March 2020

Dear

In the next academic year <name> will move into year 9 and will start their GCSE courses. This period of time of a student’s school life is called Key Stage 4 and now includes studies in year 9, 10 and 11. Students will follow the National Curriculum and will have some choice in the subjects that they would like to study at Key Stage 4. It is vital that your child studies a well-balanced curriculum in Key Stage 4.

To help you to understand the option choices available I enclose an options booklet and an option choices sheet for you to complete with your child. Students will be able to study **four** **subjects** in addition to the statutory subjects, which are, English language and literature, mathematics and dual award science which will result in five GCSEs. Students will also carry on with statutory PE and iD. Students will also have an opportunity to no longer continue with some subjects that they currently study in year 8.

Students will select **four** GCSE option preferences as well as an extra subject that will only be used if we are unable to offer your first four choices:

* Please select at **least** one GCSE subject from the subject A box (you may select more than one from this box if you wish).
* Further choices can then be made from the subject B box.
* Please number these choices in order of preference by placing numbers in the boxes opposite the subject.
* Please ensure that you have selected **five** choices in total from across both subject box A and subject box B.
* **Students will then study four of these subjects at GCSE.**

We have taken advice from current Government guidelines and will advise students against studying subjects that have similar content to ensure that all students study a broad and well-balanced curriculum.

The Government has made recommendations that the vast majority of students should follow the **English Baccalaureate** (EBacc) pathway. The EBacc is a set of subjects at GCSE that keeps young people’s options open for further study and future careers. The EBacc is made up of the following subjects:

* English language and literature
* Mathematics
* The sciences
* Geography or history
* A modern foreign language

Students who have an aptitude for science can also choose to study separate sciences, if this route is chosen, then this will take up one of their option choices. Please make sure that the separate science box is ticked. Further information regarding separate sciences can be found in the options booklet.

These subjects are considered essential to many degrees and open up lots of doors. A study by the UCL Institute of Education shows that studying subjects included in the EBacc provides students with greater opportunities in further education and increases the likelihood that a pupil will stay on in full-time education. Research also reveals that studying the EBacc can help improve a young person’s performance in English and maths.

**As such we are strongly recommending that your child follows the EBacc pathway, to do this you will need to select a language (this will be the language they have studied in Year 7 and Year 8), you will also need to select either history or geography.**

Normally I would be holding face to face meetings with you and your child to ensure that they pick the most appropriate GCSE’s. Unfortunately, due to the national situation this is not possible. **If you wish to discuss this process or you have any questions regarding option choices do not hesitate to contact me on the following number (9am – 5pm Monday to Friday)**

**07593 673117**

Once you have discussed the option choices with your child and made a decision please fill in the option choices sheet (this is for your information only and does not need to be returned to school).

When you have completed the sheet, **YOU MUST** email your five option choices in order of preference to the following email:

w.gerrard@unity.lancs.sch.uk

Yours faithfully

Wendy Gerrard

Deputy Head teacher