

## **Elthorne Park High School – KS4 Options Introduction**

We hope that you will find the guidance in this guide and the accompanying website useful in supporting your child's Key Stage 4 option choices.

As your child reaches the end of Key Stage 3, they are required to make important decisions about their curriculum that will shape their educational journey into Key Stage 4 and beyond.

We encourage all students to make choices that ensure they follow a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum pathway at Key Stage 4 so that they will later have full access to our sixth form curriculum and higher educational opportunities.

As your child progresses into Key Stage 4, the National Curriculum still applies and some subject areas remain compulsory for all students nationally. In addition to the compulsory courses of English Language, English Literature, Mathematics and a choice of Science options, your child will select subjects they would like to study at Key Stage 4.

A range of support and guidance will be provided for your child to guide them through this process. In addition to the Parents' Consultation Evening and the Senior Leader presentations, your child will benefit from targeted options guidance, subject taster days, careers guidance and further choices information in their PSHCE lessons. Your child will also be provided with input from their subject teachers, tutor and year leader to support them through the process.

This website contains information about each of the courses offered at Key Stage 4, summarising the course content and assessment requirements. It also outlines important information about the pathways process and the pathway that may best suit your child at Key Stage 4.

We hope that you will take time at home to carefully consider each of the courses outlined on this website and in particular, course combinations to ensure there is suitable breadth to support continuity into Key Stage 5 and beyond.

Student choices need to carefully consider the skills, knowledge and assessment required from each course. Making a considered, appropriate and individual decision is important. All of the courses are for two years, therefore, require dedication and commitment during this time period.

Students' choice of courses needs to be balanced and reflect their ability, aptitude and subject interests. Higher education and future careers pathways also need to be carefully considered.

Decisions made over the coming weeks are extremely important as they will shape your child's future education pathways at Key Stage 5, into higher education and future careers pathways.

We hope this information and the options support programme will provide you with all the information you and your child need to make these important decisions.

We look forward to celebrating your child's achievements at the end of their Key Stage 4 courses.

Mr Jonathan Kelley  
**Associate Deputy Headteacher**

Mr Andrés Reyes  
**Year 9 - Year Leader**

## Elthorne Park High School – KS4 Curriculum

### Which subjects are compulsory to study?

The National Curriculum lies at the heart of Key Stage 4 curriculum and there are some subjects that are compulsory to study. The information below sets out the subjects that all Year 10 and 11 students study throughout their Key Stage 4 experience. Please note that English Literature and English Language are separate GCSE courses although there is a significant integration of skills across the two qualifications. Whilst all students study PE (Core) as a curriculum entitlement, students may also opt to study GCSE PE or BTEC Sport.

English Language	Students will take a GCSE examination in these. Science can be taken as either a Double or Triple qualification.	
English Literature		
Mathematics		
Science		
PE (Core)	No exam	Physical Education
PSHCE	No exam	Includes Careers Education, Work Related Learning, Citizenship and RS themes.

The majority of students will choose to study the equivalent of 4 GCSE subjects in addition to the core subjects. This will make a total of 9 subjects. Department for Education guidance stipulates that the vast majority of students should consider taking some subjects from the **English Baccalaureate suite of subjects**.

### The English Baccalaureate subjects are:

- English, Maths and Science (compulsory subjects for all students at Elthorne Park High School)
- Humanities: History and Geography (optional subjects)
- Languages (optional subjects)

The government believes that selecting subjects from the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects will 'open more doors' for students in the future as they progress into higher education and careers. (DfE July 2017, *Implementing the English Baccalaureate*).

School progress reports, student targets and data collected from core skills testing will help in the decision making process. With your option choices, you must take into account your past and current progress in each subject area. If you are underachieving or not fully applying yourself in a specific subject area, then these subjects are best avoided, as you are unlikely to achieve your full potential. It is important to bear in mind that subjects chosen will be studied for two years, so you are advised to consider subjects that motivate you and you will enjoy studying.

You are strongly advised to select KS4 courses that provide you with the best opportunity of getting a good set of GCSE grades in Year 11 whilst also choosing a broad, balanced and ambitious range of subjects. It is therefore important that time, discussion and careful consideration are all given to this process.

### Can I study other subjects if I take the EBacc?

Yes. In choosing the EBacc, you are still able to study other subjects, such as Fine Art, Drama, Religious Studies, Music, Design and Technology or PE as well as BTECs such as Health and Social Care and Sport. In fact, it can be better for some students to do this because it creates a well-balanced curriculum.

### When you are making choices, the following should be considered:

- How well you are currently doing in the subject;
- It is your choice and not that of your friends;
- Your teachers' advice;
- The fact that the subject will be studied for 5 periods per fortnight for 2 years.

### Which subjects can I choose?

We aim to provide all students with a curriculum that is broad, balanced and ambitious. To achieve this, we allocate each student to one of our 5 Options Pathways to ensure that the options that they select have a good degree of challenge, are manageable and have an academic balance. These pathways are allocated following a thorough analysis of student progress reports, prior data, current reading age data and other information sources. To ensure that our pathway allocations are firmly rooted in the current attainment of your child, we will consider both the outcomes of recent Year 9 assessments and the most recent information that we have on your child's reading age. Current reading ages will be captured through assessments that will take place on 14<sup>th</sup> March and we will share Options Pathways with parents and students on **25<sup>th</sup> April** through the Spring Term Progress Report.

Information on our 5 pathways is set out in the table below.

Pathway	Curriculum Offer	Notes on Science
Red	Students on this Options Pathway study the EBacc. In addition to the compulsory subjects they should pick: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Either GCSE History or GCSE Geography</li><li>• Either GCSE French, GCSE German or GCSE Spanish</li><li>• Two additional options of their own choice</li></ul>	Students on this pathway may choose to select Triple Science GCSEs or can study Combined Science. If they chose to study Triple Science, this will take up one of their two additional options.
Orange	Students on this Options Pathway are recommended to study a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum. In addition to the compulsory subjects, they should pick: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Either GCSE History, GCSE Geography, GCSE French, GCSE German or GCSE Spanish</li><li>• Three additional options of their choice</li></ul>	Students on this pathway may choose to select Triple Science GCSEs or can study Combined Science. If they chose to study Triple Science, this will take up one of their two additional options.
Yellow	Students on this Options Pathway are recommended to study a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum. In addition to the compulsory subjects, they should pick: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Either GCSE History, GCSE Geography, GCSE French, GCSE German or GCSE Spanish</li><li>• Three additional options of their choice</li></ul>	Students on this pathway should not pick Triple Science as one of their three options. They will study the Combined Science qualification.
Blue	Students on this Options Pathway will study 3 options subjects. They will also receive targeted support in English and Maths through additional timetabled lessons. In addition to the compulsory subjects, they should pick: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A free choice of three options subjects</li></ul>	Students on this pathway should not pick Triple Science as one of their three options. They will study the Combined Science qualification.
EPAC (Elthorne Park Alternative Curriculum)	Students on this Options Pathway are pre-selected by the SENCO and are in receipt of an EHCP. Students are supported through Unit Award, Entry Level and Level 1 qualifications in line with their EHCP. These courses cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• English, Mathematics, Science at Entry Level/Level 1</li><li>• Level 1 Prince's Trust and Unit Award Scheme</li><li>• Level 1 RHS certificate in practical horticulture</li><li>• Level 1 certificate in Art and Design</li></ul>	Science is taught as an Entry Level qualification

# What is a BTEC?

## What Is A BTEC?

BTECs are work-related qualifications suitable for a wide range of students.

- They are built to accommodate the needs of employers and allow progression to university.
- They provide a practical, real world approach to learning without sacrificing any of the essential subject theory.
- They can be taken alongside, or in place of, GCSEs and A Levels.

## Where Can a BTEC Take You?

BTECs have been around for nearly 30 years and their reputation is second to none. They are recognised by schools, colleges, universities, employers and professional bodies across the UK and in over 100 countries worldwide. They offer natural progression along a vocational path, from and to academic qualifications and university.

## Are BTECs Right For Me?

To decide if a BTEC is right for you, you will need to know how BTECs differ from other qualifications and what advantages they have.

## A Practical Approach to Study

Students have to undertake a number of units for which they present evidence, based on real-life work and studies. This allows them to demonstrate their skill and knowledge in practical situations. If you think you would succeed working in this way, the BTEC route may be the one to take. Students do also have to complete end of course examinations in most revised BTEC courses.

## Keep Your Options Open

There are many options available to school leavers: university degrees, apprenticeships and jobs that offer workplace learning. If you are not sure about the path you will wish to take, the flexibility of BTECs makes them a good choice, as they offer useful practical experience as well as a recognised qualification.

## Inspiring Confidence

Learning should be fun, not daunting. In our experience, students enjoy BTEC programmes because they can specialise in areas of learning linked with work that they are interested in, like sport and health and social care.

Students build their confidence because they are developing practical skills that will help them secure a job in the future. Answers to assignments may be in written form or other formats such as film clips, project proposals, business plans and structured databases. Students are always given clear guidelines so they know what they have to achieve and how to do this.

## Rewarding Effort

Students will have to meet deadlines for practical and written assignments set by their teachers, but can do this at their own pace. Progress is monitored individually by teachers who provide personal support and guidance, helping students develop their learning skills to reach their full potential. Learning is progressive, from small scale and simple topics to larger and more complex themes.

## GCSE, BTEC and Technical Qualification Grading

### Grading Schemes

GCSE courses are graded on a scale of 1 – 9 where:

- **1** represents the **lowest** level of achievement available
- **9** represents the **highest** level of achievement available
- A 'pass' grade is a **Grade 4** and a 'strong pass' is a **Grade 5**
- A 'U' grade will still be used where a student fails to meet the minimum standards decided by the awarding bodies.

**BTEC and CAMNAT Courses:** grades range from a Level 1 Pass up to a Level 2 Distinction\*.

- **Level 1 Pass** is equivalent to a 1 grade, a **Merit** to a grade 2 and a **Distinction** to a grade 3
- **Level 2 Pass** is equivalent to grade 4, a **Merit** to a grade 5+ and a **Distinction** to a grade 7
- A Level 2 Distinction\* is equivalent to an 8+ grade (halfway between a grade 8 and 9)
- A 'U' grade will still be used where a student fails to meet minimum standards decided by the awarding bodies.