Swakeleys School for Girls

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6th November 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to introduce you to the options process and outline the key events that will take place to support you and your daughter. I appreciate that some of you may have been through this process before or attended the recent Engagement Evening where this process was outlined, but please do read all the following carefully and go through it with your daughter.

We have three option blocks for all students. To meet the new government curriculum requirements, all students will need to choose from either **Creative** or **Languages** as **one** of their option choices.

1) Creative:	Art	Dance	Drama	Music	Photography	DT
2) Languages:	Choose existing Language as an option choice (French or German)					

Once students have decided on their Creative or Language choice, all students will then have a further two option choices. The next page of this letter shows this process as a diagram which I have also shared with students. The option blocks will contain all GCSE subjects on offer including Creative and Languages, and all subjects are listed on pages three and four of this letter. Students will also receive a hard copy of this and the full options book can be found on our website and is also on the Year 8 Google Classroom. Three option blocks (X, Y and Z) will be created around the draft choices which students make in January which we do to get the best combination of subjects across the option blocks.

Below are a few examples of what a student's option choices might look like:

	Option X choice	**Option Y choice**	**Option Z choice**
Example 1	Business	Music (CREATIVE)	Sociology
Example 2	French (LANGUAGE)	History	Art (CREATIVE)
Example 3	DT (CREATIVE)	PE	Psychology
Example 4	Dance (CREATIVE)	Drama (CREATIVE)	Art (CREATIVE)
Example 5	Geography	Triple science	German (LANGUAGE)

The above is not based on final option blocks – it is just an example and does not include all subjects

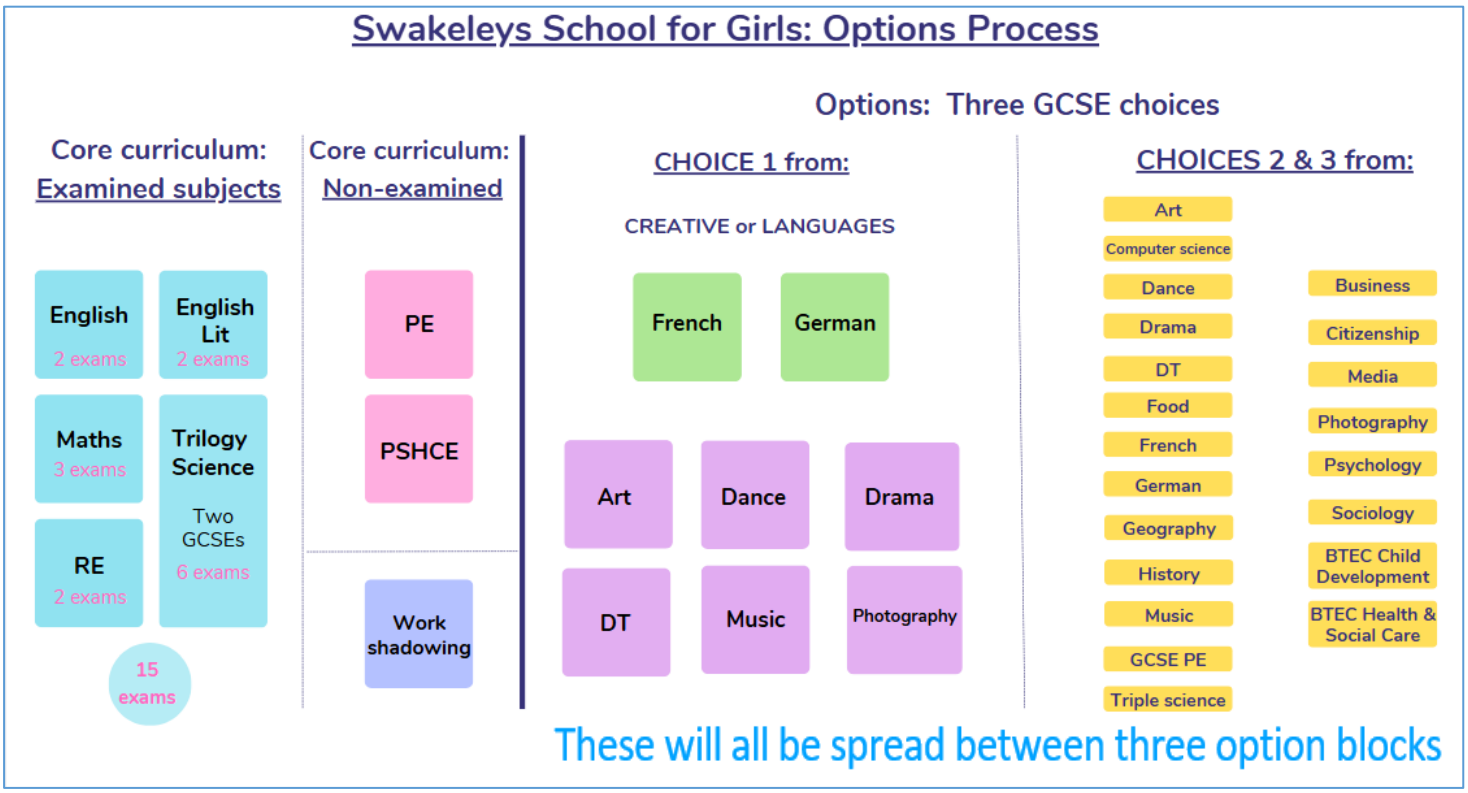
The key with all of these examples is that they all have **either a Creative or Language choice** as one of the three choices. You will also see that students can do a combination of Creative and Languages if they wish. As said, final choices will be made from option blocks once these have been published towards the end of January. I would also like to reinforce that as a school, we still feel that studying a language can have huge benefits particularly when applying to the top Russell Group universities. The MFL results are consistently very strong as is the teaching so we would like to encourage students to really consider choosing this for GCSE. The MFL Department will speak to students separately and issue letters to all those who they feel would be suited to GCSE Languages.

I will be delivering a special options assembly for Year 8 on Tuesday 17th November to explain the options process. The next page outlines the process and lists the key dates and this is followed by a two page summary of the subjects on offer. A more detailed options course guide will be published on our website and will also be emailed to you on Tuesday 17th November. I look forward to supporting you and your daughter throughout the options process.

Yours sincerely,



C. Devereux (Mrs)
Deputy Headteacher: Achievement and Curriculum



I will send a text reminder home as we approach each key date outlined below.

In addition to what is below, we will also be holding an options coffee morning on Tuesday 12th January, where you can hear about options, the process and ask any questions you may have. More information will be sent to you nearer the time.

Option key dates:

Date/timing	Actions
Week comm. 2nd November	Introductory letter home to all families
Tuesday 17th Nov	Introductory assembly to Y8 in **main hall** with Mrs Devereux Follow-up letter will be emailed home today
	Issue option course overview sheet to students – Full options book on website – email & text home about this
Monday 30th November	Students can sign up for taster sessions in new option subjects
Monday 4th – Friday 15th January	**Two week focus**: taster lessons & careers lessons in KS3 options subjects, careers lesson in PSHCE, drop down taster lessons for new subjects in the canteen
Monday 11th January	'Dry run' of option choices on a Google Form. This is to help me create two option blocks which fit the most common choices – these are not final choices,
Friday 22nd January	Issue option forms to all Y8 – includes subject option blocks
Wednesday 3rd February	**Deadline for handing in options forms**

GCSE Option Subjects: summary of subjects

Also use the QR code to access our detailed Options Subject Guide

SCAN ME

Subject	Exam Board	Final assessment	Brief outline
ART (CREATIVE)	AQA	60% portfolio, 40% controlled exam	Designed to inspire and broaden your creative ability. It is a creative subject that allows you to express yourself in a range of styles – we also run trips and have really good results and there is no written exam!
BUSINESS STUDIES	Pearson Edexcel	100% exam	We cover key business concepts, issues and skills involved in starting and running a small business. We look at how a business develops beyond the start-up phase. We focus on the key business concepts, issues and decisions used to grow a business, with emphasis on aspects of marketing, operations, finance, human resources and much more!
CITIZENSHIP	Pearson Edexcel	100% exam	Citizenship is a challenging yet exciting subject which allows students to explore current topics, news items and controversial issues in the classroom. Students must have an interest in current affairs, politics and will need to keep up with the new events in the UK as well as around the world.
COMPUTER SCIENCE	OCR	100% exam	We cover central processing unit, computer memory and storage, wired and wireless networks, network topologies, system security and system software. We also look at ethical, legal, cultural and environmental concerns associated with computer science and develop skills and understanding in computational thinking, algorithms and programming techniques.
DANCE (CREATIVE)	AQA	40% written exam, 60% practical assessment	Students will study an anthology of 6 professional works which they will critically appreciate. The anthology will be used to inform the students own choreography, performance and theory work. The course also gives the opportunity for the students to work on their own, and in groups where they can improve their team work and leadership skills.
DRAMA (CREATIVE)	Pearson Edexcel	40% written exam, 60% practical assessment	Students create a devised performance in groups to perform. They will then complete a portfolio covering the creating and developing process and analysis and evaluation of this process.
DT (CREATIVE)	Pearson Edexcel	50% written exam, 50% coursework	There are six possible material areas to enable specialisation: Metals, Papers and boards, Polymers, Systems, Textiles, or Timbers. Students will focus on their specialism in their coursework which is worth 50%.
FOOD	AQA	50% written exam, 50% coursework	This requires students to acquire a good understanding of the scientific principles behind food and nutrition, and use a number of practical cooking techniques to prepare and cook food. It will give students in-depth knowledge of nutrition, food choice, where food comes from, and practical cooking as well as the ability to apply this knowledge when cooking.
GEOGRAPHY	Pearson Edexcel	100% exam - 3 exams	The course covers the changing landscape of the UK (River and Coastal Landscapes), changing cities, global development and resource management. We also look at weather hazards, climate change, ecosystems, biodiversity, and management. You will also have two days of fieldwork.
HISTORY	AQA	100% exam - 2 exams	Across the course we cover; America 1920-1973: Opportunity and inequality, Conflict and tension: The First World War, 1894–1918 Health and the people: c1000 to the present day and Elizabethan England, c1568–1603.

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MEDIA	WJEC	70% exam - 2 exams, 30% coursework	We look at media language and representation in relation to two of the following print media forms: magazines, marketing (film posters), newspapers, or print advertisements. We explore media industry issues to understand media language, representation, audiences and media industries in relation to television and music.
FRENCH & GERMAN (LANGUAGES)	AQA	100% exam: 4 skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing	Studying a modern foreign language (MFL) enhances cultural understanding, boosts cognitive skills like problem-solving and memory, and opens doors for careers in global fields. Languages give you the edge and help you stand out from the crowd and employers know that Language students learn quickly, and have good listening and communication skills.
MUSIC (CREATIVE)	Pearson Edexcel	40% written exam, 60% controlled assessment	GCSE Music is designed to open your horizons to a variety of styles and types of music from different centuries and countries. Eight pieces of music are set which cover music from different backgrounds and genres. The syllabus is based on Performing, Composing and Listening.
PHOTOGRAPHY (CREATIVE)	AQA	60% portfolio, 40% controlled exam	Designed to inspire and broaden your creative ability. You will need to express your own thoughts and ideas in a variety of different visual ways using digital media and in particular photography. You have to purchase a camera and an SD card for this course. Financial support/cameras are available for FSM students.
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	AQA	60% written exam - 2 exam, 40% practical	Designed for students who are serious about their sport; it is for those who enjoy and would like to know more about the theory behind sport and also develop their sporting performance across a range of sports and their ability to critically analyse their own sporting performance. Students will also develop their knowledge on the human body and movement in sport, as well as, the socio-cultural influences in physical activity and sport.
PSYCHOLOGY	AQA	100% exam - 2 exams	You will cover topic areas such as: memory, perception, development, research methods, social Influence, language, thought and communication, brain and neuropsychology, and psychological problems.
SOCIOLOGY	AQA	100% exam - 2 exams	You will study society including families, education, crime and deviance and research methods. You will need to be able to develop reasoned judgements and arguments based on evidence and source material.
TRIPLE SCIENCE (single sciences)	AQA	100% exam - 9 exams (3 additional to double award)	It is designed for students who have a strong interest in science and may wish to continue science at A Level and beyond. The course develops scientific knowledge and understanding, practical skills, analytical thinking and problem-solving abilities. It also deepens awareness of how science applies to everyday life, technology and careers.
CHILD DEVELOPMENT	Pearson Edexcel	40% exam, 60% coursework	Helps prepare for further learning or training and/or develop knowledge and/or skills in child development and care. A good foundation for those who wish to progress into childcare, learn how to work with children in a variety of settings and understand the stages of child development.
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	Pearson Edexcel	40% exam, 60% coursework	Helps prepare for further learning & training to develop knowledge and skills in health & social care. It provides a good foundation for those who wish to progress into either sector, learning about the human lifespan development, health and social care services and values, and health and wellbeing.