



# PREFERENCES INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

YEAR 8



[www.TheHambleSchool.co.uk](http://www.TheHambleSchool.co.uk)



**THE HAMBLE SCHOOL**  
ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

Call us on 023 8045 2105  
[www.thehambleschool.co.uk](http://www.thehambleschool.co.uk)

# INTRODUCTION

Year 8 students finish Key Stage 3 courses in July 2017 and move on to Key Stage 4 courses in September 2017. In preparation for this transition, your child is choosing his/her courses ready for Years 9, 10 and 11. This is obviously an important decision for your child's future; we recognise that the preferences process can be a difficult time for young people and we seek to offer support, guidance and to make the process as straightforward as possible.

The preferences made are of crucial importance as they pave the way for future study. For this reason we will do everything we can to ensure students, and you as parents, receive the best possible advice. As well as the Preferences Booklet, students will:

- be able to **talk to staff in charge of each subject** to find out any extra information they would like to know about that subject
- be able to **book an interview** with our careers advisor, **Ms V Hall**
- receive an **interview from a senior member of staff** (these will take place following the Preferences Evening)
- be able to attend the **Preferences Evening on Thursday, 2 March 2017 at 6.00pm**

Parents can also contact Ms N Emmett – Head of Year 8 if they have any concerns or note down on the back of the preferences form any extra information required that is relevant for their child.

**PREFERENCES FORMS MUST BE RETURNED TO TUTORS BY TUESDAY, 28 MARCH**

# THE CORE CURRICULUM

The curriculum is designed to ensure every student has a broad and balanced education at Key Stage 4, which will allow them to maintain a wide choice of future pathways at the age of 16. It is made up of a combination of subjects that students are required to study (core) and subjects that they can select to study (preferences). You will see from the table below that 'core' courses taken by all students occupy just over half of the timetable (30 out of 50 periods over a fortnight) and for the other half (20 periods out of 50) your child can make choices within broad areas to suit their strengths and interests.

In KS4, students benefit from a 'Personal, Social and Ethics' (PSHCE) lesson. This also includes Health and Citizenship education. The aim is to give students the opportunity to explore issues that are essential to the development of their social, moral and cultural awareness.

	Subject	Periods/Fortnight
The Core Curriculum	English Language & Literature (2 GCSEs)	9
	Mathematics	9
	Core Science*	9
	Personal, Social and Ethical Education	1
	Physical Education (PE)	2
	<b>Total number of GCSEs or equivalent studied within the Core Curriculum = 5</b>	<b>Total 30</b>

\* Students in the top sets for Science will study Trilogy Science (3 GCSEs).

# THE PREFERENCES CURRICULUM

In addition to the Core Curriculum, your child will then select a number of preferences to study. Some students have been allocated the English Baccalaureate Pathway. This requires students to take subjects that qualify them for the EBACC. Students must take Geography or History and then either Spanish or French, alongside a further two preferences. These students have been identified based on their attainment on entry to the school and current levels of attainment. For those students allocated this pathway it is indicated clearly at the top of their preferences form. For all students, their tutor and a senior leader will receive recommendations from their subject teachers, and will guide them in their choices in order to enable your child to achieve the best grades possible.

## CHANGES TO THE CURRICULUM

### What is the English Baccalaureate?

In 2010 the government announced its intention to recognise individual student achievements across a core of selected academic subjects. They call this the English Baccalaureate (EBacc).

The aim is to offer students the opportunity to study a broad range of academic subjects up to the age of 16.

### What subjects are in the English Baccalaureate?

The English Baccalaureate is not a qualification in itself. It is a measure which recognises students' achievements across a core of selected academic subjects:

- English
- Mathematics
- Two good Sciences\*
- History or Geography
- A Foreign Language\*\*

### Why have the government chosen these subjects for the English Baccalaureate?

The subjects the government have included are designed to ensure that all students have the opportunity to study a broad core of subjects, ensuring that doors are not closed off to them in terms of future progression. For example, for students hoping to go to university, **The Russell Group\*\*\* guide on making informed choices for post-16 education** identifies 'facilitating subjects' at A-Level. These are subjects most likely to be required or preferred for entry to degree courses and ones that will keep the most options open. The subjects they identify are those included in the English Baccalaureate – Mathematics, English, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Geography, History and Languages (classical and modern).

\* Two from: Core Science, Additional Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics or Computer Science.

\*\* The languages covered are wider than those offered in the school curriculum (French, Italian and Spanish). If any student has the skills and knowledge necessary to sit a GCSE in an additional language it may be possible to arrange for the student to take the examination. Students will need to be able to read, write and speak in the chosen language to a high standard. Please contact Miss Fusano for further information.

\*\*\* For more information about Russell Group universities please visit [www.russellgroup.ac.uk](http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk) – it is recommended that parents and students read the post-16 study options 'Informed Choices' information guide which is one of the pieces of information found by following the specified link.

# GCSE REFORM

The Government has introduced a programme of KS4 reform that began with the introduction of new GCSEs in English and Maths to be first examined in summer 2017. The second stage of the reforms includes a wider range of qualifications for first examination in summer 2018. Your child will sit these examinations in summer 2019.

New information concerning these qualifications continues to be released however the key features are:

- Graded on a scale 1-9 (9 being the highest), this replaces the current A\*-G grading
- No tiering except in Maths and MFL. Under the previous system, foundation and higher tiers were available in many subjects
- A fully linear structure, i.e. no modules, no coursework, no controlled assessment, 'except where they cannot provide valid assessment of the skills provided'
- Increased extended writing with fewer bite sized questions in examinations
- Focus on a knowledge-based curriculum

The subject information in this booklet reflects the most up to date information we have available. Should there be any further significant changes we will of course notify you.

## **BTEC**

*The Business and Technology Council qualification (now part of the Edexcel examining body).*

BTEC programmes can be followed at all levels. The courses we offer in Key Stage 4 are Level Two programmes. This qualification is equivalent to one GCSE grade A\* - C which is graded as Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction\*.

BTEC qualifications were originally developed in consultation with industry and professionals to provide a more applied focus for learning and as such they have a greater vocational element than GCSEs. Many students find them more accessible than GCSEs as there is a practical component to the course that is based on real life situations.

We offer BTEC courses in Art, Drama, Dance, Engineering and PE.

## HELPING STUDENTS TO CHOOSE

Subject Leaders are available to speak to students out of lesson time to help them make the right choice and will be available to speak to parents and students at Preferences Evening on Thursday, 2 March.

Courses have been made available based on which subjects we believe the students will best succeed in and which subjects will help students in their future. It is important for students to focus on what they need for their future and work completed in tutor time should help immensely. Students have been shown how to use Fast Tomato and can demonstrate this at home to you, ([www.fasttomato.com](http://www.fasttomato.com)). Students are welcome to use the CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance) drop-in service where they can talk through their option choices with Ms Hall out of lesson time in her office at the back of T6.

Students have had an assembly to go through the preferences process and how important the next steps are for their future. This will have informed them how the process works for them and how to fill in the preferences form. Please go through the form with them and encourage them to talk to the teachers of the subjects they wish to take.

## STAFF AVAILABLE TO HELP

If you have any queries regarding the course choice process, please contact:

Ms N Emmett	Head of Year 8
Mr N Cleaver	Assistant Headteacher (Year 7 & 8 Progress and Attainment)
Mr C Prankerd	Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum)
Miss E Savins	SENDCO
Ms V Hall	Careers Advisor

## RESTRICTIONS ON CHOICE

Courses have been made available based on which subjects we believe the students will best succeed in and which subjects will help students in their future. In order to do this, to reduce the numbers of students who are unable to receive their first preference and to ensure students don't choose an invalid combination of subjects, the following restrictions must be imposed:

- Students must choose one subject from each block (see following page).
- Students allocated to the English Baccalaureate Pathway must take Geography or History and then either Spanish or French, alongside a further two Preferences.
- Students must not take more than one Design and Technology subject.
- (GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition is not classed as a Design and Technology subject).
- Students can only choose Italian as a second language and must have also selected either French or Spanish.

# EXAMINATION BOARDS

We use four examination boards:

<b>AQA:</b>	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance
<b>Edexcel:</b>	Educational Excellence
<b>OCR:</b>	Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations
<b>WJEC:</b>	Welsh Examination Board

## TERMS USED

**CORE SUBJECTS:** Subjects taken by all students as directed by the government.

**CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT:** Some subjects will still have an element of Controlled Assessment. This is work assessed throughout the year that contributes to the student's final qualification grade. The Controlled Assessment will happen at certain points during the three year course. Students may be able to do preparation and research outside lessons but work which is to be assessed has to be done in school under supervision. For details of individual subject requirements please see the relevant page for the subject.

**EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS:** Examinations set by approved examining groups. They award nationally accepted certificates to successful students in the final term of Year 11. The most common examinations lead to GCSE qualifications.

**INTERNAL MODERATION:** This takes place in school in subjects where there is more than one teacher of GCSE groups. It ensures that students who have produced the same quality of work receive the same mark.

**EXTERNAL MODERATION:** Trained moderators compare and standardise the marks awarded by all schools by checking samples of marked work.

**MODULE:** A unit of work connected with a subject area. It may last for a few weeks or longer.

**NATIONAL CURRICULUM:** The government decides what students learn at school. It describes what must be taught to children from ages 5 to 16. Secondary school students enter in Year 7 and leave compulsory education in Year 11. This period of time is divided into two Key Stages:

- **Key Stage 3 (KS3)** comprises Years 7, and 8
- **Key Stage 4 (KS4)** comprises Years 9, 10 and 11

**TIERS:** In some subjects, students may be entered in different levels for examination (e.g. Higher Tier or Foundation Tier). The tier will be chosen according to each student's ability and performance.

**SPECIFICATION:** Details of the knowledge, understanding and skills needed and the scheme of assessment for a particular qualification.



**THE HAMBLE SCHOOL**

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

The Hamble School, Satchell Lane, Hamble, Southampton SO31 4NE

Tel. 023 8045 2105 • Fax. 023 8045 7439 • [general@thehambleschool.co.uk](mailto:general@thehambleschool.co.uk)

Reception is open from 8am until 4pm from Monday to Friday during the school term.