



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 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.



1: The Core Curriculum

2: How compulsory
subjects will be
studied

3: Optional Subjects

4: Confirming Your Choices

5: Support and Advice

General Information

Key dates for 2024

- Launch assembly for Year 9 students – Tuesday, 20th February.
- Year 9 Guided Choices Evening - Thursday 22nd February.
- Options form will open – Monday, 26th February.
- Deadline for students making choices – Friday, 15th 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 (Students may opt for Triple Science see below)	10	11
Core PE/ Philosophy & Ethics /PSHE (Students may opt for GCSE Religious Studies see below)	4	3

The PE and PSHE curriculums enable and encourage 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 Combined Science e.g. 7-6 [a grade 7 and a grade 6], students who opt for Triple Science will have these ten lessons and an additional five lessons as one of their options.

In addition, the non-examined subjects of core PE, Philosophy & Ethics and PSHE are studied in the frequency outlined in the table above.

Students are then given the freedom to pick four 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 them 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	Notes on suitability / setting	Other notes
Science			
Triple Science (Biology/Chemistry/Physics)	GCSE	Triple Science is worth a total of three GCSEs (one per science) and covers an additional 50% more content during the course.	
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 must opt for at least one from these subjects.
Geography	GCSE		
French	GCSE		
German	GCSE		
Arts (visual and performing)			
Art	GCSE		
Dance	GCSE	Includes two practical performances and a piece of own choreography, worth 60% of grade. Students must be committed and able to do this. Written paper also a requirement.	
Drama	GCSE	Includes two practical performances and a piece of own choreography, worth 60% of grade. Students must be committed and able to do this. Written paper also a requirement.	
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.
Performing Arts (VQ) - Music Pathway	Eduqas Vocational Qualification	Like GCSE music, this course includes composing and performing music. The performance and composition are continually assessed and this is different from the final performances that occur in GCSE Music. This course does not include a terminal exam, it is coursework based and some units are completed in Y10.	
Technologies			
Computer Science	GCSE		
Creative iMedia	Cambridge National	This course is recommended to be taken alongside other complementary qualifications	

Course	Qualification	Notes on suitability / setting	Other notes
		such as Art, Computer Science and/or Business Studies.	
Design and Technology	GCSE	This course focuses on creative design to solve problems and includes technical theory on materials used in the design and manufacturing process.	
Engineering	GCSE	Classes in this subject may be loosely 'set' into Standard and Advanced groups based on prior attainment depending on numbers.	
Food and Nutrition	GCSE	This course has a heavy reliance on theory work and has elements of science included. Students will cook on average once per fortnight. On this course students will learn about: Food commodities, Principles of nutrition, Diet and good health, The science of food, Where food comes from, Cooking and food preparation.	Students should have studied Food in Year 9. For those who have not, we will review their wish to reconnect with their studies of this subject on a case-by-case basis.
Other			
Religious Studies	GCSE	Students will not be entered for GCSE Religious Studies in the core curriculum. Students must take this option to study the full GCSE course and be entered for the examinations.	
Business Studies / Economics	GCSE	Students will opt for 'Business / Economics' and indicate their preference for either GCSE Business studies or GCSE Economics. The Business & Economics department will then assess students' suitability and, with consultation and consideration of the preferences, allocate students into either the GCSE Business studies or GCSE Economics (based on their professional judgement of students' potential to succeed on each course). This process will begin immediately once options are chosen.	
Child Development	Cambridge National	Students will complete 30% of their qualification in Year 10 (NEA) and 70% in Year 11. On this course students will study the health and well-being for child development, learn how to create a safe environment and understand the nutritional needs of children from birth to five years, and understand the development of a child from one to five years. Attendance is pivotal to success.	Qualifications are equivalent to GCSE.
Health and Social Care	Cambridge National	Students will complete 30% of their qualification in Year 10 (NEA) and 70% in Year 11. On this course students will study the: Principles of care in health and social care	

Course	Qualification	Notes on suitability / setting	Other notes
		settings, Supporting individuals through life events and Health promotion campaigns. Attendance is pivotal to success.	
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 so 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 everyone 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>

Like the above

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

Also like 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 must 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.
- 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 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. Mrs Moss & Mr Hayman 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/Guided Choices 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 must 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 were and suggested that I consider my future ambition of being a vet when making my choices."

Tom is also in Year 10 and during Years 8 and 9 he enjoyed almost all his school subjects. He has opted alongside the compulsory subjects to take GCSEs in Geography, German, and Food Technology, but currently he doesn't really have a clear career plan.

"When I wasn't 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 Mrs Tallis, 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.

