



***WELCOME TO THE KS4
CURRICULUM BRIEFING 2021***

Bennett Memorial Diocesan School

■ Aims

1. Tell you about context in which you are making curriculum decisions
2. Tell you what areas of curriculum are fixed and why
3. To guide you where there are decisions to be made
4. Explain how process of agreeing curriculum will proceed and what preparation is required
5. Answer any questions

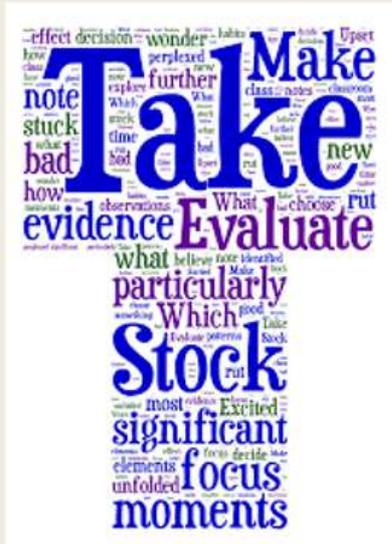
Good Evening and thank you for taking the time to join us for this briefing.

The aim of this evening's briefing is to outline the important information to consider when making decisions about which subjects a student in year 9 will follow at GCSE in years 10 and 11. We want to support you by being clear but also by providing opportunity to discuss an element of the process if required. For that reason we have two opportunities to address questions. The first is that Dr Brookes is on hand throughout the briefing to respond to questions entered via the chat facility. You may have arrived this evening with a question or something may occur to you during the presentation. Please do feel free to type that question at any point. We imagine that a good number of questions can be answered this way, but there is a second opportunity in the form of a separate Zoom meeting that will start directly after this meeting. That can cater for more complex or personal questions, but if there is something more difficult or sensitive it is also possible to seek some further support in a follow up conversation by contacting your year manager, Mr. Cautivar.

Tonight's presentation will also be on the website tomorrow.

You can see on screen the specific areas being addressed.

Take Stock!



- Progression through a mastery curriculum in a broad range of subjects.
- Good grounding of knowledge in areas that are important for life and integration.
- Good foundations laid for GCSE qualifications
- Commencement of GSCE RS
- Greater independence and responsibility
- Character-forming opportunities
- Well done!

But before we dive straight into the information, I would like to invite Mr Cautivar to address you all at this important juncture.

Good evening Year 9s,

Since taking over as your new year manager this year, I have seen you all grow. I have seen you at your highs and lows. I've seen you face challenges with great optimism and courage, and I have seen you all develop as exceptional members of our school community. I am incredibly proud of what you have achieved so far.

As I said many times this already, this year is an important year for all of you. The choices that you will make after this evening start off your journey to reach the most important milestone of your lives so far, your GCSEs. The next two years you will work harder than you have worked before but that's okay, you should not be worried.

Because during these difficult times, whether be working in school or remotely, you have already shown great resilience and tenacity to ensure that your learning is not compromised.

As you decide on your own pathway, remember that you are all capable of achieving all what you set out to do. I am looking forward to the next

two years, and rest assured, your teachers and I will be with be there to support you along the way. So, continue to work hard, for you hard work will pay dividends in the long run.

I will now hand back to Mr Woollett...

And this is a very appropriate point to take stock of where you, students, are in your school career. You are almost exactly half way through year 9 at this point, and as such are therefore half way through your pre-sixth form study! Two and half years covered, two and half more and you will have completed your GCSE exams! Let's take a moment to see what you have so far achieved:

Progression through a mastery curriculum in a broad range of subjects.

Good grounding of knowledge in areas that are important for life and to integrate into society.

Good foundations laid for GCSE qualifications

Commencement of GSCE RS

Greater independence and responsibility

Participation in character-forming opportunities

Not a parting of the ways, but rather a running alongside.



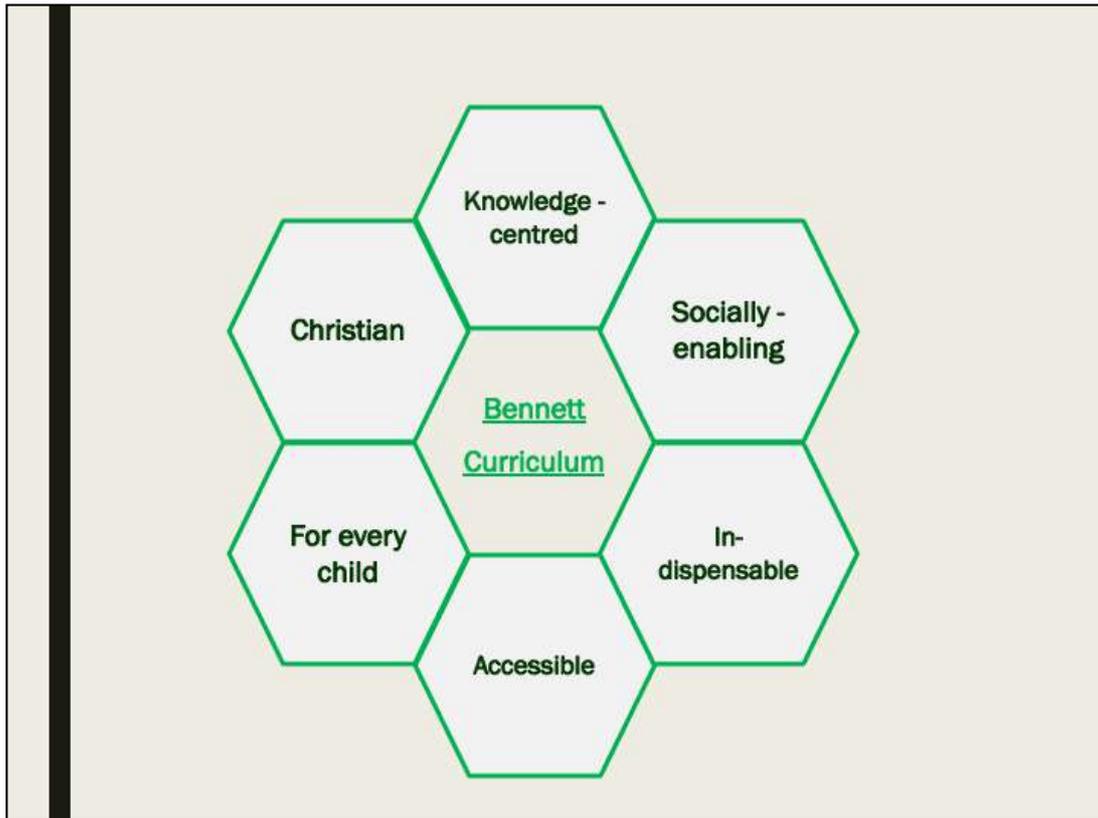
Students: This evening is not about confronting you with the most pivotal decision of your life where if you take the wrong road you will have burnt your bridges and ruined your chances: 'Choose now which way you will go and never look back!'

At your age, 14, Einstein's parents were told by his teachers that he should leave education and get a labouring job. They ignored this advice, and intriguingly bought him a violin, and the rest, as they say, is history. Imagine if his parents had listened to that fatalistic assessment of Einstein's potential: it would have been untapped! Einstein would never have lived out his potential, but also imagine the loss for the world, of even one person not empowered to fulfil and live out what they were created to be.

You will be pleased to know we are not leaving such decisions to chance or the whim of a word of advice on any given parents' evening. Instead we are looking at following a broad set of qualifications which take you all to a common destination, but with opportunities for some preference and tailoring that will allow you to truly flourish.

So, to refer to my image above, we are not sending you forever down a track that will seal your fate forever. The tracks all head in broadly the same direction for now, yet there are a few different routes and some

decisions will need to be taken that affect your next steps.



At Bennett, we think very deeply about curriculum at strategic and subject levels. In a moment we will look at what the common elements of the curriculum are and where there is choice to tailor them. As useful background to that I will first share six main principles lying behind our curriculum thinking at Bennett, which will appear on screen.

1) It is knowledge-centred because there are some things that are very important to know. Knowledge is not a disposable context to develop some skills and then be quickly discarded. It is intrinsically important and actually skills developed in a subject are entirely dependent on the knowledge they associate with.

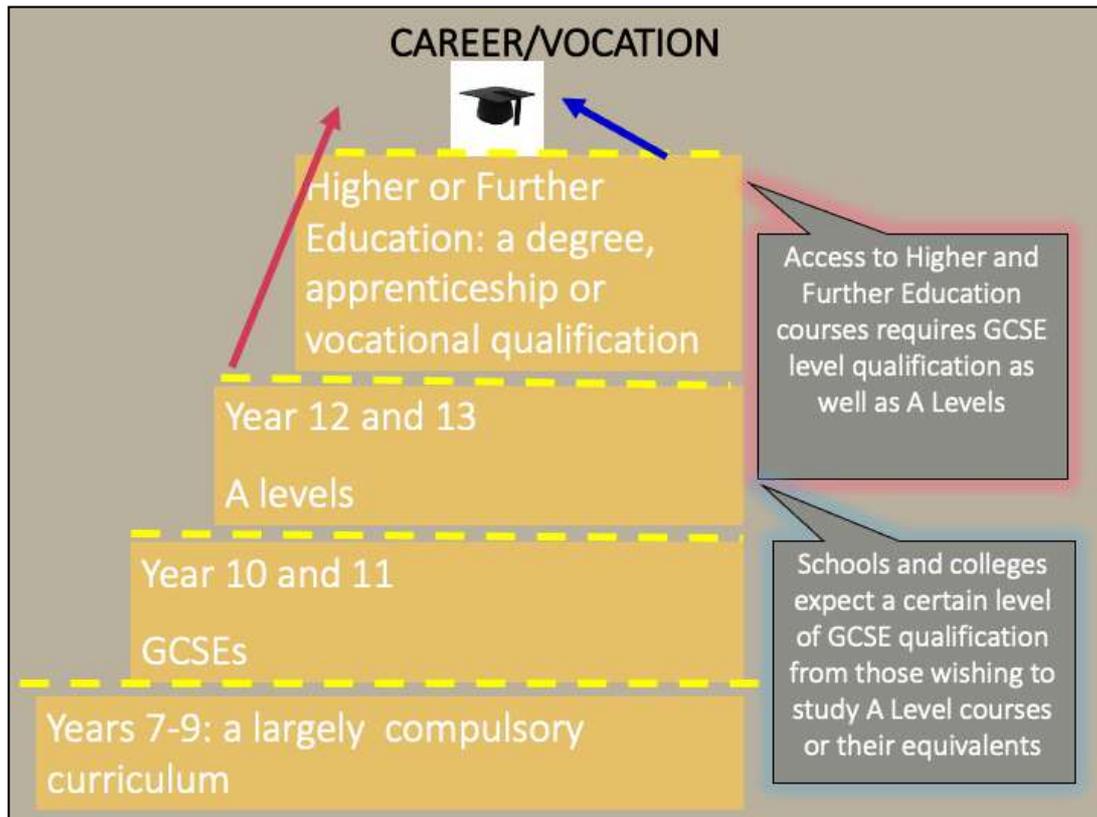
2) Socially enabling, because knowledge helps people interpret the world and relate to one another.

3) Indispensable, because as citizens we all need a broad understanding of the same sets of vitally important knowledge that provides a broad and balanced view of the world and also holds open a range of next steps and opportunities.

4) Accessible, because depending on the current state of your knowledge, you may need some supporting elements to ensure that you are able to understand as much as everyone else. No-one should be left behind.

5) 'For every child' means we are in this together. It is for us all to undertake and for all of us to finish. Not one expectation for some and a lower expectation for another. Not to identify and privilege an elite but rather to unite everyone in shared knowledge and values: 'The best of what has been thought and said'.

6) Christian in character, undertaken in a way that realises what education is for: enabling life in all its fullness, enabling us to relate to our world, to one another and our Maker.



- This diagram shows that we are at an important transition point as we move from Years 7-9 to GCSE courses, when we are moving on to study for qualifications relevant beyond school and when there is a chance to further personalise this, following Year 9.
- Opening up pathways for the future depends on achieving strong GCSE results in order to access A Level or equivalent courses.
- More than 80% of students stay on at Bennett for further education into the sixth form and almost all of these go on to study at university or college for a degree or a similar higher level qualification before seeking employment.
- It remains true to say that graduating with a degree at University or College remains the surest route into the widest range of careers at the highest levels.
- Universities and colleges now pay more attention to the GCSE results of applicants, as without many AS qualifications at sixth form anymore, these are the clearest fixed measure of a student's performance. Similarly we know that the competition for high quality apprenticeships is very intense and that the providers use GCSE qualifications as the way of filtering applicants.
- In particular the highest grades possible are needed in English and maths as they are vital for university and all careers, with specific thresholds for many courses such as grade 7s e.g. medicine. Again apprenticeship providers will simply not bother with applicants who have not secured the threshold of 4s in these courses.

•That is why **English Language and mathematics have a special status.** There is a national expectation that all students **should achieve a certain level by the time they leave education or training aged 18.** Currently this is grade **4.** In practice this means that students who don't achieve the threshold in year 11 will have to keep studying for these qualifications aged 16-18, whether they are in a school sixth form, a sixth form college or on an apprenticeship. Obviously, we think the best time to do this is first time round in year 11!

The significance of GCSEs

- General qualifications which are the springboard for the next step
- A broad curriculum
- Mathematics and English Language GCSEs



You need to be aware that GCSEs are **general qualifications**. On their own they **do not equip you for any particular direction**. You do not need media studies GCSE to get a job working in the **media**. Instead, they are gateway qualifications – they **open doors** to further study.

Understanding this then, you next need to understand the importance of the breadth of study at GCSE. The Bennett curriculum for years 10 and 11 is designed in the way that it is, in order to guarantee that students have the range of study from their GCSE courses that means that, **once they are completed in July 2023, as many options remain open to you as possible.**

QUESTIONS!

- What am I aiming for?
- Is university really worth it?
- Surely I don't need to think about any of that yet anyway?

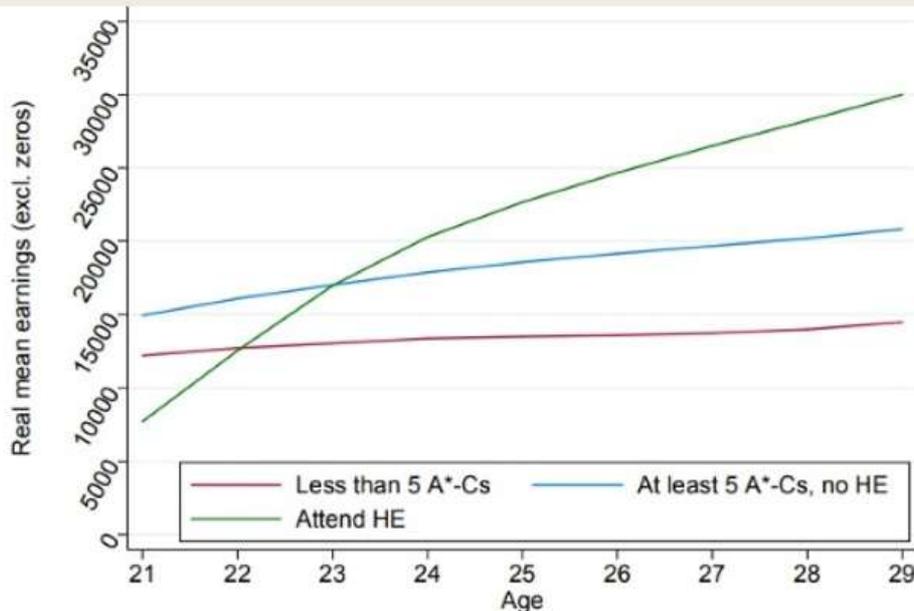
Take a look at these questions...

A recent study of earnings of 29 year olds provided insights into the relative value of various courses at various universities together with some types of A-levels and maths and English GCSEs. Students and parents are often increasingly concerned about the cost of university study and this report was able to show which courses at which universities represented a good investment. i.e. would lead to better earnings over the mid-to-long term. Of course financial reward is not the primary reason to want to go on to study a subject you really enjoy, but it is a very concrete measure and it does answer a question on all of our minds: is university worth it!?

Broadly the conclusion is that university is worth it, almost in every case for women and in most cases for men.

However, the reason we might be speaking about it TODAY with you when it must all feel pretty far off is that the courses that you are about to embark upon next year are really important in determining your future prospects and opportunities. Clearly what you will eventually earn should not be the only consideration in framing how you think about your education but it is one way of measuring the way opportunities open up for those who study hard on worthwhile courses.

How important are GCSEs? The link to lifetime earnings

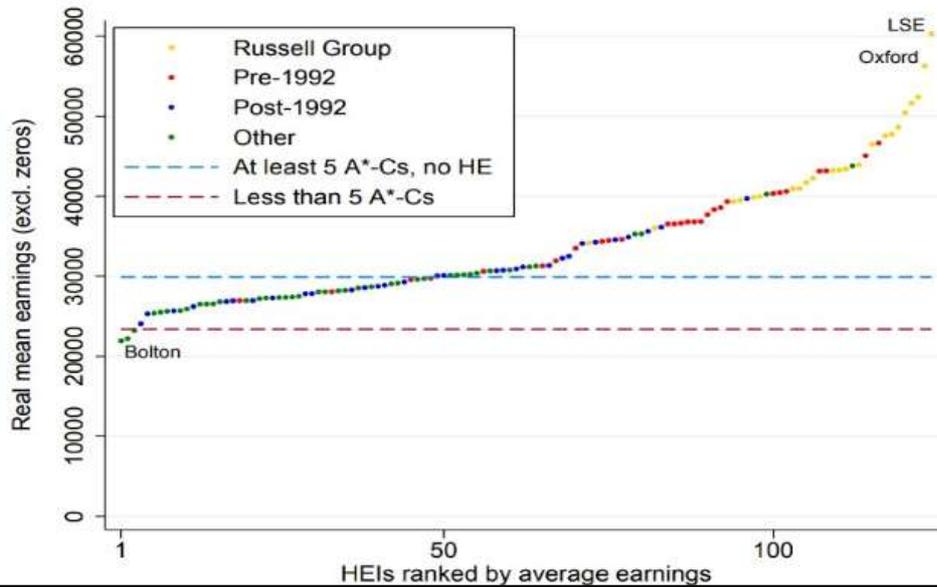


So this graph shows with three lines, the average earnings of women up to the age of 29. As you can see, the lower maroon line shows those with weak GCSEs, less than 5A*-C. Their average earnings essentially remain pretty flat as they go through the first decade of employment. Those with strong GCSEs (the blue line) start in a more favourable position and do make gradual progress in earnings. Those who study beyond school (the green line) have to come from behind because they have not gone straight into jobs but rapidly catch up with and over-take non-graduates.

Now as I said earnings are just one way of measuring the impact of your education, but other measurements follow the same pattern, for example international travel, even some health indexes.

Earnings by university type

Figure 9: Real earnings by HEI at age 29, men



This is certainly not to say that getting good GCSEs followed by just any experience of higher education opens doors to people. In fact, as this graph shows some higher education destinations seem to provide a poor return for the investment of 3 years of study and the university fees. These are the institutions which are below the dotted blue line which represents the earnings of those who got good GCSEs but didn't go on to higher education.

You will want to consider this information more when the time comes to look at university, but you should be aware that the universities in the top right of the graph are the more selective and look hardest at the GCSE profiles of applicants.

The importance of GCSEs for apprenticeships

Levels of apprenticeship

Apprenticeships have equivalent educational levels.

Name	Level	Equivalent educational level
Intermediate	2	GCSE
Advanced	3	A level
Higher	4,5,6 and 7	Foundation degree and above
Degree	6 and 7	Bachelor's or master's degree

Apprenticeships combine practical training in a job with study. Students gain job-specific skills and earn a small wage. They take between 1-5 years to complete and come at different levels. To access an apprenticeship that is higher than a GCSE (L3 or more) you will need good GCSEs. Degree equivalent apprenticeships (L4-6) are very competitive as there are relatively small numbers of good provision. They rely on strong GCSEs, A-levels and performance at interview.

Considering your future

- <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>
- <https://www.ucas.com/>

National Careers Service

UCAS

As you take this step into GCSE it may be worth thinking a little about what you may want to study or work in as an adult. The National Careers Service website has a one stop shop for exploring careers, courses, apprenticeships and jobs. However, to explore university courses UCAS is best and UCAS is also good for apprenticeships.

Will you be ready for the demands of A levels?

- New thresholds for A level courses, rising bar and necessity to be ready for the very real demands of A level
- Need to commit to studies at GCSE to cross the bar and so be ready

The demands of newly reformed A-levels are such that to be ready for them you are likely to need to get grade 5s on average and at least grade 6s in the subjects you wish to study.

The specific requirements for each of the courses offered for September 2021 are shown clearly on our website under sixth form admissions. This covers both the average GCSE point scores required and particular course requirements and grades. You may find it worth spending some time looking at this together to establish what grades are currently required for subjects that may interest you. I know it can feel far off, but ideas about A levels, higher education and careers really can be relevant not just in choices being made, but in the dedication you make towards them in your studies.

GCSE courses: Laying the right foundations

- The English Baccalaureate requires at least a grade 5 in all of the following:
 - English Language GCSE
 - Mathematics GCSE,
 - 3 from biology, chemistry, physics or computer science GCSEs
 - History OR geography GCSE
 - A modern OR ancient language GCSE
- The Russell Group Universities 'Informed Choices'

When explaining the structure of the Y10 and 11 curriculum at Bennett, it is important that you know about the English Baccalaureate (or E Bacc) which is an overarching qualification for 16 year olds. There are no grades to the Ebacc, students either get it or they don't. To get it they need the subjects outlined on screen (read).

This same list is what the Russell group universities have called facilitating subjects – those subjects that best support an application to university to study your favourite subject. Now the RG have a dedicated website called informed choices that will show you what degrees are available from what A-levels.

The key point again, is that these open doors: in many cases the best doors and certainly the greatest number of doors.

The Bennett Curriculum for years 10 and 11

- All students take GCSE courses in English Language, English Literature, mathematics and chemistry
- Two further sciences from biology, physics or computer science
- GCSE Religious Studies
- A GCSE in either geography or history
- A GCSE in a language subject that you have studied in year 9
- All students follow a core physical education course

So what subjects will you study at Bennett to **maximise your opportunities in the future and put you on the best trajectory?**

All students will study a series of subjects needed to guarantee you have the necessary **foundation for future study in a sixth form or at college:**

Students will need to give breadth to their knowledge and understanding by studying English Language and English Literature, maths, chemistry, 2 further sciences from biology, physics and computer science, religious studies, either history or geography, and a modern language.

All students also follow a **core physical education** course. This is to promote healthy living and exercise and students have **some choice** about what they do in core PE to make this more enjoyable.

The 2 English GCSEs, English language and English literature are taught as an integrated course but result in 2 GCSE qualifications.

Sciences



- All to take GCSE Chemistry
- Two further sciences from biology, physics or computer science
- Discrete learning in each science subject
- If considering studying any science at A level, the student needs to take all three of Chemistry, Biology and Physics at GCSE

- It is very important for students to continue to study science, particularly given its significance in terms of further education and employment. **The Confederation of British Industry has suggested that the economy needs 70,000** more young people each year qualified to A level standard in the sciences to meet the skills shortfall.
- We know that **students learn science** much better in a context where they study the **three areas of natural science separately with a specialist teacher**.
- Studying each of the natural sciences in depth is the best preparation for a **broad curriculum at A level**
- Students are '**normally expected**' to study 3 separate sciences from biology, computer science, chemistry and physics.
- **All students will study GCSE chemistry** as this is vital for the largest number of career and study options, underpinning both biology and physics.
- They can then choose 2 from biology, physics and computer science.

Religious Studies



As part of **Bennett's distinctiveness and identity** as a Church school, we feel that it is vital for all students to study Religious Studies up to at least GCSE level.

In order to balance the demands of the curriculum upon your time as students you have **already embarked upon your GCSE** which will allow us to make more space for other subjects in year 11. Our experience has been that Bennett students have thrived in their RE GCSE.



Languages

A number of university humanities courses now require a pass in a language GCSE. UCL requires it for all their courses!

Language barriers are proving to be a great obstacle for the UK army operating in foreign regions, and as a result, new secondary language requirements are being put into place.



Modern languages are some of the most sought-after qualifications. In this country we often have a rather Anglo-centric view of the world and forget the power that being able to communicate in a foreign language conveys. A post-Brexit Britain will need to develop trade and business with its existing partners in Europe but on new terms but it will also need to establish new relationships with other foreign partners if it is to thrive. Capability in modern languages is already highly in demand and this is set to increase. They are highly valued by universities and securing a language GCSE plays a key part in the English Baccalaureate. They also provide richly rewarding life opportunities and intellectual development.

Students who have been studying a language subject in year 9 will be expected to continue with it to GCSE.

The Bennett Curriculum for years 10 and 11

- Choose a further course: *GCSE Art (Fine Art), GCSE Art (Photography), Biology, Computer Science, Drama, Food Preparation and Nutrition, French, Geography, German, History, Latin, Media Studies, Music, GCSE PE, Physics, Product Design, Textile Design*

To be able to access further modern languages, art, music, product design, food, computer science and Latin, you will need to have already studied the subject in year 9. In the case of photography, art is a pre-requisite.



Students can then choose one further GCSE course from a range of options, which gives students a suitably broad foundation for future study.

Choose from, *GCSE Art (Fine Art), GCSE Art (Photography), Biology, Computer Science, Drama, Food Preparation and Nutrition, French, Geography, German, History, Latin, Media Studies, Music, GCSE PE, Physics, Product Design, Textile Design.*

To be able to access further modern languages, art, music, product design, food, computer science and Latin, you will need to have already studied the subject in year 9. In the case of photography, art is a pre-requisite in year 9.

How to prepare for your curriculum decisions

- Use the subject details booklet to read over the course descriptions carefully.
- Try to rank order subjects to start to move methodically towards a decision.
- Check your reasons stand up to interrogation by another family member: do you have sound reasons for what you wish to study?
- Thursday 25th March: **Final submission Deadline of your form.**

How to prepare for your curriculum decisions

You will receive an email from us tomorrow which includes the full details about each subject area. As well as explaining the course there is helpful information about where that subject might lead in terms of future qualifications or career routes. Along with that, you will also receive a letter with a link to an online MS form. To complete this, the student will need to be logged into MS on that device. This can be done by visiting our website and opening email and logging in.

On the website you will also be able to access those documents and this video in Parents Information, KS4 10-11.

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Option Blocks

Option Block A	Option Block B	Option Block C	Option Block D
Biology	Biology	History	
Computer Science	Computer Science	Geography	
Physics	Physics		

This slide represents the way decisions will be made. You will choose which two sciences to follow in addition to Chemistry in blocks A and B, you will choose either history or geography in block C and then you will choose an additional subject in block D. We will also seek an alternative/ back up choice.

For many the final box is often the most challenging because students often feel successful in a number of subjects, want to take many more than is possible or cannot decide between 2 or 3. The key thing to keep in mind is that these are qualifications. So whilst it is logical to do what you enjoy and are doing well at, a student must also ask whether this is something they want a qualification in. i.e. does it lead on to an A level course or provide some foundational knowledge that you imagine is going to be apart of your forward pathway. For example, just because I like making cakes does not mean I need a qualification in it or wish to become a baker! I need to think carefully about the idea of qualifications. And for those subjects I am doing equally well in and am stuck between, doing a bit more research into where they might lead is a useful way to help reach a decision.

7. Please select the first of your subject choices from the following list: *

- Biology
- Physics
- Computing Science

8. Please select the second of your subject choices from the following list: *

- Biology
- Physics
- Computer Science

9. Please select the third of your subject choices from the following list: *

- History
- Geography

This slide shows how you will actually be required to enter the choices you are making by responding to a series of questions that follow the kind of blocking I have just shared with you.

Who to talk to at school if you need help

- Subject teachers.
- Form tutor
- Welfare team



- Mr Cautivar or Mr Woollett

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