



## **Year 9 Options: Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the difference between a GCSE and a Vocational/BTEC course?**

The grades awarded are 9- to 1 for GCSE and Distinction\* to Pass for a vocational/BTEC courses. GCSE courses are normally 100% exam. Although some of these exams are practical exams done under strict supervision (controlled assessment). Written GCSE exams are taken at the end of the course and there are no re-sit options during Year 11.

BTEC/Vocational courses are more assignment based and grades submitted throughout the two-year course and can be improved upon. There is a short examination for all of these courses that can take place in either Year 10 or Year 11, often the pupil can resit this.

BTEC grades are roughly equivalent to the following GCSE Grades:

- Level 2 Distinction\* = Grade 8/9
- Level 2 Distinction = Grade 7
- Level 2 Merit = Grade 5/6
- Level 2 Pass = Grade 4
- Level 1 Distinction= Grade 3
- Level 1 Merit= Grade 2
- Level 1 Pass= Grade 1

### **What are the core subjects that all pupils must study?**

- GCSE English Language
- GCSE English Literature
- GCSE Maths
- GCSE Science (double award) \* equivalent to 2 GCSES

### **What are Options Pathways?**

Based on our pupil's prior progress in Key stage 3 (Year 7 to 9) they will be selected for one of two Option pathways:

#### **Pathway 1 (EBACC Pathway)**

All pupils will study French, History OR Geography and then select two other options. The EBACC is made up of the subjects which are considered essential to many degrees and open up lots of doors. A study by the UCL Institute of Education

shows that studying subjects included in the EBacc provides pupils with greater opportunities in further education and increases the likelihood that a pupil will stay in full-time education. Sutton Trust research reveals that studying the EBacc can help improve a young person's performance in English and Maths.

Subjects on offer on the Ebacc Pathway:

Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
French	History Geography	Art Business Religious Studies Drama Psychology Textiles	Health and Social Care Business Triple Science Sport IT

### **Pathway 2**

All pupils will decide between History or Geography. Pupils will then pick one subject as a preference and one subject as an insurance.

Subjects on offer on Pathway 2:

Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
History Geography	French Health and Social Care Sport IT	Art Business Religious Studies Drama Psychology Textiles	Health and Social Care Business Triple Science Sport IT

### **What entry guidance do you give to pupils when selecting their subject preferences?**

When selecting their options, we suggest to pupils that by Year 9, they are currently achieving:

- Art – Working At or Working Beyond in Art
- Psychology – Working At or Working Beyond in English
- Triple Science – Working At or Working Beyond in Science
- Drama - Working At or Working Beyond in Drama

### **What good advice do we give our pupils when selecting their options?**

- Plan your career path. Higher education, university, apprenticeship, training?
- Know your own strengths. Which subjects have you performed well in during Key Stage 3? Do you perform better in examinations or coursework?
- Think about your interests and the subjects you most enjoy
- Do not choose subjects because your friend has!
- Speak to staff and family. We are all here to support you.