

Ref: 119/17

18th December 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

Choices for Year 9

Your son is now approaching an important point of the compulsory part of his secondary education, and the time has therefore come to begin to choose the subjects that he would like to study in Year 9. This year we are continuing to operate an Options process for students entering Year 9. There is one main reason for this and that is the Key Stage 4 exam reforms. There is now greater content, demand and more rigorous questioning in all subjects. In response to these changes, we will need to give GCSE subjects more time, and one of the ways in which we are doing this is by allowing some subjects to begin teaching their GCSE course in Year 9. This means that careful consideration needs to be made as to which subjects your son may wish to study in the future.

The transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 is an important one, and we are committed to helping your son make that transition smoothly and successfully. In order to do this, your son will need to make the right choices for his studies in Year 9. To support that decision-making process, we have strengthened the Careers advice that is available to pupils.

You will receive two documents to support you and your son as you consider the options available to you. This letter sets out the choices that need to be made, and provides a form for you to communicate back to us what your choices are; in addition, a booklet sets out details for each course on offer. In addition, we will be holding our Year 9 Options evening in school at **6.00 pm on Tuesday 16th January**, when key members of staff will be on hand to explain the process and answer any questions you may have.

If you have any questions about the GCSE Choices process, please don't hesitate to contact myself or a colleague:

- subject-specific questions, such as your son's suitability for a course, or detailed questions about course requirements *etc*, are best referred to your son's subject teacher or to the relevant Head of Department. May I take this opportunity to remind you that there is a Year 8 Parents' Consultation Evening from **3:45pm on Wednesday 21st February**.
- questions about our Careers Education and Guidance programme are best addressed to the colleague who leads this area of our work, *viz* Mr G McLean;
- if you would like any advice about what adaptations we can make to the process if your son has special educational needs (or is disabled), please contact our SEND Co-ordinator, Mrs K Pritchard;
- questions about the Option Choices process should be referred to one of our Vice-Principals, Mr S Slater, who oversees it; and
- any pastoral matters may, as always, be referred to your son's Head of Year, Mrs V. Wyke.

Since this is only the second time we have run an options process in Year 8, I would be grateful for any feedback you may have, so that we can make the process even better next year.

With my best wishes as you approach this important stage in your son's education,

Yours faithfully,



Stephen Brierley
Principal