



# BISHOP CHALLONER SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

January 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

Changes to AS levels introduced gradually in different subjects over the last two years will mean that from September 2017 all AS levels taught in schools and colleges will no longer contribute towards a student's final A level grade. During my presentation at our Sixth Form Open Evening last November, I stated that in light of these changes we were currently reviewing our position in relation to AS level.

Taking these changes into consideration, we have decided not to offer AS level examinations at Bishop Challoner from September 2017. Instead we have decided to offer our students the opportunity to study 3 full A levels from the beginning of Year 12. In making this change our aim is to ensure that all subjects taught in our sixth form continue to offer the depth, rigour and academic challenge required to achieve the highest grades. From the very beginning of their studies our students will have the opportunity to develop their critical thinking skills and explore the multi-faceted nature of each of their subjects without the constraint of sitting an AS level examination at the end of Year 12.

In exceptional circumstances students will have the opportunity to study 4 full A level subjects. However, this will be a significant undertaking and certainly a decision not to be taken lightly. It will require students to have achieved outstanding GCSE results as well as an ability to effectively manage their time.

## Choosing the right subjects at A level.

A level study is a real challenge and students selecting this option at the end of Year 11 will need to have a genuine interest in the subjects they have chosen and understand clearly what subject content is to be taught. In addition, students studying A levels need to be prepared to work extremely hard to overcome the many challenges they will encounter and be totally committed to study. All of this will require very high levels of personal motivation and dedication.

To guide students in their choice of A levels individual meetings will take place with each student who has applied for a place in our sixth form. These meetings will take place before February half term and appropriate subject choices will be discussed together with a student's mock examination performance and their current GCSE estimated grades. The purpose of the meeting is to ensure that each student fully understands the commitment they wish to undertake in studying A levels and that the subjects they have initially selected to study are appropriate and represent an accurate reflection of their current progress in Year 11.

When making choices at A level students need to consider very carefully their options and the subjects they enjoy and are interested in taking further after GCSE. It is essential that students take responsibility for finding out what they need to know. This will include talking to parents/carers, teachers, university admissions departments and current A level students.

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**MAKE THE GRADE**

On our website (Sixth Form > Applying > Choosing A-Levels) you will find some additional advice and guidance on how best to select A level choices and what some of the UK's leading universities (The Russell Group) are looking for. Each university within the Russell Group has published guidance on their entrance requirements from 2017 onwards. This information is also on our website. What is clear from this guidance is that students, when making a university application, will not be disadvantaged if they have not taken AS level examinations. Hard copies of this information are available on request.

If you have any questions relating to our provision from September 2017 we will be happy to discuss them with you. You can contact either me or Mrs Nutt, Director of Sixth Form, at the school. Our email contact details are below:

Kind regards

G Hetherton

Contact details:

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