

20th January 2021

KS4 Options Process

Dear Parents/Carers,

Please find enclosed the Key Stage 4 Options Booklet for 2021 which marks the start of an exciting and important stage in your child's education. Over the next two months, all Year 9 students will choose the subjects they wish to study through years 10 and 11 and ultimately gain qualifications in. In this letter I hope to give you an overview of the Options Process for Year 9 and some of the key dates and events for this academic year.

At IES Breckland, students in Key Stage 4 (years 10 and 11) study a range of core subjects to GCSE level and then select from a second group of subjects to study in their four 'Option Blocks'. We offer a wide range of courses, most of which will lead to students obtaining a GCSE, but our broad offer also enables students to pursue interests and obtain alternative qualifications. These courses are outlined in detail in the enclosed Options Booklet and we encourage you to spend time discussing them with your child.

All Key Stage 4 students will continue to take the following core subjects: English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Combined Science, PSHE and Core PE. This leaves 4 option choices to be made; one subject is to be chosen from each of the four option blocks. Please note that a Separate Sciences option choice will offer 3 GCSEs instead of the compulsory 2 and includes single GCSE awards in Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

When making their choices, students should consider studying a broad and balanced curriculum, considering their aspirations for future study and employment. For example, a student with aspirations to attend university should be aware some undergraduate courses require a Modern Foreign Language at GCSE. Further advice on how to make informed choices is contained within the Options Booklet.

In addition to the **Options Booklet**, a range of bespoke measures are in place at IES Breckland to support you and your child in making the right decisions:

- **KS4 Options Process Assembly:** In the week commencing 25th January, Year 9 students will watch an assembly explaining the KS4 Options Process. This assembly will also be made available on the school website for you to view
- **Mentor involvement:** Year 9 Mentors will provide a bespoke message to their Mentees during the week commencing 25th January and will be available for email and phone conversations to support students

- **Year 9 Parents' Evening:** As you will no doubt be aware, Year 9 Parents' Evening is due to take place Thursday 28th January. Booking remains open for this event and we highly recommend students make the most of this opportunity to speak to their teachers about their suitability to study their subject at Key Stage 4, or ask questions about the nature of the course. Bookings can be made via: <https://iesb.parentseveningsystem.co.uk/>
- **Careers Advisor:** Ellen Alexander our Careers Advisor is available for contact and can provide information about jobs and future courses: ealexander@breckland.iesschools.co.uk
- **Subject videos:** In the Key Stage 4 Options page on the school website we will provide videos made by our teachers especially for this year group explaining what their subject entails. Available from 27th January.
- **School Website** Key Stage 4 Options page: the booklet, videos and assembly among other resources can be accessed under the 'Students' tab or via this <https://www.breckland.iesschools.co.uk/gcse-options/>

Finally, Our **Key Stage 4 Options Event** was originally scheduled to take place on 11th February. Unfortunately, under the current restrictions we cannot offer this evening as we usually would. In lieu of this event, we will instead provide some virtual taster lessons in each subject on offer. More details will follow on 11th February when these tasters are available. At this point we will also circulate the Options Form for students to make their Key Stage 4 option selections along with instructions for completing and returning it. **The deadline for returning the Options Form is Friday 5 March 2021.**

Making curriculum choices in Year 9 is a very important part of a student's time in school. It is an opportunity for them to take control of their education and begin to shape their future direction. We want our students to remember that they are not alone in making these decisions and like you, we are there to support and enable them.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Tarryn Berry
Assistant Principal