

Options Evening FAQs

Year 9 FAQs

My child can't choose the subjects they want to do from the subject blocks on offer, what can we do?

All students are expected to choose from the option blocks as they are listed. We cannot accommodate requests from outside of the listed option blocks.

Each child is expected to look at the broad and balanced curriculum that is on offer across the blocks and choose one subject from each.

To complete the process students need to access the electronic options form on the school website and sent out via the student email address and complete the form as instructed.

When will I get a confirmation of my child's option choices?

Your child will receive an email in February 2025 confirming the subjects they will be studying at GCSE. At this stage if there are any clerical errors then please email options@hccs.info to highlight them. **However please note that option changes at this stage are not possible.**

Which grading system will be used for GCSE?

The GCSE grading scale uses the numbers 1–9 to identify levels of performance (with 9 being the top level). A 'standard pass' is a grade 4 and a 'strong pass' is a grade 5.

Where performance is below the minimum requirement to pass a GCSE, students will get a U.

Which grading system will be used for Vocational and Technical Qualifications?

Tech Awards and Cambridge Nationals are Level 1/Level 2 courses that are of the same size and rigour as GCSEs, The VTQ grading system uses Level 1 Pass through to Level 2 Distinction*. A Level 2 Pass is equivalent to a GCSE 'standard pass' is a grade 4, and a Level 2 Merit is just above a GCSE 'strong pass' is a grade 5.5.

VTC	GCSE Equivalent
Level 2 Distinction*	8.5
Level 2 Distinction	7
Level 2 Merit	5.5
Level 2 Pass	4
Level 1 Distinction	3
Level 1 Merit	2
Level 1 Pass	1.25

What about the English Baccalaureate?

The English Baccalaureate is not a qualification. Whilst some schools force all students to take the EBacc, it has to be recognised that this severely limits a child's range of choice. We would like to increase the number of students taking the EBacc without forcing them to do so. We believe that children should have a greater range of choice about their future.

Universities, employers, apprenticeship providers and FE colleges DO NOT recognise the EBacc as a stand alone qualification neither do any of these specifically ask for an EBacc as part of their entry requirements. The EBacc is made up of suite of GCSE subjects including English language, English literature, Maths, The Sciences (Combined Science OR 3 separate sciences from Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Computer Science), Geography OR History, and a language

How many subjects can my child opt for?

Students following a mainstream curriculum will study 9 GCSEs with 4 being options.

Can my child choose any four subjects?

No. Children must select one subject option from each of the four blocks. This gives a wide range of choice but not limitless choice.

How will I know what GCSE grade my child is capable of and how they are doing?

Students have been part of our school community for three years with regular interim and feedback cycles. We have carefully tracked their progress since they started in Year 7 and, by referring to national data, we can see what other children have achieved from the same starting point and can, therefore, be confident in our target setting. Targets for the end of year 11 are set at the start of year 10 and the four interim reports each year tell you how your child is progressing towards those targets.

In addition, the students will sit a full Trial Exam session during Year 11 to fully prepare them for their finals in May.

What will HCCS do if they are off track?

We have a comprehensive and highly effective interventions programme to support learners as and when they need it. Parents should regularly and frequently go through their child's books with them and ensure that any feedback is fully acted upon by the child and that any concerns are brought directly to the attention of the child's teachers.