

Subjects and Courses 2019

MAKING YOUR PREFERENCES

Your curriculum in KS4 is made up of the Core (these are the subjects everybody has to study) and the Additional Curriculum (these are the subjects you have some control over)



Our Key Stage 4 Curriculum aims to:

- Challenge all of our students, whatever their ability
- Have flexibility to allow students to express a preference for some subjects they really want to study
- Offer work related learning and enterprise opportunities
- Offer pathways for students of different abilities to ensure appropriate levels of challenge
- Ensure all students are studying for appropriate qualifications that allow progression on to post 16 courses

The selection of courses is a very important and exciting matter and one in which students, parents and the school must work together to achieve the best possible outcome.

It may not be possible for us to meet every student's wishes. We create a best-fit timetable, based on the range of option preferences but sometimes a particular combination of subjects cannot be provided. Some teaching groups may be under-subscribed, others may be over-subscribed, so places cannot be guaranteed.

There are different pathways through the Key Stage 4 Options. These are:

- ▶ **EBACC Route:** The English Baccalaureate. This is made up of a modern foreign language, together with either Geography or History and one open option
- ▶ **Attainment 8 Route:** A choice between one of the following GCSEs – Computer Science, French, Geography, History and Spanish and then two open options
- ▶ **Inside Out Curriculum Route** : A choice between two options and Inside Out curriculum

We have selected the route we feel most appropriate for your child, considering prior attainment, academic potential and student interests. If you feel you would like to change the route offered to your child, please speak to Mr Ellis or Mr Waite at the Options Evening.

Where students are required to modify their option choices, we liaise closely with home to ensure that we avoid frustration and disappointment for our students.

The Options Preferences

The preference of options should be made on the basis of ability, aptitude and developing aspirations. If in doubt, students and parents are advised to discuss the suitability of each option with the Tutor, Subject Teachers and Directors of Learning. We also plan to interview students, where necessary, to ensure that they have made the appropriate choices.

What are the different qualifications?

1. **General Certificate of Education (GCSE)**

GCSEs have changed and will be based on a numerical scale from 9-1, with 9 being the highest. Seven is equivalent to a current A grade. Five is equivalent to a top C grade in the new GCSEs. In some subjects, the teacher will have to decide upon a tier of entry which will set a ceiling of achievement. Mathematics, for example, is tiered. It is vital that students work to the best of their ability from the start of Year 9, as the decision that teachers make will be based on attainment and progress.

GCSEs are based mainly on examinations, with few controlled assessments. All examinations will be taken in the summer of Year 11.

2. **BTEC**

BTECs are vocational qualifications. They provide a more practical, real world approach to learning and skills development, alongside a key theoretical background. School-based BTECs are at *Level 2 and Level 1*. The BTEC qualifications are worth **one** GCSE pass. There is only one external examined component. The rest of the qualifications are assessed through assignments.

3. **NCFE**

NCFE is equivalent to one GCSE and aids the development of personal learning and thinking skills. Assessment of the course centres around project and themed based work and students create a portfolio of evidence and take an external written examination.

4. **Cambridge National Certificate**

Cambridge Nationals are vocational qualifications, equivalent to GCSEs, for 14–16 year olds. Recognised on performance tables, each qualification goes from Level 1 to 2. They provide an excellent foundation for progression to Cambridge Technicals and other Level 3 vocational qualifications as well as A Levels and apprenticeships

What do I do if I need more information?

I hope that the contents of this booklet, and the Options Evening For Your Child's GCSE Choices on **Thursday 7 February 2018**, will answer all of your questions but, if this is not the case, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Waite, at the school, to discuss any matters concerning this procedure.

How important are the English Baccalaureate Subjects?

The current Government is placing a huge emphasis on the English Baccalaureate. Students are said to have this if they achieve a grade 5 or above in each of the following GCSE courses: English, English Literature, Maths, Two Sciences (including Computer Science), Geography or History and a Foreign Language. For students who are aspiring to University, having these qualifications may prove very important in the future.

Mr R Ellis
Headteacher