



Our Ref: LTM/kmd/optionsfback

26 March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Year 8 Options Evening – Further Feedback

Thank you for the positive feedback regarding last night's Year 8 Options Evening. We know that it is challenging not being able to meet with staff face-to-face in school, but we are glad that the online materials have proved useful, alongside the opportunity to ask staff online any further questions to support decisions to be made. With regards to the system used to manage the appointments; this was the first time the school has used this and we are aware that it is a very different approach for staff and parents. Should you feel that you have any further questions or need any more detail having reflected on what was discussed in your 5-minute window, please do not hesitate to e-mail the key staff concerned who will be more than happy to help.

There were a few questions raised during the evening which I would like to respond, as outlined below, and which we hope gives you further support regarding options decision making:

Does my child have to select 7 preferences from the list of subjects given? Yes, they do. This stage of the process provides everyone the chance to list their preferred subjects in rank order. When all preferences are returned, we will however need to apply a best fit model to ensure that we can deliver as many preferences as possible with the staffing and resources available. This will mean that although we will try to allocate the subjects with the highest preference, this cannot be guaranteed for any student.

Can you explain a little more about the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). Details are available on page 2 of the Options Booklet. The EBacc recognises what is defined by the Government as a 'fully rounded education', recognising those who study English, Maths, Science (including Computer Science), Humanities (Geography or History) and a Language (French or Spanish). We would actively encourage students to consider this combination of subjects where applicable as we know that from a University entry point of view, this can be one factor which is discussed. The view is that by covering this range of subjects a student has been exposed to a good breadth of curriculum, particularly when matched with other subjects.

How will I know my child has selected a good balance of subjects? We have left the initial part of the process regarding options very open this year to allow us to respond to a wide range of developments in school during what have been extremely unusual times. Our view is that students will study the core subjects (English, English Literature, Maths, Science, PE) and should then ensure that there is a good breadth of other subjects, including a Humanities based subject (Geography or History), alongside 3 further subjects. This approach will ensure a curriculum with appropriate breadth to support a student into any future career pathway. When allocating subjects this will be incorporated into our thinking

What if my child is particularly focused on a particular type of subject (eg. the Arts)? Although we would always encourage students to consider the subjects they are really interested in, the breadth of curriculum they experience is also really important. We will consider the breadth of subjects selected and may well offer subjects which promote a wider range of learning than initially selected. This is a really important point to consider as we want to ensure that all students have the right balance of subjects to support any career direction during a period of time when student interests could, and often do, change. It is important that a student's curriculum is as broad and balanced as possible.

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When does the online option form have to be submitted? We have asked for this to be completed by Tuesday, 30th March. The form is available via the link on the school website:

<http://www.oldburywells.com/year-8-options>

When will I know what options my child has been allocated? We will be updating parents shortly after the Easter break on where we are with subject allocation.

We would like to thank you for your continued support and should you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me at school or via email (bruce.brown@oldburywells.com)

Yours Faithfully



Mr B Brown
Assistant Headteacher