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Headteacher: Mr J Parr BA Hons

Friday, 23rd February 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

The Pathways process, sometimes known as options, is now underway. We are writing to you to give you advance notice of the first stage, a Pathways Evening, in school on Thursday 7th March 5-7pm. Below you will find some other key dates for your diary.

Key Dates 2024:

1. **Thursday 7th March**, Pathways Evening, 5-7pm
2. **Thursday 21st March**, Progress Evening, 3:40-6:40pm
3. **Friday 22nd March**, pathways final choice form sent electronically to students.
4. **Friday 12th April**, deadline for submission of options form, 9am.
5. **From 15th April onwards**, best-fit interviews and subject choices confirmed.

Before the end of the last half term, we talked to Year 9 students about the Pathways process, and we asked them to fill in an initial survey this week to find out what subjects they would choose right now, given a free choice. They ranked 6 subjects, from a list of 15, in order of preference. They will eventually pick 4 subjects as options, but more to follow on this at the Pathways Evening. The survey information will allow us to do some advance planning and we may well put out more surveys over the coming week. This will help us to arrive at the best possible set of options for each student whilst still working within the constraints of the timetable, staffing, and resources available. At this time students have not made their final choices and all subjects will remain as choices available to your child.

It is evident from discussions with students that they do not yet have a clear understanding of some subjects and what each involves, and some are thinking of opting for subjects without this key information in mind. This, of course, is entirely expected at this point but we would like to take this opportunity to sign-post the relevant sources of information available to help in arriving at a good balance of subjects. A pathways booklet will be available on the website soon and a hard copy will be available at the Pathways Evening. This details the process we follow and contains lots of useful information. The school website [here](#) has subject information about each subject and the links to two websites that offer lots of useful careers advice and forward planning activities to help students decide. Andrew Austin, the school's careers guidance officer, will be attending both the Pathways and Progress Evenings to offer further help and advice as to which subjects will allow your child to progress on to the Post 16 courses and training, they wish to pursue. They should ask teachers questions too. This, together with the upcoming grade update, and the Progress Evening (21st March) should all help them to reach a well-considered set of options.

Please do not be daunted by this process, we will guide your son/daughter through each step offering advice, guidance, and support as required. Do start conversations at home, talking about subjects and what they hope to gain by doing them, this is an important part of the process. Please bear in mind that curriculum reforms in recent years mean that previous experiences of some practical based courses may be out of date, the emphasis is now more on the theory and application of the knowledge and less so on the practical work itself.

Kind regards.

Mr. D Bird

Assistant Headteacher