

Dear Parents and Carers,

11 March 2021

I hope you and your family continue to remain safe and in good health. This week I am so grateful that we have been able to welcome back our school community to face to face education. Thank you to you as parents for the support you provided with home learning over lockdown, I know this will continue as you support with homework on Teams this half term and beyond.

Please can I make it clear that it is my hope and expectation that parents actively communicate and work in partnership with the Academy by checking emails regularly and responding to any key messages that are sent via Parentmail. This means informing the Academy immediately if your email address has changed so that we can update our system and send you letters that you are able to read.

You are receiving this letter because your child is in Year 9 and soon to take part in the important Option Process at St Mark's Academy. At St Mark's we recognise the importance of the decisions that your child needs to make in their transition from Year 9 into Year 10 and Year 11. These options will also open doors to their chosen A Level subjects when they join us in Sixth Form. In this important and challenging phase of students' education, it is crucial that we give your child and you as parent(s)/carer(s) clear and informed guidance as to the choices available and how these are matched to their individual needs, interests and abilities.

This will be the first time they have been given the chance to select the GCSE and BTEC subjects they wish to study from Year 10 onwards, so it is important that they consider the following things:

- What is available?
- What do they enjoy?
- What are they good at?
- What might you need for future study and careers?

We are passionate about making sure our curriculum is broad in that it allows us to realise the God given potential in every child, but also offer a strong academic core through our EBacc offer. This means that students can continue to extend their knowledge and skills in a central core of subjects while beginning to make choices in other areas, based on their own abilities, talents and preferences. This curriculum will ensure as many opportunities as possible remain open to your child for further study at St Mark's Sixth Form, in higher education and their future career. We are extremely proud of the offer we are providing students with which is supported by high quality teaching delivered by staff with exceptional subject knowledge.

The Year 10 and Year 11 curriculum combines a core of compulsory subjects (English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science, RE and Core PE) with choices taken from a variety of other subjects e.g. Modern Foreign Languages, Humanities, Drama, Art, Music, PE, Psychology, Technology, Business and ICT. It is important that your child maintains a broad and balanced curriculum so they do not limit their choices in Year 12 and 13 when they apply for A Levels and BTECs at St mark's Sixth Form.

Interim Principal Hannan Faney

What do parents and Year 9 students need to do now?

Today we held an assembly with Year 9 to launch the Options Process and shared the Options Booklet with them.

A summary of each course can be found in our Options Booklet which has been shared with you virtually. **Please ask your child to read through this with you and watch the videos** so you can start to gain a sense of what each option subject may involve or feel like.

We would like you to **indicate your child's initial preferences using the Microsoft Form below**. Please complete this by **Monday 15 March**. Please note this just gives the school a general idea about curriculum demand and your child's passion for certain subjects, it is not a final choice.

We will hold a Virtual Options Evening Mid-April to communicate the process with you and answer any questions.

The Academy will run taster sessions in early April to give students a flavour of GCSE life in different subjects

We will end by sending you a guided pathway form to be completed by the end of April and communicate final options choices for your child by 01 May 2021.

Accessing the MS Form

The easiest way to access the form is to ask your child to log in to MS Teams in the usual way, and look in the assignments tab. There they will find a link to the survey called 'Complete this Survey with your Parents'

You can also access the survey with [this link](#) but you will need your child to log in to MS Forms with their usual Teams email address and password, and then again into MS Stream to access the videos.

Please can I thank you as parents for your engagement and support as we work together to plan an incredible Options Process. We know this will allow your child to achieve their hopes and dreams beyond this academic year. I am already excited to see their dreams come to life through an enriching, broad and balanced GCSE curriculum.

Yours faithfully,



Hannah Fahey
Acting Principal