



HGSS Curriculum Update – Frequently Asked Questions

Why were these Specialism subjects chosen?

Each specialism area was chosen as it has a variety of subjects for students to consider. They offer the students the chance to explore one subject in more detail before they commit to a GCSE pathway.

Is Dance available within the PE Specialism?

Dance units of study are integrated into PE core curriculum and it can be used as a practical option if the students choose the full GCSE in PE starting in Year 10.

Can you please explain the course content for the specialisms.

Teachers will be preparing presentations which introduce each specialism and provide guidance as to the content and learning styles of the Year 9 curriculum. These presentations will be available for parents to view on the school website by the 18th March 2022. The course content will reflect the national curriculum.

Will the students begin studying the GCSE content for core subjects in Year 9?

Students will not begin GCSE courses until Year 10, but the Year 7,8 & 9 curriculum will provide the skills and knowledge needed for future GCSE success. In core subjects students will not be set into tiers of entry during Year 9 to ensure that all students have access to a full curriculum and the opportunity to access the higher tiers in Year 10.

If after the end of year 9 they are not happy with the subjects they picked can they change them for GCSE years?

Yes. Students will have two GCSE option choices for Year 10 which is not restricted by specialism choices in Year 9.

Is there an option whereby if a student is struggling in a subject they can be switched out and in to a different specialism in the same category?

We encourage all students to stick with their chosen specialism in Year 9 as a free choice is offered when they choose their GCSE pathway for Year 10.

Where does MFL fit in the choices?

The study of Modern Foreign languages is compulsory in Years 7,8 & 9 as part of the national curriculum. They are an option choice for Year 10 as a GCSE. We strongly recommend that students continue to study a modern foreign language as this helps students achieve the highly regarded EBACC suite of qualifications and enhances the quality of applications to Russell group universities.

Please can you clarify which of the Year 10 Core Curriculum subjects end up in a GCSE?

Students will study for 10 GCSE's in total including English language, English Literature, Maths, Triple Science, Religious Studies, a Humanities GCSE and their 2 Year 10 option choices.

When will they make their specialism/option choices ?

Students will make their Year 9 Specialism choice in the Spring term by 8th April 2022. Students will choose their Year 10 GCSE option choice in Spring Term 2023.

How will we choose the options and do they include reserve for each section?

Students will be asked to indicate their specialism choices via an online survey by the 8th April. All students will be asked to indicate a first choice and a reserve in each specialism.

How can a reduced GCSE learning period be of benefit in a COVID world that impacts upon continuity of learning?

The guidance from the Department for Education is clear that students should not narrow their curriculum and begin studying exam content before Year 10. The Department for Education has taken other measures to ensure that GCSE outcomes are fair and not impacted by COVID such as reducing the content of some exams and issuing clear guidance on the content of exams to help students focus their revision. We anticipate that measures such as this would be in place in the future if needed to mitigate the impact upon continuity of learning.

What about children who do not lean towards Art-based subjects? Why are 2 whole columns so strongly Art orientated?

We have tried our best to provide a varied specialism choice which will appeal to our students and match our staffing expertise. These include subjects such as PE, Food Technology, Design Technology, Music and Drama. The core curriculum also includes all statutory subjects.

Will the students be under more pressure resulting in more homework to work through the GCSE curriculum?

Staff are developing curriculum maps and schemes of work to ensure that the skills and themes needed for GCSE success are embedded from Year 7. We view GCSE success as a five-year journey and all students will be supported to achieve the best they can through our well planned and integrated 5-year curriculum.

Is the structure of choices of GCSE now always going to start in Y10 or is this only for 2022?

The curriculum change is a long-term change and all students from 2022 onwards will follow our new curriculum model.