



Spalding High School

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Headmistress Mrs M Anderson, B.Ed



Dear parents, carers and Year 8 pupils

April 2023

Year 8 are very soon to become Year 9 and we have made some curriculum changes to further support them through this very important year. It is normal practice for the teaching of many GCSE subjects to begin in Year 9 and we have a long history of experience and knowledge that our Year 9 pupils cope well with GCSEs and enjoy the challenge and achievement that this brings. Subjects that start teaching the GCSE course formally in Year 9 include: English Language and Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Religious Studies, French and German. All other subjects also start to introduce pupils to GCSE work as the year progresses. The increased content in the GCSE examination specifications means that we simply cannot cover all of the topics in the two years traditionally given to GCSEs. Moreover, we also know that our pupils do not necessarily need the full three years to cover the Key Stage 3 content and so it is prudent to use the time more wisely.

We took the decision to reduce the number of subjects studied in Year 9 to recognise the increased challenge that starting GCSE courses early brings. Also to allow us to allocate more curriculum time to English and Mathematics (one additional lesson each per fortnight cycle) and very importantly to address pupil, parental and staff concerns over pupil workload in Year 9. The curriculum choices available to Year 8 pupils for Year 9 (2023) are outlined below:

The arts block:

Pupils will be able to select which **two of the three arts** subjects (Art, Drama, Music) they wish to study in Year 9. Pupils are electing to study the two they most enjoy. Pupils are not picking these as GCSE subjects, although the Key Stage 3 work they do will continue to underpin their knowledge and experience should they wish to pick them as GCSEs in the Year 9 Options process. However, pupils who want to study arts subjects at GCSE must have studied them in Year 9.

The technology block:

Pupils will be able to select which **two of the three technology** subjects (Food and Nutrition, Design & Technology, Textiles) they wish to study in Year 9. Pupils are electing to study the two they most enjoy. The technology block is more complicated to timetable as it is based on a rotation of three subjects across the academic year and we would hope to be able to accommodate all pupil choices but provision will depend on which subjects pupils select. **We know we could meet the pupils' first choice of subject but could not necessarily guarantee the second choice.** We therefore ask that pupils select the one technology subject they most want to study in Year 9. They should also nominate a second choice but accept that **we may not be able to guarantee this.** As with the arts block choice, pupils are not picking these as GCSE subjects, however, pupils who want to study technology subjects at GCSE must have studied them in Year 9.

Please complete the curriculum form, which will be set up on your child's Microsoft Teams Account, no later than **Tuesday 9th May**. In the meantime, please do contact Mrs Neal if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

M K Anderson
Headmistress