



20th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: GCSE Options Process 2021

I am writing to explain how our Year 9 options process will run, with some changes to the timeline, given the disruption to schools at the moment. I am in a position to be able to confirm with you support for the choices our cohort of Year 9 students will be making over the coming weeks. This process will move online, and we will support students to make informed choices through a booklet, a series of videos and through virtual meetings with teachers.

Under normal circumstances, we would invite all students and yourselves to an information evening, where you could speak to staff and be talked through the process of discussing and choosing options for Key Stage 4. We hope that by launching our online evening, the young people in Year 9 will continue to feel just as supported through their choices and able to engage fully in these conversations despite the current lockdown.

Our Options provision for GCSE study in 2021 – 2023 will be:

Monday 25th January: Assembly

All students in Year 9 will be invited to an assembly via Teams to explain the Options Process to them and to encourage them to access all opportunities to discuss their choices with staff as they can. Please encourage your child to log onto this as it will outline all they need to know. This will also be shared with parents and carers via the website later in the day.

Thursday 28th January 2021: Launch of Remote Options Evening

At 3.30 p.m., we will launch our Remote Options Evening package on the school website. This will include the same provision you would have received at a traditional Options Evening event, including:

- **An introduction to the Options Process:** Mr Brand and Mrs Smith will talk you through the next few weeks of research, discussion and decisions. We will explain the reasons you should and should not give for picking a subject, talk you through the curriculum subjects available at GCSE and outline the steps you need to take to register your first and second choices.
- **What to do if you have Questions:** Mr Stradling (Head of Year) will talk you through the many opportunities for support from school, even though we are in lockdown. He will reassure you that you are not alone and direct you to the people who can help.
- **Subject Outlines:** Our Directors of Faculty and Subject Leads will talk you through the subjects they teach and explain what each GCSE (or equivalent) course involves. We offer one of the widest choices of study at Key Stage 4 in the local area and these videos will give you a clear understanding of what each subject is about, how it is examined and whether it is for you.
- **Options Booklet:** An online booklet to support all aspects of the decision-making process will be available for the duration. If you would prefer a printed copy, these can be requested.
- **Careers Guidance:** Ms Roberts-Marklove (Careers Advisor) will talk you through the support you will receive over the next two years as you begin to think more about future career options and post-16 study. She will also explain how you can access this information online now to help you make your Options choices.

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Richard Brand: Headteacher



Thursday 4th February: Student and Parent Consultation Evening (via School Cloud)

This evening will offer students, parents and carers the opportunity to make an appointment to have a remote, but crucially “face to face” meeting with teachers of specific subject areas. Further details will be sent to you about how to make appointments online for meetings where you will be able to ask specific questions related to your child. This is in addition to being able to make appointments with members of SLT and Mr Stradling, Head of Year, to ask broader questions.

Wednesday 10th February: Mock Options “Forms” Deadline

Each year, in order to ensure that as many students are given their first choices as possible, we ask for initial options choices so that we can check that our curriculum model best fits the cohort. You will be asked to complete a Microsoft Forms document online, giving four first choice and four second choice subject areas. At this stage no decisions are final, and it is only for us to understand estimated numbers. In previous years, this has enabled us to ensure that over 85% of students have been given their four first choices.


Friday 26th February: Final Options Choices Deadline

After half term, you will receive a link to the final options form, where we will ask you to select your final choices (first and second). These will then be used to allocate Options from September 2021. It then takes a number of months to use this information to build a curriculum model and timetable for the coming academic year; students will be told their option subjects as soon as possible but please be aware that this will not happen until closer to May.

We all understand that this is potentially an exciting but nervous time for all involved and, of course, would be happy to offer additional support where needed at other opportunities. Subject teachers will happily offer advice and answer questions via email and I am happy to discuss any concerns or questions at any point. I am excited to launch this process with the wonderful young people in Year 9 and to help support them as they take their next steps in their school life here at The Dean Academy.

Thank you for all the discussions, encouragement and reassurance you will also provide throughout this process; please do be in touch if there is anything we can do to help. While this process is new to our Year 9 students, it is one we have been through many times before and it is an exciting time for Year 9 to take control of the subjects they student and the areas within which the focus.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Emily Smith
Deputy Head Teacher

[EKS/TW - Year 9 Options process-200121](#)

