



NEWSLETTER

Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School & 6th Form College

SPECIAL YEAR 9 OPTIONS EDITION – 17TH NOVEMBER 2023



Welcome to our Special Edition GCSE Options Newsletter.

The GCSE options process that our year 9 students are about to embark upon is a real opportunity for each individual to take a degree of choice and control over their education. Many of our year 9 students are already discussing amongst themselves and their teachers what they would like to do in the future and the choices they would like to consider for their GCSE options.



I am sure that this is also a hot topic of debate in your home at the moment too.

This is an important and exciting time. The options that our year 9 students decide to study in years 10 and 11 will affect how they spend their time at school. Their choice of GCSEs also give direction to their post 16 pathways whether this is further study, work or an apprenticeship programme so the choices which the students eventually make must be made carefully and with serious consideration.

We will continue to support you through the process by reminding you of deadlines and sending key information. We will also deliver important information to students during tutor time as well as give them a further insight into subjects that are not taught in KS3. Please engage with the process and use the information that is available on the school website to guide you. There is some critical thinking time now in order to give the opportunity to reflect as well as use the upcoming interim to inform your choices. If you have any concerns please contact your child's tutor for support.



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YEAR 9 OPTIONS INFORMATION

CONTACTS

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OPTIONS GUIDELINES

1. Choose 1 subject from each of the columns labelled A, B, C, D.
2. At least 1 of your 4 choices must be from the subjects in the shaded area (History; Geography; Computer Science; French; German; Spanish; Triple Science)
3. We recommend that you take a Modern Foreign Language
4. Your option choices should give you a broad and balanced curriculum. With this in mind we recommend that you do not opt for more than two from each of the following subject combinations:
 - a. Geography; History and Religious Studies
 - b. French; German and Spanish
 - c. Art, Drama and Music

KEY DATES

DEC 2023
8th
Issue individual student logins to register options

DEC 2023
22nd
The deadline for registering option choices

FEB 2024
16th
Final confirmation of option choices

Thursday 9th November from 16.30 – 18.25

Talk 1 – 16.45 Talk 2 – 17.30

Visit www.hccs1978.co.uk/upper-school for Options Subject Sheets & Subject Information Sheets

Please click the image for a downloadable copy of the postcard



SPECIAL YEAR 9 OPTIONS EDITION



Options Evening November 9th 2023

On the evening of the 9th we welcomed year 9 students and their families into our school to kick off the options programme for 23-24. It was a fantastic evening where we all felt proud to be part of this community. Our staff were informative and supportive, helping the students in making these important decisions. Our older students did an incredible job of not only representing the subjects and our school but genuinely helped a lot of our year 9 students with their questions and prompted them to consider things they previously hadn't.



The families who came along were positive and excited about this next step for their child's education, asking the right questions, looking for the information to help confirm their choices and were also open minded, using the opportunity to consider subjects that were new to them.

Some students left the event having confirmed their choices for GCSE and some students finished the night with lots more information and options to consider over the next few weeks. We couldn't have asked for more from the evening so thank you to all those involved, especially to the families who came along.

On a personal note, I want to say how much we enjoyed meeting parents and carers last night and getting to know more of you; it was a pleasure to talk about your children's education and to be part of this journey with you.

Please [click here](#) for the full presentation from the Options Evening and [click here](#) for the Options webpage.

What did former Year 9 Students think of the Options Process?

We spoke to the students who have successfully navigated the options process and are currently making progress in their studies and this was the advice in their words that they offered to current year 9 students:

I spoke to the careers officer after the open evening and found that useful

Don't take subjects because your friends are, you probably won't be in the same lessons anyway

Choose what you enjoy or are doing well in. I was given this advice and used it. It may sound simple but don't over complicate your options

Speak to as many people as possible who have done GCSEs and see what they have to say about different subjects

See what you like and then see how well you do in the subjects (grades) because if you are not doing well in a subject then you shouldn't do it for GCSE unless you are willing to work really hard



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Vocational and Technical Curriculum

Our Vocational and Technical Curriculum (VTC) here at HCCS & HC6F has grown considerably in the last five years from 30 students to circa 200 students in 2023 across Upper School and the 6th Form College. The current VTC comprises vocational pathways in Enterprise & Business, Health and Social Care, Information Technology, and Creative Media Production.

All of our VTCs have a modular structure with a mixture of internally assessed "coursework" based units and externally assessed units in a variety of formats including practical pieces for example creating pitches for new products, building databases and creating publications.

Taking a vocational qualification enables our students to maintain a broader curriculum whilst at the same time building knowledge and skills that are important not only to employers but studying at higher levels including at University.

The majority of our Vocational and Technical Qualifications are BTECs from Pearson, one of the largest Awarding Organisations in the UK, but we also have Cambridge Nationals which are similar to BTECs but offered by OCR. No matter which Awarding Organisation the vocational qualification is with, they have similar structures and assessment methods at key stage 4 and key stage 5 that use a combination of vocational assignments, practical tasks and written assessments relevant to each subject area. At the same time they give students a taste of a sector, developing transferable skills.

Key Stage 4: BTECs & Cambridge Nationals Vs GCSE

Tech Awards and Cambridge Nationals are Level 1/Level 2 courses that are of the same size and rigour as GCSEs, widening students' options at Key Stage 4, while keeping all their options open for progression into post-16 education and training.

They have been developed in consultation with subject specialists and secondary school and FE representatives, to ensure that they are engaging and fully up to date with current sector skills, behaviours and knowledge.

| VTC | GCSE Equivalent |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Level 2 Distinction* | 8.5 |
| Level 2 Distinction | 7 |
| Level 2 Merit | 5.5 |
| Level 2 Pass | 4 |
| Level 1 Distinction | 3 |
| Level 1 Merit | 2 |
| Level 1 Pass | 1.25 |



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