



The Castle School

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GCSE OPTIONS GUIDANCE 2021-2023 COHORT – JANUARY 2021 YEAR 9 OPTIONS PROCESS.

Important Dates:

Monday 4 January – Year 9 Curriculum Guides sent home.

Wednesday 6 January – Year 9 Options Assembly.

Monday 11 January – 6.00pm **GCSE Options Evening** (an essential information virtual event. Pre-recorded videos will be posted on the school website).

Tuesday 12 January – online booking open for individual interviews for 19 January.

Tuesday 19 January – 4.30pm-7.00pm individual option interviews – only if parents and students have outstanding questions/concerns.

Friday 22 January – Deadline for options returns to Form Tutor.

Dear Parents/Carers

Year 9 students are now at the stage where they need to choose their GCSE courses for Years 10 and 11.

Compulsory subjects:

English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science (most will take two GCSEs in Science known as Combined Award Science).

All will study short course RE in Year 10 only, PSHE and Physical Education.

Your child is currently studying for their first GCSE. They now need to choose a **further three subjects** which they will take exams in at the end of Year 11.

Details of the option subjects are in the curriculum guide, see attached. This guide gives you information to help make decisions. Students choose their options online and will receive an email to register. This will be done under the guidance of their form tutor during form time. They will be able to make their option choices online from Tuesday 12 January, after the information evening. You, as a parent/carer, will also receive a link via email to approve your child's choices, on 19 January. The deadline for option choices is **Friday 22 January**. If you have any difficulty accessing the online system, please contact the school.

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 options as possible, ideally most will get three out of three. If a subject does not attract a minimum number of students, we may not be able to put this on. If an allocation difficulty arises, the students will be informed and we will work together to select different options.

Advice

There are basic, common sense rules for students to follow when making their option 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.

Options should be made according to these principles:

- ability in the subject;
- interest in, and liking for, the subject itself;
- relevance of the subject to future career (if known);
- preferred assessment style (eg look at the balance between non-examined assessment (NEA) and terminal exams).

It is essential for the students to be proactive in finding out about the courses. Where a student does not have any definite career ideas, it is wise to aim for a balanced choice of subjects which would ensure good all-round education and flexibility for future career choices.

Following the Options Evening on 11 January, if you or your child still have questions, there will be an opportunity to speak with the Head of House or your child's tutor via Teams on Tuesday 19 January 2021.

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

Yours sincerely



Mr J Thomson
Deputy Headteacher

OPTIONS – YEAR 9 LEAVERS 2023

NATIONAL EXPECTATION SUBJECTS

Computer Science, French, German, Spanish, Mandarin, Geography, History

You need to make sure at least one of these is included in your choice of subjects. This could be your First GCSE that you are taking at the end of Year 10. Or it could be one of your options now.

These are highlighted in bold italics below.

You need to **select 3 subjects** from the list below and a reserve subject (please put in order of preference 1, 2, 3 – put RES for your reserve choice). You do not need to include the First GCSE you are taking at the end of Year 10.

GCSE Art & Design : Fine Art	Non-Examined Assessment (NEA): 1x60% Exam: 1x40%
GCSE Art & Design : Photography	
GCSE Art & Design : Textiles	
Child Development Cambridge Nationals	CW: 2x25% Exam: 1x50%
<i>GCSE Computer Science</i>	Exams: 2x50%
GCSE Drama	NEA: 2x30% Exam: 1x40%
GCSE Design Technology	NEA: 1x50% Exam: 1x50%
Engineering Design Cambridge Nationals	CW: 3x25% Exam: 1x25%
GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition	NEA: 1x50% Exam: 1x50%
<i>GCSE French</i>	Exams: 4x25%
<i>GCSE Geography</i>	Exams: 1x35% 1x35% 1x30%
<i>GCSE German</i>	Exams: 4x25%
<i>GCSE History</i>	Exams: 2x40% 1x20%
Information Technologies (IT) Cambridge Nationals	NEA: 1x50% Exam: 1x50%
<i>GCSE Mandarin</i>	Exams: 4x25%
GCSE Music	NEA: 2x30% Exam: 1x40%
OR BTEC Music	NEA: 3x25% Exam: 1x25%
PE GCSE	NEA: 1x40% Exams: 1x36% 1x24%
BTEC Performing Arts	NEA: 2x30% Exam: 1x40%
GCSE Philosophy, Ethics and Religion	Exams: 2x50%
<i>GCSE Spanish</i>	Exams: 4x25%

Double check that you have one subject in bold italics, either here or your First GCSE