



Mossbourne Community Academy

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Associate Principal: Rebecca Warren

4th December 2018

Dear Parents/Carers,

In **September 2019**, your child will begin to study the courses that they will pursue until the end of Year 9. In preparation for this, your child will be required to make their **GCSE Option choices via Parent PAM**.

The **Course Information Booklet** will be available on our website from the week beginning 18th December, 2018. This contains very important information about the curriculum that your child will study. It lists the **core subjects** and choices available within the **optional element** of the curriculum.

Your sons and daughters will know their strengths and weaknesses from reports, assessments and comments from their teachers. It is necessary, therefore, that this self-knowledge is applied to the choices that they will make.

Listed below are the steps involved to help your child make informed choices.

Week beginning 3rd December 2018

Friday, 7th December 2018- Options Assembly.

Week beginning 10th December 2018

Monday, 10th December 2018- Options Road Show. Students will receive presentations on subjects not studied currently.

Week beginning 17th December 2018

The Course Information Booklet will be uploaded to the website during this week.

Week beginning 14th January 2019

Thursday, 17th January 2019- 4.30-7:30pm

An **Options Clinic** will be available during Year 8 Parents Evening. This provides an opportunity for students and parents to speak with teachers about subjects that students do not currently study.

Week beginning 21st January 2019

Friday, 25th January 2019- Pathway Stickers: Students will receive details showing their learning pathway.

Week beginning 11th February 2019

Thursday, 14th February 2019- 7.45am-12.30pm

Drop-in Options Clinic

Drop-in Options Clinic-drop in: no appointment is necessary and attendance is not compulsory for all.

However, some students will be required to attend to receive specific advice from teachers. Those required to attend a consultation meeting will receive an additional letter, which will provide more details.

Please note that no other students are in school on this day to accommodate the Year 8 & 11 options process.

Friday, 22nd February 2019: Is the deadline to complete the options application form, using Parent PAM.

The Curriculum

The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all students. Certain subjects are known as CORE subjects—these are compulsory and will be studied by all students.

The remaining subjects are called OPTION subjects and students, in consultation with their parents/ carers and teachers, can choose **two** subjects from a range of academic and vocational subjects.

The table below shows the number of hours allocated to each subject from September 2019: **2019-2020**

Key Stage 4	Hours per week	Hours per week	Hours per week
	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11
English	4	5	4
Maths	4	5	4
Science	6	6	6
MFL	3	3	4
RS	1	1	0
PE	2	1	1
Humanities	4	3	3
Option A	3	3	3
Option B	3	3	3
Sub total	30	30	28
Teaching periods	33	33	33
Prep	3	3	5
Citizenship	drop down days	drop down days	drop down days

*Religious Studies is a GCSE Short course, which begins in Year 8 and is examined in Year 10.

**Citizenship is delivered through three discrete days during the academic year.

The Options Subjects

Students will be introduced to new subjects via a presentation from the course leader. Information on subjects currently studied will be given during regular lesson time. A brief synopsis of this information can be found in the Course Information Booklet.

By 22nd February 2019, all students must have completed the online application form via Parent PAM. It is extremely important that you are aware of the choices your son/daughter has made. The decisions made at this time will affect the future of every student and students will not normally be able to change option choices after this date. Students will be asked to indicate their two subjects of choice and a reserve subject, as some subjects may become over-subscribed.

Students will also have to decide whether they wish to continue with History **or** Geography/ Travel & Tourism.

Suggested Option Combinations

Few students at the age of 12 and 13 have a clear idea of which higher or further education course or career path they are going to follow. It is, therefore, sensible to study a broad range of subjects so that future pathways are not jeopardised. Some students may have already expressed an interest in certain vocational careers and need to know which subjects might be essential.

Factors influencing student choice will include academic ability, subject interest, course content, talent (often linguistic, artistic, sporting, practical, creative) and career implications. It is important that your child is not tempted to choose a subject because their peers have chosen it, or because the student likes a particular teacher. Students should seek guidance from you, as well as teachers and, having listened to and thought seriously about the advice, should choose subjects that complement their strengths, interests, and provide a sound basis for future aspirations.

University places are reliant on outstanding GCSE and A Level results. To study any subjects at A Level at Mossbourne Community Academy, students will need a minimum of GCSE Grade 5 in that subject. Please note that some subjects have higher grade requirements. For students whose ambitions do not include university, good results in key areas such as English and Maths and the gold standard of five good grades at GCSE are still essential for college entrance or employment.

GCSE and Vocational Qualifications

GCSEs are highly valued by schools, colleges and employers and, as you know, have recently been reformed. These qualifications mainly involve studying the theory of a subject and, for some subjects, controlled assessment, coursework or practical work is required in addition. Students wishing to learn more about a particular job or area of work may elect to study for vocational qualifications. Vocational courses are designed in collaboration with industry, and are intended to equip students with the skills and knowledge that employers seek. These qualifications offer a mix of theory and practice and can also include an element of work experience. Vocational courses are equivalent to one GCSE at Grade 9-1 and are graded as follows: Fail, Pass, Merit or Distinction*.

Subjects offered require various methods of assessment. The majority of subjects have a terminal examination and may also have externally verified assessments. However, some subjects have other assessments, such as controlled assessment and coursework. These are marked internally, before being externally verified, and candidates can request a review of their centre's marking. For more information concerning the specification information on each course, please review the GCSE Course Information Booklet that will be accessible Monday, 17th December 2018.

Option Blocks

Below are the option blocks from which students will make their choices. Students may be allocated their reserve choice in the event of courses being oversubscribed. Unfortunately, should a course be under-subscribed, budget restrictions may mean that the course will not run, and students' reserve choices will then be considered.

Block A	Block B
Business	Art
Computer Science	Business
Drama	Computer Science
Economics	Drama
French	Economics
Geography	Food Technology
German	French
History	Geography
Music	German
Psychology	Graphics
Religious Studies	History
Sociology	Life Sciences
Health & Social Care	Music
PE	PE
	Psychology
	Religious Studies
	Resistant Materials
	Sociology
	Textiles
	Health and Social Care

Learning Pathways

Learning pathways should be used as a guide when choosing subject combinations.

Green Route

For those who wish to pursue the more academic route, the subjects in green should be considered. Choosing any of these subjects will provide a solid foundation for progression to study at A Level and continued education at university.

Block A	Block B
Business	Art
Computer Science	Business
Drama	Computer Science
Economics	Drama
French	Economics
Geography	Food Technology
German	French
History	Geography
Music	German
Psychology	Graphics
Religious Studies	History
Sociology	Life Sciences
PE	Music
Health & Social Care	PE
	Psychology
	Religious Studies
	Resistant Materials
	Sociology
	Textiles
	Health & Social Care

Blue Route

The blue route provides a range of academic and vocational courses, allowing flexibility in future career paths. The blue route is ideal for those who want their studies to provide good preparation for the world of work, and/or future post-16 vocational study.

Block A	Block B
Business	Art
Computer Science	Business
Drama	Computer Science
Economics	Drama
French	Economics
Geography	Food Technology
German	French
History	Geography
Music	German
Psychology	Graphics
Religious Studies	History
Sociology	Life Sciences
PE	Music
Health & Social Care	PE
	Psychology
	Religious Studies
	Resistant Materials
	Sociology
	Textiles
	Health & Social Care

Please note that any student who does not achieve a grade 4 or higher in English and Mathematics will be required to continue these subjects Post 16.

If you have any queries regarding any **options arrangements**, please do not hesitate to contact me at the academy.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Caceres
Options Coordinator

