



6th September 2021

Dear Parent or Carer,

Key Stage 4 Curriculum and Setting Information

We are pleased to welcome back our Year 10 students this week to what is the start of a very important stage in their education. As they step up to Key Stage 4, this first term is critical in terms of establishing good habits and we will be emphasising to them the importance of making a positive start to their courses as I am sure you will be at home.

Students received their timetables today with final confirmation of their option choices and the sets they have been placed in for the core subjects of English, Maths, Science and RE. Classroom teachers will be explaining to students what these sets mean and the courses they will be following and this letter aims to provide that same clarity for parents and carers.

Throughout Year 10 and 11, all of the core subjects are taught in 2 broadly parallel bands and there is setting in the separate subjects within the band. Levels of entry where relevant – and in the case of Science, the course followed – are determined by ability, to ensure that all students achieve the best possible results. There is no setting for option subjects and all of these courses are taught in mixed ability groups.

GCSE Mathematics

In the summer term of last year, students began the GCSE Mathematics scheme of work studying key topics, as well as consolidating knowledge from Years 8 and 9. This was to ensure all students had the same solid foundation for Year 10. When setting students for Year 10 we reviewed all assessment data to that point, in particular how students performed during the summer term, both in class and in their two summer assessments.

GCSE Mathematics is available at two tiers of entry: Higher (grades 9-4) and Foundation (grades 5-1). The tier of entry is determined mainly by ability and work ethic. We want to ensure each student is on the most appropriate pathway, has the right individual support and achieves the best possible result. The table below details which course each class will be following.



Headteacher: A J O'Sullivan BA, MA

Deputy Heads: J Bell BSc, MA
R McFadden MEng
M J Wright BA

Director of Resources: H Charlton BA, MBA

Assistant Heads: S A F McArdle BSc
N Weaver BA



Class	Course Details
10X1A, 10X2A, 10X2B 10Y1B, 10Y1C, 10Y2C	These are Higher tier classes and all students will follow the AQA Higher Specification.
10X3	<p>This is a Higher/Foundation borderline class and the progress of these students will be reviewed at the end of Year 10 before a final decision is made on their course of study and tier of entry for Year 11.</p> <p>In order for us to be confident that they will meet the demands of the Higher Curriculum, students will have to have demonstrated they meet the following criteria by the end of Year 10;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong knowledge of the Foundation Curriculum • A good attitude to their learning • The ability to work independently and prepare effectively for examinations
10X4A, 10X4B, 10Y4C	These are Foundation tier classes and all students will follow the AQA Foundation Specification.
10Y5	This is a Foundation tier classes and students will follow the AQA Foundation Specification. In addition some students will also complete the AQA Entry Level Mathematics Qualification.

GCSE Science

Students made a similar start to the GCSE Science course in the summer term of last year, studying several key GCSE topics. All students then sat assessments in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. When setting students for Year 10 we reviewed all assessment evidence to date, in particular how students performed during the summer term, both in class and in the summer assessments.

GCSE Science is available as two GCSEs in Combined Science (Higher and Foundation tiers) or three separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics (Higher tier only). Course allocations are decided mainly by ability, but also work ethic, and we aim to ensure each student is on the most appropriate pathway, has the right individual support and achieves the best possible result which give them access to their next steps after GCSE. We will continue to review students' performance throughout year 10 to make sure they are on the most appropriate course and to ensure that all students have the best support we can give them. The table below details which course each class will be following.

Class	Course Details
10Y1A, 10Y1B	These are Higher Triple classes and students will follow the Edexcel Specifications for Higher GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics.
10X1A, 10X1B, 10X1C	<p>These are Triple borderline classes. Students in these classes will follow the Higher Triple Science course in Year 10 and their progress will be reviewed at the end of Year 10 before a final decision is made on their course of study and tier of entry for Year 11.</p> <p>In order for us to be confident that they will meet the demands of Triple Science in Year 11, students will have to have demonstrated they meet the following criteria by the end of Year 10;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong knowledge of the content covered in Year 10 • A good attitude to their learning • The ability to work independently and prepare effectively for examinations
10X2, 10Y2	These are Higher Combined classes and students will follow the Edexcel Higher Combined Science Specification.
10X3, 10X4, 10Y3, 10Y4	These are Foundation Combined classes and students will follow the Edexcel Foundation Combined Science Specification.

GCSE English Language and Literature

In Key Stage 4, students will study both GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature. Neither of these subjects are tiered and all students will follow the same course for both Language and Literature. Students have been set, using all assessment data to this point, but at the end of the Year 11 all students will sit the same exams and can therefore achieve a grade from 9 to 1 in each course.

GCSE RE

All students began studying this qualification at the beginning of Year 9 and will continue to do so in Years 10 and 11. They are taught in the same sets as their English classes. At the end of Year 11 all students will sit the same exam and can therefore achieve a grade from 9 to 1 in this course.

OPTION SUBJECTS

There is no setting for option subjects and all of these courses are taught in mixed ability groups. The allocation of students to groups with multiple classes is determined by a number of timetabling factors and it is not possible to facilitate requests for class changes.

Very occasionally students wish to make a change to their option subjects at the start of the term and any student in this position should contact me to discuss as soon as possible. Please note that students cannot make option subject changes after the first 2 weeks as they will have missed too much content.

SETTLING IN REPORT

Year 10 students will receive a 'Settling in Report' in the w/b 18th October. This will provide you with an update as to whether your child has made a positive start and will allow us to support any students who are struggling to make the transition to Key Stage 4 and put the appropriate intervention in place.

If you have any questions relating to the content of this letter, please contact the relevant member of staff from the list below.

Mathematics – Mrs Urwin (Subject Leader for Mathematic).

Science – Mr Horn (Subject Leader for Science).

English – Mrs Clark (Subject Leader for English).

RE – Mr Wells (Subject Leader for RE).

Options – Mrs McFadden (Deputy Headteacher).

Pastoral Concerns – Mr Digby (Head of Year 10)

Yours faithfully,

Mrs McFadden
Deputy Headteacher