

19th January 2021

Dear students and families,

I hope that this letter finds you well and keeping up with the work you are being set across the curriculum.

I know that some of you have started asking your tutors about Options. It is understandable that you are now thinking about this process and that you may be worried that because we are not in school you are missing out in some way. Please be assured that we are putting plans in place so that the Options process will follow the normal timeline but, of course, will operate a little differently this year because much of it will be available virtually.

All the subject leaders have produced information about their GCSE courses in a written format and this is being collated into a booklet that will be issued to you during the week commencing the **8th February**. This booklet will also include a letter with details about your recommended route and this is explained in the booklet. It is important that you read all of this information carefully.

Each of the GCSE subject leads are also currently working on a virtual presentation about their subject and this will be made available on the school website during the week of the **22nd February** in a special area of the website currently under construction.

On **Thursday 25th February**, the presentation I would normally give, as part of the options evening, will be made available via the school website as a video. In this video, I will explain the different routes, how to make your decisions and how to submit your choices online.

The Year 9 reports will be issued during February and this will give you an indication of progress and achievement in each subject area. Once you have all of the information you can begin to make more informed choices about the three subjects you will need to select. Normally in lessons in the week of the Options Evening, your class teachers may also talk to you about the subject. If we return to school after February half term, you will be able to have these conversations in person. If, however, we do not return to school at that time, you will have opportunities, when submitting online classwork, to ask questions such as “does the standard of this work mean I would be successful at this subject at GCSE?”

You will also be given clear guidance at the time of my virtual Options presentation about how to make your online option choices, including one reserve. The software for this will be live for you to make your choices between the **10th and 12th of March 2021** giving you time to consider the information from your report along with feedback from your individual teachers.

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Following the online submission of your choices there will be a period of time for internal checks and timetabling. It may be necessary for me to have some individual meetings where combinations of some subjects may prove problematic. The final options will be shared with you in May 2021.

I hope that this information helps you to understand the timeline of the Options process and to reassure you that there is still plenty of time for you to be working hard in all your subjects to get a clearer picture of where your strengths and passions lie before having to make your final choices.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Dunford', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mrs Amanda Dunford
Assistant Headteacher