



The Castle School

ACHIEVE | BELONG | PARTICIPATE

OPTIONS GUIDANCE 2019-2021 COHORT – JANUARY 2019 OPTIONS PROCESS.

Important Dates

Monday 7 January – Year 9 Curriculum Guides sent home.

Wednesday 9 January – Year 9 Options Assembly.

Monday 14 January – 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm **Facing the Future – Options Evening**, opportunity to talk to teachers and students for all subjects, this is an essential fact-finding opportunity.

Friday 18 January – Year 9 Options Assembly (follow up).

Thursday 24 January – 4.30 pm-7.00 pm individual option interviews – parents and students.

Friday 25 January – Deadline for options returns to Form Tutor.

Dear Parents/Carers

Year 9 students are now at the stage where they need to choose an appropriate course for Years 10 and 11. Between us, we must help them make this important choice.

All students will take GCSEs in:

English Language

English Literature

Mathematics

Science (most will take two GCSEs in Science known as Combined Award Science)

In addition, all students will study Short Course RE in Year 10 only, PSHE and Physical Education.

It should be noted that all students will have **5 Full GCSEs** within their core curriculum, and one Short Course GCSE.

In addition to the compulsory courses mentioned above, the students will choose a **further three subjects**. All subjects chosen will require a terminal exam covering the majority of the syllabus in the summer term of Year 11 – 2021.

Details of the option subjects are in the Curriculum Guide. This Guide gives you as much information as possible to help you and your son or daughter to make your decision. When you have made your decision you will need to return the form attached to the form tutor. One form is to be returned to your child's form tutor by **Friday 25 January**, the other may be kept by you for reference.

At this stage we have not built the option blocks. Our reasoning behind this is to maximise the potential to give everyone as many of their choices as possible, clearly not everyone is going to get everything they ask for. We will work hard to ensure that as many as possible get two out of three choices, ideally many will get three out of three. Once we have the returns we will construct option blocks, which will allow the greatest number of students to study their preferred subjects. Unfortunately, this may mean that there will be a small number of students whose particular combination of subjects cannot be accommodated. In addition, if a subject does not attract a minimum number of students, usually 15, we may not be able to put this on. If either of these situations arise, the students will be informed and will have to make new choices.

You will see from the options schedule that time is spent in school talking to the students about the choices available. There is also an information evening – **Facing the Future** - on **Monday 14 January** when you will be able to talk to students and staff, and consult with colleges and our Careers Adviser to obtain more information on possible career routes post 16. The evening will begin at 6pm and end around 8.00pm; this is a key evening for students and families to attend. Individual appointments for you and your son or daughter to discuss their option choices will be

held on **Thursday 24 January**. Please can you ensure that you sign up for a meeting with form tutors or HoH or SLT before you leave school on 14 January; the appointment lists will be in the corridor by the Main Hall.

There are basic, common sense rules to follow when making your choices. It is most unwise to choose a particular subject because a friend is doing so, or because of liking or disliking a particular teacher. There is no certainty at all that friends will be allocated to the same teaching group, nor that they will be with the teacher of their choice.

Choices should be made according to these principles:

- ability in the subject;
- interest in, and liking for, the subject itself;
- relevance of the subject to the student's future career (if known);
- balance of the student's chosen course overall; and
- preferred assessment style (i.e. balance between non-examined assessment (NEA) and terminal exams).

We hope you will read the details to enable you and your child to make up your minds and take the opportunity to talk to your teachers, on the evenings as well as in lessons. It is essential for the students to be proactive in finding out about the courses they are considering. Where a student does not have any definite career ideas as yet, it is wise to aim for a **balanced course** which would ensure good all-round education as well as flexibility for future career choices.

Finally, I would like to stress the need to make decisions very carefully. If, during the summer term, you have second thoughts about your choice of subjects, please contact me as soon as possible. The later this happens, the more difficult it will be to make any changes. **No changes will be made after the first week of the autumn term and only before then if there is a significant reason for changing, which is supported by a parental request.** Each subject chosen carries a commitment to a two-year course, whether or not the student eventually takes an examination in that subject. **If you do not hear anything, you can assume that 'no news is good news' and that we have been able to accommodate the mixture of subjects.**

All the best, please make good use of the support and guidance that is available to you.

Yours sincerely



Mr Randle
Assistant Headteacher

OPTION FORM – TO BE HANDED TO YOUR FORM TUTOR BY FRIDAY 25 JANUARY

Name: Tutor group:

All students will follow 5 Full GCSEs in the core time, with the exception of those students taking single sciences who will follow 6 GCSEs in the core time and 1 Short Course RE GCSE.

A further 3 subjects will be studied through option choices. The total GCSEs studied will be 9 for the majority of students and 10 for the students taking the single sciences. Top set students only will enter for single sciences, in core curriculum time, if performance indicates this is the right route.

NATIONAL EXPECTATION – You need to select 1 of these subjects. Please TICK your choice. There is an opportunity in the 'Open Choices' to select more. √		
GCSE Computer Science	Exam: 2x50%	
GCSE French	Exam: 4x25%	
GCSE German	Exam: 4x25%	
GCSE Spanish	Exam: 4x25%	
GCSE Mandarin Chinese	Exam :4x25%	
GCSE Geography	Exam: 1x35%, 1x35%, 1x30%	
GCSE History	Exam: 2x40%, 1x20%	

OPEN CHOICE – you need to select 2 subjects from the list below and a reserve subject (please put in order of preference 1 and 2 – put RES for your third choice - which will be your reserve choice)		Choice 1, 2 and RES
GCSE Art & Design : Fine Art	Non-Examined Assessment (NEA): 1x60% Exam: 1x40%	
GCSE Art & Design : Photography		
GCSE Art & Design : Textile Design		
Cambridge Nationals Child Development Level 1/2	NEA: 2x25% Exam: 1x50%	
GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition	NEA: 1x50% Exam: 1x50%	
GCSE Computer Science	Exams: 2x50%	
Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies	NEA: 1x50% Exam: 1x50%	
Dance – BTEC Tech Award Level 2 Performing Arts	NEA: 2x30% Exam: 1x40%	
GCSE Drama	NEA: 2x30% Exam: 1x40%	
GCSE Design Technology	NEA: 1x50% Exam: 1x50%	
GCSE French	Exams: 4x25%	
GCSE Geography	Exams:1x35% 1x35% 1x30%	
GCSE German	Exams: 4x25%	
GCSE History	Exams: 2x40% 1x20%	
GCSE Mandarin Chinese	Exams: 4x25%	
GCSE Music	NEA: 2x30% Exam: 1x40%	
OR BTEC Music	NEA: 3x25% Exam: 1x25%	
GCSE PE	NEA: 1x40% Exam: 1x60%	
OR BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Sport	NEA: 3x25% Exam: 1x25%	
GCSE Philosophy, Ethics and Religion	Exams: 2x50%	
GCSE Spanish	Exams: 4x25%	

FOURTH OPTION

Due to particular staffing circumstances and in response to feedback from last year’s Options Consultation we will offer GCSE History as an after school GCSE for those few students who feel very strongly that they want this additional academic challenge.

Commitment would run through **Years 9 – 11**, the hours and proposed times are highlighted below. GCSEs typically need 120-guided learning hours. In addition, you will need to allocate at least 45 minutes per week to homework.

If you would like to apply, please submit a letter, one side of A4 only to Mr Randle at the same time as you submit your option request form.

Please structure the letter a) stating the reasons why you want to be considered, and b) your thoughts about how you will manage the increased workload. Your history teacher will also need to confirm that you show a positive attitude and commitment to learning. We strongly recommend the vast majority follow three options. Please bear in mind the commitment over 2½ years. The number of students who committed to this was 15 out of the whole year group.

Allocation - 120 guided learning hours.	Hours
Year 9 April 2019 – July 2019 After school lessons – day to be determined. Time 3:30pm – 4:45pm one day a week. 14 weeks – 1 hour 15 minutes after school	18 hours
Year 9 Curriculum Enrichment Day in June instead of team building June 2019	6 hours
Year 9 History Timetable Change Day when Year 6 induction takes place July 2019	6 hours
Year 10 – September 2019 attend first day back with Year 7 and Year 11 students	6 hours
Year 10 - 38 weeks - after school - 1 hour 15 minutes per week	48 hours
Year 11 approx. 30 weeks - after school – 1 hour 15 minutes per week	38 hours
Year 10 and 11 Fieldwork Trips	
Total	122 hours.

Yes, I would like to apply to take History as an after school option and have attached my letter of application.

I will be using History as my National Expectation option. Yes No

Name Form

OPTION FORM (STUDENT COPY TO KEEP FOR REFERENCE)

Name: Tutor group:

All students will follow 5 Full GCSEs in the core time, with the exception of those students taking single sciences who will follow 6 GCSEs in the core time and 1 Short Course RE GCSE.

A further 3 subjects will be studied through option choices. The total GCSEs studied will be 9 for the majority of students and 10 for the students taking the single sciences. Top set students only will enter for single sciences, in core curriculum time, if performance indicates this is the right route.

NATIONAL EXPECTATION – You need to select 1 of these subjects. Please TICK your choice. There is an opportunity in the ‘Open Choices’ to select more. √		
GCSE Computer Science	Exam: 2x50%	
GCSE French	Exam: 4x25%	
GCSE German	Exam: 4x25%	
GCSE Spanish	Exam: 4x25%	
GCSE Mandarin Chinese	Exam :4x25%	
GCSE Geography	Exam: 1x35%, 1x35%, 1x30%	
GCSE History	Exam: 2x40%, 1x20%	

OPEN CHOICE – you need to select 2 subjects from the list below and a reserve subject (please put in order of preference 1 and 2 – put RES for your third choice - which will be your reserve choice)		Choice 1, 2 and RES
GCSE Art & Design :Fine Art	Non-Examined Assessment (NEA): 1x60% Exam: 1x40%	
GCSE Art & Design : Photography		
GCSE Art & Design : Textile Design		
Cambridge Nationals Child Development Level 1/2	NEA: 2x25% Exam: 1x50%	
GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition	NEA: 1x50% Exam: 1x50%	
GCSE Computer Science	Exams: 2x50%	
Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies	NEA: 1x50% Exam: 1x50%	
Dance - BTEC Tech Award Level 2 Performing Arts	NEA: 2x30% Exam: 1x40%	
GCSE Drama	NEA: 2x30% Exam: 1x40%	
GCSE Design Technology	NEA: 1x50% Exam: 1x50%	
GCSE French	Exams: 4x25%	
GCSE Geography	Exams:1x35% 1x35% 1x30%	
GCSE German	Exams: 4x25%	
GCSE History	Exams: 2x40% 1x20%	
GCSE Mandarin Chinese	Exams: 4x25%	
GCSE Music	NEA: 2x30% Exam: 1x40%	
OR BTEC Music	NEA: 3x25% Exam: 1x25%	
GCSE PE	NEA: 1x40% Exam: 1x60%	
OR BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Sport	NEA: 3x25% Exam: 1x25%	
GCSE Philosophy, Ethics and Religion	Exams: 2x50%	
GCSE Spanish	Exams: 4x25%	

FOURTH OPTION

Due to particular staffing circumstances and in response to feedback from last year’s Options Consultation we will offer GCSE History as an after school GCSE for those few students who feel very strongly that they want this additional academic challenge.

Commitment would run through **Years 9 – 11**, the hours and proposed times are highlighted below. GCSEs typically need 120-guided learning hours. In addition, you will need to allocate at least 45 minutes per week to homework.

If you would like to apply, please submit a letter, one side of A4 only to Mr Randle at the same time as you submit your option request form.

Please structure the letter a) stating the reasons why you want to be considered, and b) your thoughts about how you will manage the increased workload. Your history teacher will also need to confirm that you show a positive attitude and commitment to learning. We strongly recommend the vast majority follow three options. Please bear in mind the commitment over 2½ years. The number of students who committed to this was 15 out of the whole year group.

Allocation - 120 guided learning hours.	Hours
Year 9 April 2019 – July 2019 After school lessons – day to be determined. Time 3:30pm – 4:45pm one day a week. 14 weeks – 1 hour 15 minutes after school	18 hours
Year 9 Curriculum Enrichment Day in June instead of team building June 2019	6 hours
Year 9 History Timetable Change Day when Year 6 induction takes place July 2019	6 hours
Year 10 – September 2019 attend first day back with Year 7 and Year 11 students	6 hours
Year 10 - 38 weeks - after school - 1 hour 15 minutes per week	48 hours
Year 11 approx. 30 weeks - after school – 1 hour 15 minutes per week	38 hours
Year 10 and 11 Fieldwork Trips	
Total	122 hours.

Yes, I would like to apply to take History as an after school option and have attached my letter of application.

I will be using History as my National Expectation option. Yes No

Name Form