



18th December 2023

Dear Parent / Carer

KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM INFORMATION and OPTION CHOICES

Monday 15th January 2024 – Curriculum Information Evening. 5.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m.

It is time for our Year 9 students to begin to look forward to their studies next school year, as they enter Key Stage 4. This is the time when they follow courses at GCSE and equivalent level that will lead to public examinations and qualifications that will enable them to progress into further learning and training.

This process begins with our Curriculum Information Evening scheduled to take place on Monday 15th January 2024. We'd like to welcome you to school for an introductory presentation (5.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.) before encouraging you and your son/daughter to tour departments and find out more about courses they will take during Key Stage 4, and the subjects that they will consider for the option choices they can exercise.

The evening begins at 5.00 p.m. in the Main Hall, and thereafter you will have a chance to visit departments around the school to meet staff, and students who currently study those courses, to view resources, ask questions and find out more about what awaits our students. Mrs Hudson, our SENDCO, will also be available to support where appropriate.

At the evening you will receive an options booklet, which summarises the key information you need to know about the process and about each subject that can be taken as a programme of study in Years 10 and 11. This will also be posted on our website after the event. Additionally, we will make available for you and our students a series of narrated presentations from our subject leaders offering more detail about their subjects. This will include information about content, assessment, modes of learning and potential progression routes beyond Key Stage 4 should you need to be reminded or wish to revisit it at any time. You can access these through the website following the evening.

Monday 23rd January – Year 9 Parents' Evening

As you'll know the Yr9 Parents' Evening is on Monday 23rd January. You may wish to ask questions of subject teachers on that occasion about the nature of subject content and assessment at GCSE. Obviously, the primary focus of these parents' evenings is academic progress but subject teachers will be happy to offer advice and guidance in response to specific questions you may have following the options evening.

On-going dialogue

The process can be demanding. Some students have great certainty and will select quickly and never reconsider, others will take time to find the right choices and may find themselves revisiting their choices. Please contact mark.dickson@thirskschool.org or nicola.stimson@thirskschool.org or shiona.head@thirskschool.org or kirsty.fulford@thirskschool.org about this whenever you need to. Your child's form tutor will also be willing and able to act as a sounding board for these key decisions too, as someone who will know your child well. Subject leaders will also be showing students the subject videos in class and offering further explanation as well as answering questions.





Our online Option Decision Form will be given out to students on Monday 22nd January. The deadline for returning it to us is Friday 2nd February. Instructions for how to return it will be in the email carrying the links to the form.

This is a very important process for our year 9 students and their parents / carers. We strongly recommend that you attend the Curriculum Information Evening and take the time to read, listen and ask questions, in order to be able to support your child as they make some key decisions about their future. Although this process concludes with students making choices reasonably soon, please be aware that we do continue to support students throughout the year and changes of heart, or direction are usually accommodated subject to the option blocks and capacity. These are determined shortly after the February 2nd deadline based on the choices students have made at that time.

In order to ensure that students think carefully about their choices, and do not rush to make their decisions, the Key Stage 4 Options Decision Forms are not given out until Monday 22nd January. This form must be returned to us no later than **Friday 2nd February**.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Stimson
HEAD OF UPPER SCHOOL

Mr Dickson
DEPUTY HEADTEACHER