

29th January 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Thank you for your support over the year to date. We are proud of all our Year 9 students who have worked hard, in partnership with yourselves, to arrive to school in the correct uniform, on time and ready to learn. These **core routines of punctuality and attendance will help our students to achieve, develop and thrive** so that everyone is best placed to be happy and successful in the future.

Year 9 is an important year for all students, at the end of the year students will conclude their Key Stage 3 (KS3) studies and graduate onto Key Stage 4 (KS4). **In KS4 students will have some choices around which subjects they choose to study**. We have designed our options process to ensure that students continue to access a broad and balanced curriculum which gives them the very best footing for post-16 provision. For the majority of our students, we will be providing a pathway which includes the **English Baccalaureate (EBacc)**. The EBacc is not a qualification in its own right – it's a combination of GCSE subjects, including a language, that offer an important range of knowledge and skills to young people. While your child may not have decided on their future career path yet, studying an EBacc pathway at GCSE gives them **access to a full range of employment options when they leave secondary school and the broad knowledge that employers are looking for**. The competition for post-16 places is fiercer than ever and we aim to give the students at Whitcliffe Mount the best possible chance of securing their first choice in future studies and training opportunities. Additionally, if students are thinking of going on to university, the EBacc is also recognised and recommended by most universities.

We are privileged to be able to offer a range of pathways which cater to our students' needs and promote their academic success through both GCSE and vocational courses. **Students will be allocated the pathway which is most suitable for their individual needs and which will provide them with the best chance at success post 16**. Pathways will be allocated based on our full knowledge of the students and their prior assessment data. Once pathways have been allocated, we do not expect there to be movement between pathways.

All of the pathways on offer will cover the core curriculum consisting of:

- English Language & Literature
- Mathematics
- Science
- Learning for Life (PSHCSE/ Careers)
- Physical Education



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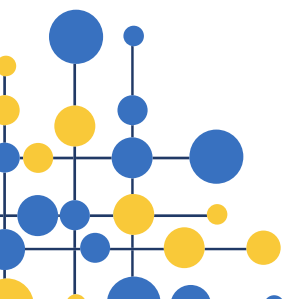
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In addition to the core curriculum the pathways will offer students some choice from a selection of subjects. The pathways are as follows:

Pathway	Cohort %	Curriculum studied
EBacc + or EBacc	75%	EBacc + <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core curriculum • 3 separate science GCSEs • History or Geography • French or Spanish • 1 open choice EBacc <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core curriculum • Combined science GCSE equivalent to 2 GCSE's • History or Geography • French or Spanish • 2 open choices
Open +	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core curriculum • History or Geography • 4 open choices
Open	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core curriculum • Princes Trust • 3 open choices

In order to support the options process, we have the following events running:

Options Information and SIMS Online Registration – Monday 26th February - Friday 8th March

During this fortnight, your child will be given the pathway they will be studying through and be able to discuss this during a one-to-one interview with the options team. Faculties will also share information about the subjects and courses during lessons. Within personal development time every student will be allocated support to register on SIMs Online. This is the online software used for students to request their choices.

Thursday 29th February – Options Evening 6-8pm

Parents and carers will be invited into school to attend an options evening which will go through the options process and provide more information on the courses available. There will be computers and support available to use to complete options choices on the evening. Booking information for this event will follow shortly.

The **deadline for students to complete their option choices online is Monday 11th March**. Please be aware that if the options are not selected in SIMs Online by this date, they may not be able to study their chosen options.

We really look forward to seeing Parents and Carers at the Year 9 Options Evening and supporting you and your child(ren) through this significant milestone as they begin their journey from KS3 to KS4.

Yours faithfully,

Mr C Elstub
Assistant Headteacher