

# **Year 9 Option Choices**



# **2022**

## Y9 Options Guide

### Introduction

Y9 students are approaching the end of key stage 3 and it is now time for them to make decisions about their courses for the next two years at key stage 4. Students will need to consider their individual strengths, talents and plans for the future.

In Y9 all students will be required to study:

- English Language and English Literature
- Mathematics
- At least two Sciences (some will study three)
- Core Physical Education
- Either Geography, History, or a Modern Foreign Language (English Baccalaureate subjects)

In addition, students choose further options from the subjects outlined in this booklet.

### Why humanities and a language?

There is strong evidence to support many students following this route (The Sutton Trust, July 2016). Research from 300 schools found that statistically students following the English Baccalaureate subjects were:

- more likely to achieve good GCSEs in English and maths
- more likely to be taking an A level or other level 3 qualification after the age of 16
- less likely to have dropped out of education after the age of 16

[http://educationdatalab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Changing-the-subject\\_FINAL.pdf](http://educationdatalab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Changing-the-subject_FINAL.pdf)

The Department for Education say:

- *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 can help improve a young person's performance in English and maths.*

We are offering the subject choices below and there are some points to note about combinations of subjects.

### GCSEs and Vocational subjects

Both types of final qualification are valid. The most significant differences are in the balance of theory/practical work and the style of assessment.

GCSEs	Vocational (Btec or VCert)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ More theoretical</li> <li>➤ More exam based and less practical in many cases (not all)</li> <li>➤ More aligned to A Levels</li> <li>➤ Graded as a number from 9 to 1 (nine being the highest)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A career focus grounded in the world of work.</li> <li>➤ Usually more practical than GCSEs</li> <li>➤ Mainly coursework but still an exam</li> <li>➤ Grades are Distinction, Merit and Pass rather than numbers (as GCSEs are)</li> </ul>

- All students will study English Language, English Literature, Maths, at least two Sciences, and core PE. No option choices are required for these
- To follow the English Baccalaureate a student must study a language and at least one subject out of Geography and History. You can choose both.
- Students cannot choose Art and Design, and Art Graphics. They are the same GCSE but use different mediums and techniques
- You cannot choose the same subject twice

### The subjects we offer

GCSEs	Vocational qualifications
Art	Dance
Art Graphics	Drama
*Computer Science	Engineering
*Geography	Health & Social Care
*History	Hospitality and Catering
*French	Media Studies
Religious Education	Music
*Triple Science	Sport

- Not all subjects are available to every student as some subjects require certain criteria to have been met during Key Stage 3.
- Every student must select at least one subject marked with an asterisk\*

### The process of choosing subjects

To support students in making the best choices they will:

- Have an assembly lead by Mr Pryde
- Receive guidance from their Form Tutor
- The online options system is set up so that students will automatically have to opt for an appropriate set of options. This is individualised to take account of student progress during Key Stage 3
- Guided time in a computer room to make their actual choices online
- The choices of every individual student will then be quality assured in school to ensure it maximises their chances of success

Once this point has been reached in June, you will be informed of the subjects allocated to your son/daughter for Key Stage 4.

### How can parents support?

It will support your child and the school if you can spend time going through this booklet with your son/daughter and discussing their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their areas of enjoyment.

You may find page 2 particularly useful when choosing between GCSEs and Vocational subjects. Page 4 references the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and for any student considering A Levels and University in the future this should be given very serious consideration.

If you have strong opinions on the option choices your son/daughter makes please do share them with us and we will do our best to accommodate them; it is important to note that choices cannot be guaranteed though and this is explained on page 4. Students will be making their choices in the week beginning 18 February 2022.

If you are happy for us to guide your child in their choices, we will do so fully. If you have specific subjects you are very keen your son/daughter opts for, please send this in via email to: [options@blaisehighschool.co.uk](mailto:options@blaisehighschool.co.uk) by Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> February. This email address will not respond to mail but it will be monitored and acted upon as a part of the options process.

1. Your child's name
2. The subjects you would like them to be allocated (up to 4 subjects) based on the table on page 3. These cannot be guaranteed but we will aim to achieve your request.

## **Options – Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who will be the teacher for each option subject?**

This cannot be answered at this stage so do not assume it will be the same person who teaches you this year. It is wiser to make an option choice based on the subject content and assessment style rather than on who teaches the subject.

### **Are there boys and girls subjects?**

Absolutely not. All subjects are appropriate for students regardless of gender. What makes a subject suitable or not is your ability, your enjoyment of a subject, the assessment methods, and your aspirations for post 16 education.

### **Am I guaranteed to get my option choices?**

We will do all we can to ensure you get your choices but it cannot be guaranteed. Most students do have their first choices met. There are a number of reasons for not getting your choices:

- Too few people might opt for a subject so no class can be created
- More people opt for a subject than can be in a class e.g. we cannot place over 20 students into a Food Technology class due to the number of ovens and workstations available. If forty students opt, two classes of twenty can be created, but if twenty-one students opt for it only twenty will get their option choice. Decisions will be based on suitability of a subject for a student and aptitude.

### **Will I be able to change my mind in September?**

This is possible, but there will be restrictions once the curriculum has been finalised. It is far better to make the correct choice in the first instance, based on all of the information available.

### **Who can help me with my choices?**

Your Tutor and your subject teachers are the first people to ask for help and advice.

### **What subjects do I have to study?**

English, Maths, Science, Physical Education and either History, Geography, or a Modern Foreign Language.

### **Do I have to put reserve choices on my options form?**

Yes. If a subject you have opted for is full, you will be allocated one of your reserve choices. For this reason, reserve choices need as much thought as your main choices.

### **What is the English Baccalaureate (EBacc)?**

The EBacc is not a qualification in itself. It is a measure of performance introduced by the Government. This is recognised by some universities, post 16 providers and employers as a reflection of a broad and balanced curriculum which facilitates progression to many other qualifications and jobs. To achieve this performance measure, a student must achieve a grade 5 or higher in English, maths, two Sciences, a humanities subject (Geography or History), and a modern foreign language (French).

## Factors to consider when making your choices

Sound reasons	Reasons to avoid
I already study the subject at key stage 3 and enjoy it	<p>My friends are choosing this course</p> <p><i>You need to be more independent. You do not necessarily learn in the same way or have the same skills as your friends. It does not mean you will be in the same class either.</i></p>
I've already achieved success in the subject at key stage 3	<p>I don't like any other subjects so I'll choose this one</p> <p><i>You need to find out more detail about each subject and make a positive choice based upon learning style, assessment methods and subject content.</i></p>
The subject will help with my plans for the future	<p>I really get on well with the teacher I have this year</p> <p><i>There is no guarantee whatsoever of the same teacher next year.</i></p>
I've not studied the subject before but it interests me and I've discussed this with my Tutor and teachers to get a lot of information	<p>I don't need to choose too carefully as I can change my mind later</p> <p><i>Once the timetable and options blocks have been constructed it is very hard to change subjects. You will also have wasted valuable time and have a lot of work to catch up on. Much better to make the right choice now.</i></p>