

# INTRODUCTION

## Key Stage 4 Curriculum

### Years 10 and 11

- This booklet will provide you with information about the curriculum for Year 10 students from September 2023. We will provide some general information about qualifications appropriate to this age group and then provide specific details of the courses offered.
- To help students make the right decisions when selecting their courses, we have been explaining the content, details and skills that will be developed through these qualifications, in discussions with subject staff, in assembly and PSHE time, as well as delivering careers lessons as part of the PSHE curriculum.
- The Year 9 Options evening talk will give you and your son/daughter the opportunity to gain more information about the options process along with instructions about where to find information about each course we offer.
- The Year 9 Parents evening provides you an opportunity to gain feedback on your child's current progress in their subjects and get further advice about the Key Stage 4 courses and potential career paths linked to each respective subject.
- You may also wish to discuss issues with senior staff, form tutors, subject staff and other members of staff such as our SENCO. To this extent emails have been included where appropriate.



# A GUIDE TO QUALIFICATIONS

## WHAT'S WHAT AT KEY STAGE 4

### GCSE (General Certificate in Secondary Education)

Level 1 (Foundation) and Level 2 (Higher)

Many of our subjects - including the core English, (English Language and English Literature) Mathematics and Science—lead to GCSE qualifications.

Students will be assessed by wider controlled assessment during the course (see subject pages) and at least one examination or all examinations. Some subjects (such as Maths, Languages and Science) have **tiered** exams: students will be entered at the foundation level grades 4 to 1 or the higher level grades 9 to 4. The levels of entry will be decided in Year 11 by negotiation between teachers, parents and students as a result of student performance.

- GCSE grade 5 and above will be needed to progress onto level 3 course. A GCSE grade 6 and above is required for A level programmes.
- Lower grade GCSE passes (for example, a grade 2 or 3 at GCSE) lead on to an appropriate level 2 course either at school or college.

### Technical Award courses : Levels 1 and 2

The course content is applied to the world of work and the assessment is more coursework based. Students are assessed mostly through a portfolio of evidence. The level 2 qualification is equivalent to a former GCSE pass at grade C or above. Students who do not reach this standard will be able to achieve a level 1 pass.

Level	Qualification Grade	Equivalent GCSE Points
2	Distinction*	8.5
2	Distinction	7
2	Merit	5.5
2	Pass	4
1	Distinction	3
1	Merit	2
1	Pass	1.25

### The English Baccalaureate

As well as GCSE qualifications being used to show individual student achievement, the government uses them as a measure of school achievement. Previously, the main accountability measure was the number of students who achieve 5 GCSEs at C grade or higher, including English Language and Mathematics. When your son/daughter completes their GCSEs the measure will be the best 8 GCSE qualifications.

The EBacc is currently being used as a way of reporting school achievement in league tables. We are not aware of it being used by employers or universities for recruitment purposes, although this measure is being given more prominence with the government's goal of 90% of students being entered for this qualification. In our options process, if pupils want to achieve the EBacc qualification they should choose Geography or History and Spanish.

## **GOOD REASONS FOR CHOOSING SUBJECTS**

Year 9 students are now approaching a very important stage of their education where key decisions need to be made. It is important that students think carefully about these choices as they will have a direct impact on later decisions about potential Level 3 courses and apprenticeships and ultimately about university routes should that be their preference, and of course the world of work.

### **Build on success:**

- Choose subjects in which you feel you will do well.
- Use your target grade and Year 9 reports to help you make an informed choice.

### **Go for motivation:**

- Choose subjects which interest you.
- You are then likely to work hard and do well.

### **Choose subjects which match your learning needs:**

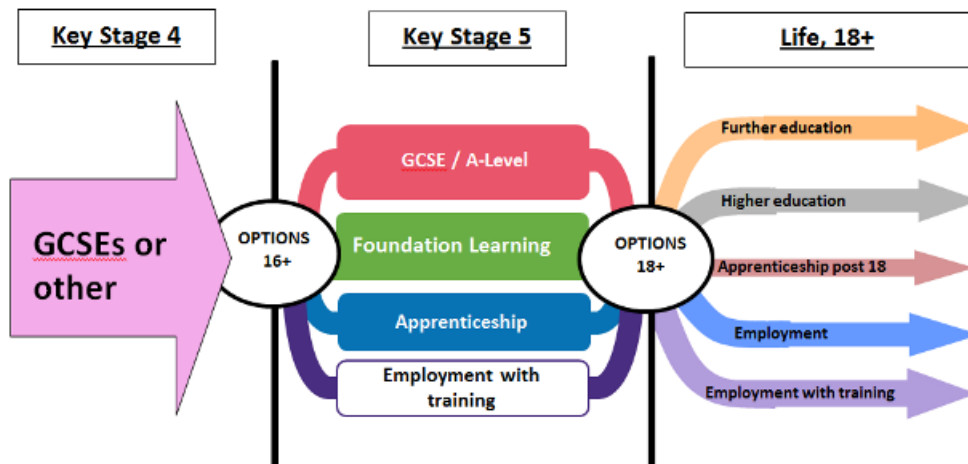
- Some students prefer a course with a large quantity of 'project' work and independent learning, others prefer exams. Think about what type of assessment suits you best. Do you do better with coursework or do you prefer written exams? Different courses will suit different students because of the way they are assessed.
- Look carefully at subject areas in which you are successful and at new courses that you have not studied at school so far. If there are courses you would like further information about please speak to the members of staff listed on the relevant options page. Ask how this subject may help you with your own career path.

### **Think about your future career**

- Try to consider a balance of subjects. You might have ideas about your future but you could change your mind! That is why we offer a broad curriculum which keeps options for the future open. We want to make sure that you are educated in a way that means you can adapt to changes during your working lives and respond to future opportunities. Use the internet and U-Explore to find out which subjects are required for any career you might be interested in.
- If you do have an idea about the specific career you want to follow, check out the qualifications you need.
- If you haven't already had a careers interview and would like one, please see your form tutor who can arrange an appointment with our Career Advisor.
- If you want to study specific courses, for example, medicine, law, engineering or nursing, you may need to choose certain GCSE subjects. Speak to Miss Cracknell if you have any questions about this.

### **Beyond 16**

- You will be expected to stay in some form of education or training beyond the age of 16.
- Many students will stay in school and enter the Sixth Form, where the courses cater for a wide range of abilities and interests, however, a college or employment with training is also an option.
- Some students will continue their education and training at college or with an employer.
- For many A level options at post 16 you need specific GCSEs and/or grades. It's really important that you take this into account before choosing your options so talk to your teachers or Miss Cracknell if you have questions about this.



## BAD REASONS FOR CHOOSING SUBJECTS!

- Picking a subject just because your friend is doing it—the subject might not suit you and you may not be in the same class anyway!
- Your parents enjoyed it when they were at school—it will probably have changed since then, and you may have different talents from your parents in any case.
- It's new and you're not sure what it's like but you hope it might be good. Pick a subject for positive reasons, not just because you can't think of anything else ... and find out something about it first!
- You like the teacher you've got this year and you'd really like to work with them in Year 10—you will probably get a different teacher in Year 10 or your favourite teacher may leave.
- Coursework overload! Don't pick several subjects with lots of project work or rehearsals unless you are prepared to put in the time. Some students will cope with a large coursework load, but many will not.
- Assuming you know what you need for a career without actually checking—for example, many people assume that you need biology A level to become a doctor, when in fact the essential subject is Chemistry.

## IF YOU MAKE THE WRONG CHOICE

There can be some limited scope to change, but this will depend on spare places being available in another subject, and the amount of work that you have missed.

## GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS

### The Options Process Is About Your Qualifications And Your Future

The National Curriculum requires all pupils to study English, Mathematics, Science, ICT, PE, RE and PSHE.

At Aldercar this is organised as follows:

- English—leading to GCSEs in English Language and Literature
- Mathematics
- Science—every pupil follows the triple science programme which has higher and foundation entry.
- Physical Education
- Religious Education
- Information and Communication Technology

(PSHE and Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural opportunities will be delivered in tutor times and across curriculum areas where the opportunities arise.)

**Students will choose three options from our range of qualifications that we offer.** Our recommendation is that the students keep their options broad and balanced, so that they have as many routes as possible open for Post-16 study. Students and their families should consider the following:

- A language, a humanities and an art or technology subject gives the greater breadth and balance.
- Any student who aspires to an academic university course is advised to take Spanish and History or Geography as this will qualify them for the English Baccalaureate award.



## **OUR PROMISE—WE WILL:**

- **Provide opportunities** for students of all abilities, encouraging existing talents while stimulating new interests and providing new challenges;
- **Match courses to individual needs** so that study in KS4 is both enjoyable and successful;
- Allow all students to have the opportunity to study a **broad range** of subjects;
- Ensure that all students are able to take a balanced range of subjects;
- Provide **flexibility and choice** so that those students who do wish to follow a particular academic or vocational pathway are able to do so;
- Enable all students to follow a course of subjects personal to them, leading to **progression** in terms of further study, training or employment.

## **OPTIONS PROCESS**

The work you have undertaken about careers in PSHE, your Year 9 data and the input from subject staff will have helped to prepare you for the next stage in your education—your GCSE choices. You are now in a position to use all the knowledge and information you have gained and apply it to the decisions you need to make about the courses you wish to study in Key Stage 4. You need to take a full and active part in the options process so that you are able to discuss your plans with your family, keep them well informed and ensure you are in the best possible position to make the right choices for you.

**Options Booklet:** Read this booklet carefully to make sure you fully understand the options process.

**Subject Information:** On our website in the students section you will find the year nine options subject information.

**Individual Student Interviews:** Make sure that you have discussed the full range of subjects on offer with someone who knows you well and recognises your strengths and weaknesses, they may be able to give you useful insight into whether a subject will be suitable for you or not. Talking to people about your thoughts and listening to others' advice can help you make a decision but remember the decision is ultimately yours. Some students will have an individual interview with a member of the Leadership Team to discuss and help them decide final option choices for Key Stage 4.

## Preparation For Year 10

Before you make your option choices, think about the following questions:-

- What are your future plans and career possibilities?
- What plans do you have after you have completed your GCSEs?
- Do you plan to go on to further/higher education? If so, what courses might you study?
- What career ideas do you have for the future at the moment?

Students who have clear ideas about what they might wish to study at University are advised to research the entry requirements. Some specify A level courses which can only be studied if the subject has already been studied at GCSE level, whilst some require particular subjects and grades to have been achieved at GCSE.

A useful source of information is the Russell Group of Universities Guide, 'Informed Choices'. There are a number of other useful careers links on the School website on the student drop down menu.



## OPTIONS PROCESS: ADVICE & GUIDANCE

The members of staff most closely linked with the Options Process are:-

<b>Mr L Parry</b>	<b>Deputy Head Teacher (lparry@aldercarhigh.co.uk)</b>
<b>Mrs J Powdrill</b>	<b>Assistant Head Teacher (jpowdrill@aldercarhigh.co.uk)</b>
<b>Mr A Evans</b>	<b>Head of year 9 (aevans@aldercarhigh.co.uk)</b>
<b>Mrs K Temple</b>	<b>SENCO (ktemple@aldercarhigh.co.uk)</b>
<b>Miss F Cracknell</b>	<b>Head of 6th Form (fcracknell@aldercarhigh.co.uk)</b>

Form Tutors will also be very closely involved in supporting the Options Process:-

Please do not hesitate to contact the appropriate staff for further advice and assistance at any time during this important period.





## Careers Guidance

During the GCSE options process and in the coming years students and their parents may wish to gain additional advice. All Year 9 students have already received information in lessons and/or assemblies about the subjects on offer. They have also had input via the PSHE programme and the individual subjects.

It is important to think about what you might like to do in the future because careers in certain areas of work require that you study specific subjects at Key Stage 4 and 5. This can seem very daunting in Year 9 and, although our option system is designed to ensure a spread of subjects to keep your options open for later on, it is a good idea to really consider paths for the future now.

In school, we have access to a wide range of information sources, including:

- Careers Adviser: We have an independent careers advisor in school and if you need further help she has a drop-in session at lunchtime. (when school is open to all students)
- Miss Cracknell (Head of 6th Form) can advise on A level and higher education routes
- The Senior Leadership Team

There are also a range of useful websites:

### **To help with career ideas:**

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk> Scroll down to careers advice, click on browse job profiles to start your search

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk> Click on skills health check tool. This is designed to give you information about your skills, interests and motivations in the workplace and help you think about the kind of jobs that might be of interest to you in the future.

[www.derbyshireyouthink.com](http://www.derbyshireyouthink.com) Information and advice is available on making your Option Choices

<http://icould.com/buzz> Quiz to help you work out what kind of person you are.

### **Specific career websites:**

[www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching](http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching) 08003892500

[www.policecouldyou.co.uk](http://www.policecouldyou.co.uk)

[www.stepitnothenhs.nhs.uk/www.nhscareers.nhs.uk](http://www.stepitnothenhs.nhs.uk/www.nhscareers.nhs.uk) Psychological Society

[www.stemcareer.com](http://www.stemcareer.com) Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/recruitment](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/recruitment) for careers in the Ministry of Defence including Royal Navy, British Army and the Royal Air Force

[www.lawcareers.net](http://www.lawcareers.net)

[www.apprenticeships.gov.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk) - National apprenticeship website with vacancies advertised.

[www.ucas.com/](http://www.ucas.com/) Information about higher education courses and entry requirements