

Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

## Re. Introduction to the Options Process

The move from the Spring term to the Summer term is an exciting time for Year 9 students as they prepare to select their options for their GCSE courses for Years 10 and 11. Key Stage 4 is a foundation for the rest of your child's life. Whatever is decided now will make a difference in securing academic success in the future.

As your child enters the last part of their Key Stage 3 experience, they will soon be choosing their subjects for GCSE; developing an important pathway to their future study at A Level and beyond. We know that, as exciting a time as this can be, it can also be quite daunting for some and we will fully support you and your child in ensuring they select the right choices for Key Stage 4.

## What is special about the Key Stage 4 curriculum?

The principles underpinning our Key Stage 4 curriculum are:

- **A broad and balanced curriculum** in Key Stage 4, defined by the entitlement to a full range of courses and nationally recognised qualifications.
- **A recognition of the importance of core subjects.** Success in the core subjects will provide a solid foundation for progression onto higher level courses and future careers.
- **Flexibility and choice.** During Key Stage 4, students are working between the compulsory curriculum of Key Stage 3 and the greater choice and flexibility of study post-16. Our learners deserve a curriculum that is motivating, challenging and prepares them effectively for employment, further learning and adult life.
- **Coherence and progression.** As students begin to develop their own mix of subjects, they should be able to access coherent learning programmes that enable them to progress to further learning at age-16 and beyond.
- **High quality guidance and support** is essential to ensure that the interests, needs and aspirations of learners are met.
- **Maximising chances of success.** We will make use of prior attainment data and national progress data to ensure students can reach their full potential. We can provide a clear indication of likely progress on particular courses and make firm recommendations to students and their parents/carers.

At St Edward's Academy, we believe that education is not a 'one size fits all' system. We believe that all students need a curriculum which gives them a mix of academic, creative and practical experiences to ensure they are prepared for life in the fast-moving 21<sup>st</sup> Century world. At St Edward's Academy, we will provide a broad, balanced, relevant and appropriate curriculum for all our students.

This week, students are being introduced to the different courses on offer at GCSE. Each department has produced a short presentation which covers the GCSE course content and how this may facilitate their academic journey going forward, including career paths. We want all students to feel confident and able to make informed choices going forward.

After Easter, we will continue with these important preparations. Students will have the opportunity to ask questions and address any issues they may have with a member of the Senior Leadership team or Ms Perdomo, their Head of Learning. This process will support students in the decision-making process by providing a realistic overview of the subject choices best suited to them. At St Edward's Academy, we have a coaching culture and strongly believe in providing students with honest feedback. This opportunity will help students to reflect in order to enable them to make the best decisions for their future aspirations.

In the week beginning 26<sup>th</sup> April, the Guided Options booklet and Options Form will be issued, along with each student's HOPE report and Compound Assessment scores. More details about the completion of the Options form will be provided nearer the time.

We invite students to use the next few weeks as an opportunity to personally evaluate their interests, future ambitions and strengths. Students should ensure they are working to the best of their ability in all subjects, this will give a realistic representation of their potential future attainment in each area.

We look forward with working with parents to support Year 9 through this process.

Yours faithfully



Mrs A Day  
Assistant Headteacher