

MGO/CC year 9 option process

October 2011

Year 9

Dear Parents/Guardians

### **Year 9 Options Process**

**You will be aware that this is the time when your child should be thinking about their GCSE option choices for next year.**

This letter outlines the key dates in the process and invites you to our PSFA Forum on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November to hear more about the process and explore some of the issues involved. The PSFA Forum will take place in the Oliver Studio at 7.30pm and last no more than an hour and a half. Light refreshments will be served.

In brief, this is the timetable of events that follows:

#### **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November**

PSFA Forum for Parents of Year 9 pupils

#### **Friday 18<sup>th</sup> November**

During the afternoon PSHE session the process is explained to all Year 9 pupils. The session includes brief talks about the subjects that the pupils will not have encountered at key stage 3 (Media studies, Horticulture, Business studies, Psychology and Skills for Life). An explanation of the science options is included.

During this session pupils are given an alphabetical list of the subjects that may be on offer and are asked to take this list away to discuss with parents/guardians and then to indicate their 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> choice subjects with one reserve choice. It must be understood that not all combinations of subjects will be possible and that this is only an initial indication of interest. The information enables us to identify popular subjects that may be offered in more than one option block and also subjects where there is insufficient interest to justify running them.

This information is then used to put the subjects into four blocks from which the final choices will be made. These blocks are constructed to allow pupils to choose the most popular combinations of subjects. It is normally possible for pupils to choose mostly practical more vocationally based subjects or mostly the subjects considered to be more

academic with more emphasis on written work and exams or a mixture of the two. We will endeavour to minimise clashes and to maximise opportunities for students to take the subjects they wish.

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November**

The initial interest choices from pupils are to be returned via tutors to Andy Newbold, Director of Studies.

**By the end of the autumn term**

The options booklet is made available on the school website with hard copies available on request. This will include the 'blocks' from which the final choices need to be made. There is very little chance of any changes being made to the blocks at this stage.

**From Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January**

**Year 9 academic tutorials begin**

These one to one sessions between the pupil and their tutor allows an opportunity for the pupil to discuss their possible choices and the tutor to advise on the suitability of the choices being looked at and the overall balance of subjects. Further advice may be sought from subject staff, SfL, Learning Support, ESOL and Directors of Study as appropriate at any time throughout the process.

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> January**

**Year 9 Parents' Evening**

Option choices can be discussed further: appointments can be booked with subject teachers in the usual way to check current progress and to ask questions about the suitability or appropriateness of a particular subject or combination of subjects.

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February**

Final option choices are to be returned to Andy Newbold directly or via tutors. Some changes, within the published blocks, are normally possible right up to the start of Year 10 or even occasionally in the first week or two of Year 10 provided there is still room in the subject sets pupils wish to move into.

I hope this information is helpful. We look forward to seeing you on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November for the PSFA Forum on 'GCSE Options', but if you are unable to attend, please do not hesitate to be in touch should you have any concerns about the process.

In friendship

Michael Goodwin  
Head