

Welcome to Simon Balle All-through School Year 9 Preferences Evening 2024

Aim: Creating tomorrow's Citizens today

A decorative horizontal bar at the bottom of the slide, composed of five vertical rectangular segments in varying shades of green, from light to dark.

The journey so far



Aim of the evening

1. To understand the preferences process

- a. To outline the preferences process
- b. To help you to support your child to make an informed decision
- c. To examine what should influence choices
- d. To share key dates
- e. To give you an opportunity to contact us with any questions



Guidance in School

- ❑ **Subject Presentations** - All subjects have delivered presentations about their subjects at KS4 to give students more information about course content, assessment, practical: theory ratio, expectation and potential careers
- ❑ **Preference booklet** - This contains subject information and is also available to all Year 9 students and yourselves in the Preference google classroom
- ❑ **Google Classroom**- These are the slideshows the students have had presented to them during the assemblies over the past 2 weeks, again available to you all on the google classroom
- ❑ **Classroom teachers** - don't be afraid to speak to your classroom teachers and ask their advice. They are the experts and they know you well!
- ❑ **Careers Education** - Using Unifrog's Spiral Careers Curriculum student have/will continue to be delivered lesson such as Decision making: what to study at KS4.
- ❑ **Unifrog Webinar** - Information shared about Unifrog's Webinar on helping students choose GCSE subjects.
- ❑ **Caius 9&10** - offers a springboard for Year 9 and 10 students, encouraging them to consider university as a post-secondary option and supporting them in their academic and personal growth.



Preferences Process

You will pick up your preference form as you leave the hall tonight

- ❑ **Deadline to submit is Friday 16th February.** Bring them to **MR EAST directly in the Head Of Year office** in the Humanities block.
- ❑ **Compulsory Examined subjects:** English Language and English Literature, Maths (H or F), Science (Everyone does at least double science H or F), French or Spanish and History or Geography. These subject give you 7 GCSE grades as (Double) Science counts for 2. You do not need to 'choose' these subjects.
- ❑ **Compulsory Non examined subjects:** 'Physical Education' and 'PSHE' you do not need to 'choose' these subjects.
- ❑ **Students have been guided to take one subject in each block.** You can only have one subject circled in each block, you cannot leave a block free or choose 2 subjects from one block.



Preferences Information

- ❑ **Science** - everyone takes at least combined (double) science which means that they study all three sciences and gain two GCSEs in science and is available at both foundation and higher tiers. By taking triple science you are expanding this to three GCSEs hence why you would select this as one of your preferences. Triple science is for those students who see sciences as a strength of theirs and is available at both foundation and higher tiers.

You are still able to go onto science A levels after taking combined science, but if you were to be looking at more than one science at A Level then you should be taking triple science.

- ❑ It is very important that students understand that there is not a completely open option, rather, they have preferences.



Preferences Information

Why Ebaac (Eng, Maths, Science, Lang & Geog/Hist?)

Consists of subjects which are **considered essential** to **open up lots of doors** in the future. Therefore, Enhances prospects for entering further education or employment.

Educational research has proven that studying the EBacc can help **improve a young person's performance in English and Maths.**

Department for Education (2019)

- ❑ As a school, we are proud to be able to offer the Ebaac to all students, knowing the opportunities this will provide for them.
- ❑ We believe that mindset and intelligence are not fixed and we have the **highest aspirations** for all



Preferences Information

BLOCK A	BLOCK C	BLOCK D
Geography	Geography	Geography
History	History	Triple Science
Triple Science	Triple Science	Business Studies
Art	Music	Drama
Textiles	Psychology	PRE
Product Design	Computer Science	Psychology
Photography	Business Studies	OCR Sports Studies
OCR Sports Studies	Enterprise and Marketing	GCSE PE
GCSE PE		





Things to consider

- ❑ Select subjects that suit your learning/that you enjoy/that you are doing well in
- ❑ Do not just choose what your friends are choosing
- ❑ Think about where you might be heading (Sixth form, college, apprenticeship, university)
- ❑ Keep doors open
- ❑ Read the preferences booklet and speak to members of staff
- ❑ **This is a 2 year COMMITMENT**



Things to consider

To ensure the right choice is made you may also want to consider:

- ☐ Go4schools data and reports
- ☐ Looking at exam board subject websites
- ☐ Speaking to older students
- ☐ Speaking to older staff
- ☐ Reading the **'Year 9 Preferences Booklet 2024'**
- ☐ Requesting a Connexions interview
- ☐ Ask a question via the specific email address y9preferences@simonballe.herts.sch.uk



Next Steps

Go and speak to the subject leads and students **now**, they will be able to answer any question you might have. Then think about and discuss your preferences at **home**.

Students must submit the form by **Wednesday 16th February, directly to Mr East in the Head of Year office.** It can be brought in before BUT NOT AFTER

We have set up a specific email address to answer question on these choices.
y9preferences@simonballe.herts.sch.uk

We will answer emails up to the deadline date (16th Feb) as soon as possible. If we are unable to answer your questions via email, then we may suggest a meeting or phone call. Similarly, we will be in contact with you if we feel that the preferences chosen are not the most suitable according to the pathway you are on.



GCSE start date

We will change the timetable and students will begin their GCSE options **from the start of the last half term in June (Summer 2).**

This provides students with a focus for the last half term of the year.



Preference forms

Please do not forget to collect your personalised envelope before you leave.

H2 - A, B, L

G1 - M, N, R



Frequently asked questions

- **Do I have to take a language?** Yes. As a school we are extremely proud to offer our students all EBacc subjects. Studying EBacc subjects will ensure the best aspirational outcomes for all our young people. Remember 'the sky's the limit'.
- **Are my choices okay?** You should be able to justify your choices when discussing with anyone. Have a think about what is your likely pathway into the sixth form. Have you checked your data on Go4Schools? Look at the checklist on the form that you have received, have you followed the guidance?
- **I want to do Computer Science as I like computers, is that okay?** You need to be very good at logical thinking and hence Maths. Is your mathematical ability high enough to take this subject?
- **I want to choose 2 subjects from one block as I can't decide between them. What do I do?**
You can't choose 2 from the same block, you cannot leave a block free
- **I have additional needs, do I get a free choice?** You will have the same form as everyone else who is on the same pathway as you, but we will invite you and your parents into school to discuss whether your choices will best suit your needs.



Frequently asked questions

- **I want to take Business as I want to work in a business when I am older and if I want to take it at A level I need a GCSE in it, is this right?** No, you can take Business Studies at A level without taking it at GCSE. Speak to Mr Pooley if you want to know more about the subject
- **I am not very good at anything, what shall I choose?** As with someone who is good at everything, it is the subjects that you enjoy or work best in and have already shown a good ATL that you will gain most from. If you feel that you will not reach the criteria to take specific subjects at Level 3 (A level) then have you looked at college courses to see what the requirements are for anything in which you may be interested.
- **I like art so why can't I take more than one of those subjects?** Fine art, Textiles, Photography & 3D design **are all the same GCSE** but with a different medium to produce the work. If you had two of them you would effectively be taking a subject twice.
- **What if the subject I choose is full, will I get a place?** This decision will be made based upon your ATL not attainment. Last year there were **three subjects that were oversubscribed** and we had to ask some people to change one preference. To make that decision, teachers took into account how each student had worked in class and their commitment to the subject.



Frequently asked questions

- **I like this subject, but only want to take it if I am taught by a certain teacher?** We have not planned who is taking particular classes so **do not** choose a subject based upon a teacher you like.
- **So if I take triple science does that count as one of my preferences?**
Yes. Taking double/combined science does not take up one of your options. If science is an area of strength for you and it is something you enjoy then triple/combined science should be one of your preferences. For both combined or triple, you will study all three sciences.
- **How will I know if I have my choices or if a subject is oversubscribed?** It will take us a few weeks to work out; after that, Mr East, Mr Pooley or Mr Ayres will approach you but that will be well after half term. We can never guarantee that all subjects will be available until we know our staffing later in the year. **If you are informed that there is an issue**, it will be a case of you selecting one other subject and we will then give you priority over others if you are selecting a subject that may also become full.
- **What if I don't agree with the pathway I have been put on?** Student have all been place on the same pathway. Some will be advised that they should take a certain subject however this is their preference. Student that have not been advised to take a certain subject does not mean they cannot take it.

