



The Castle School

ACHIEVE | BELONG | PARTICIPATE

GCSE OPTIONS GUIDANCE 2024-2026 COHORT – JANUARY 2024 YEAR 9 OPTIONS PROCESS.

Dear Parents/Carers

Year 9 students are now at the stage where they need to choose their GCSE courses for Years 10 and 11. This is an important time for our students and I want to take this opportunity to outline the process and to invite you to our options evening on Monday 8 January when teachers will be available to explain the choices and give details of courses which are also outlined in the curriculum guide that accompanies this letter.

All students will study the following 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, PSHE and Physical Education. Students then need to select a further 3 subjects as their option choices.

The Options form is divided into 3 sections;
Guided Option - Select one subject in this section.
Open Choice Options – select two subjects from this section.
Reserve Choice – Select one subject from this section.

Subjects and courses are explained in the Curriculum Guide. You will receive a link to a Microsoft Form by email on Tuesday 9 January, after the information evening. Once your child has decided on their option subjects, please complete the form and submit online. The deadline for option choices is **Monday 29 January**. If you have any difficulty completing the form, please contact the school.

Our aim is for all students to be able to study the subjects they choose, although if a subject does not attract the 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, having a reserve subject in mind is useful as a starter for this conversation.

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:

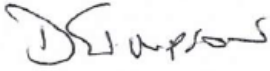
- ability in the subject
- interest in, and liking for the subject
- relevance of the subject to future career (if known);
- preferred assessment style (eg look at the balance between non-examined assessment (NEA) and terminal exams).

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 8 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 on Tuesday 16 January 2024.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Simpson', written in a cursive style.

Mr D Simpson
Assistant Headteacher