

# Script for options evening presentation

1	<p>Hello and welcome to this short presentation about the options process here at Saint Ninian's High School.</p> <p>My name is Tony Smith, deputy head teacher at upper site and the person responsible for building the school timetable – a process that begins with Y9 students telling us what they would like to study at key stage 4.</p> <p>Traditionally we have begun our Y9 options evening event with this presentation but hopefully by moving it online, and allowing students and parents to watch at their own convenience, it will make the options evening more productive – providing more time for conversations with subject staff.</p>
2	<p>I would like to start by outlining the mix of subject's students study at key stage 4 (Y10&amp;Y11).</p> <p>We have a timetable of 6 lessons per day, 30 lessons per week. Students will continue to study English and Mathematics for 4 lessons each, as they did throughout Ks3. The amount of science will increase to 6 lessons per week, and this is to take into account of the volume of work to get through at KS4. Students study RE for 2 lessons and they will have a double lesson of games. These subjects are often referred to as the <b>Core subjects</b>. 4 additional subjects then make up the remaining 12 lessons, these are <b>option subjects</b>.</p>
3	<p>Although the options process is about helping students to settle upon their option subjects it is worth mentioning a few key points about the core subjects.</p> <p>All students study the core subjects, and we have put a lot of effort into developing a broad range of pathways through Ks4. This is to ensure that each student can develop their knowledge and skills at an appropriate level.</p> <p>In English the main focus is language, as this is the qualification employers and educational establishments value the most. The English department enter students' at the most appropriate level to maximise their grade. Many students do also study English Literature alongside language thereby achieving an additional qualification.</p> <p>In Mathematics we help students to maximise their skills by providing them with an early attempt at an external exam at the end of Y10. Students then follow the most appropriate pathway in y11 with the aim of helping them to improve their grade.</p> <p>Science is perhaps the most complicated subject. All students study Biology, Chemistry and Physics. The majority of students student follow a <b>co-ordinated</b> science course, which means their final grade represents their attainment across all three sciences. The qualification is a double GCSE (it is worth two GCSEs). Some students follow a <b>separates</b> pathway, they end up with three separate qualifications, one for biology, one for chemistry and one for physics. This is a very demanding pathway as they are effectively squeezing 3 subjects into the teaching time for 2 subjects. Some students follow a <b>combined</b> science course, the outcome of which is a single grade, or qualification. This pathway allows students more time to get to grips with fewer concepts.</p>

	<p>RE with two lessons a week cover the content for a full GCSE with many students but some students follow a pathway that leads to a qualification that is ½ the size of a GCSE. This is termed a short course.</p> <p>All core subjects also offer entry level pathways for those student for whom this is the most appropriate level.</p> <p>If you are attending the options evening the core subjects are represented and I would recommend you take the opportunity to understand the pathways in these subjects.</p>
4	<p>As you have probably already realised the language of qualifications can be overwhelming to begin with. So let's recap before we proceed.</p> <p>The <b>level</b> of a qualification is an indication of the academic demand of a qualification, it represents the skills and depth of knowledge a students has to demonstrate to be successful. How well they demonstrate those skills and that knowledge is reflected in the <b>grade</b> they achieve.</p> <p>The size of a qualification represents the volume of the content covered. So a double award is twice the size of a standard qualification. A short course is half the size.</p> <p>So all level 2 qualifications are considered comparable. There is a wide range of Level 2 qualifications including: GCSEs grades A*, A, B, C (or grades 8,7,6,5,4 in the UK). CSE grade 1, national certificates, NVQs, music grade 4 or 5, O levels grade A, B, C are all further examples of level 2 qualifications.</p> <p>Level 1 qualifications include GCSE grades D, E, F, G (or 3,2,1 in the uk)</p> <p>Entry level qualifications are awarded at three sub levels: 1,2,3. Entry level 3 is the most difficult.</p> <p>The majority of courses we offer enable students to achieve a level 2 qualification, but also have a level 1 pathway if required. However this is not the case for all courses so please do check.</p>
5	<p>We have over 30 different courses on offer at Saint Ninian's. Some are theoretical, some focus on developing technical skills and some are practical in nature. Each course is assessed in its own unique way often using a blend of examinations and other techniques – such as fieldwork, coursework, project work or in class assessments. The typical learning activities are also very different in each course.</p> <p>Students are free to choose any course, so it is vital that they take the time to understand the different demand of each course and match that with their own abilities, strengths, interests and any possible future aspirations they might have.</p> <p>Information about each course can be found on our web site, students also have the opportunity to talk to their class teachers but every year the feedback we receive indicates that the options evening is the most useful and influential event of the process for students and their families. So I hope you can attend this event. This is where students and parents can speak with subject staff and ask lots of questions.</p>

6	<p>Once a student has narrowed down the subject they would like to study they need to complete a request form.</p> <p>The request form asks student to place their requests in priority order – the subject they most want to study in the first position and then the rest in descending order of preference. The form also asks for up to 2 reserve choices.</p> <p>The deadline, of the 18<sup>th</sup> March, is important to meet if a student wishes their choices to be part of the data that determines how we group subjects together. More about this in a second.</p> <p>If for any reason a student wished to change their mind about the options they have chosen please complete a new form in its entirety, highlighting the changes and adding the reason for the alteration in the notes section. Sign and date the new form, this enables us to monitor changes accurately.</p>
7	<p>So what happens once we have collected the requests?</p> <p>Initially we do a data check to make sure all our information has been entered correctly and the pastoral team speak with individual student to discuss their choices just to make sure that choices and combinations are sensible and realistic.</p> <p>Meanwhile we are analysing the data and using it to determine any resource implications for the school: how many classes of each subject are we going to have to provide.</p> <p>We then have to go through a lengthy process where we determine which subjects will be taught at the same time – everyone need to be somewhere are all times! To do this we builds <b>blocks</b> of subjects so for example when one group of students go to History, the rest of the year group are either studying Music, Art, Business, French, Practical Woodwork or Geography. Our challenge is to build the four most appropriate <b>blocks</b> that will allow the majority of students in the year group to be able to study the combination of subject they each would like. Clearly this is a complex process and one that requires some compromises to be made: This why it is important that students rank order their choices and meet the deadline!</p> <p>Blocks are determined based on satisfying the option choices of the largest number of students, and this is based on the data we have on deadline day.</p> <p>Once the blocks are decided every student must study a subject from each of the 4 blocks – remember each block represents 3 lessons in the school timetable and everyone has to be somewhere.</p> <p>Where we can't provide a combination of subjects for a student we will liaise with students and parents. It is likely that a number of students will not be able to study their 4<sup>th</sup> choice and an alternative will need to be found, on rare occasions 3<sup>rd</sup> choices have to be changed.</p> <p>The process is usually completed by mid to late June, at which point we confirm subject allocations with all students and parents.</p>

8 So that is the end of the presentation and the information you need before attending options evening and completing your request forms

Remember

- Do your research – know all there is to know about each of the courses that you are considering choosing and match this knowledge with what you know about yourself and your future aspirations
- You need to make 4 requests and up to 2 reserves and place these in priority order with the subject you most want to study in position number 1
- The Deadline 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Hand your forms into the lower site office by this date to ensure your information is considered with everyone else's – There is no benefit from being early and late forms will still be processed – so don't panic too much.
- Forms can be resubmitted. Please date them and highlight the changes you are requesting 0 this helps us stay in top of the information.
- We will Confirm your subject allocations mid/late June
- Contact Y9 team if any questions

I look forward to meeting you all at options evening – please say hello and I will do my best to answer any questions you might have.