



January 2021

Dear Families,

Key Stage 4 Options Process 2021

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on the timeline for the Year 9 Options process. This process results in Year 9 students selecting three subjects that they would like to follow in Years 10 and 11 and forms the first steps in guiding students towards their future plans. We aim to outline all the provision available to your child, which will ensure that all students will achieve the best possible grades to prepare them for Post-16 study.

Due to the pandemic, we are changing our processes this Academic year to ensure we support our students whilst conforming to National restrictions and guidelines. In light of this, our option process is beginning a little earlier than in previous years and will follow the steps below:

- **Thursday 28th January** – All students will attend a Virtual Assembly at 8.45am. Within this presentation the Options timeline and process will be explained.
- **Friday 29th January** – Students will be emailed a google form to complete. Here students will be selecting the virtual lessons they would like to attend during the ‘Virtual Options Taster Week’, week beginning Monday 8th February 2021. These lessons are taster lessons and will enable Year 9 Students to get a flavour of what the subject is like should they choose to study it in Key Stage 4.
- **Monday 8th - Friday 12th February** – Options Taster Week
- **Friday 12th February** – All students will attend a Virtual Assembly at 8.45am, this will outline the expectations of students over the forthcoming weeks leading up to the **Parent Consultation Meetings**.
- **Week Beginning Monday 1st March 2021** – All year 9 students and parents will receive the final options booklet that will highlight the option blocks that students must select from. **There will also be further information regarding the Parent Consultation Evening.**
- **Thursday 18th March 2021** – All parents should attend the virtual Parent Consultation Meeting where their child’s option choices for Key Stage 4 will be discussed and chosen.

During the Parent Consultation Evening on Thursday, 18 March from 3.45 - 6.45pm, you will be given an appointment for a 15-minute interview with a senior member of staff. If the appointment you are given is not suitable, then please telephone or email (01384 987973 or info@tca.shirelandcat.net) the Academy to ask for a different time slot; we trust that you will support your child by attending virtually on that evening, so that you can access all of the advice on offer, but if it is not possible for you to attend, then please contact the school as soon as possible. The purpose of the interview is to guide you and your child through the choices which need to be

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made, taking into account the skills and attributes of your child, as well as their career plans. On this evening, you will also have access to representatives from each of your child's current subjects as well as the new subjects that are available during Years 10 and 11. We recommend you book virtual appointments with these members of staff should you have any subject specific queries regarding your child's current performance or their suitability to specific courses in Key Stage 4.

During the options process there are a number of resources students and families can access to fully understand the courses and qualifications on offer:

- Thorns Collegiate Academy Website – The Year 9 Choices section of our website includes information about each of our courses as well as short videos from our Head of Departments. <https://thornsca.org.uk/parents-and-carers/year-9-choices/>
- Start Profile and Connexions Websites – These both assist students in thinking about their future career and the processes they need to go through in order to follow a specific path. www.startprofile.com or www.connexionsdudley.org
- Family and Friends Network – Please encourage your son/daughter to speak to their friends and family about their chosen subjects and to find out their personal experiences of course they are or have studied.
- Higher Educational Institutions – Access local college or university websites if you have a career path in mind, what expectations do these providers require from GCSEs? Are there any subjects that are compulsory or desired for specific courses?
- Teachers – please speak directly with your teachers. Your form tutor, subject teachers and heads of departments will be more than happy to answer your calls or emails in order to provide you with the best advice about your future...we are here to help!

If you have any further questions about these process or arrangements, please do not hesitate to contact me at the Academy (sfletcher@tca.shirelandcat.net).

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Simon Fletcher
Senior Teacher

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