

Ref: 118 17

12<sup>th</sup> December 2017

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **Choices for GCSE**

Your son is now approaching the half-way point of the compulsory part of his secondary education, and the time has therefore come to choose what GCSEs (and possibly other qualifications) he should study in Year 10.

The transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 is an important one, and we are committed to helping your son make that transition smoothly and successfully. In order to do this, your son will need to make the right choices for his studies in Year 10. To support that decision-making process, we have strengthened the Careers advice that is available to pupils, and we will once again be interviewing every pupil about their choices – and you would be more than welcome to accompany your son on that occasion should you wish to do so (more details to follow).

Not only have we made changes to the process, we have also made changes to the structure of the choices that lie ahead, affording youngsters more flexibility than was the case a few years ago. And we are offering some new courses too, including qualifications in Food/Hospitality and Drama, now we have new facilities in which to teach these subjects.

You will receive two documents to support you and your son as you consider the options available to you. This booklet outlines all the courses we offer; the other contains further guidance, and a form by which you can communicate your choices back to us.

As mentioned above, our GCSE Choices process will continue to be underpinned by our programme of Careers Education and Guidance. This programme is supported by independent advisors, who will require details of the academic and non-academic progress of your son to enable them to offer appropriate guidance. In addition, we will be holding our Year 9 Options evening in school at **7.00 pm on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January**, when key members of staff will be on hand to explain the process and answer any questions you may have.

If you have any questions about the GCSE Choices process, please don't hesitate to contact myself or a colleague:

- subject-specific questions, such as your son's suitability for a course, or detailed questions about course requirements *etc*, are best referred to your son's subject teacher or to the relevant Head of Department. May I take this opportunity to remind you that there is a Year 9 Parents' Consultation Evening from **3:45pm on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February**;
- questions about our Careers Education and Guidance programme are best addressed to the colleague who leads this area of our work, *viz* Mr G McLean;
- if you would like any advice about what adaptations we can make to the process if your son has special educational needs (or is disabled), please contact our SENDCo-ordinator, Mrs K Pritchard;
- questions about the GCSE Choices process should be referred to one of our Vice-Principals, Mr S Slater, who oversees it; and
- any pastoral matters may, as always, be referred to your son's Head of Year, **Mr R. Kingston**.

As ever, I would be very grateful to receive any feedback on the GCSE Choices process so that we can continue to improve it even more in the future.

With my best wishes as you approach this important stage in your son's education,



Stephen Brierley  
Principal