



**DROITWICH SPA
HIGH SCHOOL
AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE**

Year 9 Options

The subjects and qualifications you study over Years 10 and 11 will affect how you spend your time during your next two years at DSHS. They could also help set you up for a career, university or college course you would like later on in life.

We've made this booklet with the help of our independent careers advisor. It is designed to offer students and families support in making decisions.



General Information

Key dates for 2023

- Launch assembly for Year 9 students – Friday 3rd March.
- Course information will go live on our website on Thursday 9th March.
- Year 9 Options Evening is Thursday 9th March.
- Deadline for students making choices is Monday 20th March.

The Options Process

1. The Core Curriculum

In Year 10 and 11 all students (except in exceptional circumstances) will study:

	Hours per fortnight in Year 10	Hours per fortnight in Year 11
English Language and Literature (two separate qualifications, worth a total of two GCSEs)	8	8
Maths	8	8
Science (worth two GCSEs) / Specialist Science (three GCSEs)*	10 / 12	11 / 12
Core PE and PSHE for double award Science / Core PE and PSHE for Specialist Science*	6 / 4	5 / 4

* see 'Pathways' below.

The PE and PSHE curriculum enables and encourages students to:

- have a good grasp of issues facing...
 - ...them personally (e.g. sex and relationships, personal finance)
 - ...society as a whole (e.g. crime and punishment)
- lead active and healthy lifestyles

NB: students will NOT be entered for the Religious Studies GCSE examinations unless they choose Religious Studies as a GCSE Option.

2. How compulsory subjects will be studied

Students will spend eight hours per fortnight in both English and Maths. Alongside this they will undertake 10 hours a fortnight in Science lessons (in Year 10), leading towards the award of two GCSEs in Science e.g. 7-6 [a grade 7 and a grade 6].

In addition to this, students will receive six hours [five in year eleven] per fortnight in Core PE and PSHE.

Students are then given the freedom to pick three further subjects with the only restriction being that at least one of their three choices is History, Geography, French or German.

3. Optional Subjects

All reformed Level 2 courses are rigorous challenges for students. Furthermore, there are some subjects where less secure prior knowledge will mean that we cannot, if we are to act in the best interests of a given child, allow him/her to start on the course. Therefore, below is a table that outlines what courses are available and what restrictions are put in place.

Course	Qualification (all worth 1 GCSE)	Notes on suitability / setting	Other notes
Humanities and Languages			
History	GCSE	Classes in these subjects will be loosely 'set' into Standard and Advanced groups based on prior attainment. Students may only pick languages they have studied in Year 9.	Students in the General Pathway must pick at least one of these subjects.
Geography	GCSE		
French	GCSE		
German	GCSE		
Arts (visual and performing)			
Art	GCSE		
Art (Fashion and Textiles)	GCSE		
Dance	GCSE	Includes several practical performances, worth 60% of grade. Students must be committed and able to do this.	
Drama	GCSE	Includes a practical performance, worth 30% of grade. Students must be committed and able to do this.	
Music	GCSE	This course includes composing music, performing music and a listening exam (worth 40%). Students who are not currently playing an instrument (or singing) to a basic standard will find this course very difficult.	For both Music courses students should have studied Music in Year 9. For those who have not, we will review their wish to study it in Year 10 and 11 on a case by case basis. Students can't do both.
Music Performance	RSL Level 2	This course focuses on performance but does include performing in front of a (small) audience. This course is more suitable for those who haven't currently got strong experience of playing an instrument.	
Technologies			
Computer Science	GCSE	Only students in Maths sets D and R should select this subject. Students in other sets <i>may</i> be accepted on a case by case basis.	
Creative iMedia	Cambridge National		
Design and Technology	GCSE	This course focuses on creative design to solve problems and includes scientific theory on materials used in the design and manufacturing process.	Students cannot choose this and Technology Technical Award.
Engineering	GCSE	Classes in this subject may be loosely 'set' into Standard and Advanced groups based on prior attainment depending on numbers.	

Course	Qualification (all worth 1 GCSE)	Notes on suitability / setting	Other notes
Creative Craft Technical Award	Level 1/2 Award	This course is focussed on 'making' so prioritises development of hands on skills for future learning or employment.	Students cannot choose this and Design and Technology.
Food and Nutrition	GCSE	This course is more theoretical / scientific ((it is not just doing cooking/baking etc.)	
Other			
Religious Studies	GCSE	Students will not be entered for GCSE Religious Studies in the core curriculum. Students must take this option in order to study the full GCSE course and be entered for the examinations.	
Business Studies	GCSE		
Child Development	GCSE		
Health and Social Care	Cambridge National		
PE / Sport Science	GCSE / Cambridge National	Students will opt for 'PE / Sport' and indicate their preference for either GCSE PE or Sports Science Cambridge National. The PE department will then assess students' suitability and, with consultation and consideration of the preferences, allocate students into either the PE GCSE or the Sport Science Cambridge National groups (based on their professional judgement of students' potential to succeed on each course). This process will begin immediately once options are chosen.	

4. Confirming Choices

Students will record their options using the DSHS Launchpad site. They will be sent the link they need via email and can do it either in school or from home.

It is very important that students list their options in preference order to that we can prioritise the choices on the rare occasion that we can't satisfy all of them.

We work very hard to try to ensure every gets what they want but it is not always possible. Some combinations of options may not be possible, some groups may be over-subscribed and some groups may be so small that they are not viable. If there is a problem we will speak to the student affected as soon as possible.

We monitor choices to make sure they comply with the requirements set out. Some students may be given further advice if we feel that they may not have chosen wisely.

5. Supporting and Advice

Useful links

Your young person will have had lots of information about subject choices, in subject videos and the various Q+A sessions, but it will also be helpful if you discuss their choices with them. It's important to choose subjects they find enjoyable, but also to keep a good balance. These links should help you and your young person to make an informed, unbiased decision:

<https://website.droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk/index.php/student-development-and-support/careers/>
<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/careersportal/>

Excellent magazine style publication about post 14 choices

<https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/job-sectors/subjects>

Click on a subject and it will give you ideas as to where it might lead

<https://icould.com/explore/#subject>

Similar to the above

<https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/my-career-options/subjects?group=all&subjects=1936#search-top>

Also similar to Career Pilot

<https://university.which.co.uk/advice/gcse-choices-university/how-important-are-gcse-choices-when-it-comes-to-university>

Good advice on relative importance of GCSEs for university courses

[National Careers Service](#) – 0800 100 900

Advice for Parents / Carers

- Talk to your son/daughter about what their interests are.
- Find out what they would like to do in the future.
- Let them know that jobs for 16 year olds are now virtually non-existent. The key to their future is in good education, good training and developing skills and abilities that employers want and are prepared to pay for.
- If in doubt about your son/daughter's option choices, please contact us to make an appointment to see Lindsay Stevens, our Independent Careers Adviser.
- Check that your son/daughter is choosing subjects for the right reasons.
- Try to encourage a variety in their choices – this will allow more choice at Post 16.

The wrong reasons for choosing a course might include:

- × I like the teacher
- × All the other choices are boring / too difficult
- × All my friends are doing that subject
- × I think it will help me get a job

The right reasons for choosing a course might include:

- ✓ I am good at/enjoy that subject
- ✓ I know that these subjects will help my career choice, because I have found out about it
- ✓ I have achieved good marks and exam grades in a subject
- ✓ I had doubts – however, I asked for (and got) help and advice

Support for Students

How do I choose?

To help you decide what to study in Years 10 and 11, start by asking yourself what you enjoy doing and what you're good at.

Think about:

- What you're interested in: it could be other cultures and languages, writing projects, helping people, being outdoors or designing things.
- What types of activity you enjoy most - working things out and thinking them through, practical activities or artistic options like painting, drawing or performing music?
- What you're like at home, as well as in school - what skills have you developed following outside interests?
- There are some subjects so important that everyone has to take them, but you still have options in Year 9.

Some hints and tips.....

- Get as much information as you can, so you choose well.
- Remember, no qualification is ever wasted.
- If you have a firm career idea, research it and choose your options accordingly.
- You don't have to have a career in mind at this stage – you just need to choose subjects and courses that will give you plenty of choice later on.
- Ask for help from your Head of House, Mrs Stevens in the Careers Hub, your tutor, your PSHE teacher who has been working with you this ½ term on the theme of careers and your subject teachers
- Choose subjects that you enjoy!

Where can I get help and advice?

The choices are yours, but most people look for advice on important decisions. There's plenty available, but you should do as much as you can yourself to research all the options.

Parents, carers, family and friends probably know you best, so talking to them can help you work out what might suit you. However, remember that they won't always know a lot about careers or courses you're interested in. If you're planning to work towards a particular career or college course, don't be put off just because it means taking a different direction from friends or family members. Subject teachers know exactly what studying a subject in Year 10 and 11 involves, and can advise whether it's right for you.

Mrs Lindsay Stevens [our Independent Careers Advisor] can guide you towards advice about which subjects and qualifications are useful for particular careers. Mr Brook can answer any questions about the DSHS options process itself. You will also have an opportunity to talk to some older students who have studied the subjects in which you are interested. Lindsay will also be at Parents/Options Evening and is always available via email for you to ask any questions.

Case Studies

If you are a bit unsure about where to go with your options choices, try reading the case studies below:

Lauren is a current Year 10 who started her GCSE courses in September this year. Alongside Mathematics, English and RE she is doing Triple Science, History, PE, Engineering and French. She has always enjoyed making and repairing things and would like a career in engineering. When it came to choosing her options Lauren found it invaluable talking to the school careers adviser and her tutor, who both emphasised the importance of choosing subjects that she enjoys as well as those that relate to her career choice.

This particularly helped Lauren focus on her decision-making as she is a student who does well in most subject areas. "When I had to make my choices I was advised to look at options I would have fun doing, and that I was good at, not what I felt I have to do because everyone else was talking about taking them. When I spent time with Lindsay she got me to think about where my best attitude to learning grades are and also suggested that I consider my future ambition if being a vet when making my choices."

Tom is also in year 10 and during years eight and nine he enjoyed almost all of his school subjects. He has opted alongside the compulsory subjects to take GCSEs in Geography, German and Food Technology, but at the moment he doesn't really have a clear career plan. '

"When I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do I spent lots of time talking to my tutor. When I got to options evening and I still didn't know I had the opportunity to talk to Miss Harding, Mr Brook and Lindsay which really helped. They made me think about what I was good at. When I was at home I also used the school's option booklet and careers website which I went through with my parents and this helped me to decide what courses would suit me."

Tom found it invaluable talking to lots of different people about what to do after Year 9. As he doesn't have a career idea yet, decision-making can feel even more confusing. It's important to choose courses that will suit and interest you, not just because your friends are doing them, so get some advice and help from those around you.