



9th March 2018

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Dear

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Year 8 Options –

Traditionally, students choose their GCSE options in Year 9 and begin their GCSE courses in Year 10. Like many schools, we are conscious that, with the increased rigour and demands of GCSEs, the five full terms in key stage 4 do not allow sufficient time for the required depth and breadth of study now required to be successful. Many schools have been delivering a 3 year key stage 4 for a number of years now. We have been looking closely at the impact of this and carrying out research to determine what is right for our students and school. As with any change, there will be some drawbacks as well as benefits. However, we believe that the benefits of such a change strongly outweigh the drawbacks.

We are confident that the key stage 3 curriculum can be completed in non-compulsory subjects by the end of Year 8 and, therefore, allow GCSE courses to begin in Year 9.

In the current curriculum requirements for key stage 4, there are only a small number of options to make. In order to move to this system, we will be working with Year 8 students to help them make decisions about which options might be suitable for them in terms of their interests, aptitude and career aspirations.

Although, a longer key stage 4 will support greater success and opportunity to achieve as well as possible at GCSE, we recognise that, for some, making important decisions around a small number of subjects that they will no longer study or choose from September will be quite daunting. Therefore, we are fully committed to supporting both students and parents with this process to ensure it is successful and meets everyone's needs.

We are also conscious that there is a strong link between students' achievement and their enjoyment of the courses they are studying. We believe that by focusing on the subjects where they are most motivated, students will excel.

The guidance and information that we give to Year 8 to enable them to make their choices is of paramount importance and I would ask you to take note of the following dates:-

28th March	Year 8 Options Evening (5pm to 7pm)
20th April	Deadline for options forms to be returned with initial decisions
Week of 30th April	Individual options interviews with tutors, Head of Year or Senior Leaders

In the next few weeks, assemblies, tutor periods and some lessons will be dedicated to helping students to understand the options process and the choices they have.

I look forward to seeing you at the Options Evening. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mr I Little
Assistant Headteacher