



Blackfen School for Girls

Raising aspirations - releasing potential

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Dear Parents/Carers and Year 9 students,

Key Stage 4 course selection process: 2021 – 2022 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, thereby beginning their transition from Key Stage 3 into Key Stage 4. Inevitably, the selection of Key Stage 4 courses prompts the first serious consideration of post-19 education, training and employment. These decisions are exciting, serious and very important, which is why the input of family support and guidance is absolutely essential. This letter sets out the schedule of events 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 education and training in the future.

The Key Stage 4 course selection process – The timeline

November – December 2021

- Students: Year 9 Assembly - *Lights, Camera, Action!*
- Parents/Carers: Watch on-line Year 9 Assembly in Microsoft Teams.
- Students: Receive guidance booklet '*Year 9 preparation for Key Stage 4 course selection*'.
- Students: Complete specific pages in '*Kudos*' which are signed off by Parents/Carers.
- Parents/Carers: Take time to browse education and career options in '*Kudos*'.

January – March 2022

- Students: Small-group careers interviews in school with 'Prospects' careers adviser.
- Students: Year 9 Assembly - '*Key Stage 4 course selection*'.
- Students: Key Stage 4 course selection *Spotlights* – Information about selected Key Stage 4 courses.
- Students/Parents/Carers: 10.2.22 - Year 9 Information Evening about Key Stage 4 courses.
- Students/Parents/Carers: Watch on-line presentations in Microsoft Teams - '*Year 9 Key Stage 4 course selection Assembly*' and the '*Subject Leader guides to Key Stage 4 courses*'.
- Students/Parents/Carers: 24.2.22: Year 9 Parents Evening: Red Community, Blue Community, Green Community 1 – 4.

March 2022

- Students/Parents/Carers: 3.3.22 - Year 9 Parents Evening: Yellow Community, Purple Community, Green Community 5 – 9.
- **Parents/Carers: Wednesday 9th March 2022** - Submit on-line Key Stage 4 course selection form.
- Students: Week beginning 14th March 2022 - 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 2021

- **Year 9 Assembly: *Lights, Camera, Action!***

The Assembly in November starts the Key Stage 4 course selection schedule and introduces students to the selection process. The personal qualities which make the selection process successful are identified in famous icons and presented to students:

- 1) Hard work: 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) A personal choice: The courses selected must suit the individual student and be tailored to their needs and interests - not the needs and interests of friends.
- 3) Application of growth mindset: Taking important decisions naturally gives rise to some apprehension but there is a tried and tested process in place in school, in addition to the all-important family input at home to support students in their selection of courses.

- **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. The booklet is designed to guide students, with family input, to reflect on their personal character traits and qualities and their academic strengths and learning journey. **Parents/Carers and students need to complete pages 2 - 10 and page 21** of 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 *Kudos* website, to enable them to work with their families to assess their interests and skills, as well as explore different education and career options.

January - March 2022

- **Year 9 small-group interviews**

The independent Careers adviser from 'Prospects' who works in Blackfen School, organises informal 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 should be selecting 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 been started can hinder the selection process and 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. The work of Mrs Kellie Smith, the school's Work Experience Coordinator, has been recognised for its sustained excellence by the school gaining 'The Quality in Careers Standard'.

February 2022

- **Year 9 Assembly: *'Key Stage 4 course selection'***

The Year 9 Assembly at the beginning of February takes forward the Key Stage 4 selection process by explaining the 'pathways' from Key Stage 4 into Key Stage 5 and beyond, which is why the selection of Key Stage 4 courses needs to be carefully considered. The Assembly also outlines the qualifications offered by the school and the conditions that must be met for some to be selected. Parents can view the Assembly presentations in Microsoft Teams.

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

The Year 9 timetable is adjusted for a week, so that Year 9 students can attend special sessions during the school day to learn about the subjects that are offered for the first time in Key Stage 4: GCSE Business, GCSE Economics, BTEC Enterprise, BTEC Health and Social Care.

- **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 and qualifications on offer. Parents/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 '*Kudos*' website.

- **Year 9 Information Evening - Key Stage 4 course selection guidance**

Presentations by school and subject leaders at the Information Evening will explain important information about curriculum and assessment in Key Stage 4 courses, as well as future pathways to Sixth Form, Apprenticeship, College and University options. We trust that you and your daughter will attend this event to meet our Subject Leaders and understand our full curriculum offer. The Information Evening is supported by two on-line presentations in Microsoft Teams - '*Year 9 Key Stage 4 course selection Assembly*' and the '*Subject Leader guides to Key Stage 4 courses*'.

February / March 2022

- **Year 9 Parents Evenings**

The Year 9 Parents Evenings are a valuable opportunity for Parents/Carers and students to discuss academic progress and suitability for preferred Key Stage 4 courses with teachers.

March 2022

- **Wednesday 9th March 2022: Submission of on-line Key Stage 4 course selection form**

It is the responsibility of Parents/Carers to ensure that their daughters have chosen their 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 go on 'behind the scenes' to support their selection of Key Stage 4 courses. These short student interviews with school leaders 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 a very special and exciting time in Year 9 and we are looking forward to working with you and your daughter. Please do not hesitate to contact me, should you have further queries about the Key Stage 4 course selection process.

Yours faithfully,



Miss F Minnis
Deputy Head Teacher