

11 December 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

GCSE Options Process 2021

It is the stage of the academic year when we launch the GCSE options process for Year 8. Before Christmas Year 8 students will begin looking at the process of choosing subjects with their PD teachers. This is in preparation for the main launch of the Options Process in the New Year.

All Year 8 students will be watching a presentation outlining those subjects which are 'new' at GCSE and which they won't have studied or studied briefly in Key Stage 3. In addition each student will be given an Options booklet which outlines the school's approach to GCSE study and the curriculum and also details all the different subjects available. They will bring these booklets home in January. Additionally, we will be putting materials on the school website from **Monday 18 January** for students and parents to use to help to find out more about individual subjects. Each option subject is producing a short video which outlines their course. There will also be a presentation on the practicalities of the process itself and explaining the school's approach to the options process. The Year 8 parents' evening then follows on **Thursday 21 January**.

Year 8 students will then need to complete an options form. This form will be personalised and handed to students by tutors in the week beginning 18 January. The deadline for the completed forms to be returned to tutors is **Wednesday 3 March 2021**. We need all forms returned by this deadline so that we can allocate groups and organise staffing and resources. However, if students change their minds they are welcome to request an adjustment to their options which we will accommodate if possible. It is important to note that while most students will get their preferred option choices there will be instances where clashes in the timetable or excessive numbers mean that we will have to allocate reserve choices. This is sometimes particularly an issue in subjects that require specialist equipment.

If you have any questions at any point about this process please contact us at options@theweald.org.uk. If your query relates to a specific subject then it will be forwarded to the relevant subject leader and if it is about the options process itself I will respond. In normal circumstances we would run a drop in session for parents to ask questions a week before the deadline. This is not possible this year but staff will be monitoring the email address above between 3.30 and 4.30pm on **Wednesday 24 February** so that we can provide a quick response to any final questions.

Our experience is that only a small group of parents need to be in contact with staff on that afternoon to resolve final issues with the process but the speed of response to these messages will depend on the volume of emails we receive.

I hope this letter is helpful in outlining the options process and explaining what resources, materials and support will be available to students and parents throughout this important process.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Backshall'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and 'B'.

Mr T Backshall
Assistant Headteacher