

16 January 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

## **OPTIONS PROCESS**

The next few months are an important time for our Year 9 students. They are making the transition into Key Stage 4 and have to start considering the choice of pathways they may take in the future. Making informed decisions is even more critical as all young people are now required to stay in education, training or employment with training until they are 18.

I am writing to tell you of some important changes, and to remind you of some of the key events coming up that we have planned to help your child through the Year 9 options process. All these events have been advertised through Newsletters over the past months, but you may find it useful to have them all in one place.

### **Changes This Year**

In the light of national trends towards the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), we have reviewed the curriculum we provide to our more able students and have changed our approach to choice of curriculum pathways.

From September 2017, our top 50% most able linguists will be required to be on the EBacc pathway. This will ensure that they study the full suite of subjects that the Government refers to as the EBacc, including Maths, English, Sciences, a Humanity and a Modern Foreign Language.

We have made this decision as we believe that it would be beneficial for these students to gain the EBacc suite of GCSEs. We are concerned that if we do not require this we will be doing a disservice to these students, who will be competing with other like students both locally and nationally, who will have the EBacc. We also believe that this group of students is quite capable of achieving high grades in French and Spanish, and that it is a valuable qualification to have for future applications to higher education. The Department for Education is currently pushing for 90% of students to take a Modern Foreign Language – we believe that 50% is the appropriate proportion for our students. We are also aware that there may be students who are not in the top half of the year group linguistically who may like to study a language. We will welcome applications from those students, but only if we feel that it is an appropriate curriculum, enabling them to obtain the best possible grades.

The top 50% most able linguists will therefore be on the EBacc pathway. Students and parents/carers will be informed over the next week if this applies to them.

## **Timetable for the Options Process**

### **Tuesday 31 January & Wednesday 1 February      Options Booklet Issued**

This will be issued to all Year 9 students during Course 42 lessons. Please check with your child that he/she has the booklet, which explains the process in detail and gives information about each course. **The Options Application Form 2017 is at the back of this booklet.** The booklet will also be available on our website. **Tutors will be meeting all students over the following two weeks to discuss appropriate pathways.**

### **Tuesday 7 February      Options Information Evening**

We are holding our annual Year 9 Options Evening on Tuesday 7 February from 4.30pm till 7.00pm, in the Post 16 Centre. During the evening there will be two presentations, at 4.30pm and 5.45pm, regarding the curriculum at Key Stage 4 and detailing the process of selecting and applying for courses. **It is important you attend one of these sessions in order to be fully aware of the process.** You will also have the opportunity to talk to staff from the full range of subjects about the courses available.

### **Wednesday 8 February      Options Fair (during lessons)**

The Options Fair is a chance for Year 9 students to discuss option subjects with Year 10 and 11 students currently studying each subject.

### **Thursday 23 February      Year 9 Parents' Evening**

The Parents' Evening is a further opportunity to discuss your child's progress in his/her subject areas and to discuss with staff the suitability for starting the new examination subject in September.

### **Friday 3 March      Deadline for Return of Options Forms**

Completed Options Application Forms need to be returned to your child's tutor.

### **Wednesday 8 March      Application Interviews Start**

All students will be invited to an interview with a senior member of staff, at which the appropriateness of their course applications will be discussed. This could result in course changes; parents will be contacted if this is the case.

If you have any questions either about this process, or about the specifics of your child's options, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant tutor or Head of School.

We look forward to meeting you on Tuesday 7 and Thursday 23 February.

Yours faithfully



Adrian Green  
Vice Principal