

Dear Parent / Carer

Throughout this academic year, we have been assessing the quality of our curriculum offer – the subjects that our students will study in each year of school. We regularly review the quality and delivery of our curriculum and use this information to decide on any changes that need to be made for the following year. As a school, we are committed to ensuring that our students receive an education which allows them to reach their full potential, whilst making sure they have every chance to achieve excellent academic outcomes. It is also important that we equip our students with wider knowledge and skills so that they are well rounded young adults when they leave us. We are also keen to ensure we are working closely across phases of learning and there are clear links between primary and secondary school.

In Year 8, students would usually choose the GCSE and BTEC subjects that they will continue to study in more depth in Year 9, 10 and 11 as part of our Options process. However as a school, we are responding to Government guidance that it is essential for schools to strive for high standards stating students should have access to a ***'broad and balanced curriculum for as long as possible'***.

You may remember me writing to you in February regarding the cancellation of options evening. At that point, I explained that we would be changing our Options process in order to give our students the chance to study as many subjects for as long as possible. This is a deliberate action to engage students and enable them to really engage with their subjects and learn the depth of knowledge they need to succeed. Our revised curriculum model will allow students to choose two subjects in Year 9 in addition to the core offer. This will help to ensure that students have the foundations needed for KS4 – Years 10 and 11.

Under the new model, Year 9 is designed to be a gateway for students into Key Stage 4. Year 9 allows a transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 and the focus is on developing the skills and creating the enthusiasm needed for examination study in Years 10 and 11. At the end of Year 9, students will be able to choose a further two option subjects to study throughout Year 10 and 11.

This revised curriculum ensures all students have the most valuable set of qualifications to access the highest level of post-16 education and training possible in a competitive future economy.

When students leave school they are judged on their success under the following GCSE measures as they progress on to Sixth Form education, college, apprenticeship or training:

- Progress 8 – progress in their best 8 GCSEs (must include 5 from English/Maths/Science/History or Geography/Modern Foreign Language)
- Attainment 8 – best 8 GCSE pass grades (as above)
- English & Maths GCSE pass grade
- The EBacc – 5 GCSE pass grades (English, Maths, Science, History or Geography and Modern Foreign Language)

Respect • Ambition • Bravery

It is therefore imperative that they gain a solid foundation in subject areas to allow them to succeed. We believe a mini-opt at the end of Year 8 followed by a further options process at the end of Year 9 will allow this.

As such students will be asked before their return to school to make the choices below:-

- 1) All students will be asked to choose from a humanities subject – either History or Geography. They will continue this choice through into year 11 where it will be an accredited GCSE subject.
- 2) All students will be asked to choose a performing arts based subject from Musical Theatre, Dance and Drama. This will be for one year only and students will have the choice of whether to pursue this qualification into year 10 and 11.

In addition to the above choices they will also study Maths, English, Science, ICT, French, Music, Art, Technology, PE and Student Wellbeing.

Due to the current climate, the process of choosing options will be online. Please take this opportunity to look through the information provided on the different subjects and discuss your son / daughter's choices with them. We will send through instructions on how to access the online options process in due course

In the meantime should you require any more information please do not hesitate to contact us via curriculum@airedaleacademy.com

Yours faithfully

Lyndsey Proctor

Principal