



Blackfen School for Girls

Raising aspirations - releasing potential

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Dear Parents and Carers,

6th November 2025

Key Stage 4 course selection process: 2025–2026 Key dates, events and deadlines for Year 9 parents, carers and students

Next term, Year 9 students will select their Key Stage 4 courses for study in Year 10 and Year 11 and, in doing so, begin their transition from Key Stage 3 into Key Stage 4. These decisions are exciting and important, which is why family guidance and support is so essential.

This letter sets out the schedule of events in Year 9 which support the selection of Key Stage 4 courses and which parents, carers and students should note as they begin to review the options available for study over the next two years, as well as in the future.

The Key Stage 4 course selection process – The timeline

November – December 2025

- Students: Attend Year 9 Information Assembly (1) – 12.11.25
- Parents/Carers: Please see the Year 9 Assembly presentation available in Year 9 TEAMS.
- Students: Receive guidance booklet '*Year 9 preparation for Key Stage 4 course selection*'
- **Students/Parents/Carers: Complete specified pages in the guidance booklet**
- **Students/Parents/Carers: Log into 'Unifrog' with students to browse education and career options**

January – March 2026

- Students: Attend small-group careers interviews in school with 'Prospects Education' careers adviser
- Students: Attend Year 9 Information Assembly (2) - '*Key Stage 4 course selection: what's on offer?*'
- Students/Parents/Carers: Please see Year 9 Assembly presentation available in Year 9 TEAMS
- Students: Attend Key Stage 4 *Spotlights* – Mini meetings about specific courses
- **Students/Parents/Carers: Attend Year 9 Information Evening - 5.2.26** about the Key Stage 4 course selection process
- **Students/Parents/Carers: Attend Year 9 Parents Evening – 26.2.26**

March 2026

- **Parents/Carers: Wednesday 4th March 2026 - Submit on-line course selection form**
- Students: Week beginning 9th March 2026 - Interviews in school with a member of the Leadership Team to confirm course selection



The Key Stage 4 course selection process – The details

November – December 2025

- **Year 9 Information Assembly 1**

The Assembly on 12.11.25 starts the Key Stage 4 course selection schedule and introduces students to the selection process and the personal qualities which make the course selection process successful:

- 1) Individual work ethic: Year 9 students need to achieve their 'best' across *all* subjects this year, in order to be successful in their selected Key Stage 4 courses in Year 10.
- 2) Individual choice: The courses selected must suit the individual student and be tailored to their needs and interests.
- 3) Individual mindset: Adopting a positive, "can-do" approach to take important decisions about courses for Key Stage 4 study, supported by guidance at school and from family and carers at home.

- **Guidance booklet: 'Year 9 preparation for Key Stage 4 course selection'**

Likewise, in November, Year 9 students are issued the guidance booklet called 'Year 9 preparation for Key Stage 4 course selection', for use at home with their families. **Parents, carers and students need to read the booklet together** and then **sign on page 1** of the booklet to confirm that these pages have been read and discussed. Year 9 students are also provided with login access details to the *Unifrog* website, to enable them to work with their families to assess their interests and skills, as well as explore different education and career options.

December 2025 - March 2026

- **Year 9 small-group interviews**

The independent Careers adviser from 'Prospects' who works in Blackfen School organises interviews for students to learn about the range of potential careers that might match their preferred selection of Key Stage 4 courses. It is *not* the case that Year 9 students have to select a career at this stage of their academic journey and personal development. Making hard and fast choices about preferred careers before qualification courses have even started can limit the breadth of education and academic experience that we seek to provide in Key Stage 4. However, it is important that Year 9 students are introduced to the world of work, employment and future training and are able to think ahead. The work of Mrs Smith, the school's Careers Adviser, has been recognised for its sustained excellence in the school's achievement of 'The Quality in Careers Standard'.

February 2026

- **Year 9 Information Assembly 2**

The second Year 9 Information Assembly at the beginning of February takes forward the Key Stage 4 selection process by explaining the selection of Key Stage 4 courses available to students for study in Year 10 and Year 11. This Assembly also outlines the conditions that must be met for some courses to be selected. Parents and carers can view the Assembly presentation in Year 9 TEAMS.

- **Key Stage 4 course selection: *Spotlights***

The Year 9 timetable is adjusted for a week at the end of January, so that Year 9 students can attend special sessions during the school day to learn about the GCSE and BTEC subjects that are offered for the first time in Key Stage 4 and about which students have no previous knowledge.

- **The Key Stage 4 course selection booklet**

The *Key Stage 4 course selection booklet* is issued in February and contains information about all of the Key Stage 4 courses on offer. Parents and carers and students should read the booklet carefully and discuss its contents, keeping in mind information from the *Year 9 Preparation for Key Stage 4 Course Selection* booklet and the 'Unifrog' website.

- **Year 9 Information Evening: 5.2.26**

Presentations by school and subject leaders at the Information Evening on 5.2.26 will explain important information about Key Stage 4 curriculum and assessment, as well as future pathways to Sixth Form, Apprenticeship, College and University options. It is important that you and your daughter attend this event to meet our Subject Leaders and understand our full curriculum offer.

- **Year 9 Parents' Evening: 26.2.26**

The Year 9 Parents Evening is a valuable opportunity for parents and carers and students to discuss academic progress and suitability for preferred Key Stage 4 courses with teachers.

March 2026

- **Wednesday 4th March 2026: Submission of on-line Key Stage 4 course selection form**

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that their daughter has chosen her courses as explained by the school and that the online course selection form is completed correctly. After this date, no changes will be made to Year 9 students' selection of Key Stage 4 courses.

- **Student interviews with a member of the Leadership Team**

There are many meetings with students which take place 'behind the scenes' to support their selection of Key Stage 4 courses. These short student interviews with a member of the Leadership Team recognise the work and effort made by Year 9 students and their families throughout the course selection process and provide a final double-check of the academic pathway that has been selected.

The selection of Key Stage 4 courses is an exciting time in Year 9 and we are looking forward to working with you and your daughter throughout the selection process.

Yours faithfully,

Miss F Minnis
Deputy Headteacher