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**Options 2024  
Student Handbook**

**Student:**

**Form:**

**Introduction**

Welcome to the Options Handbook. This booklet contains key information and most importantly the form to complete to select your options.

The Options process began with the theme ‘Careers’ within L4L lessons. Within this theme we have tried to introduce students to a range of information to help develop an understanding of the future pathways available to them at 16, 18 and in their future career.

You will now have to make the first major choices to put you on that path. You will need to choose four subjects to study and there will be a number of subjects that you will no longer study from the start of Year 10. Subjects taken at this stage of your education can restrict the options that you will have available to you when you are looking to take Post-16 courses.

This handbook is designed to be used with the Options pages on the WBCA website where you can find information on every subject. The website can be found from the link on the Student Portal. Please take time to visit the Options site and take a look at the information that different departments have provided. These will give you some insight into what the course looks like, how it is assessed and what it can lead to in later education.

You will be able to meet and talk to subject staff to learn more about each course and to ask any questions you may have.

If you have questions about particular qualifications, home languages etc, please email [exams@wbca.shirelandcat.net](mailto:exams@wbca.shirelandcat.net) and Mrs McQueen our Exams Officer will be able to help.

**Additional Guidance for Students and Families**

Experience shows that when students play to their strengths, they succeed. Because of this, some subjects have entry requirements. You may also be restricted from some subjects in which you have not demonstrated a required minimum skill level, since starting at the Academy in Year 7. Examples of these subjects include Computer Science and Separate Sciences.

The Department for Education have created a measure called Progress 8, to judge schools and students based on your attainment level when you start at the Academy.

We use this measure to develop a target grade for students and make sure that target is stretching. It should be noted that this is not your destiny, targets can be raised. It will take dedication and hard work to reach your target and how hard you study will be the determining factor at GCSE.

In the information provided on the sheet alongside this booklet, you will see your target grade. These are based on government predictions and whether staff think that you are performing in a way which is above, below or at this standard. For academic subjects, these targets are based on the 9-1 methodology which has replaced the old A\*-G grading system in the last few years. Please seek guidance from staff if you would like the 9-1 system to be explained to you. You have also been assessed on your progress against competencies in Literacy for Life.

Departments will have different ways of determining if students are currently on track to achieve these grades, based on test data, classwork, end of year examinations and staff professional judgement.

Some students who have a low English and/or Mathematics level and are not performing well in relation to already-low targets in a number of subjects, may be asked to consider specific programmes which will allow them the best chance to be successful.

Further discussions have taken place with Heads of Department, the Special Educational Needs department, the L4L team and senior staff to determine if this guidance is necessary. Students will be supported with their choices if they are in this group.

**The Key Stage 4 Curriculum**

**Curriculum Compulsory Qualifications**

The following qualifications are compulsory, and all students will take them as part of their KS4 curriculum.

No matter which subjects you take, you should gain the equivalent of five GCSE grades purely from the core offering. You also have an hour of non-examined Physical Education and PSHE, Citizenship and RE in Form Time Sessions.

‘Core time’ will take up around 15 hours per week. Students are set by ability in Mathematics, English and Science; PE is taught in mixed ability groups.

**An English Baccalaureate Subject**

All students are required to use one of their four subjects to study one of the subjects which is part of the English Baccalaureate. You should pick one of those as one of the four options on the form below.

While this will use some of your options provision, we have ensured that you still have a breadth of choice by ensuring that all students do 9 qualifications as opposed to the minimum 8.

**Design Technology**

The Academy Trust has a specialism for Design Technology and we have some world class equipment in the Academy. Design Technology also has a significant coursework element which students can bank before the examinations season. We would encourage you to think strongly about taking this subject as one of your options.

**Additional Languages**

Another option to fulfil the language slot is to study an additional language that you already have some proficiency in as an additional after-school qualification. You then would pick either History or Geography with one of your option choices and then three others from different blocks. While we will try to support with as many languages as possible, we cannot provide tuition in them.

Languages that are available to take as a GCSE are:

* Arabic
* Bengali
* Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese)
* French
* Greek
* Gujarati
* Italian
* Japanese
* Panjabi
* Persian
* Polish
* Portuguese
* Russian
* Spanish
* Turkish
* Urdu

Please note – we do not offer these languages as options and taught classes.

Students must be proficient in the speaking, reading, writing and listening of the language and should be able to get a good grade in the subject.

**Options**

You must select four qualifications, ***one qualification from each of the option blocks***. This makes up the remaining hours of your weekly timetable.

You must choose either History or Geography or a Language (though you can choose more than one) as one of your choices.

If you wish to study Separate Sciences or Computer Science, you should generally be targeted a grade 6 or above in Science (for Separate Sciences) and Mathematics (for Computer Science) and be working at or above this level. Any exceptions to this will be at the discretion of the appropriate Head of Department.

It is important to think carefully about the career field that you are considering entering when you are older. If you had to choose three A level qualifications to study tomorrow, what would they be? Are they available as options you can take today? If they are, then it may well be worth considering them as your options.

Consider carefully what you are talented in. What is your best subject? Often the subject that you are best at is the one that you will enjoy the most.

It is important to consider which subjects you can get the best grades in, it is also important to consider if any subjects have a coursework element so you can bank some of the qualifications before the final examinations.

There are a number of subjects that you have not studied before. If you are considering one of those subjects, then check the website carefully. Consider talking to staff if you are unsure.

After selection we may have multiple groups of some subjects in the same block, we may move students block to block for the best mix. All choices are subject to the Academy’s view on what is best for the educational achievement of the student and students can be directed if required.

**Key Tips**

**DOS**

* VISIT the options website and look carefully over each subject.
* ASK subject teachers, your L4L teacher or Heads of Department if there is anything you are not sure about or if you would like more information.
* THINK about all the subjects open to you.
* THINK carefully about your possible educational and career future.
* TALK about your ideas and choices with your parents/carers.
* TALK about subjects you are choosing with teachers of that subject.
* CHECK you are definite about your choices before sending in your final form.
* MAKE SURE that if you want to do a subject and are unsure of whether you meet the entry requirements you see the Head of Department and get them to agree.

**DON’TS**

* DON’T choose a subject simply because your friends are choosing it. Their needs may be totally different from yours and you probably will not be in the same teaching group anyway.
* DON’T choose a subject just because you like the teacher; you may have a different teacher next year.
* DON’T choose a subject just because it is new or because it sounds glamorous. Check it out carefully.

**Options Choice Sheet**

**Student Name:** **Student Form:**

The sheet below lists all of the options available.

Please choose one option from each column.

You must choose **at least one gold subject as part of your choices.**

Place a tick next to each option you wish to select.

Please remember that some subjects have entry requirements and if you do not meet these you will need permission from the Head of Department.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Option 1** |  | **Option 2** |  | **Option 3** |  | **Option 4** |  |
| DESIGN TECHNOLOGY |  | DESIGN TECHNOLOGY |  | ART |  | DESIGN TECHNOLOGY |  |
| HISTORY |  | HISTORY |  | CREATIVE IMEDIA |  | ART |  |
| GCSE PE |  | GEOGRAPHY |  | DRAMA |  | BUSINESS STUDIES |  |
| MUSIC |  | BUSINESS STUDIES |  | HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE |  | GEOGRAPHY |  |
| COMPUTER SCIENCE |  | LANGUAGES (German or Spanish) |  | SEPARATE SCIENCES |  | RELIGIOUS STUDIES |  |
| LANGUAGES (German or Spanish) |  | SEPARATE SCIENCES |  | GEOGRAPHY |  | HISTORY |  |
| PSYCHOLOGY |  | DRAMA |  | BUSINESS STUDIES |  | LANGUAGES (German or Spanish) |  |
|  |  | HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE |  |  |  | GCSE PE |  |

Although we will make every effort to ensure that all courses listed above run, if there is very low demand for a specific course then the group may not be able to take place.

Similarly, depending on the number of students wishing to study particular courses, we may have to limit the number of students in a group.

If there was a combination you would have like to have followed but it is not available, please let us know here:

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