

# Lowton Church of England High School



**Lowton**  
Church of England High School

12 March 2021

Dear parents and carers

The next few weeks are a milestone in any secondary students' education, as they make their option choices, and decide which subjects they wish to continue studying in years ten and eleven.

We believe that our students should follow a broad and balanced curriculum that allows each individual to flourish, thrive and succeed. Our curriculum is based on:

- Academic rigour: qualifications that count for the student
- Nurture and development.
- Social action.

This ensures that students do not narrow their curriculum too early or limit Post 16 options and destinations.

In order to guide and support them, and yourselves, through this process we have created a timeline of events to provide all the information that is needed.

On Monday we held an options webinar, for those who could not make the event the Zoom recording and slides are available on our website <https://www.lowtonhs.wigan.sch.uk/year-9-options/> Attached, as promised, are the Frequently Asked Questions from the evening.

All year nine students were provided with an options booklet today containing information on the process, who can help, a timeline of events and subject specific pages. During RE lessons over the next few week pupils will be using these booklets to explore their choices. They will also have access to Xello, a web-based careers app that will help them identify learning styles, job preferences and how interests and values can impact on future career choices.

On Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March we have our Year 9 subject based parents evening which provides students and parents with an opportunity to talk to subject staff about the course of study in years ten and eleven along with receiving an update on students' current effort and general progress. The school careers advisor Miss O'Hara Moore will also be available for appointments. Here is the link for the parents evening, there is still time to make appointments if you have not already done so. <https://lowtonchurchofengland.schoolcloud.co.uk/> If spaces fill up, we will set up a conversation at another time with a subject teacher.

In order to provide some individual discussion time all students will have an options interview on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March from 4.00 pm to 6:30 pm. These will take place either with your child's form tutor, Head of Year, or a member of the leadership team. The booking system for this evening will go live at 9:00 am on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March following parents evening. The link is <https://lowtonchurchofengland.schoolcloud.co.uk/> but you will not be able to book options appointments until 16<sup>th</sup> March. You only need to book one appointment slot with one of the two members of staff allocated to each form. Students who need to see Mrs Cooper (SENDCo) will be notified and should book an appointment slot with her only.

The deadline for returning your child's options form is Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March at 1:10pm. Parents and students will be notified of course allocations in May. If you have any queries relating to the options process or require further information please contact us.

Yours faithfully,  
Mrs Shaw  
**Assistant Headteacher**

**CARING, LEARNING AND SUCCEEDING**

**Mr Kieran Larkin**  
Headteacher

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## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) from the Year 9 Options Parent and Student Webinar on 8th March 2021**

### **1. Can parents attend the options interview?**

Yes. We are holding the options interview appointments virtually on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> in an evening to facilitate this. The staff appreciate parental support and it ensures all involved in the process have clear communication and discussion. Students who have not had an interview during this evening will have one with a member of staff at school by the end of Friday the 26<sup>th</sup> March.

### **2. What subjects do I have to take if I want to get the English Baccalaureate?**

This is not a qualification in itself but recognises students' achievements in gaining good passes, (grade 5 or higher) in a combination of subjects. These are English, Maths, Geography / History, Modern Foreign Languages and Science, which includes GCSE Computer Science. Students who wish to achieve the English Baccalaureate must choose either Geography or History as their pre-selected option 1 and French or Spanish. Students must ONLY select the Modern Foreign Language that they have been studying if they wish to opt for a Language GCSE

### **3. Do students have to take a Language? (French or Spanish)**

We remain committed to the provision and value of studying a Modern Foreign Language, and the English Baccalaureate. However, we also recognise the impact of the pandemic on the learning of French and Spanish in particular. Students of all abilities are welcome to opt for a Modern Foreign Language as long as they have studied it throughout year 7,8 and 9, enjoy it, and feel they can achieve within it, commensurate to ability.

### **4. Can students take both History & Geography?**

Yes, but this is the exception not the norm. You can take both History & Geography, you should select either History or Geography in the pre-selected Option 1 box and then select the other humanities subject in either option box 2 or 3, depending on your option preference order.

### **5. Can I take DT along with Art and Drama?**

We want you to keep your Post 16 options open, so have designed the process to ensure you take a Humanities subject and strongly recommend that you take one creative, performance or technical subject. You have 3 options choices and the first one must be History or Geography. You could then put either Art, DT or drama as option 2 or 3, the third subject would be your reserve. On allocation you would then be studying 2 of the 3 subjects mentioned, but you can't opt to study all 3 instead of a Humanities discipline.

### **6. Can I see the type of work expected in a subject at GCSE level?**

Subject teachers will welcome your interest and be pleased to show you examples of students work at KS4 so you are aware of the standards and expectations within each subject area. This is a great way of doing your research!

### **7. What happens if I miss the option deadline?**

The deadline is there so the process of course allocation can commence in a fair and equitable way to ensure that every student receives their first choice of option subject. If you submit your form late, it will be processed after those who met the deadline, this is in line with expectations at GCSE study and Post 16 requirements. Time management and meeting deadlines are important skills in all areas of employment and further study.

### **8. What criteria would be used to allocate places in an oversubscribed course?**

If a course is oversubscribed we would look at students' engagement, effort and organisation. An example could be pupils who do not regularly bring their PE kit may not be allocated a place in GCSE PE. We are fully inclusive and would make reasonable adjustments for pupils who have additional needs to ensure equality of access. We will make sure you and your child are aware if this is necessary.

**9. What happens if I don't make a reserve choice, will I be guaranteed my option preference?** All students are expected to select and record a reserve choice that they are prepared to study. This ensures the process is fair and equitable across all the students in the year group. We will endeavour to meet every students' needs, as far as is practically possible. Mrs Shaw will be checking all forms. Those without a reserve choice will be returned to students to complete. This could mean the form is classed as being submitted late, depending on how quickly it is then returned to school, which may impact on course allocation. Not completing your reserve will not guarantee your choices, but it may put them at risk.

