

6<sup>th</sup> November 2023

## Re: The Options Process

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.

### **Pathways:**

We offer two pathways:

- Pathway one – Humanities: Pupils select either geography or history and no longer continue with a language. This pathway is for approximately 40 pupils.
- Pathway two – Languages: Pupils continue with the language they are currently learning. They have the opportunity to take either geography or history to achieve the Ebacc qualification.

We take great care to place each pupil on the pathway which will enable them to achieve to their full potential. Pupils will be aware of their pathway by the end of this term. **ALL pupils**, regardless of pathway, have an **additional two option preferences** to make, one from each option block.

### **Support:**

Pupils will have information assemblies with me to explain the options process, along with a number of form time activities that will generate discussion and provide support. I will deliver an introductory assembly to Year 8 on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> November in the main Hall and will also put the powerpoint in the Year 8 Google Classroom and email it to all parents/carers. I will also be available every lunchtime on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday in my office from 12.50pm to talk to any pupils who would like help throughout the option process. Parents/carers will be able to book Zoom appointments with me for Year 8 Parents Evening on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January if you would like to discuss options.

### **Subject information:**

Course descriptions for all option subjects will be given to pupils on 29<sup>th</sup> November. Pupils will then have the weekend to read these in detail. On Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December pupils will then have the chance to sign up for January taster lessons in subjects they may be considering but do not currently study and would like to know more about.

### **Options and careers focus weeks:**

As soon as we return in January we will have a two week focus on options and careers from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January to Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January. All key stage 3 subjects will run a GCSE taster lesson and a careers lesson as part of the timetable. Taster lessons in new subjects will also occur during these two weeks and will all be held in the canteen.

Furthermore, all Year 8 pupils are offered an Options Interview with Mr Williams (our school Careers Advisor) to support their choices, in addition to the guidance given throughout all of the above events.

We fully appreciate that this process can be very daunting and I hope that this letter has provided a clear overview of the steps involved and support offered. On the reverse of this letter you will find a summary of all of the key dates mentioned above and also FAQs – please take time look through this and discuss it with your daughter. Information will also be posted regularly in the Year 8 Google Classroom, parent texts and emails will sent and information will also be available on our website at: <https://swakeleys.hillingdon.sch.uk/curriculum>.

Yours sincerely,



**C. Devereux (Mrs)**

**Deputy Headteacher: Achievement and Curriculum**

# Options Pathways

## HUMANITIES pathway:

Approx. 40 pupils



- No MFL
- Must choose either Geography or History (a Humanity)
- 2 other choices

## LANGUAGES pathway:

Approx. 200 pupils



- With MFL
- 2 other choices
- Can choose either Geography or History to achieve **Ebacc**

Date/timing	Actions
Week comm. 6 <sup>th</sup> November	Introductory letter home to all families
Mon 27 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Introductory assembly to Y8 in <b>main hall</b> with Mrs Devereux
Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Issue all option course descriptions (Options Book) to pupils
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> December	Pupils can sign up for taster sessions in new option subjects
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> January	<b>Two weeks:</b> taster lessons in KS3 options subjects, careers lesson in PSHCE, drop down taster lessons for new subjects in the canteen
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> January	'Dry run' of option choices on a Google Form
Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> January	Issue options forms to all Y8 – <u>includes subject option blocks</u>
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> February	<b>Deadline for handing in options forms</b>

## Options – Common questions...and the answers!

1. Does my pathway affect the set I am in for English, maths or science?  
*NO - core subject sets are all set separately and this is not part of the options process.*
2. If I am on the Languages pathway, do I have to do history or geography?  
*NO, but you can choose either as an option. If you do then you have the Ebacc subjects.*
3. What is Ebacc?  
*It is an academic set of 5 subjects Eng, maths, science, MFL and a humanity. Achieve a grade 4 or 5 (or higher!) in all to achieve Ebacc.*
4. Why do we not offer triple science?  
*It is very content heavy and puts a real pressure on exam performance. Also, pupils can continue with A Level and degree level science without having studied GCSE triple science.*
5. What is the deadline for option forms and when will we know which courses we have?  
*The deadline for handing in options forms is Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February and choices will be confirmed in May. We have to check we can staff all courses and this takes time.*
6. Why do we need to pick back up subjects?  
*Unfortunately you may NOT get your top two choices – we sometimes have to use back-ups if courses are full or not running so pick these carefully too!*