

Year 8/9 Options



In Year 8 or 9, young people are required to select a range of optional subjects they will study at GCSE level or Education Level 2 (including BTECs and NVQs), alongside compulsory subjects such as English, Maths and Science. This is an exciting and crucial time for pupils as they can now begin to tailor their education around what they enjoy and/or steer them towards a particular career path, even at this early stage.

Supporting your young person

As a parent or carer, you are in a great position to support your young person through this process and help them look ahead to consider the implications of their choices. As someone who knows them well, you can discuss their favourite subjects at school and what they might want to do in future. These conversations can help your young person to choose options that reflect their strengths and potentially set them on the path to their chosen career.

When supporting young people to select subject options, it is useful to discuss the following questions with them first:

What subjects do you enjoy studying most? What subjects don't you enjoy?

What subjects do you think you are best at? Are there any you would like to study at A-level?

Would you like to go to university?

What tasks/skills would you like to do/develop in a job? What is your dream career?

The answers to these questions will to some extent determine the best Level 2/GCSE options for your young person.



Making choices

GCSE and Level 2 option choices can affect pupils' educational direction, whether that be going on to sixth form or college at 16, securing further training and apprenticeships, and eventually attending university and/or finding employment. For example, some university courses and professions may require students to hold a certain grade in a particular subject at GCSE level in order to be considered for entry.

It is useful to check what qualifications your young person might need to pursue their career or educational aspirations by using the National Careers Service (nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/youngpeople) or Prospects (prospects.ac.uk) websites.

For more information please get in touch.

Widening Participation and Outreach Team

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For Parents/Carers

However, it is important to encourage your child to do a broad range of subjects that include essay writing, language and numerical skills, to keep their options open if they change their mind later regarding study and/or employment.



Further information

For more information, advice and guidance on options choices, visit the following websites:

<http://ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-and-assessments/qualification-types/gcse/>

<http://www.studential.com/GCSEs/choosing-your-GCSE-subjects>

<http://www.parentdish.co.uk/2014/02/05/choosing-gcse-options-advice-for-year-9/>

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/study/outreach/thinkinguni/parents/carers/>

Jargon Buster

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| Level 2 | Refers to the level of qualifications that pupils aged 14-16 can study towards. This includes GCSEs grade A*-C, NVQs at level 2, Level 2 VQs, Key Skills Level 2, Skills for Life, Higher Diploma, BTEC awards and Functional Skills Level 2 |
| GCSEs | Stands for 'General Certificate of Secondary Education' and equivalent to the old 'O-levels'. GCSEs are usually sat by 15 to 18 year olds in schools or colleges, but they can be taken by anyone who wants to gain a qualification. GCSEs have undergone reforms in recent years; visit http://ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-and-assessments/qualification-types/gcse/ for more information. |
| BTEC | BTECs are widely recognised work-related qualifications suitable for a wide range of ages and abilities. They tend to focus on vocational skills and can be taken alongside, or in place of, GCSEs . |
| NVQs | National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are work based awards that can be studied at different levels. Assessment involves the application of knowledge in varied work activities, performed in a variety of contexts. Collaboration with others, perhaps through membership of a work group or team, is often a requirement. At comprehensive schools, Level 2 is equivalent to one GCSE at A*-C. |

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