

6th June 2019

Year 8 GCSE Options Evening - Tuesday 11th June 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

Over the last few years we have seen GCSEs evolve to become far more content driven and challenging. Within some subjects the content needed to be covered has almost doubled and the amount of controlled assessment /coursework has been replaced with end of course terminal exams, which are worth 100% of the overall grade.

Therefore, to ensure our students are given the best chance of achieving good GCSE grades, we have increased the Key Stage 4 curriculum time from 2 years to 3 years, meaning students will begin their GCSEs in Year 9.

An extended Key Stage 4 curriculum is not a new concept and is one that is being practised in many schools across the country. Tanfield School has decided to adapt this curriculum framework to allow subjects to be taught in greater depth with access to specialist teaching and therefore creating more motivated students. Extending Key Stage 4 to three years provides an even higher quality curriculum, potentially allowing students to access a wider range of subjects at the end of Key Stage 4.

The decision to move to a three-year Key Stage 4 programme is not something that we have taken lightly and we have consulted widely. A number of local schools have already made the transition to this model and feedback from them and their students is very positive. Those schools that we have consulted report that student progress and engagement has improved and that staff also feel that this change has allowed them more time to cover the GCSE syllabus content and to prepare the students for exams more rigorously.

We do not want our students to be disadvantaged as many other local schools already offer a 3-year Key Stage 4. This means these students are in competition for the same college places, so in order to secure the best chances and choices, our students need more time to complete their GCSEs.

All students will be given a hard copy of the GCSE Options Booklet which we would like you to look at with them over the next few days so that they can discuss their preferred choices with you. They will also be given an Options Choice form to make their initial choices. These documents will be available via the school website and students will be emailed an electronic copy.

In order to make the process as clear as possible, it has been explained to students in their afternoon meetings. However, if you or your child have any queries about the process or specific subjects, please do not hesitate to email the teachers named in the Options Booklet.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to the Options Evening on **Tuesday 11th June 2019, in the School Hall.** The purpose of this information evening is to explain how the Options process works and to introduce you to the courses we offer. This is an important evening for both students and parents as it provides the opportunity to discuss option choices with staff. There will be a brief presentation by Mr Clough at 6pm and an additional presentation at 6.30pm for those who cannot attend the earlier one. After the presentations parents and students will then be able to speak to subject specific staff.

Key Dates

- Friday 7th June 2019:
 - Pupils receive a hard copy of the GCSE Options booklet to take home.
 - Students are emailed an electronic copy of the GCSE options Booklet.
 - Option Book and Information go live on school website.
- Tuesday 11th June 2019: Options Evening Presentation at 6.00pm & repeated at 6.30pm.
- Friday 14th June 2019: **Deadline** for option forms to be returned.

We value your continued support in helping your child in making an informed decision and look forward to seeing you on Tuesday 11th June 2019 at 6pm or 6.30pm.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Jones', written in a cursive style.

Mr C Jones
Deputy Headteacher.