

# Year 9 Option Choices



# 2023

## 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, interests and talents. Students should make choices based on what they enjoy and what they are passionate about. Every combination of subjects that we offer will enable students to access any post 16 course.

In Y9 all students will be required to study:

- English Language and English Literature
- Mathematics
- Combined Sciences (two GCSEs)
- Core Physical Education
- Either Geography, History, or a Modern Foreign Language (English Baccalaureate subjects)

In addition, students choose further options from the subjects outlined below and in the online video which can be located on the school website.

### Why humanities and a language?

There is evidence to support students following this route (The Sutton Trust, July 2016). The English Baccalaureate refers to a group of options in which a child studies: English Language and Literature, Maths, Combined Science, Geography or History and a language. 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.*

### GCSEs and Vocational subjects

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

GCSEs	Vocational (Btec or OCR National)
<input type="checkbox"/> More theoretical	<input type="checkbox"/> A career focus grounded in the world of work.
<input type="checkbox"/> More exam based and less practical in many cases (not all)	<input type="checkbox"/> Usually more practical than GCSEs
<input type="checkbox"/> More aligned to A Levels	<input type="checkbox"/> Mainly coursework but still an exam
<input type="checkbox"/> Graded as a number from 9 to 1 (nine being the highest)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grades are Distinction, Merit and Pass rather than numbers (as GCSEs are)

- All students will study English Language, English Literature, Maths, 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

- When selecting French or Spanish, students can only select the language they have studied at Key Stage 3
- We are currently offering subjects that we have greater certainty that we will be fully staffed in for the duration of the students course. Whilst not everything is predictable, as far as possible we want to remove the risk of students having to switch courses at the end of year 10.

### The subjects we offer

GCSEs	Vocational qualifications
Art	Drama
Computer Science	Engineering
Geography	Health & Social Care
History	Media Studies
French	Music
Religious Studies	Sport
Spanish	

### Students will be required to select four subjects plus at least two reserve choices

#### The process of choosing subjects

To support students in making the best choices they:

1. Have had an assembly lead by Mr Leese
2. Will receive guidance from their Form Tutor
3. Will use the online options system which is set up so that students automatically have to opt for an appropriate set of options.
4. **Will have 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

We are now at stage 4 and this will take place in school. 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 Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. This email address will not respond to mail but it will be monitored and acted upon as a part of the options process. In your email, include:

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

In July you will be informed of the subjects allocated to your son/daughter for Key Stage 4. It is important to note that choices cannot be guaranteed.

For more detailed information about each subject please see the options link on the school website. where Heads of Departments give an overview of the content and assessment methods for each subject. This guide is also available at that link.

## **Options – Frequently Asked Questions**

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

This cannot be answered until much later in the year 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 all students.

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

No. 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 30 students into a Computing class due to the number of PCs available. If enough students opt for this we can create a second class

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

No. It is important 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, PSHE, 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.

### **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>Changes of subject cannot happen once we reach September.</i></p>