



St Mary's Catholic School

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where everyone can succeed



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Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to you as we are now at that time of the year when we are organising the timetable for September 2022, when your child will begin Year 10. As you are aware, your son/daughter was able to make a small amount of choice about the subjects he/she studied in Year 9. We are delighted with the progress that Year 9 students are currently making in their different subjects.

Last year, we outlined that, nationally, GCSEs are more challenging than ever before, with increased content and more demanding examinations, and therefore, we explained that Year 9 would be used as good preparation for the demands of the upcoming GCSEs. We feel that the extra time spent in subjects in Year 9 has been of great benefit to our students, in preparation for next year.

In a similar vein to Year 9, much of the curriculum remains compulsory when your child begins Key Stage 4 and GCSEs in September 2020. All students will continue to study the core curriculum of RE, Maths, English Language, English Literature and Sciences. Furthermore, all students will continue to study PE and the Pastoral Programme.

We are recommending that your child, alongside the core curriculum, continues to study a humanities subject (History or Geography) and a language subject (French or Spanish). The choices that your child made in Year 9 will help him/her to choose which humanities subject and language subject to study, as students will need to have studied these courses in Year 9 to be able to continue them at GCSE. Your son/daughter will then need to make one final choice. This will mean that your child will finish Year 11 with 9 GCSEs.

GCSE Science is a compulsory option, but students can choose to study it in different ways:

- **Double Award:** Students will gain two GCSEs in Science if they follow the Double Award and these two GCSEs will include the study of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. For the vast majority of our students, we would recommend this route. Should your child want to progress to Science A-Levels and/or specific Science-based University courses in the future, this route will allow them to do so. Indeed, every year, we see a number of students who achieve highly in the Double Award, choosing to progress to Science A Levels. Students following the Double Award will also be able to select another subject to study, for their final GCSE choice (from table four).
- **Triple Award:** Students will gain three GCSEs in Science; one in Biology, one in Chemistry and one in Physics. If your child would like to study Triple Science, they should indicate this as their final GCSE choice (from table four).

Regardless of which Science pathway your child chooses, he/she will cover all three Science subjects. The difference is only in the amount of time your child would spend studying Science, the number of final exams he/she would take and the number of Science GCSE qualifications that would be achieved at the end of Year 11 i.e. two or three GCSEs.

The vast majority of GCSEs are now assessed solely by formal written examinations, taken at the end of Year 11, with no re-sit opportunities and no coursework or controlled assessment. As such, our guiding principle is to strongly recommend a pathway that will ensure your child studies a range of courses appropriate to his/her academic ability, to ensure suitable challenge and to give the best possible chance of success.

In order to support you and your child, please find attached to the email an information booklet about all of the courses and a link to a form for you to complete to indicate chosen subjects. Please note that because choices are now far more limited under the new curriculum, it is no longer beneficial to hold an Options Evening. We will, of course, continue to give students and you, as parents/carers, meaningful guidance throughout this process. We believe that the information in this pack will support you in making your decisions. If you would like any further information or have any queries at all, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Brooks (Head of Year 9) before returning the option form to us by **Tuesday 29th March 2022**.

Yours sincerely

Miss Rossi
Assistant Headteacher

