

SMMA

Y9 Options Information

2021

ALL YOU NEED
TO KNOW



Information for Parents

Next academic year your child will make the move into Year 10, which we call the Upper School at SMMA. Up to this point, pupils have studied a broad and balanced curriculum, and for many subjects they have already started to learn GCSE content. However, now is the time to make decisions about which subjects they wish to continue through or start in Year 10 that will lead to GCSEs or Level 2 Awards by the end of Year 11.

The majority of pupils will follow 9 subjects. Six of these are from the compulsory core curriculum, which all pupils study. The other three subjects can be chosen. Of these, Box A is limited to Geography, History, French, German, Spanish or Mandarin and the other two are a free choice. Some pupils may gain a tenth GCSE if they are selected to take Triple Science instead of Combined Science but the decision on this is made by the Science department towards the end of Year 10. There are opportunities to take more or less than 9 GCSEs or Level 2 Award Courses but this will be discussed with the selected pupils on an individual basis.

There is a video on the website outlining the options process this year including key dates. The online options form is on the website and **must be submitted by Monday 1 March 2021**. Your child's completed options form will be checked by their Academy Guardian and a senior member of staff to make sure they are playing to their strengths and choosing a balanced range of subjects. We may contact you if we feel some further discussion might help secure the right combination of subjects for your child. Similarly, if you have any queries about your child's option choices please contact their Academy Guardian in the first instance.

We do our best to ensure that your child gets the option subjects they have chosen. However, there may be situations when the combination of subjects chosen does not fit into the timetable. Also on rare occasions a subject may not run if not enough pupils choose it. In either case we may need to use your child's reserve choices so do please complete these on the online options form and give them careful consideration too.

As well as reading through this information, please look at the Options Subjects' Information which will also be posted on the website and shared with your child in google classroom. Your child will also be given tasks to do during their PAL lesson at the end of this half term to help them with the decision-making process.

Should you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Elaine Sharp (Assistant Headteacher: Timetabling) at the Academy at Elaine.sharp@smmacademy.org

Information for Pupils

Welcome to Upper School

At our school, we aim to provide opportunities for every pupil to achieve their very best potential. The Upper School (Years 10 and 11) option choices are important and we want to help you choose the right ones for you. When making these decisions we want you to remember two things:

- 1) Think about who you are and what you want to do, rather than what you think you should do or what others think you should do.
- 2) You can't go wrong if you choose a range of subjects that you are best at, and that you enjoy. If you are thinking about subjects you have never studied before, think about whether you have the right skills to make it a good fit for you.

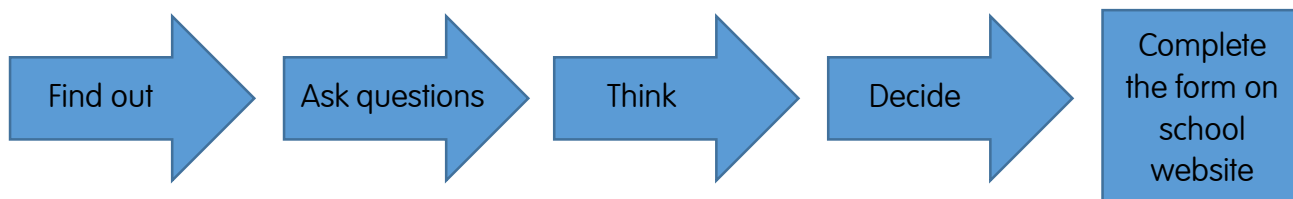
In previous years, pupils made their option choices in Year 8. We decided to move this to Year 9 so that you can spend the first part of Year 9 gaining some insight into the content of some GCSE subjects. You have actually already started covering GCSE content in Maths, English, Science, History, Geography, Philosophy of Religion and your language choice. We think this now gives you more information about these courses and will help you realise where your strengths and interests lie. This will mean you are now better able to make suitable choices for GCSE and level 2 subjects.

Here are the Options you can choose from:

You must choose one from this list BOX A	You must choose 2 more options (and 2 reserve choices) from this list BOX B	
Geography GCSE	Geography GCSE	Art GCSE
History GCSE	History GCSE	Performing Arts Level 2 Award
French GCSE	French GCSE	Music GCSE
German GCSE	German GCSE	Design & Technology GCSE
Spanish GCSE	Spanish GCSE	Sports & Coaching Level 2
Mandarin GCSE	Mandarin GCSE	MCS (Pupils will be contacted if this is suitable for them)
	Hospitality & Catering Level 2	
	Sociology GCSE	

Making your choices

We are here to help and support you to choose the GCSE/Level 2 subjects which are right for you. The process you need to follow is simple:



1. **Find out** what you have to take and what you can choose- see page 2. This booklet explains the compulsory subjects and the optional ones. There is also a video made by Mrs Sharp on the website that it is worth watching. Also **find out** more detail about the subjects you are interested in by using the subject information pages which are on the website and in Google Classroom.
2. **Ask questions** about the information you have read. Would this subject suit your skills and interests? Is the subject content what you thought it would be? Am I allowed to choose this combination of subjects? If you are unsure about anything, ask your Guardian, Ms McNiven, subject leaders or Mrs Sharp and they will be able to help you.
3. **Think** about each subject as you read the information and consider whether it is worth putting them on a shortlist of possible choices. Completing the form, you will be given in your PAL lesson will also help you to think more about whether this subject would be a good match for you. Remember a balanced range of subjects that suit your skills and interest you are the aim.
4. **Decide** on your choices. Ask questions and talk to other people to help you decide but remember not to choose a subject because someone else thinks you should.
5. **Complete the online form by Monday 1 March 2021.** If you are late submitting the form you risk not getting the subject you have chosen so please set a reminder for yourself so you don't forget.

Further advice when choosing your options

You should carefully read the information in this booklet and the subject information. Remember to keep the following advice in mind:

- Consider your current attainment level in each subject
- Follow your interests; it is good to do things you like
- Take responsibility
- It's your decision
- Be pro-active, seek advice
- Find out as much as you can
- Do not be influenced in your choice by what your friends are doing
- You don't need to have chosen your future career path. Choose a broad and balanced range of subjects and you will not limit your career choices
- Be prepared to be continually learning new things throughout your life.

Some pupils make option choices they later regret because:

- They select subjects to be with their friends. Be aware there is a chance you will not be together if there is more than one class in this subject or your friend does not get their first choices.
- They choose subjects because they like the teacher they have for this subject in Year 9. There is no guarantee that they will get this teacher in Year 10 or Year 11
- They don't read the course properly and don't understand the requirements
- They take advice from only one person
- They don't think their course choices through thoroughly
- They don't focus on their strengths

We realise that these decisions can be difficult, but urge you to consider very carefully. After all, it's **your** future.

Reserve choices

After you have chosen your three options we ask that you select two reserve choices. We do everything we can to give you the subjects you want but there might be a need to use one of your reserves. This would happen if a subject wasn't running because not enough pupils have chosen it or if the combination of subjects clashed when put into the timetable. Please think carefully about your reserve choices as you need to be sure that you want to study these subjects too.

Changing options

It is important that you make the correct choices as it is only in exceptional circumstances that we will allow you to change your options, and then only if there is space available in the group you wish to move to. Your parents will need to write to Mrs Sharp or Mr Reardon in order for you to be considered for an option change. No pupil will be allowed to change options after the first half term (October 2021) of year 10. A pupil can only change options if the group they wish to move to are not full.

Careers Advice – Careers Education, Independent Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

The Academy will support you to make KS4 and Post 16 choices through Guardian Time, PAL (Preparation for Adult Life) lessons, drop down days, online platforms and the careers advisors.

This year you will be introduced to the online platform for careers advice called Fast Tomato, which is part of the well-established Morrisby online careers guidance service. This is the most widely used careers guidance service approved by government for quality careers advice. This online guidance provides a wealth of careers, course and subject information, coupled with independent adviser support, to inspire you and help you make an informed decision about your future.

Once you have logged on at school you are free to use this platform to explore by yourselves or with your parents/carers advice.

My Fast Tomato username _____

My Password _____

Date of login on Fast Tomato	Notes



Advice to pupils considering university education

The Russell Group, which represents the UK's 24 leading universities have said that although A Level performance is their primary consideration, they will also look at your Key Stage 4 performance. Individual universities set their own admissions criteria but please be aware:

- All universities require GCSE 4-9 grades in English Language and Maths. Please note grade 4 is a 'standard pass' and grade 5 is a 'strong pass' and a grade 7 is the same level as the old grade A
- Most universities require students to achieve 5-9 in five GCSE or Level 2 Award courses (to include English and Maths)
- Russell Group universities do not insist that students have the EBacc (English Baccalaureate) which comprises grade 5 or more in English, Maths, Science, a modern foreign language and History or Geography, however, they expect them to have a good balance of subjects so it is advisable that pupils considering higher education achieve the EBacc by choosing History/Geography **and** a modern foreign language.

Pupils can get further information on university courses and entry requirements from the UCAS website www.ucas.com . This has links to individual universities where detailed course information can be found.