



Oakbank  
School

# Choices 2025-26



**WORK HARD, BE KIND**



GREENSHAW  
LEARNING TRUST

## Y9 Choices Guide

### Introduction

Welcome! We are looking forward to the process of Year 9 students selecting their subjects for next year. This is a huge step in climbing their own personal mountains, allowing them to access the very best universities in the country of careers of their choosing.

**Choices** is the process of choosing what subjects to study in Years 10 and 11 (also known as Key Stage 4). We have chosen subjects that will enable students to go on to study whatever they want at A Level or other post-16 courses.

This means students should see this as an exciting opportunity to tailor their learning to them, and not something that they should worry about - they can't go wrong with the subjects we have chosen to offer.

Students will need to consider their individual strengths, interests and talents. Students should make choices based on what they enjoy and what they are passionate about. Every combination of subjects that we offer will enable students to access any post-16 course.

In Y10 all students will be required to study:

- GCSE English Language
- GCSE English Literature
- GCSE Mathematics
- GCSE Combined Sciences (two GCSEs), or Triple Science (three GCSEs) based on school assessments - final decision at the end of year 10.

**In addition to the compulsory subjects listed above, students must choose four subjects from:**

- History
- Geography
- Religious Studies
- French
- Business Studies
- Art & Design
- Design Technology
- Physical Education
- Hospitality & Catering (Level 1 Vocational Tech Award)
- Health & Social Care (BTEC)
- Music (BTEC)

All students must study **either** History or Geography as one of their options. They may study both these subjects if they want to, as two of their choices.



Alongside your compulsory GCSE subjects and your options subjects, **all** students study non-examined:

- Core PE
- Character Education (RSE, PSHE & Careers)

There are **no exams** in these two subjects. These are important to ensure our students are healthy, happy, well-informed young people, ready to live safely and successfully in the modern world.

### Example student subjects:

Here are some possible subject combinations. These are just examples - there are lots of other possibilities!

	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
Core subjects (compulsory)	English Literature	English Literature	English Literature
	English Language	English Language	English Language
	Maths	Maths	Maths
	Combined Science	Combined Science	Combined Science
	Combined Science	Combined Science	Combined Science
Choices	History	Geography	History
	Physical Education	French	Geography
	Hospitality & Catering	Music	Design Technology
	Religious Studies	Business Studies	Art & Design
Non-examined subjects (compulsory)	Core PE	Core PE	Core PE
	Character Education (RSE, PSHE & Careers)	Character Education (RSE, PSHE & Careers)	Character Education (RSE, PSHE & Careers)

### Choosing subjects

Students should choose their subjects based on which subjects they enjoy and are interested in. Students will be asked to select 6 choices, which they will rank from 1 to 6, 1 being their most desired subject. Of these 6 ranked subjects, they will study 4 choices. We aim that all students will receive 4 of their 6. **We strongly advise not choosing subjects based on friendships or teachers; students should choose based on their interests and goals.** All students will study at least nine qualifications, either GCSEs or vocational qualifications (BTECs or equivalent).



To support students in making the best choices they:

1. Receive an assembly and regular information in TTRP
2. Are attending Choices Evening
3. Will have a tutor time session where they will plan their choices
4. Can talk to their Head of Year, SLT or members of teaching staff during social time

Students then make their choices during tutor time via an online form that they will complete on a school computer. The choices of every individual student will then be checked by senior leaders, to ensure they have been entered correctly and make sense for that student.

In July, you will be informed of the subjects allocated to your son/daughter for Key Stage 4. **It is important to note that choices cannot be guaranteed.** We will always do our best to give you your first choices, but we cannot always achieve this. For this reason we ask students to make two reserve choices.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### What's the difference between GCSEs and Vocational Subjects?

Both types of qualification will help your child climb their personal mountain to the best universities, careers, and apprenticeships of their choosing. The most significant differences are in the balance of theory/practical work and the style of assessment. The qualifications are worth the same and both enable students to go onto study A Levels and Level 3 BTEC qualifications in sixth forms and colleges. We therefore advise that students are led by their enjoyment of different subjects and how much they are interested in them, when they are making their selections, rather than the qualification type.

The key differences are shown in the table below:

GCSEs	Vocational (e.g. BTEC)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>More theoretical</li><li>More exam based and less practical in many cases (not all)</li><li>More aligned to A Levels</li><li>Graded as a number from 9 to 1 (nine being the highest)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Usually more practical than GCSEs</li><li>Mainly coursework but still an exam</li><li>Grades are Distinction, Merit and Pass rather than numbers</li></ul>

More information about each subject, and format of assessment, is listed on the subject pages.

#### Who will be the teacher for each subject?

This cannot be answered until much later in the year so do not assume it will be the same person who teaches you this year. It is wiser to make an option choice based on the subject content and assessment style rather than on who teaches the subject.

#### Am I guaranteed to get my choices?

No. We will do all we can to ensure you get your choices but it cannot be guaranteed. Most students do have their first choices. There are a number of reasons for not getting your choices:

- Too few people might opt for a subject so no class can be created



- Too many people opt for a subject so classes fill up. When classes fill up, we generally allocate places based on attendance.
- It may be impossible to timetable some combinations of choices together. This is unpredictable until after selections have been made by students.

### **Will I be able to change my mind in September?**

No. It is important to make the correct choice in the first instance, based on all of the information available. Putting the timetable together is a complex task which takes months, leaving no possibility for changes in September.

### **Who can help me with my choices?**

Your subject teachers, Heads of Department, and families are the first people to ask for advice.

### **Do I have to select 6 choices?**

Yes. All students must do this. If a subject you have opted for is full or impossible to timetable, we aim to provide you with 4 of your choices. Ranking will be from 1 to 6, with 1 being your most desired subject.

### **What happens if I don't get 4 of my 6 choices?**

We aim to give all students 4 of their 6 choices. In a small number of cases, if this is also impossible, we will meet with students and their parents/carers together, to discuss their options.

### **Can I pick any subjects?**

All students must study either Geography or History. This is because research consistently shows the benefits for students of studying a humanities subject (The Sutton Trust, July 2016).

### **Are some subjects better than others? Will some subjects limit my career choices?**

All the subjects we are offering are good subjects. All combinations of subjects are good combinations. No combinations will limit students or impact their careers. Therefore we recommend that students are led in their choices by which subjects they enjoy the most.

### **How many GCSEs will I get?**

All students will get a minimum of 9 GCSEs or vocational qualifications.

### **My child is stuck! I've got a question! What should I do?**

You can:

- Email their Head of Year, Mr Lant, [plant@oakbankschool.co.uk](mailto:plant@oakbankschool.co.uk)
- Email the Raising Standards Lead, Dr Mills, [gills@oakbankschool.co.uk](mailto:gills@oakbankschool.co.uk)
- Email the Careers Lead, Ms Korporowicz, [akorporowicz@oakbankschool.co.uk](mailto:akorporowicz@oakbankschool.co.uk)
- Book a School in Action tour via our website

Your child can:

- Speak to the Head of Department for each subject
- Speak to a trusted adult or a member of the Senior Leadership Team

