

Dear Parents

### **Year 9 GCSE Options Process and Parents Evening – Wednesday, 3 March 2021**

As you are aware, your Year 9 child will be choosing the option subjects they would like to study at GCSE level next school year. We understand how vitally important these decisions are, and I am writing to outline the support available throughout the options process.

You are invited to an online Parents Evening on **Wednesday, 3 March 2021 from 4.00pm – 8.00pm**. During the evening you will have the opportunity to discuss your child's current progress and possible option choices with their class teachers. There will also be an opportunity to make an appointment to talk to other subject representatives, should you wish to discuss potential option choice subjects further. The year group team will be available for appointments throughout the evening.

The school has introduced a new, intuitive and easy to use online appointment booking system. This allows you to choose your own appointment times with teachers, and you will receive an email confirming your appointments. Attending the appointments online, via a phone, tablet or laptop is also very straightforward. We are confident this will be an improvement to the previous system and welcome any feedback. Please see the guidance at the end of this letter for further information on how to book appointments.

In support of the Year 9 Options process, we have held an online assembly to outline the procedure to all students. This assembly is available to watch online and can be accessed via the live broadcast link your child has been emailed.

Students have been exposed to different subject material through our Futures Thursday initiative, and online videos and roadmaps have been made available to support option choice decisions on the school's VLE (<https://vle.williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk/careers/futures-thursday/year-9-options>). If you require any support with this please contact Mrs Hill, our Careers Lead, by email at [thill@williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:thill@williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk).

### **Option Choice Form Process**

Students will be able to access options information outlining courses on offer on the school website. There is a wealth of information and I encourage you to take the time to digest the information and book an appointment for the parents evening to support the option choice process. Please take time to read the information on the options form to ensure the details are completed accurately.

When completing the options form please ensure you have taken into consideration the following:

We **strongly recommend** that students aim to achieve the **English Baccalaureate** through studying a language and a humanity (Geography or History). Why study the English Baccalaureate (EBacc)? The EBacc is made up of the subjects which are considered essential to many degrees and open up lots of doors. A study by **the UCL Institute of Education shows that studying subjects included in the EBacc provides students with greater opportunities in further education and increases the likelihood that a pupil will stay on in full-time education. Sutton Trust research reveals that studying the EBacc helps improve a young person's performance in English and Maths.**

- If a student decides not to study subjects to achieve the EBacc then they must take one of the compulsory subjects as one of their three choices (History, Geography, French, Spanish or Computer Science).
- You are unable to choose Design Engineering and Product Design as a combination, as they are the same course but with a different bias.
- Please ensure the name and form sections of the form are completed accurately.
- All students must provide two reserve subjects, different from their first choices, in the event that some courses may not run due to a lack of numbers and financial viability.
- Any additional information or things to note can be added in the notes box at the bottom of the page.
- The deadline for submission is **Friday, 19 March 2021**. Forms can be completed online via the VLE or returned to the main office in school.

Finally, you will receive a letter in the summer term confirming your child's option choices. Please be aware that courses are subject to change due to exam board amendments and lack of sufficient numbers. If this happens a further conversation will occur to support alternative option choices.

Please do not hesitate to email me, [kpigdon@williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:kpigdon@williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk), Miss Mulholland, [vmulholland@williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:vmulholland@williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk), or Mrs Wood, [rwood@williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:rwood@williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk), if you require further information.

Yours sincerely



Ms Pigdon  
Deputy Headteacher

## Booking Online Parents Evening Appointments via Schools Cloud

The school has introduced a new, intuitive and easy to use online appointment booking system. This allows you to choose your own appointment times with teachers and you will receive an email confirming your appointments. Attending the appointments online, via a phone, tablet or laptop is also very straightforward.

Appointments can be made from **Wednesday, 10 February**. You will receive an email with a link to the booking system. Following your booking you will receive a confirmation email with everything you need to join the online appointment on the evening.

Please have the following information ready to login:

### Your Details

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Title	First Name	Surname
Mr ▼	John	Smith
Email	Confirm Email	
<input type="text" value="jsmith@email.com"/>	<input type="text" value="jsmith@email.com"/>	

### Student's Details

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First Name	Surname	Date of Birth		
<input type="text" value="Joe"/>	<input type="text" value="Smith"/>	1 ▼	January ▼	2010 ▼

Please make sure that the email address entered when making your appointments is the email address the initial link was sent to. If you are having difficulty logging in, or need support in making the appointments, please email the main office, [mail@williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:mail@williamhoward.cumbria.sch.uk).