

September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

As your child begins the final year of KS3, I am writing to give you some key information about the Options process that will take place later this academic year. I do hope this information will be helpful to you and your child. Year 9 can sometimes be given the label as being 'The Middle Year' and one that is less important as full GCSE study has yet to begin. We know, however, that a successful Year 9 is a very important building block that helps prepare students for GCSE exams.

After Christmas, we will be undertaking the Options process where students will make some choices about the subjects they wish to study at GCSE in Years 10 and 11. It is always an exciting time for students and a chance to focus on those subjects where they have a particular interest or strength.

We follow the National Curriculum at KS4 where every student will study English, Maths and Science, with some curriculum time provided for non-examination PE and PSCS. Alongside this, students will study a further four GCSE courses. All students will study either Geography or History and the vast majority (no less than 75%) will continue to study a foreign language.

Some important notes:

- For those subject areas that your child does not continue to study at KS4, it is still important to develop their skills and knowledge as much as possible before the end of KS3.
- Progress and attainment in Science will determine whether individual students are chosen to study separate GCSE's at Higher Level in Biology, Chemistry and Physics, or whether they follow the Combined Trilogy Course, which means they achieve two Science grades. The combined course can be entered at higher level (Grade 9-1 available) or Foundation level (grades 5-1 available).
- Although we aim to provide all students with their first choices for Options, if courses are very popular and oversubscribed, then we will look at the students' effort and engagement in the subject area during the year to allocate places. Oversubscribed courses are often the smaller cohort courses: Engineering, Resistant Materials, Food & Nutrition and Photography. Therefore, it is important for students to keep all their options open and work hard in every subject area.

As this term proceeds, we will be refining our plans for providing Option course information and will keep you updated.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Hudson  
Vice Principal