



9th March 2017

RE: Year 8 into Year 9 Options'

Dear Parent / Carer

Your child has now reached an important stage in their school career as this represents their first opportunity to influence the curriculum they will follow. At The Cottesloe School we offer both an excellent core curriculum and a very flexible system of option choices.

Within this booklet you will find descriptions the option choices for Year 9. These subjects will form the basis of the GCSE pathway and they will continue to study for the next three years. Students can choose four of the optional subjects; one from each of the Option Blocks. There are of course a variety of reasons why a particular subject might be chosen and good advice can be gained from Heads of Department, subject teachers and form tutors.

The reporting system currently used by the School gives an expectation of the level of attainment the student will make in each subject area; this in conjunction with the discussions held with staff at Parents Evening where parents were informed of their child's progress toward their expectation, will enable students to make an accurate and informed decision on the best academic pathway.

Students should carefully consider the fact that many universities welcome the breadth that a foreign language offers at GCSE. For some universities such as UCL it is a requirement for all courses; for others, such as St Andrews and Warwick, it is needed for some courses and it is a preferred subject for many other institutions. We would also recommend the value of a practical subject in terms of the problem solving and range of skills developed throughout the course.

It may be helpful for you to understand that in 2011 the Government introduced the English Baccalaureate. They believe that schools should offer students a broad range of academic subjects to age 16, and the English Baccalaureate (Ebacc) promotes that aspiration. It is not a new qualification in itself but will recognise students' achievements across a core of selected academic subjects. Ebacc is awarded for achievement of an A* - C grade in all of the following GCSEs: English, Maths, Science, a Language (i.e. French, German or Latin) and a humanities subject, either History or Geography. As you will see, our options system allows all students to opt for programmes to qualify for the English Baccalaureate award if they wish.

You may also read about changes being made to GCSE courses and assessment. In most cases, your child will be required to sit assessments at the end of their courses rather than as modules during them. Question papers in English Literature, Geography, History and Ethics and Philosophy will have extra marks awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

A detailed information booklet of all the options' subjects is available on the school website via the letters section of the parents tab.

Once your child has made his or her choices, please ask them to hand the form in to the School Reception by **Thursday 30th March 2017**. Choices are not allocated on a first come first served basis so there is no hurry to make this important decision before then.

Parents and students are welcome to book a meeting with the Assistant Headteacher, Mrs Lynott, to discuss the relevant academic pathway for the student, taking into account their prior attainment and interests.

There will also be the opportunity to book a 10 minute meeting, via the online appointment booking

system for **Wednesday 15th March 2017**, should you wish to discuss your child's option choices with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The appointment system is now live and will close at noon on Wednesday 15th March 2017.

If you are unable to attend on Wednesday 15th March, then please contact the School Reception to book a meeting with Mrs Lynott, which are available during and after the school day - telephone number 01296 688264.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "A Lynott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'A'.

Mrs A Lynott
Assistant Headteacher – Curriculum