



Friday 5 September

Dear Parents/Carers,

We hope you and your children had an enjoyable summer break. We have been very excited to see our Year 9 students returning ready to embark on another year of growth and learning. The theme for this year is 'Stepping up to Year 9 and towards GCSE.' We will be talking about how students can strive to be the very best versions of themselves, how Year 9 is different to Year 8, how we will be preparing them for GCSEs and what they can do to support themselves to be successful.

Year 9 Curriculum and Assessment

During Year 9 students continue to study a broad curriculum as we build on the knowledge and skills taught in Years 7 and 8. Alongside this there is a variety of extra-curricular opportunities including the opportunity to take part in the popular Duke of Edinburgh Award.

This year is particularly key in beginning to prepare students for their Key Stage 4 studies and in the spring term students will be supported in selecting their options subjects, which will begin next September.

As part of our curriculum journey, Year 9 is the start of the GCSE RE course that all students will sit examinations for in Year 10. Our results for this have been excellent for a number of years, (2025: 85% Grade 4+, 55% Grade 7), and it provides a fantastic opportunity for students to develop their study habits in preparation for Year 11.

The core curriculum of Maths, English, Science and RE provides a fundamental basis for the future, and these occupy over 60% of curriculum time. As we work towards GCSEs for all students in these subjects, we are going to transition this year to setting targets, and monitoring progress and attainment in these subjects using the GCSE grades from 9-1. This will enable students to become used to these grades and enable even more detailed monitoring of progress. The banding system utilised in Year 7 and 8 will continue to be used across the rest of the curriculum, and there is a reminder below of how this is also linked to GCSE grades.

Targets will be on Go4Schools from the end of September. As per our policy, all targets in years 7-11 are set using information from Fischer-Family Trust who utilise vast amounts of data. Targets are set at a level which would mean students make progress in the top 20% of the country from their KS2 starting points, so are bespoke to each student.

More information will be sent out ahead of the data 1 reports in December and all aspects of our assessment and reporting practices can be found on our [website](#).

KS3 Bands	GCSE Grades
Band A	9
	8
Band B	7
	6
Band C	5

	4
Band D	3
	2
	1
All other subjects	Maths, English, Science, RE

PHSE/Tutor Time Learning Journeys

All our Learning Journeys, which contain curriculum information for all subjects, are available on our website within the Learn and Curriculum tab, [Learning Journeys](#)

In Year 9 PHSE and tutor time sessions students will be covering a variety of topics including extremism and terrorism and how we can combat them and Black History. Students will continue to broaden their literacy skills and their understanding of the world around them through the literacy sessions and current affairs quizzes.

Careers in Year 9

The careers theme for Year 9 is Opening Doors. Students will continue their careers journey through their Tutor Time and PHSE curriculum. Some of the careers-based learning they will undertake are:

- Opening Doors to different career routes.
- Opening Doors to support GCSE choices.
- Opening Doors to all Post 16 choices.
- Opening Doors to the effect of politics and the economy on LMI
- Opening Doors on the different sectors of employment.

Students will continue to develop their understanding of Post 16 options and a range of different types of careers through:

- **Post 16 Choices:** Opening Doors to remaining in Full-Time Education and doing Further Studies.
- **World of Work:** Opening Doors to careers in different sectors of employment
- Their subject curricula where subject teachers have shared information and real-life stories of a range of careers and routes to those careers that link to their subject.

We would like to remind all parents and carers that all attendance, behaviour, timetable, homework and data information for your child can be found via go4schools [Go4Schools \(G4S\)](#) and we very much encourage you to access this regularly. Tutors remain the first point of contact for students in Year 9 if you have any questions and contact details of your child's tutor can be found in the [Meet the Team](#) section of our website. This is an important system as tutors know their students best. Can we also take this opportunity to signpost the Digital Learning Hub on the school website as another key area for students and parents/carers to support the journey through Year 9 and beyond.

Upcoming Event – Race for Life

On Friday 26 September, we are supporting the Cancer Research UK Race for Life through our annual whole school event (weather permitting). Starting in Tutor Time, students will have the opportunity to run or walk a marked-out route of our school field. Students can come into school in their NLS PE kit and NLS blazer and can wear a pink item of clothing and/or accessory. All students and staff are encouraged to donate £1, either in cash or via ParentPay.

Connect for Health

Students in Year 9 will be invited to complete an online health questionnaire as a homework via go4schools. The questionnaire is on behalf of Connect for Health, the School Nursing service, and is about how healthy students are and how they are feeling. Please read the attached letter for further information. If you have any concerns please contact Connect for Health directly using the contact details on their letter.

As always, I want to thank you for your continued support as it's only by working together that we can make this year a great one, and one that fully prepares all Year 9 students to be their most successful for GCSEs and beyond.

Mrs Sarah Barley-Morey
AHT Y9 Lead, CEIAG/Student Self Reflection Lead