

Parent webinars - Year 9, 10 and 11

Dear parents and carers,

It was a pleasure to meet so many of you last week during our parent webinars and in particular I extend a very warm welcome to those of you who are new to our school community this year.

In case you were unable to attend the webinars, there are links below to the presentation that we shared with you. This letter also contains some frequently asked questions which came up in the live question and answers session at the end of the presentation.

Warm regards,
Ms Lloyd
Deputy headteacher

[Year 9, 10 and 11 information evening presentation](#)

Parent webinar FAQs

1. Why is my child sitting a GCSE in year 10?

At Highlands all students sit one GCSE subject in year 10. This enables students to space out their exams across two years, thus reducing the intensity of examination pressure in year 11. It also enables them to get into good revision habits one year early. This really helps them prepare for their final year exams in year 11. We carry out regular student voice and our year 11 students unanimously welcome the opportunity to do one GCSE in year 10 for the reasons outlined above.

2. My child is in year 9. When do they finalise which GCSE subjects they will study in year 10 and 11?

Your child and you will be invited to attend the GCSE options evening on the 31st January. This will follow a similar format to last year where you will have the opportunity to meet with different subject leaders and consider whether the subjects your child indicated that they wanted to do last year, are still the ones they would like to do this year. You will then be emailed a form to complete which will ask your child to confirm their choices.

3. Why has the curriculum model changed?

Previously students were expected to do two GCSEs in year 10. If you are a year 11 parent you will be familiar with this model. Current year 10 students are now expected to do one GCSE in year 10. We have changed the curriculum model because it frees up curriculum time

in years 7, 8 and 9. By only doing one GCSE a year early students have more time in year 7, 8 and 9 to take subjects like RE, citizenship and the performing arts.

4. Will revision resources be provided for all students so that they are prepared for their assessments and when will this be?

Yes, all GCSE classes will have access to revision materials three working weeks before their assessments. These will be uploaded onto Google Classroom for all students to access. Pupil premium students will have their resources printed for them so that they can take them home.

5. What is the school's policy on homework?

Teachers log all homework on Google Classroom with a clear assignment deadline. Please check this to see what your child must complete and by when. We will be launching our new homework policy this year. Tom Hurst, a deputy headteacher leading on homework, will be in contact with you with further information about this.

6. Which subjects are set using student attainment?

Maths and science set students by attainment. They use a range of data to inform their judgements and will notify you if there are any set changes. English has three groups. A small, higher attaining group, a small, lower attaining group and a large, middle attaining group which is split into a number of different classes.

7. Why are parents evenings online?

Parents' evenings are currently online because it allows more parents to meet with their child's teacher than if it were in person. We do keep this under review and your feedback would be much appreciated when we consult on this at a later date this year.

8. Have the staffing issues in geography and science been addressed?

As I explained in the webinar, staffing in schools is a national challenge. The current recruitment and retention crisis means that there are not enough trainees applying to train as teachers particularly in science and geography. We are not immune to this challenge and we are constantly trying to find creative ways to both recruit and retain teachers particularly in subject shortage areas.

I can confirm though that if your child is a GCSE student in either geography or science they are being taught by a subject specialist this year.

9. Where can I find the name of my child's exam board?

All GCSE exam board names have been updated on our school website. Please click on the relevant subject tile to find it.

