

2<sup>nd</sup> May 2018

Dear Year 8 Parent/Carer,

Headteacher: Mrs H L Millett

### **Year 8 into Year 9 and beyond**

Year 8 is coming to an end with your son/daughter soon about to start Year 9; there are some important points to which we would like to draw your attention.

#### ***Planning for GCSEs:***

In February/March of Year 9 students will start to make their option choices for GCSE. These will be the new GCSEs brought in as part of the Government reforms for first teaching from 2016 and examination in 2018. The new GCSEs are designed to be more demanding than current GCSEs.

A key expectation of the Government reforms is that all pupils should take at least 5 GCSEs in what are known as facilitating subjects. The idea is that by taking a broad core of subjects, no student, from any background, should have doors closed to future progression e.g. going to university. This is something we wholly endorse and has been a key component of our curriculum design for many years. The following conditions will therefore continue to apply for your son/ daughter at GCSE:

*“Unless there are exceptional circumstances, all students will take English, maths, and two sciences as well as at least one of geography or history. Students will also be encouraged to select a language.”*

#### ***The Year 9 Timetable:***

Our design of next year’s Year 9 timetable takes all this into account. For the most part, the Year 9 timetable will be the same as that in Year 8 with students continuing to further their knowledge, skills and understanding in maths, English, science, history, geography, PE, RE and a language.

Students will also take three ‘personalised options’ selected from: art, DT, drama, food/textiles, ICT, music and to possibly continue studying two languages for those who currently are already doing so. The students will have 2 lessons a week of each option for the duration of year 9, giving them more time than previously to deepen their knowledge of their chosen subjects.

In order to complete the timetabling process for Year 9, please complete the form at the end of this letter and return to Student Reception no later than Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May.

Rob McGreal

Assistant Principal

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## **Personalised Options:**

### **Art**

If you choose art you will explore specialised areas of art and design in greater depth. These will be wide ranging e.g. include digital portraits, ceramics, large sculpture, life drawing and abstract painting. You will have lots of choice and will get a taste of what it's like to be an art Student. The experience will be useful as a preparation for GCSE, but can be chosen simply for the pleasure of learning new creative techniques.

### **Drama**

In drama we will be covering three different skills throughout the year: devising, performing and reviewing.

#### Devising

We will begin by working in groups to create our own 15-30 minute play. You will be given a starting point and then asked to create your own play from it. You will have to use a range of drama skills to create an interesting and exciting piece. This piece will then be performed on a performance night to parents. You will be able to choose whether you would like to be a performer or do performance support (lighting, sound, costume etc.)

#### Performing

You will perform part of a play either in small groups or individually. We will be focusing on acting and in particular your use of voice, movement and characterisation. This will then be performed as part of a performance evening and again you will choose whether to perform or to carry out performance support.

#### Reviewing

During the year we will go to see a play at the theatre and you will be writing your own review of the play we have been to see.

### **Music**

If you choose music you will be developing your interest in performing, composing and arranging. As part of the course, you will need to be willing to make use of your chosen instrument / voice or develop music technology skills as well as being able to explore basic skills of playing instruments such as guitar and drum kit.

Units will include popular music, music for film and TV, developing performance skills and composition techniques, learning basic sound recording skills and experience aspects of the music industry.

You do **not** have to take art, music or drama in Year 9 if you are interested in doing GCSEs in these subjects.

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## Design Technology

Do you like to design and make things? If yes, this is the exciting practical course with opportunities for you to produce a number of original products. These will include:

- A metal gift with packaging.
- A domino keyring made of brass to practise your accurate engineering skills.
- An ancient Chinese wooden puzzle to practise your wood working skills.



## Food Technology or Textiles

Do you like experimenting with ingredients trying new flavour combinations and using exciting ingredients? Then Food Technology is the course for you. We will be covering

- Skills to support students carrying out hospitality and catering in the future.
- Looking at foods from around the world, including spice use and curry dishes.
- We will study food safety and the nutritional value of foods.

Students who then choose food only will be carrying out crazy **bakery** activities in a Mad Hatter's tea party theme.

Students who then choose food with textiles will design and make a crazy **textiles** item for the Mad Hatter's tea party learning lots of new skills & techniques.

You need to select **either** the food only or food with textiles option, **not both** as there is a lot of overlap.



You do **not** have to take design technology or food and textiles in Year 9 if you are interested in doing GCSEs in these subjects.

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## ICT

If you choose to study ICT as an option in year 9 you will learn a lot of different things to do with computers including how they work and how to use applications for different purposes.

You will get a flavour of computing and learn a programming language called Python; an easy to learn but very powerful language. We will cover more about how computers can be used effectively in business and research when we learn about how to use applications to create advanced databases and spreadsheets. And for those who are interested in the way computers can be used in a more creative way, you will also learn how to use Photoshop and animation software.

If you are thinking that you might want to study computing at GCSE or one of the ICT based GCSEs then choosing this option is not compulsory but would give you a fantastic head start.

## Single Language (French OR Spanish)

All students will follow our new programme of study as a platform for the new GCSE. Key assessments, including speaking and writing preparation, will be routinely completed. Students will carry on taking three periods of **the language they are currently studying in Year 8**. Students currently taking French and Spanish who wish to only continue with one, may choose whether they wish to continue with French or Spanish. Students may only take a GCSE if they study that language in year 9.

All four skill areas (listening, speaking, reading and writing) will be further developed with students gaining valuable and crucial communication skills for their future. Students carrying on with French will have the opportunity to acquire a deeper insight into the French culture with the possibility of a French home stay visit to Paris.

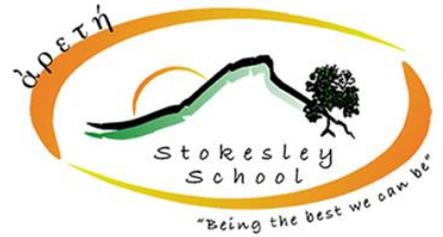
## Double Languages (Both French and Spanish)

Students currently learning French and Spanish have the opportunity to continue with both languages. They will develop all four skill areas and their communication skills in both languages.

Students who are considering taking two languages at GCSE **must** take a double languages option as part of their personalised option programme.

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Headteacher: Mrs H L Millett

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

FORM: \_\_\_\_\_

**Year 8 – Timetable Preferences for Year 9, September 2018**

**1) Language Choice** (you can only choose Spanish if you currently do it)

French only  Spanish only  Both, must include as one of your choices below

**2) Personalised Option**

Please rank the following subjects 1 to 3, with 1 being your most preferred, 2 your second preferred and 3 your third preferred subject and mark on one reserve option with an R. The number of places on each course is fixed, so if you are unlucky in not getting your preferred subjects we will try to get you your reserve option. You **can't** choose both FTT options.

Art		Drama		Music		ICT	
DT		Food only		Food with textiles		Continue with second language	

Space for any comments:

**Please return this form to your tutor by Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

We have discussed this together. We understand that whilst school staff will do their best to meet our preferences, we understand that issues such as group size, staffing and cost have to be considered and there is therefore no guarantee that our top preferences will be met.

Student Signature:

Date:

Parent Signature:

Date:

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