

TIME TO CHOOSE

During Year 9 you have to make important decisions about the courses you study that will lead to GCSE or other qualifications.

This booklet tells you about these different courses and answers some of the questions that you may wish to ask.

You will all continue to study English, English Literature, Mathematics, Science, Religious Studies, Information Technology and Physical Education. Your PDL lessons will continue and concentrate on topics such as Health Education and Law and Government in Year 10, and Careers planning in Year 11. You will also choose from the wide range of new and exciting courses in Option Ka bit more of that later.

Your Choices:

You can choose from a wide range of GSCE and non-GCSE courses in the subject options grid. We will ask you to choose four GCSEs after consultation with your teachers or Careers Guidance Practitioner.

In October 2013, the Government produced new guidance on what will be considered a broad and balanced range of qualifications for 2016 and beyond. To ensure that all pupils gain recognition for their studies, you need to follow the “check-list” to guide your decision making.

1. **Are you studying GCSE Maths and English?** Yes- all students at Malbank study GCSE English, English Literature and Maths.
2. **Are you studying 3 EBacc GCSE subjects that include 2 or 3 Science GCSEs?** All students study 2 or 3 GCSEs in Science at Malbank. In addition have you chosen at least one subject from: History, Geography, French, Spanish, German or Computer Science?
3. **Are you studying 3 additional high quality courses?** All KS4 courses at Malbank are judged high quality by the Government. Please remember that in the performing arts subjects, Dance/Drama/PA are judged by the Government as too similar in content, so only count as 1 qualification.

How is your choice to be made?

We expect that you will consult parents/carers, subject teachers and Careers Guidance Practitioners.

There will be a Year 9 Options Information Evening in January where representatives from subjects will be available to explain the courses in greater detail.

In February you will have an individual appointment with a senior member of staff or a Careers Guidance Practitioner. Parents/carers may accompany your child.

How should I decide?

Choosing your option subjects is very important.

DO

- think about yourself, about the kind of person you are.
- consider what sort of life you want to live after you leave school.
- ask yourself what sort of job you might enjoy.
- think honestly about your strong subjects and the weaker ones. You cannot always do only what you like doing; life is not like that.
- be flexible and aim for a wide range.
- check out internet sites for information on careers.

DON'T

- choose a course only because a friend is choosing it you need to really like it too.
- give up a subject because you find it difficult. If you like it and find it interesting, it may be worth considering.
- choose subjects according to examination marks alone.
- be influenced by the fact that you like or dislike a particular teacher.
- try to select all your choices around your current career choice. It is likely to change!!
- choose a subject because it sounds good without finding out about it.

Will I get a choice?

We will make every effort to ensure that you can study the subjects that you choose. However, we might have to withdraw courses that are under subscribed and therefore financially not viable. In some subject areas, where there are different qualifications available (eg GCSE and BTEC) we will determine which pathway would be the right one for you, this will be in consultation with your Progress Manager and Subject teachers.

Whilst the school will make every effort to accommodate your choices, sometimes timetabling restrictions prevent us from doing this. In such a case we will talk with you to find an alternative that is appropriate to your interests and choice of career.

REMEMBER

- if in doubt ask questions.
- to use the careers library at school.
- to go for the subjects (and later the jobs) that attract YOU. Do not be put off making a choice because that subject has traditionally been taken mainly by members of the opposite sex.

Websites you may find useful

<http://www.fasttomato.com/> - registration code available from Mr A Wilson

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/>

<http://russellgroup.ac.uk/informed-choices/>

www.ucas.ac.uk

<http://getingofar.gov.uk> –National Apprenticeship Website

Grades and Levels

We are all familiar with traditional GCSE grades (A*-G), but from September 2016, GCSE exams changed significantly and now allocate grades in number format (9-1).

The Doodle Step targets and attainment grades that you receive in your reports and in lessons are directly linked to the 9-1 GCSE grades, so they should give you a good idea of what level you are currently performing at. Remember if you convert more Red areas to Green your Doodle Step of attainment will increase.

The English Baccalaureate

The EBacc was introduced in 2010. It recognises when students have secured a GCSE grade 4 or better across a range of subjects. These subjects include:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science (Dual award or triple award)
- History **or** Geography
- A Language – French, German or Spanish

These subjects *may* be preferred or required for entry to a degree course at the Russell Group of Universities in the future.

At Malbank it is possible to study for the EBacc as outlined in this booklet.