

# OATHALL COMMUNITY COLLEGE



## KEY STAGE 4

### A guide to Years 10 and 11

2021 – 2023

The Year 9 Options process will start on **Monday 25th 2021**. The Oathall website will be used to provide information about the subjects on offer.

Online appointments with subject teachers will be available on **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021**.

Subject preferences must be made by **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021**.

## INTRODUCTION

It is an exciting time for Year 9 students. For the first time in their schooling they have a significant choice about the subjects they will study. The options process is designed to ensure that all students have the opportunity to follow a broad range of subjects including the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

We ask that parents and students go through the information provided in this booklet, refer to the subject course details on the Oathall website and attend the Year 9 online Parents' Evening. This will ensure that you fully understand the options process and are well informed about each of the courses that students may select.

This year we are sadly not able to host an options evening in school as we would normally do. Instead we are providing additional information on the website. Alongside the course details for each subject is a video produced by a teacher from that subject talking about the qualification.

Making appropriate choices at this stage is very important as the subjects studied at Key Stage 4 form the pathway to post-16 education. Students are making a two-year commitment to study these subjects and are not entitled to drop courses.

Every effort is made to ensure that each student is given their preferred choices. However, you will see that they are asked to select one more subject than they will end up taking and then indicate their preferences. This reserve choice may be assigned if it is not possible to run a preferred course or the combination of subjects that have been chosen will not timetable. Therefore, it is important to give careful consideration to all the choices that are made.

## Frequently asked questions

<p><b>Who chooses the courses?</b></p>	<p>The final decision is made by students with their parents, within the limits set out in this booklet.</p>
<p><b>Who can help make the choices?</b></p>	<p>Your group tutor and Head of House - will be able to offer you advice and guidance.</p> <p>The staff have produced information sheets and videos giving details of the courses available. These are on the website.</p> <p>Subject teachers - who can talk about your suitability for the course. The online Parents' Evening provides this opportunity.</p> <p>The careers guidance practitioner can advise you on details of different areas of work and post-16 courses.</p>
<p><b>Which qualifications must be taken?</b></p>	<p>Students must take English, Mathematics and science. Most students must also take a language and either geography or history.</p>
<p><b>How do students choose subjects that are right for them?</b></p>	<p><b>DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out exactly what each course involves and decide whether you are well suited to cope with the demands of the subject.</li> <li>• Think about how much you enjoy the subject.</li> <li>• Find out about the entry requirements of post-16 courses and areas of employment that interest you.</li> <li>• Be careful not to close any doors at this stage because you may need certain skills and qualifications at a later stage.</li> <li>• Ensure you have a good balance in your subjects.</li> </ul> <p><b>DON'T</b> choose a subject because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your friend is doing it.</li> <li>• You like the teacher. You may well have a different teacher at Key Stage 4.</li> <li>• You think it will be easy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Can a student change their mind later?</b></p>	<p>Only in exceptional circumstances are students allowed to make a change to their subjects once Year 10 has started. Take the time and effort to make the best choices at this stage.</p>
<p><b>Do courses that are listed in this booklet sometimes not run?</b></p>	<p>Yes. We cannot run a course that has very few students choosing it. If it is not possible to allocate a student a subject they have chosen then further discussions will take place with them and possibly their parents.</p>

## Key Stage 4 Provision

Here are the different courses and qualifications that you can study.

All students will take the following core subjects:

Core subjects	Qualification
English Language	GCSE
English Literature	GCSE
Mathematics (Further Maths for some students)	GCSE
Double or Triple Science	GCSE

Note: Allocation to further maths and double or triple science is managed later in the year.

Students will also take courses from the following list:

Other subjects	Qualification
3-D Design	GCSE
Art	GCSE
Business Studies	GCSE
Computer Science	GCSE
Drama	GCSE
Engineering	GCSE
French	GCSE
Geography	GCSE
German	GCSE
History	GCSE
Music	GCSE
Photography	GCSE
Physical Education	GCSE
Psychology	GCSE
Religious Studies	GCSE
Spanish	GCSE
Animal Care	BTEC Level 1 & 2
Child Development	Cambridge National Level 1 & 2
Health and Social Care	BTEC Level 1 & 2
Hospitality and Catering	WJEC Level 1 & 2
Performing Arts – Dance	BTEC Level 1 & 2
Performing Arts - Drama	BTEC Level 1 & 2
Sports Studies	Cambridge National Level 1 & 2

All students will also take: core Physical Education and Personal Development (PD) which includes Religious Education and Citizenship. There are not qualifications in these subjects.

## Types of qualifications

The qualifications on offer fall into two categories: GCSE and non-GCSE qualifications. Both types of qualifications offer the same range of outcomes but they are reported using a different grading systems. They can be taken alongside each other so it is perfectly acceptable for a student to select some GCSE and some non-GCSE subjects. The most important factor to consider is how well suited is the student to the type of learning and assessment involved in any qualification. All the qualifications on offer are approved for 14 to 16 year old students and carry the same weighting, that is to say they have the same recommended number of hours of study time.

### **GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education)**

These are the qualifications taken by the majority of students during years 10 and 11. They are graded on a scale from 1 to 9, with 9 being the highest grade. Almost all GCSE qualifications are assessed using only examinations at the end of Year 11, although a few of the subjects have a small amount of non-examination assessment. The subject pages and videos available on the Oathall website give the details. Some A level subjects require a certain grade in a specified GCSE subjects so it is worth checking the A level entry requirement with the specific post-16 college or school.

### **Non-GCSE qualifications**

These include the BTEC and Cambridge National qualifications listed above. They take a more practical approach to learning compared with GCSEs without missing out on the important theory aspects of the subject. The assessment is based largely on evidence that the students produce to demonstrate they have acquired the required skills and knowledge. There is an examination in each subject but this accounts for a much smaller proportion of the final grade than with GCSEs. They are recognised by colleges and employers as equivalent qualifications to GCSEs. They cover the same range of standards as GCSE grades 1 to 9 but are reported using different grading systems. It is perfectly acceptable to follow a combination of these and GCSE subjects. Experience of these courses can help support progress onto vocational courses post-16 but will also provide a route to A levels provided the specific entry requirements are met.

## The Options Process

There are 3 possible pathways to follow when making the option choices. The pathway that a student will follow is determined by the school. Please look at the table below and then read the notes that follow.

List A - Languages	List B - Humanities	List C - GCSEs unless otherwise indicated in brackets.	
French German Spanish	Geography History	3-D Design Animal Care (BTEC) Art Business Studies Computer Science Child Development (Cambridge National) Drama or Performing Arts-Drama (BTEC) Engineering French Geography German	Health and Social Care (BTEC) History Hospitality and Catering (Level 1 / 2 Award) Music Performing Arts-Dance (BTEC) Photography Physical Education or Sports Studies (Cambridge National) Psychology Religious Studies Spanish

### Pathway A

The majority of students will follow pathway A. They will:

- Select a language from list A. This must be a language they have been learning in Year 9.
- Select either geography or history from list B.
- Select two subjects from list C **and** one reserve subject. Please give careful thought to the reserve subject because this may have to be allocated for reasons given earlier in the booklet.

If a student has been learning two languages in Year 9 they may, if they wish, select the second language from list C.

If a student wants to study both Geography and History, they can select one in list B and one in list C.

## **Pathway B**

Some students will not have to take a language subject. Parents will be written to informing them of this pathway. They will:

- Select either geography or history from list B.
- Select three subjects from list C and one reserve subject. Please give very careful thought to the reserve subject because this may have to be allocated for reasons given earlier on in the booklet.

A student following pathway B may select the language they have been learning in Year 9 if they want to but they do not have to.

If a student wants to study both Geography and History, they can select one in list B and one in list C.

## **Pathway C**

Some students will follow an alternative curriculum in place of the languages and humanities subjects. Parents will be written to informing them of this pathway. They will:

- Select two subjects from list C and one reserve subject.

Students following pathway C will take Step Up to English and Maths qualifications that will support their progress in GCSE English and mathematics. They will also have support that will help them with their other qualifications. This can be discussed further with the SENCo.

## **All students**

Students interested in Physical Education can choose to take either PE (GCSE) or Sports Studies (Cambridge National). Similarly, students interested in Drama can select GCSE Drama or Performing Arts-Drama BTEC. In each case students should only select either the GCSE or the non-GCSE qualification within the area of study. The school may move a student from one to the other if teachers think they would benefit from the change.

## How to use INSIGHT to make your options choices

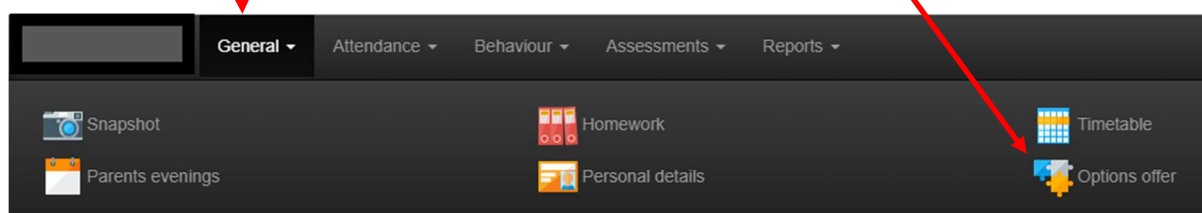
Option choices are made in INSIGHT using a parental account. If you have any problems using INSIGHT to submit options, please contact Mrs Van Der Spiegel (gvanderspiegel@oathall.org).

The Options facility on INSIGHT will open on **Friday 29 January** and must be completed by **Thursday 11 February**. You can amend the choices at any time throughout this period.

Students who are following **Pathway C** should follow steps 1 and 2 and then move to step 6.

1. Select *General* from the top menu on the INSIGHT home page.

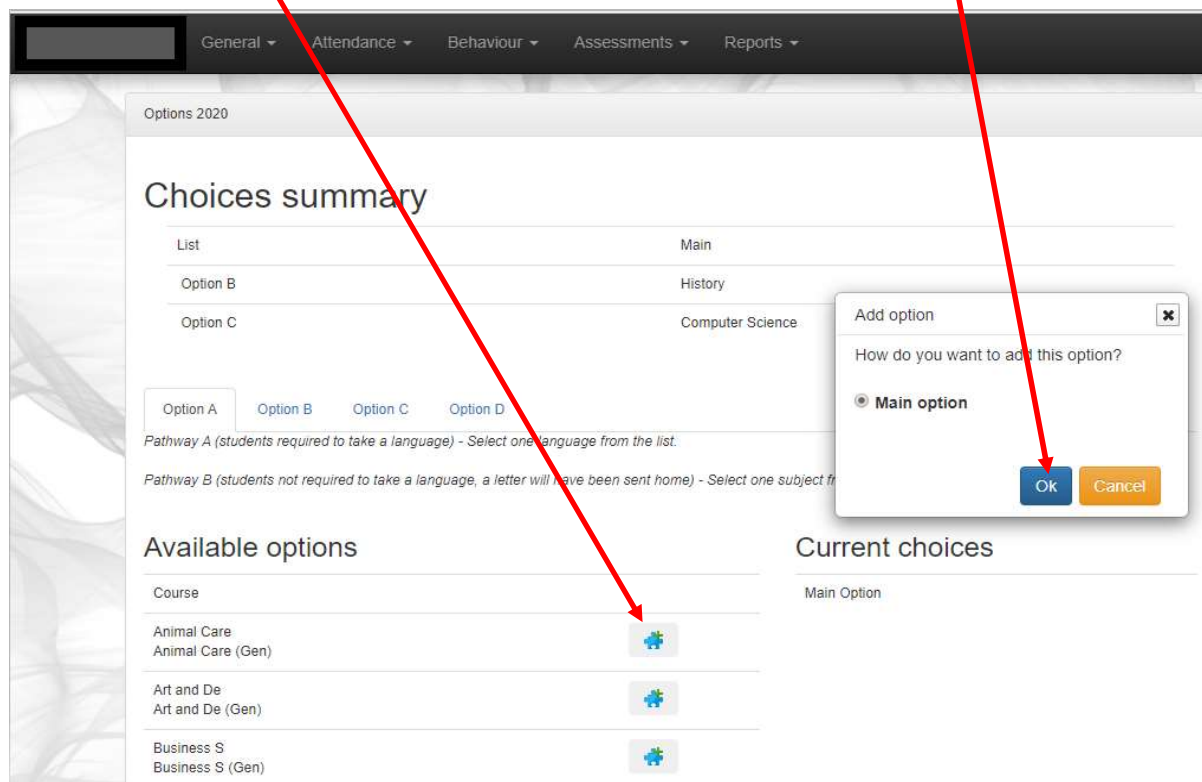
2. Select *Options offer* from the *General* menu.



3. *Option A* will be selected. Students on **Pathway A** must select a language they have been studying in Year 9.

Students on **Pathway B** can select any subject.

4. Select *Ok* from the pop-up that appears.





5. Select *Option B*.  
Select either Geography or History as described above.

Options 2020

## Choices summary

List	Main
Option A	French
Option C	Computer Science

Option A   **Option B**   Option C   Option D

Please select either Geography or History

### Available options

Course	
Geography Geography (Gen)	
History History (Gen)	

### Current choices

Main Option

6. Repeat this process for *Options C and D* to select the other option subjects.

In *Option D* a second choice must be made which will be saved as a *Reserve*.

Students who have been studying two languages in Year 9 may, if they wish, select the second language in *C* or *D*.

Students may select the second Humanities subject in *Options C* or *D* if they wish to take Geography and History.

7. The *Choices summary* shows the subjects that have been selected.

These can be amended at any time up to the deadline by deleting a subject and selecting a different one from the appropriate *Options* tab.

## Choices summary

Reserve	List	Main
	Option A	French
	Option B	History
	Option C	Computer Science
	Option D	Dance (BTEC)
✓	Option D	Engineering

## Checklist (for parents and students)

Make sure you have:

- taken the time to find out everything you need to about the courses on offer before making your choices,
- had online appointments with subject teachers,
- included a reserve choice in Option D,
- not selected the same subject more than once,
- completed the options process in INSIGHT by Thursday 11 February.

Students following pathway A must have a language selected in option A.