

Options

Students follow a broad curriculum at Highlands and during Key Stage 3, all subjects are compulsory.

Note: For details of the options offered in each year group, it is important that you refer to correct options booklet for your year group. This is vital because we have made significant changes to the future curriculum for current Year 8.

Decisions for the current Year 8

In January of Year 8 we ask students to think about what subjects they would like to take in Year 9, 10 and 11 as option subjects. By February half term, students have to ask for the options they want and by Easter all will have been decided and shared with students and parents by email.

Make sure you know about the percentages of the course that are controlled assessment and exams to figure out what best suits you – e.g. whether you are better in exams or coursework. It would be ideal to be shown exemplar coursework pieces in order to see what standard you need to work at. Don't just pick something that is respected or considered important: if you don't think you will enjoy a subject, then don't pick it.

Advice from a past Year 9 student

Students pick two options to take over Years 9 & 10 and three options to take over Years 10 & 11 which all lead to external qualifications, such as GCSEs or BTECs. They also pick a reserve subject. They will also get a chance to request a change to their options in January or February of Year 9.

One of the options in Year 9 & 10 is a simple choice between Citizenship and RS but the other will be selected from a range of subjects and the choice widens further for Year 10 & 11. We expect all students to take an English Baccalaureate option subject (Geography, History, French, Spanish, the separate sciences or Computer Science) and to take one subject from each of the faculties of Arts, Humanities, and Design & Technology. As you would expect, we only run a subject if a viable number of students choose it.

We do allow a minority of students to be an exception to double up in one of the faculty areas if we are convinced that it is in that student's best interest.

Students make room for these options because they reduce their Arts down to one chosen subject in Year 9 and drop Design & Technology subjects in Year 9 unless it has been chosen as an option.

"I chose subjects that I excelled in from my earliest years. I feel now that this was the right thing to do for me because even now I remember a lot from Year 7. All your school years count and when you choose your options you need to be guided by your past and you need to plan for your future."

Advice from a past Year 9 student

Decisions for the current Year 9

In January of Year 9 we ask students to consider if they would like to concentrate on Citizenship or RS GCSE in Year 10 and they make their request online by February half term and when they start Year 10, they will only have lessons in one of these subjects.

Students will also have to decide if they want to take double science or follow an accelerated course and take all 3 sciences separately as Biology Chemistry and Physics GCSE. This happens in the spring term of Year 9.

Decisions for the current Year 10

In January, Year 10 students are asked to reconfirm their final option subject for Year 11 with a February half term deadline. Students will only be able to choose from subjects that are already planned to run.