



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: 2023 – 2024 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 2023

- Students: Attend Year 9 Assembly (1) – 23.11.23 *Lights, Camera, Action!*
- Parents/Carers: Please see the Year 9 Assembly presentation available in Microsoft Teams.
- Students: Receive guidance booklet '*Year 9 preparation for Key Stage 4 course selection*'
- Parents/Carers/Students: Complete specified pages in the guidance booklet
- Parents/Carers: Log into '*Kudos*' with students to browse education and career options

January – March 2024

- Students: Attend small-group careers interviews in school with 'CER Education' careers adviser
- Students: Attend Year 9 Assembly (2) - '*Key Stage 4 course selection*'
- Students: Attend Key Stage 4 course selection *Spotlights* – Mini meetings about specific courses
- **Students/Parents/Carers: Attend Year 9 Information Evening** about Key Stage 4 course selection – 8.2.24
- Students/Parents/Carers: Please see Year 9 Assembly presentation available in Microsoft Teams and the film called '*Subject Leader guides to Key Stage 4 courses*' – on the school website
- **Students/Parents/Carers: Attend Year 9 Parents Evening – 22.2.24:** All Green and Red Community form groups, and Blue Community form groups 1 – 4
- **Students/Parents/Carers: Attend Year 9 Parents Evening – 29.2.24:** All Yellow and Purple Community form groups and Blue Community form groups 5 – 9

March 2023

- **Parents/Carers: Wednesday 6th March 2024 - Submit on-line course selection form**
- Students: Week beginning 11th March 2024 - 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 2023

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

The Assembly on 23.11.23 starts the Key Stage 4 course selection schedule and introduces students to the selection process. The personal qualities which make the course selection process successful are explained to students:

- 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 - not the needs and interests of friends.
- 3) Individual mindset: Taking important decisions naturally gives rise to some apprehension. But students are more than capable of applying a growth mindset approach in the context of a tried and tested process in place in school, and support 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. 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 2024

- **Year 9 small-group interviews**

The independent Careers adviser from 'CER Education' 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 hinders the selection process and limits 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 Smith, the school's Work Experience Coordinator, has been recognised for its sustained excellence by the school gaining 'The Quality in Careers Standard'.

February 2024

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

The second special 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. This 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 presentation in Microsoft 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 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 on 8.2.24 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. It is important that you and your young person attend this event to meet our Subject Leaders and understand our full curriculum offer. The Information Evening is supported by the '*Subject Leader guides to Key Stage 4 courses*', a mini film which is hosted on the school website.

February / March 2024

- **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 2024

- **Wednesday 6th March 2024: Submission of on-line Key Stage 4 course selection form**

It is the responsibility of Parents/Carers to ensure that their young people 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 take place '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 young person. 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