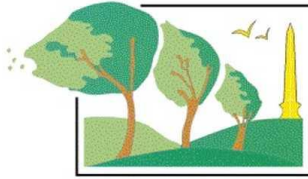


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Achieve | Belong | Participate

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Headteacher: Ms R Bennett

23 November 2017

Dear Parents, Carers and Year 9 Students

In the Summer of 2018, students will sit the new GCSEs for the first time, except for English and Maths which were introduced last year. Students will sit (on average) a total of 30 hours of exams in the summer compared with previous years' average of 22 hours (according to the Association of School and College Leadership). The new exams are intended to be significantly harder than in previous years and with increased content. There is no doubt that we have to change things in order to secure the best possible grades for every child, grades that stay with each individual for the rest of their life. We are very concerned about the increased pressure on students because of this. As you will no doubt have heard or read, there has been a dramatic rise in concerns about the mental health of young people in the UK. This is clearly due to a number of factors but exam pressure seems to play at least a part in this and I know you will expect us to do what we can to address this.

An additional concern for our most able students is that University Admissions Tutors tell us that they are looking for the best grades and not for the highest number of grades. To reach the new grade 9 requires even greater knowledge and understanding than the old A* and we need to be able to give our very able students the time and opportunity to explore their subjects in depth so they can compete with other students for places at the top universities.

As a result of concerns raised by last year's and this year's Year 11, we are reviewing the current GCSE curriculum from Year 9 onwards in order to:

- a) Reduce pressure on our children.
- b) Increase the number of hours given to subjects especially English and Maths in response to the significantly increased content and level of difficulty.
- c) Allow students the time so they do well and feel confident in their subjects, rather than cramming them through the increased content and making them stressed and unhappy.
- d) Give teachers fewer classes and students so they can spend more time on and with the children they teach.
- e) Ensure that the most able of our students are able to compete equally with students from other schools.

In order to address the concerns, respond to students and staff, and provide a positive and high quality learning experience, we propose moving to the curriculum model outlined below in terms of how many hours should be allocated to each subject. You will notice:

- a) A decrease in the number of options from 4 to 3.
- b) This allows us to increase the number of hours given to all subjects except for Science, which is evened out over two years.
- c) RE will no longer be a full GCSE but a 'short course' subject equivalent to half a GCSE but a full GCSE in Philosophy and Ethics will now be offered in the options.

The timings given to subjects therefore will be as outlined below.

The first column shows the CURRENT model.

The second shows the proposed model for Year 10 from September 2018

Alongside it, you can see how the hours will be allocated in Year 11 and the difference from the current model.

	Year 10 Current hours	Year 10 Proposal Sept 2018 Number of hours	Year 11 Current hours	Year 11 Proposal Sept 2018 Number of hours
English	3	4	4	5
Maths	3	4	4	4
Science	4	5	6	5
RE Short Course	1	1 This exam will be taken at the end of Year 10	1	
PE	2	2	2	2
Option 1	3	3	2	3
Option 2	3	3	2	3
Option 3	3	3	2	3
Option 4	3	No fourth option	2	No fourth option
Total lessons per week.	25	25	25	25

Online Parent Consultation re Options

In order to take part in the consultation please follow the link to our survey:

URL: <https://goo.gl/forms/Fc4MikqyLPH50SWn2>, or use the QR code below, and respond to the following statements as appropriate:



- I am clear on the rationale for moving to three option choices and agree with school proposal.
- I am clear on the rationale but do not agree with the school proposal.
- I have read the school proposal, but am not clear about the details.

In addition to this letter please also read the sheet **Year 9 Options Offer 2018-2020** attached.

Our process of consultation and key dates are listed below for your diary:

Consultation Dates:

- Thursday 23rd November – Consultation Year 9 Parents and students – assembly and letters out.
- Friday 8th December 2017 – Deadline for feedback from Year 9 Parents and students.
- Thursday 14th December – Governors Directors – Final Decision.

Options Process: Key Dates:

- 30th November 2017: Year 9 Parents Evening: Discussion of choices
- 17th January 2018: Year 9 Options Assembly: Process and Choices (SLT)
- 18th January 2018: Year 9 Options Evening: Discussion of choices
- 1st Feb 2018: Academic Monitoring Day: Discussion / Checking of choices by Tutor
- w/b: 5th Feb 2018: HOH checking of Options Choices – further discussion with students/parents as appropriate
- w/b 12th Feb 2018: SLT checking of Options Choices – final discussion with students/parents as appropriate

Yours sincerely

RACHAEL BENNETT
Headteacher

YEAR 9 OPTIONS OFFER – CURRICULUM 2018-2020 COURT FIELDS SCHOOL

Nos of GCSEs	COMPULSORY CURRICULUM	Exams 2020	NATIONAL EXPECTATION – You need to select 1 of these subjects. There is an opportunity in the ‘Open Choices’ to select more.	CA/CW	Exam 2020	Open Choice – you need to select 2 subjects from the list below.	CA/CW	Exam 2020
1	English Language GCSE	2x50%	GCSE Computing	1x20%	1x80%	GCSE Art & Design	1x60%	1x40%
2	English Literature GCSE	1x40% 1x60%	GCSE French		4x25%	OCR Health and Social Care	3x25%	1x25%
3	Mathematics GCSE	3x33.3%	GCSE Spanish		4x25%	VCert in Food	1x50%	1x50%
4&5	Combined Science GCSE (2)	2x50% (for each science)	GCSE Geography		4x25%	GCSE Computing	1x20%	1x80%
6	Philosophy and Beliefs Short Course(RE) completed end of Year 10	1x100% (2019)	GCSE History		1x35% 1x35% 1x30%	GCSE Design Technology	1x50%	1x50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students will follow 5 GCSEs in the core time. Those choosing to take Separate Sciences (Chemistry, Biology and Physics) will choose this as an Option in order to provide enough learning hours. • Students can choose <u>either</u> GCSE PE <u>or</u> VCert Health & Fitness, not both. 						GCSE French		4x25%
						GCSE Geography		2x35% 1x30%
						GCSE History		2x40% 1x20%
						GCSE ICT	1x50%	1x50%
						BTEC Music	3x25%	1x25%
						BTEC Performing Arts	2x37.5%	1 x25%
						GCSE PE	1x60%	1x40%
						VCert in Health and Fitness	1x60%	1x40%
						GCSE Philosophy and Beliefs (RE)		2 x 50%
GCSE Spanish		4x25%						
Separate Sciences – Chemistry, Biology, Physics (This is for top set only)		2x50% (for each Science)						

