Music as an option in Year 9 to develop their knowledge and skills to a suitable level. Further advice around GCSE choices will be given in Year 9.

Some subjects which are not studied in Year 9, will be available as GCSE options in Year 9 - these are: Media Studies, Psychology, Business Studies and Economics.

The English Baccalaureate

What is the English Baccalaureate?

Our curriculum is also designed to allow a large percentage of students to achieve the English Baccalaureate or EBacc. This is not a qualification in itself, but a measure that recognises where students have secured a grade 4 or a grade 5 or better across a core of academic subjects - English Language, Mathematics, History or Geography, at least two Sciences and a Modern Foreign Language.

More information about the English Baccalaureate will be given during Year 9 study.

Options

Year 8 into 9 Option Choices

As part of our commitment that all students be given the most effective guidance throughout the options process we have a staggered options process, whereby students study a broad range of subjects whilst being able to refine their subjects at two points - at the end of Year 8 and at the end of Year 9.

In Year 8, each student will be guided toward two initial option choices. Guidance will be given to students regarding their suitability for different courses based upon a range of information including their academic progress throughout Year 7 and 8, their learning style and their flair for specific subjects.

Year 9 into 10 Option Choices *(Full details of this options process will be provided next year.)*

During Year 9, once they have had ample opportunity to experience their initial options subjects, students will choose their GCSE / BTEC subjects for Years 10 and 11.

In Year 9, students will be guided onto one of three broad pathways to ensure that they are making the best decisions, in line with their academic achievements and aspirations.

The Year 9 Course Structure

For Year 9 all students study the compulsory core subjects: as well as choosing two option subjects.

| Year 9 Course Structure | |
|--|--|
| Core Subjects studied by all students | <p>English Mathematics Science* Geography History Religious Education (GCSE Short Course will be taken in Y10) Modern Foreign Language (French, German or Spanish) Core PE Core Music Technology Core Design & Technology and Food Core Art & Design Core Computing &</p> <p>* Students will select Combined or Triple Science as part of the Year 9 options process.</p> |
| Option subjects - choose 2 from | <p>Art Photography Drama Performing Arts Music ICT Computing Design & Technology Food Preparation and Nutrition Physical Education Sports Studies Cambridge Nationals</p> |
| Additional subjects that will be available from the beginning of Year 10 subject to staffing and timetabling constraints | <p>Psychology Media Business Studies Economics</p> |

Important dates in the Options Process

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Tuesday 23 January 2024 | Year 8 Options Information Evening |
| Weds 24th January 2024 | Options Brochure available in the Student Zone on the school website Options form opens |
| Friday 22nd March 2024 | Deadline for completion of online options choices |
| Before May Half Term | Once the initial allocation of students to courses has been processed and timetabling constraints have been identified, individual conversations may take place with students where it is not possible to accommodate all of their chosen subjects, to discuss alternatives. Where appropriate, options choices will also be reviewed by the SENCO, who will also conduct options interviews with students placed on the register of Special Educational Needs. |
| Summer Term | Option choices confirmed. Please bear in mind that, before choices can be confirmed, final timetabling viability checks must be completed; the options process forms only part of structuring the timetable for the next academic year. |

Constraints

We aim to build the timetable as best we can to reflect all students' choices. Inevitably a minority of students will be allocated reserve courses where the optimum timetabling solution will not allow a particular combination.

Health and Safety dictates that in certain practical subjects a maximum group size be observed. These restrictions make subscription to such courses more competitive.

Significant under-subscription to a course may render it financially unviable, in which case the school reserves the right not to run the course.

We will try to give Subject 1 and Subject 2 wherever possible.
We can not guarantee all three choices, but will try to allocate them.

What to do now

Once course preferences have been arrived at, students should enter their choices by accessing the form **on our website, Student Zone, Options or using the link sent out by Miss Hawes.**

You **must** complete the online options form **by Friday 22nd March 2024**, please see our website, Student Zone, Options.

Option choices completed late will be processed after those received on time and may result in a restricted choice, so please ensure you complete the online form on time.

Frequently Asked Questions

· **Does my son/daughter need to state a reserve for every option chosen?**

- One reserve subject is required.
- Courses may be oversubscribed or may not run due to insufficient demand. Giving a reserve subject allows the timetabler to best meet your child's requests.
- We will try to give Subject 1 and Subject 2 wherever possible. We can not guarantee both choices, but will try to allocate them.

Where can I get more advice about this process?

- Advice is available from subject teachers, the Year Leader, Miss Hawes, and our Careers Advisor is also available for individual meetings by appointment.

To what extent will the school tell my son/daughter which optional subjects he/she should or should not take?

- At this stage, students should make choices based on subjects they enjoy and are interested in. Subject teachers will advise and guide them, supported by the year team. Students will also be supported throughout Year 9 as they make their final GCSE / vocational options choices.

Who should parents contact if they have questions or concerns prior to the options form submission regarding (a) specific subjects or (b) choices generally?

- Questions relating to a specific subject should be addressed to the subject teacher or Subject Leader.
- Questions regarding the options process should be addressed to Mr A Newbey, the Assistant Headteacher overseeing the options process.

What is the next step if my son/daughter does not get one or more of his/her first option choices?

- We will try to give Subject 1 and Subject 2 wherever possible. We can not guarantee all three choices, but will try to allocate them. If it is not possible to allocate all of their choices, then in most cases, a reserve choice will be allocated. The situation will be explained to them and they will be given an opportunity to change their choices if necessary.
- A revised form giving the option blocks will be issued so that they can discuss the available choices with you before returning the completed form so that their allocation can be finalised.
- At this point it will not be possible to change the subjects in the option block.

· **Who should parents contact in the first instance if they have questions or concerns following the options outcome?**

- If parents have any concerns following the options allocation they should contact Mr A Newbey, the Assistant Headteacher overseeing the options process, who will work with them as far as possible to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

- The options process is not undertaken lightly and timetabling and staffing constraints have an impact on what we can offer. Inevitably, some students will not get exactly what they would like but we will work with parents and students to achieve the best possible outcome.

- **Can parents request an interview (outside of parents' evening) at any of the above stages?**

- We would like to assist you in the options process as much as possible. Please contact the school to make an appointment to speak to the subject teacher or Subject Leader if you have questions about a particular course, the Year Leader or your child's form tutor or other support staff for general questions, or Mr Newbey on specific aspects of the options process.

Year 9 Core Subjects

These subjects are studied by all students in Year 9.

English

Mathematics

Science

History

Geography

Modern Foreign Language

Religious Education

Physical Education

Core Music

Core Art & Design

Core Computer Science

Core Design & Technology and Food

Option Subjects

Art

Drama

Music

Performing Arts BTEC

Photography

IT BTEC

Computer Science

Design & Technology

Food Preparation and Nutrition

Physical Education

Sports Studies Cambridge Nationals

- [Link to Curriculum Maps on website which outline curriculum content for each subject in Y9 and beyond.](#)
- [Link to detailed information of KS4 Vocational and GCSE courses for future consideration.](#)