

## Year 8 GCSE Options FAQ – Feb 2026

### 1. What does 'Year 9 Only' mean?

It means that this part of the curriculum is studied by all students in Year 9 but not in Years 10 or 11. The 'breadth' lessons on Y9 students' timetables which will be allocated to Technology, Creative Arts or Languages, depending on the students' subject allocations are part of the Year 9, but not Y10 or 11 curriculum.

### 2. What does the 'C' in PSHCE stand for?

'C' is for **Citizenship** education which fosters pupils' keen awareness and understanding of democracy, government and how laws are made and upheld.

### 3. Is there opportunity to drop or add a subject? Is there the opportunity to swap subjects once Year 9 has started?

It is not normal to drop any GCSE subjects, our ambition is that all students undertake a full complement of GCSE subjects. However, in exceptional circumstances we may explore with the SENDCo whether a bespoke curriculum would be in the best interest for a student with special educational needs (SEN).

Some students may wish to take a GCSE in their 'mother tongue' in Year 10.

We would not recommend, and in the large majority of cases will not be able to support, students swapping GCSE subjects once they have started the course in September 2026.

The majority of classes are at maximum capacity across Year 9, as the number of classes created reflects the student demand for the subject from the options process. It is important that you think carefully about your choices prior to submitting your form for this reason.

### 4. Is GCSE Physical Education the same as Sports Studies?

No. Sports Studies is not a GCSE but is instead a vocational qualification. We only offer GCSE PE.

### 5. Can you study both French and Spanish plus two other choices?

No. The additional language is one of the two free choices.

### 6. Can students 'opt out' of any Core subjects?

Not unless there are exceptional circumstances for why a student should not study a core subject. These would be discussed with Heads of House and/ or the SENDCo. If the evidence presented was strongly in support of the student not undertaking a particular subject, then we would look at alternative subjects and/ or arrangements.

### 7. Where do we get the Options Form from?

The Options Form will be shared electronically via email on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026. Final deadline for submission is 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

**8. Will all students sit a GCSE in Religious Studies?**

No. Only students who choose to study GCSE RS will sit the full course exam. All other students will study RS in their allocated lessons across the curriculum in addition to their PSHCE curriculum.

**9. What Science qualification will students undertake?**

In Year 9 - All students follow a curriculum which is common to Combined Science and Triple Science. Following this, in Year 10 some students, for whom we feel it appropriate, will study Combined Science, with the rest following the Triple Science curriculum.

In Year 11, using mock exam and assessment performance, any student for whom the Combined Science curriculum is more appropriate will be moved onto this curriculum. More students will move to studying the Combined Science curriculum. Approximately 40% of our students take Triple Science GCSE exams, with the other 60% taking either Combined Science (Foundation) or Combined Science (Higher) exams.

**10. What does Foundation and Higher Tier mean?**

The Foundation Tier curriculum in a subject has more accessible content than that of the Higher Tier. Students studying Foundation Tier GCSE can attain grades up to and including Grade 5.