



Welcome parents, carers and students to our Year 9 Options Evening

Although the options your son or daughter chooses are important, firstly experience tells us that a student who is motivated and determined to follow a particular career will find a way of doing so. Secondly, your son or daughter is highly likely to have more than one career in their lifetime and the qualifications they achieve early on may play a part at different points of their careers. Thirdly, students do go on to hold down multiple jobs at any one time that are frequently web-based, involve being part of a multinational team that communicates online. Thus, having exposure to a range of different subjects and equally important the different skill sets they offer, will benefit your son or daughter.

We encourage all our students to do English, Maths, Science a humanity and a foreign language here as this keeps them competitive and gives them the greatest range of options post GCSEs and post A-Levels. Above about 8 GCSEs, Universities and Higher Apprenticeship providers are concerned about the quality of the grade, rather than the quantity. The Russell group of 24 leading universities have a web site, called 'Informed choices', which gives information on the types of subjects and experiences they are looking for. The purpose of studying, for example, RS, Spanish, Photosynthesis in Science, or algebra in Maths, is not necessarily because you will need it later on in your career, but it shows Universities, Apprenticeship providers, Colleges and Employers that you have different skill sets, can meet competing deadlines and will do well no matter what is put in front of you.

Academic progress is extremely important. However, personal development is equally as important, both to further improve society, but also because traits such as confidence; and skills such as oracy and presenting; are highly valued by employers. Alongside the Options chosen by your son or daughter, they have already completed two units of work on the PENN resilience programme, where they learn how to become more resilient and not to let events overwhelm them, or catastrophise events, they will also complete further work on public speaking/oracy, a unit on 21st Century IT skills and revision skills. The purpose of these is to make your son or daughter even more competitive in the market place as they will have the softer skills that universities, employers and apprenticeships are looking for.

Lastly, all students of your son's and daughter's age across the country will be doing similar GCSEs, so it is also imperative to think about what other skills they have that set them apart from others. Attendance and punctuality are key. Attendance should be above 96% and punctuality should be 100%. Where this is not the case, it makes competing for jobs and university places more difficult. Activities like Duke of Edinburgh, student council representatives, sports clubs, chess clubs, etc. all develop skills and character in students that they can later talk about, or will make them stand out more in a crowded market.

Thank you for your time in listening to my opening remarks. The rest of the evening should give you a good insight to the range of courses on offer and support your son's or daughter's option choices.

Mr E Hillyard, Headteacher
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