



Birchwood High School

your dreams, your future, our challenge

Dear Parents/Carer

As we approach the Year 8 Parents evening, understandably we have had some questions regarding the process for Year 9. For the past few years Birchwood has undertaken an Options process in Year 9 as a start to their GCSE's, however, the leadership of the school have reviewed this offer and undertaken research into other models and best practice. Following this review, we would like to outline the offer that will be in place for the current Year 8 into 9. Essentially Year 9 will become a Core Foundation Year. This will continue to support the Core of Key Stage 3, ensuring students receive a broad and balanced curriculum that enables them to study a wide range of subjects at an appropriate level. It will support transition to GCSE study, combining elements of KS3 and GCSE in an integrated approach, but not be a start of the GCSE. At the end of Year 9 students will undertake an Options procedure that will enable them to choose their actual GCSE options that they will then study for two years. At this point a full range of GCSE options will be available to the students.

In the Core Foundation Year students will study a core of five foundation subjects, this will include; English, Maths, Science, PE and PSHCE. They will then be able to choose from a suite of subjects, termed the Ebacc suite, which are made up from: French, German, Spanish, History, Geography, Religious Studies, and Computer Studies. They will also be expected to choose from a Creative suite that is made up of: Art, Music, Drama, Dance, Product Design and Food Technology. They will have five choices in total.

Core (compulsory)	Ebacc Suite (a minimum of two choices) *	Creative Suite (a minimum of two choices) *
English	French	Art
Maths	German	Music
Science	Spanish	Drama
PE	History	Dance
PSCHE	Geography	Product Design
	Religious Studies	Food Technology
	Computer Studies	
*For certain students there will be flexibility in the curriculum, and this will be done in detailed discussion with you and your child.		

The curriculum is designed to:

- ensure all students benefit from the core principle, skills and knowledge embedded within these subject areas
- enables a breadth of study
- and following feedback from stakeholders, we retain a level of choice into Year 9.

It is important to note that these will not be their final GCSE options.

In the coming weeks you will be informed of a comprehensive package of advice and guidance to ensure that students make choices that are suitable for their future progression. The choices will need to be completed by 17 May 2024. We will, however, be doing a 'dummy run' earlier this to ascertain staffing requirements. Therefore, for the upcoming parents evening we would very much like to focus on the current progress of your child. We look forward to seeing you at the school on Tuesday.

Kind regards

Mr R Noblett, Head of Year 8

Principal - Mr Sam Griffin

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