



22nd November 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

Year 9 Options, Overview, Process and Key Dates

We are now starting to plan for September 2024, and part of this planning involves your child's preferences for the option subjects they will study in Year 10 and 11. Over the next few weeks, students will view face-to-face and virtual assemblies from subject leaders. These will also be available on our website and a link to this will be sent to you by the weekend.

The Parents' Consultation Evening on 30th November is a great opportunity to discuss subjects with your child's subject teachers, but you will also book an appointment with a member of the Leadership Team (Headteacher, Deputy Head and Assistant Headteachers). They will discuss the options with you and complete an 'initial interest' online survey. This is to help design the 'Option blocks', and to help us avoid as many impossible combinations as we can, so we do need all students to fill this in.

These will be 5-minute appointments on SchoolCloud, so it would help to have had an initial conversation with your child about what they would like to study, to watch the videos for any subjects they are considering, and for your child to be present at the appointment. We have included detailed information with this letter to help with those discussions, including answers to some Frequently Asked Questions.

Key Dates in the Options Process:

- **Year 9 Parents' Consultation Evening** is on Thursday 30th November on SchoolCloud – parents/carers and students will meet with a member of the Leadership Team and complete the initial interest survey.
- **Year 9 Options Event** is in school, face-to-face, on Thursday 11th January. At this event we will present more detailed information about subjects and the option blocks, and you will have the opportunity to discuss subjects with staff. More details on this will be sent out later this term.
- **Year 9 Options Online Form** (for selecting first and reserve choices for each of the three blocks) will open on Friday 26th January and close on Friday 9th February at midday.
- **Options will be confirmed** to students by Friday 24th May. At that time, we will ask parents and carers to click on a link to see the option choices for their child and confirm that they have seen and are happy with them.

What is the EBacc?

The English Baccalaureate is an award which certifies and recognises a student's achievements across a core group of selected GCSE subjects both nationally and internationally, keeping young people's options open for further study and future careers.

The EBacc is:

- English language and literature
- Maths
- The sciences (combined science or separate sciences)
- Geography or history
- A language

Research shows that a student's socio-economic background impacts the subjects they choose at GCSE, and that this determines their opportunities beyond school.

A study by the UCL Institute of Education shows that studying subjects included in the EBacc provides students with greater opportunities in further education and increases the likelihood that a student will stay on in full-time education. Sutton Trust research reveals that studying the EBacc can help improve a young person's performance in English and maths.

Why is Religious Studies (RS) compulsory?

GCSE RS is part of our core offer for a number of reasons. We are a school of Christian religious character. The RE programme of study provides understanding and tolerance of other cultures and religions, supporting the teaching of British Values and SMSC. It provides further pathways into Sixth Form and builds on the skills used and developed in EBacc subjects. It is a full GCSE but is delivered in half of the time of other subjects. We have a great standard of success and student feedback is overwhelmingly positive.

Why study a language?

At QEGS we believe that learning a language gives our students a skill for life, as they learn functional language that they can use for trips abroad, holidays and in the world of work.

In addition to this, studying a language helps students to develop a range of other useful skills such as communication skills, problem-solving, self-confidence, resilience, and creativity. It can help students with their native language, as they make links with new vocabulary, improve their understanding of grammar, and learn techniques to memorise new words. Students also deepen their knowledge of the world around them as they explore other cultures and traditions.

A foreign language qualification is highly respected in the world of education and can aid students in future college and university applications, for example for entry onto increasingly popular degree courses such as International Business.

In an increasingly globalized economy, there are a wealth of career opportunities available with languages in sectors such as engineering, fashion, sports, military, journalism, marketing, intelligence, education, hospitality and travel and tourism. Statistics also show that having a language qualification can lead to a higher salary!

Any students interested in studying a language at GCSE can speak to their teachers to find out more information about the course – we are more than happy to help!

How many hours of science are allocated for combined and triple science?

All students study science for 10 hours as part of our core curriculum. If students choose triple science (separate sciences), they will then have a further 2 hours, so 12 hours in total, with reduced curriculum time in RS and Core IT. All students study all three sciences. This does not affect their choices from their option blocks.

Do I need to choose triple science to study A level sciences?

No, you can access A level sciences from combined science (trilogy) so long as you meet the entry requirements for those courses.

Do you have to take GCSE Business, to then go on and take it at A Level?

No, there is no requirement to currently study business at GCSE before picking it up at A Level.

How much sport do students do if they don't pick one of the PE options? Will they still be able to play for school teams?

One hour per week, as part of the core offer. Yes, they can still play for school and be involved in the co-curricular sport.

Can I choose art and art textiles?

No, there is too much crossover between these subjects, so it is not possible to opt for both.

Would you recommend students do not take both Engineering and Design and Technology? And if not, why not?

These subjects have many crossovers/similarities and so we would not recommend choosing both.

What are the option subjects?

All students must choose history or geography (and can choose both) and two other options, including:

- Agricultural Engineering
- Art, Craft and Design
- Art Textiles
- Business Studies
- Child Development & Care
- Computer Science
- Construction Skills
- Creative & Digital Media Production
- Dance
- Design and Technology
- Drama
- Engineering
- Food prep and nutrition
- French
- Music
- Physical Education (GCSE)
- Spanish
- Sports Science (Cambridge National)

These are in alphabetical order, not blocks.

There is more information on the curriculum for each of these subjects on our website:

<https://www.queenelizabeths.derbyshire.sch.uk/Learning/>

What happens if the subjects your child wants to do are in the same block?

Option blocks are only decided after the initial interest survey is complete, and we arrange them to meet the preferences of as many students as possible.

Unfortunately, if subjects are in the same block, a student will not be able to choose both as they are timetabled at the same time. We wish that we could make 100% of combinations possible each year, but unfortunately it is not possible, and we have to put together blocks that meet the needs of as many students as possible. It is very important that we know your child's initial interests so we can consider that in the planning.

We hope that this detailed information, and the process will support you and your child in making the decision about their preferences. We thank you in advance for your support at the Parents' Consultation Evening and Options Event, and for discussing their subject choices with them.

Please do contact me if you have any further questions about this process.

Yours faithfully



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Assistant Headteacher

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