

Our Ref: DGS/LRS

27 January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

This letter is to inform you about how we are going to manage the options process. It will outline how we are proposing to ensure students and parents are confident in making decisions and are guided through the process, where extra information and help can be found and when different parts of the process will happen.

There will be a virtual assembly on Microsoft Teams for students on Wednesday 3 February at 9.15am where I will outline the options process to the students. Any live lessons the students would normally have at this time will be moved to another time in the week.

The options booklet will be made available before Options Evening and a text will be sent home when you can access the booklet from the school website.

There will be a Live Launch Options Evening on Wednesday 3 February, starting at 6.00pm. This will be a virtual version of the usual options evening with information about the process. There will be live talks by myself, the Headteacher, head of year 9 and the heads of core subjects to outline what GCSE looks like in their non-option choice subjects. Then we will launch subject-specific videos for each subject which you will be able to access on the website.

There will be a taster week during the week of 8 February until 12 February. For this week, students will get to try out each option subject. Most subjects will be at the same time as the normal lessons for your child but there will be some slight changes to the normal timetable, to fit all the subjects in; hopefully this will give the students a taste of each GCSE subject. The intention is for a typical lesson, not a 'bells and whistles' selling-the-subject lesson, but a lesson which reflects what the subject is like in Year 10. Every year, students choose subjects which they subsequently don't enjoy because they didn't sufficiently think about what day-to-day lessons might be like. We had planned to do this for the first time this year, and although it's got to be virtual, we decided to go ahead anyway. We hope that it will be fun, inspiring and help them to make a balanced decision. Timetables for this week will be issued after options evening. Every student will be expected to attend most lessons with the following subjects being optional, Hair and Beauty, ICT, Computing and Media.

The option form will not be available at the start of the process, as we want students to think carefully about their options and not make a quick decision. The form will be available from Monday 22 February and will be an online form. A link to the form will become available to students in the Year 9 Options team in Microsoft teams.

The parents' evening on Thursday 25 February will be a virtual live parents evening. The evening will include the chance to speak to option subject teachers. Parents will be encouraged to book appointments with teachers for subjects they are considering, to get a more personal response as to the suitability of the course for your child and answer any questions.

Following this evening you will be asked to submit your option choices by Thursday 4 March. Any late option forms will still be considered but if a course is already full, places will not be made available for late submissions.

If you have any questions about the options process then please email me via [options@aldworth.hants.sch.uk](mailto:options@aldworth.hants.sch.uk).

I must emphasise that any option choices are preferences and should not be taken as confirmed until they are officially confirmed. As a school we will not allow students to stop doing work for subjects that they are not 'taking' at GCSE. I would ask for your support in this, because if parents support students 'downing tools' in certain subjects over lockdown then when we come back there will be a disparity in what the students have achieved; this will potentially make the remainder of the year extremely difficult for the teachers and the students who are intending on continuing the course to GCSE level.

During the options process your child will be given PSHE work based on careers and options to complete. Part of this work will ask them to sign up to the Careerpilot website, <https://careerpilot.org.uk/>. This is an excellent place to look for detailed information about career paths and if they are unsure what career they would like to do in the future it will help them look at careers in areas that they are good at and are interested in. If after looking at this website your child would like further guidance please contact me at [options@aldworth.hants.sch.uk](mailto:options@aldworth.hants.sch.uk).

As with so much this year, this is new territory for us doing it online and it would perhaps have been wiser not to attempt the taster week in such unusual circumstances, however we are nothing if not ambitious and I hope you appreciate that we are determined to do the very best we can and avoid compromising on giving our students the best during these difficult times.

Yours sincerely

*David Griffiths*

David Griffiths  
**Associate Assistant Headteacher**