



Dear Fourth Form Parents and Guardians,

GCSE/IGCSE Courses and Subject Options

I am writing to tell you about the curriculum that your son will follow when he enters the Remove Form in September 2021 and so explain the arrangements for the Fourth Form Options Evening on Monday 18 January.

The Curriculum in Remove and Fifth Forms (Years 10 and 11)

The programme that your son is presently studying in the Fourth Form is designed to give him as wide an experience of subjects as can reasonably be achieved. Your son has therefore been studying up to fourteen subjects this year.

In September of the next academic year your son will, in most subjects, begin the formal two-year course leading to the GCSE examination. For this two-year period there are some choices to be made. All pupils study Mathematics, English Language and English Literature, the three Sciences and a Modern Language. Three further subjects are to be chosen, one from each Option List, but either Geography or History or Religious Studies (or two or all three!) must be included among the choices. In addition, each boy will have one lesson of non-examined material in ToK (Theory of Knowledge) in the Remove Form, and PE (Physical Education) in both the Remove and Fifth Form.

As a school, we are anxious to ensure that the best qualification is pursued at this level and, for this reason, some subjects offer a GCSE course and others an IGCSE course. In terms of qualification for university entry, both GCSE and IGCSE are treated equally, but by following the IGCSE syllabuses in some subjects we are able to select appropriate courses for the boys from a wider choice. IGCSEs are taught in English, Science, French, Spanish, German, History, Design & Technology and English as a Second Language.

With regards to Science, most boys will study a wide range of scientific content at a faster pace and be entered for three separate IGCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Where appropriate, some boys will take the Double Award qualification – essentially this takes approximately two-thirds of the subject content of each of the Edexcel IGCSE single sciences, and combines them into an IGCSE Science specification worth two IGCSEs. The decision on which Science examinations will be most appropriate for your son will be made at the end of the summer term of the Remove Form (i.e. Summer 2022), in the light of his aptitude and performance in a variety of assessments, including block tests and end of year examinations.

Full information about each subject can be found in the [GCSE Courses Guide](#).

Fourth Form Options Evening

To provide further information on this important process and to give you and your son an opportunity to explore the GCSE Option Subjects, we are holding an online **Options Evening** on **Monday 18 January** from **6.30–8.30pm**.

Please find [here a video](#) that introduces the event and gives some guidance on making effective choices. We ask that you and your son watch this video before the event, if possible.

Between 6.30pm and 8.00pm there will be a series of ten-minute Q&A sessions with academic departments as per the schedule below:

6.30-6.40	Modern Languages	History	Geography	Religious Studies	Art	Computer Science	Latin
6.45-6.55	Modern Languages	History	Geography	Religious Studies	Art	Computer Science	Latin
7.00-7.10	Modern Languages	History	Geography	Religious Studies	Art	Computer Science	Latin
7.15-7.25	Modern Languages	History	Geography	Religious Studies	Drama	DT	Music
7.30-7.40	Modern Languages	History	Geography	Religious Studies	Drama	DT	Music
7.45-7.55	Modern Languages	History	Geography	Religious Studies	Drama	DT	Music

In addition, there will be the following ‘drop-in’ sessions running from 7.30–8.30pm, to which boys and families are invited to ‘drop in’ to ask more specific questions:

- Guidance on subject combinations for Sixth Form courses with Mr Adrian Finch (Director of IB)
- Guidance on subject combinations for specific careers or higher education with Mrs Mel Lincoln (Head of Careers and UCAS)
- General questions with Ms Wainwright (Academic Year Head, Fourth Form) and Mr Baldock (Deputy Head, Academic)

Links to all the different sessions will be sent on Monday 18 January. Please do plan with your son which sessions you’d like to join and let [Ms Elsby](#) know if there are any clashes which prevent you from talking to every academic department you wish to, as we may be able to move a session to accommodate you or add an additional session.

Please note the following guidance so the evening can run as smoothly as possible:

- Please login into Microsoft Teams with your son, using **your son’s** normal school login and have your microphone switched to mute. We know that some families may need to join separately, and this will be possible via the links, but to manage the number of users in each meeting the default should be your son’s login.
- Each ten-minute session will end promptly and will begin with a short talk before boys and their families are invited to ask any subject questions.
- During the Q&A part of the session, please use the Chat function to post your questions.
- Please keep questions subject-related rather than boy-specific. i.e. queries about coursework requirements, rather than “is this a good option for my son?”.

If you have any questions unanswered after the evening or wish to discuss anything in greater depth, please do email your son’s subject teacher or the relevant contact in the [Courses Guide](#).

In next week’s bulletin there will be an electronic form to complete to indicate subject choices, which should be returned by **Wednesday 10 February**. We have attempted to offer our pupils a well-

balanced combination that will appeal to the majority and answer their scholastic and career needs. We hope to be able to meet all choices, but that is, of course, subject to staffing and timetable restraints.

I know I do not need to add this, but performance at GCSE/IGCSE is used as a filter by university admissions tutors and therefore it is imperative that high grades are secured in accordance with each boy's ability, and across the board. The next two and a half years are not just about passing through into the Sixth Form, but crucially provide a base on which boys are able to build a successful future beyond school.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Baldock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Sam Baldock
Deputy Head (Academic)