

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

- **Questions relating to progress or suitability for a course:**

Please book an appointment to speak with your child's class teacher at the Parents Evening on 4th February.

Further advice and guidance will be available to students in the form of one-to-one discussions with their form tutor between 26th January and 12th February. These discussions will be scheduled between 08.40 – 09.00 each morning. All Year 9 students will receive an invitation from their tutor to meet them on Teams.

- **Questions relating to a specific subject:**

Please encourage your child to “drop-in” to subject specific Q&A sessions – every lunchtime from Monday 25th Jan. (Appointments have been sent to all students via Microsoft Teams) The timetable for the lunchtime Q&A drop-in sessions is shown below:

- each day 13.30 -14.00 -

JAN		FEB		FEB
25 th	PE and Sport	1 st	Computer Science / ICT	8 th History
26 th	Business	2 nd	Art	9 th RE
27 th	MFL	3 rd	Product Design / Textiles	10 th Music
28 th	Separate Science	4 th	Food / H&S Care	11 th Drama
29 th	Construction	5 th	Geography	

- **Why do I have to choose at least ONE subject from the shaded area on the form?**

Whilst we want you to have some choice in your future studies, we are also keen to guide students to take combinations of courses that will allow for many different options at the end of Year 11. We know from experience that students' aspirations change with time. The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects are known as “facilitating subjects” and ensure a broad and balanced curriculum for all students and keep open, future options. Therefore, we ask all students to continue to follow a broadly “EBacc curriculum”.

- **Is the study of a Modern Foreign Language compulsory for Set 1 and Set 2?**

No, everyone this year, has a free choice regarding which EBacc subject to choose in at least ONE block. However, we believe there are many advantages to studying a language in the future and continue to encourage it. We think, at this time, that ‘top universities’ may take this into account when looking at applications.

- **Why can't I choose BTEC Sport or GCSE PE now?**

We are asking you to choose PE & Sport on the online form. PE & Sport have two possible pathways, GCSE or BTEC and final decisions regarding the best route for students will be made following further discussion and guidance given to each student. Factors such as how much sport a student is involved in at a competitive level will have a bearing on which course is most suitable for different learners. Drop-in to the Q&A session on Monday 25th January at 13.30 for more information.

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- **Why can't I choose GCSE Business Studies or CNAT Business Studies now?**

We are asking you to choose Business Studies on the online form. Business Studies has two possible pathways, GCSE or CNAT and final decisions regarding the best route for students will be made following further discussion and guidance given to each student. Drop-in to the Q&A session on Tuesday 26th January at 13.30 for more information.

- **Will there be an assessment in Science that I have to do in order to study Separate Science?**

The Science department is planning for all Year 9 students to take an assessment before the half term holiday in February. The results of this assessment will give students and their teachers a further indication of their aptitude for science and will help guide your decisions. If you are really keen to study science at A-level, we recommend choosing Separate Science, but getting good grades (9-6) in Combined Science would also allow you to go on to study a science at A-level. Once we are back in school there may be follow up assessments for those who have chosen to study separate science and your teachers will talk to you if they have any concerns with your choice.

- **I have already filled in the form. Can I change my mind?**

The returns on the Options Form are date and time stamped. Once the deadline date is reached we will process all of the option requests and use the most recent return you made.

- **Is the availability of places on over-subscribed subjects decided on a first come – first served basis?**

No. If a subject is over-subscribed, further discussions will take place to ensure all students are placed on the most suitable courses, based on their aspirations and talents.

- **Why are places on the Construction course limited to 7 students?**

We share the Skills Centre with two other schools and they also have up to 7 places each. Health & Safety risk assessments limit the course to 21 students in total. If the other schools do not wish to take up their 7 places, then Idsall School is able to take up these extra places if they become available. Following the deadline of 26th February, Mr Northall will have follow up discussions with Idsall School students and parents before final decisions are made.

- **Why don't you start teaching the GCSE and BTEC courses in Year 9?**

We do. For core subjects, such as English, Maths and Science, the GCSE courses are started in the summer term of Year 9. For new subjects such as Business Studies, Health & Social Care etc. this is not possible as the class teachers already have a full timetable commitment to teach the current Y10, 11 and A-level students until the end of June and, in the case of BTEC courses, may go on until the end of the summer term. (Some schools may choose to release their 'exam students' at the start of the exam season in May, but at Idsall School we

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believe it is right to continue to support our student in school throughout their exam period.)