



Heathcote School & Science College

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Headteacher: Emma Hillman NPQH, MSc, MA

EHN/FAN



5th January 2018



Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: GCSE/BTEC/DEC Options



I hope you had a great holiday and I wish you a happy and fulfilling 2018. I wanted to update you about the proposed previously published date for the 'Options' evening in January 2018 which will no longer be taking place. As you are aware, the school moved last year to a three year Key Stage 4 programme meaning pupils chose their options for GCSE subjects in Year 8. At this stage, we are considering whether this is something that we should continue with (or revert back to Year 9) and we do not want to rush into making a decision. There is much to consider but, most importantly, what is best for the pupils will be the key deciding factor.



On another note, I am giving you advance warning that whatever decision is made about the above, pupils will be following a 'pathway' Option system, with all pathways focusing on challenge and success and also ensuring the vast majority of pupils have the potential to gain the **EBacc** qualification. This will allow them the very best chances of success in later life and ensure that this means they do not miss out against other children both locally and nationally. The EBacc recognises the success of those young people who attain GCSEs, at grades 4 or above in the following subjects and is considered to be the benchmark of academic success by the Government, universities and employers:



- English, Mathematics,
- Geography or History
- Science
- Language



This means that most pupils will be advised strongly to choose these subjects. Since the last Ofsted Inspection, Languages (MFL), Geography and History all have new Heads of Department and I am utterly confident in their leadership (and that of the core subjects) and drive for outstanding learning, teaching and results.



A possible Pathway model



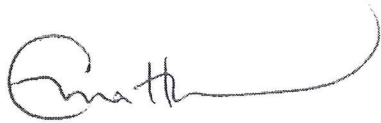
Pathway A	Approx. 30 pupils	10 GCSEs including Triple Science	9-7 grades expected in most subjects
Pathway B	Approx. 110 pupils	9 GCSEs (or alternative)	Pupils should aim for 9-4 grades in all subjects
Pathway C	Approx. 30 pupils	At least 7 GCSEs (or alternative) but also some more specialist provision to support these subjects such as extra English and Maths or an alternative course	
Pathway D	Approx. 6 pupils depending on need	Alternative provision e.g. a more vocational college course e.g. Hair and Beauty	



At present, pupils at Heathcote study 8 GCSEs (unless they opt for Triple science) and we need to increase this number (outlined in the diagram) as this means the curriculum is too narrow both for pupils and for the school's progress score against which we are judged.

We will keep you updated as soon as we make decisions and will also keep pupils informed. The final decisions made may also mean that we need to make some changes to facilitate this such as considering the number of periods in the school day. I am currently meeting with all Heads of Department/other staff and Governors to get their feedback. We also very keen to hear your opinion and so if you would like to contribute anything to the process please do not hesitate to e mail me directly on ehillman@heathcote.waltham.sch.uk or make an appointment to come and speak to me or a member of the Senior Leadership Team at the Monday surgery slot by contacting the school office. We are also, as you know, about to start a process of tendering for a new catering service and so will also have to consider the length of and processes of lunchtimes and we will also be consulting on this later in the year.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emma Hillman', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Emma Hillman
Headteacher