

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

YEAR 9 PREFERENCES 2026

This document provides answers to some commonly asked questions you may have with regards to the Year 9 preference process.

Where can I find information about the preference process?

All information can be found here: <https://www.thehambleschool.co.uk/preferences-2026/year-9-into-10-preferences/> This includes an explanation of the process and subject information videos.

What will my child study?

All students will study English, Maths, Science, Core PE and PSHCRE throughout year 10-11. These are considered core subjects. In addition to this, students will study 4 additional subjects, one of which must be either History or Geography (whoever they are currently studying).

Is it a first come, first served system?

No. We encourage students to take an appropriate amount of time to consider their choices. There is no advantage at all in submitting the form early. However, students submitting forms after the deadline are less likely to receive their first choices.

Can they do both Humanities subjects?

Yes, if they studied both in Year 9, they can choose to do both in Year 10/11, provided they studied both in Year 9.

If my child studied Art/Photography or Design Technology/Engineering in Year 9, can they study both in Year 10/11?

Students studied the courses as combined in Year 9 to give them a taste of what is on offer. Moving into KS4 they can choose to specialise in one or they can opt to study both in Year 10 and 11. If they choose both, this will count as 2 of their 4 options.

Can my child choose subjects not studied in Year 9?

They will not be able to pick up subjects not studied in Year 9 as there will have been pre-requisite knowledge taught. The only exception to this is Statistics, which we are pleased to offer to all students as an option subject.

What if they are not happy on the course?

In the rare case that students decide a subject is not for them, this would be a conversation between the parents/careers, Progress Leader and Head of the relevant subject.



Are vocational and GCSE qualifications the same?

Some of our subjects offer both vocational and GCSE, for example Music and PE. The Head of Department will decide on which qualification route the class will take. In terms of College/University, GCSE and vocational qualifications have similar weighting but some courses will have expectations about whether a student has studied at GCSE or vocational qualifications, for example some A-Levels. If your child is set on their future pathway, it is sometimes worth exploring college websites to see their entry requirements.

Why can't the school always guarantee student's choices?

Whilst, the vast majority of the time, we are able to offer students their first-choice options, there are times when we might not be able to and for this reason we ask for reserve choices. This can be due to rooming and staffing constraints, for example Food Preparation & Nutrition. The Progress Leader will also look through students' choices and ensure they have made sensible choices that are appropriate for them. Should we have concerns, reserve choices will be used. Many schools ask students to select from blocks of subjects. The reason for this is to simplify the timetabling process. As a school, we feel that students should have the opportunity to study a wide range of subjects and not have restrictive measures on them.

Whilst giving students a broader range of choices makes timetabling much more complex it is much better for the student. However, what that does mean is for some students their mix of subjects will not fit. In these instances, and again this is rare, we will contact home and discuss.

My child still is unsure of their choices. What support is available?

In the first instance, watch the subject videos on the webpage. Students are encouraged to have conversations with their teachers about the subjects and what they entail. They will also be discussing their choices in tutor time. If as the parent/ carer you still have subject-specific questions, please contact the class teacher or Head of Department. If you have general questions about the process, please contact Mr James (Year 9 Progress Leader) using general@thehambleschool.co.uk.

We are also able to arrange for your child to speak with a Hampshire Careers advisor who can discuss with you child their next steps after leaving school. This may help them with their decision making. If you would like to arrange this, please contact general@thehambleschool.co.uk.