



14<sup>th</sup> September 2022

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 this week with final confirmation of their option choices and the sets they have been placed in for the core subjects. 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 reviewed and consolidated all knowledge from Year 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 date, in particular how students performed during the summer term, both in class and in the 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:** A Lennon BA  
S A F McArdle BSc  
N Weaver BA



<b>Class</b>	<b>Course Details</b>
10X1A, 10X2A, 10X2B 10Y1B, 10Y1C, 10Y2C	These are Higher tier classes and all students will follow the AQA Higher Specification. Grades 4-9 are available on this tier.
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"> <li>• Strong knowledge of the Foundation Curriculum</li> <li>• A good attitude to their learning</li> <li>• The ability to work independently and prepare effectively for examinations</li> </ul>
10X4A, 10X4B, 10Y4C	These are Foundation tier classes and all students will follow the AQA Foundation Specification. Grades 1-5 are available on this tier.
10Y5	This is a Foundation tier classes and students will follow the Edexcel Foundation Specification. In addition some students will also complete the AQA Entry Level Mathematics Qualification. Grades 1-5 are available on the GCSE Foundation tier.

## **GCSE Science**

Students made a 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 by work ethic, 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 students have the best support. The table below details which course each class will be following in year 10.

<b>Class</b>	<b>Course Details</b>
10Y1A, 10Y1B	<p>These are Higher Triple classes and students will follow the Edexcel Specifications for Higher GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics.</p> <p>Grades 4-9 for each subject are available via this route.</p>
10X2a, 10X2b, 10Y2	<p>These are Higher Combined classes and students will follow the Edexcel Higher Combined Science Specification.</p> <p>Grades 44-99* are available via this route.</p>
10X3, 10X4, 10Y3, 10Y4	<p>These are Foundation Combined classes and students will follow the Edexcel Foundation Combined Science Specification.</p> <p>Grades 11-55* are available via this route.</p>
10X1A, 10X1B,	<p>These are Triple 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"> <li>• Strong knowledge of the content covered in Year 10</li> <li>• A good attitude to their learning</li> <li>• The ability to work independently and prepare effectively for examinations</li> </ul> <p>Grades 3-9 for each subject are available via this route.</p>

\*Combined science is awarded as two GCSEs and there are 18 different grades available from 11 to 99. For example, a grade 65 would be one GCSE grade 6 and one GCSE grade 5. A grade 98 would be one GCSE grade 9 and one GCSE grade 8. It is not possible to be awarded a grade 75 the two grades are always the same or consecutive grades.

## **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 date, 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 myself to discuss. Please note that students cannot make option subject changes after the first 2 full weeks as they will have missed too much content.

## **Curriculum Content**

Further details of the content that students will be studying for any of their subjects can be found on the 'Curriculum' section of the school website (<https://durhamjohnston.org.uk/learning/year-10-curriculum>).

## **Settling in Report**

Year 10 students will receive a 'Settling in Report' in the w/b 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **Pastoral**

Mrs Anderson is Year Leader for year 10 with Mrs Ward Assistant Year Leader. They will oversee pastoral matters for Year 10 and support the transition into Key Stage 4. Mr Bowman is Key Stage Lead for Key Stage 4. Form tutors are always the first point of contact for any pastoral matters and we encourage regular signing and reading of student planners as an effective method of communication between home and school. Please keep the Form Tutor informed of any issues outside of school that may impact upon a student's life in school. In their first assemblies in year 10, Mrs Anderson will talk to the cohort about what it means to be a Durham Johnston pupil and then in the coming weeks pastoral staff will focus upon academic excellence, equality and public service. The pastoral programme in form period will echo the themes each week.

## **Attendance**

As we emerge from the pandemic, we would like to reiterate to all parents and carers the importance of students attending school. Every missed school day is a lost opportunity for students to learn and can mean missing out on key building blocks of knowledge. This can have a detrimental impact on their future learning. High attendance is directly linked to improved exam performance, which in turn opens doors to future learning opportunities and better employment prospects. Attending school also helps students to develop friendships, social skills and cultural awareness. High attendance at school is not just valuable, it is fundamental to future success.

## **Parent Information Evening**

We are hosting our parental information evening for the parents and carers of Year 10 students on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November. The information evening offers an opportunity to gain an overview of the school's approach for the year group, with a focus upon the year ahead, the curriculum we offer and the pastoral support we provide. The session will be led by senior school staff and there will also be opportunities to meet with senior teachers and ask individual questions at the end of the session.

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 Bray (Subject Leader for RE).

**Options** – Mrs McFadden (Deputy Headteacher).

**Pastoral Concerns** – Mrs Anderson (Head of Year 10)

Yours Faithfully,

Mrs McFadden  
Deputy Headteacher