

8th February 2012
Our ref: CFA/GS/128

Dear Parent/Carer

Year 9 Options Evening

As you are aware the Academy postponed the original date for the Year 9 Evening as a result of the government deliberations on the National Curriculum. Last week the Government made an endorsement of what courses could be validated for your daughter's year group. We should therefore like to invite you to a Year 9 Options Evening on the rearranged date of Wednesday 7th March.

There will be two presentations to explain the option process which will be held in the Small Hall as follows:

7.10pm for tutor groups **9B1, 9B2, 9G1** and **9G2**
7.50pm for tutor groups **9Y1, 9Y2, 9R1** and **9R2**

Throughout the evening Heads of Subject will be available to speak to you and your daughter and you will have the opportunity to look at displays and sample coursework. The Form Tutors will also be available to discuss and answer any of your questions.

I realise this is an exciting time for students as decisions are about to be made which will influence and shape their future. At Harris Academy Bromley we value your involvement. Your participation is integral to the whole process. This is an important evening for you and your daughter and we look forward to seeing you there.

Before choosing options, students will be placed in one of three pathways. Within each pathway the option choices will be slightly different. We do this so that the possible choices match the ability and aptitude of the student. Your daughter will be told which one she will be following before the evening of Wednesday 7th March 2012.

I have attached more details and the answers to frequently asked questions about the options process. I look forward to seeing you on Wednesday 7th March 2012 when I will be delighted to answer any of your questions. Please complete the attached reply slip and return to your daughter's Form Tutor by Monday 27th February 2012.

Yours sincerely

Mr G Keane
Vice Principal

Year 9 Options Evening

Student Name: Tutor Group:

I / We will / will not be able to attend the Year 9 Options Evening.

Parent/Carer: Date:

**Please complete and return the reply slip to your daughter's Form Tutor by Monday 27th February 2012*

Key Year 9 Dates:

Wednesday 7 th March 2012	Option Choice Evening (Small Hall)
Monday 19 th March 2012	Option interviews start
Monday 14 th May 2012 – Friday 18 th May 2012	KS3 Examinations

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Year 10 Curriculum Choices

Are there compulsory subjects that my daughter must study?

- All students must study Mathematics, English, Science, Religious Education and Physical Education.

How many additional option subjects will my daughter be able to choose?

- Most students choose four additional subjects, although some applied subjects are worth double and if your daughter chooses these subjects, she will only need to take two more additional subjects.

How will her ability impact on her choice of subjects?

- Your daughter will be placed in the ability group based on her predicted results in the KS3 internal examinations. Some students will be predicted level 6 and above, others will be predicted mainly level 5s and others will be predicted up to and including level 4s. Each of these groups will choose subjects from one of three pathways.

What would happen if my daughter does significantly better in her KS3 internal examinations than expected?

- Your daughter will be invited to change her options should she wish to do so.

Why are not all students given the same choice of subjects?

- Experience and national statistics have shown that some courses may prove too difficult for some students and others are insufficiently challenging for our more able students. The option choices are so designed that all students, whatever their ability, can achieve success.

My daughter is predicted a mixture of level 5s and 6s, in which option group or pathway will she be put?

- Students that are borderline of different groups will be given some flexibility as to which option group or pathway they will be put in. However, we will not allow a student predicted level 4s to choose subjects more suited to level 6 students nor vice versa, as it would not be in the best interest of the individual student.

If courses are oversubscribed, how are decisions made as to which students gain a place on the course?

- The student's effort and aptitude in the subject or associated subjects are taken into account.

What support will the school give my daughter in choosing her options?

- On the evening of Wednesday 7th March 2012 Heads of Department will be available to talk to parents/carers and daughters.
- The options booklet (issued on the evening) will give specific details on all the courses available.
- Assessment reports are issued every six weeks so that your daughter's aptitudes and progress in particular subjects can also be considered.
- Student and parent/carer will then have an individual interview with either Mr Keane (Curriculum Vice Principal) or her Assistant Principal, at which a final choice will be made.

Why are the pathway 3 options more limited than the other pathways?

- The options have been so designed that all pathway 3 students take subjects which will enable her to achieve the English Baccalaureate. Students in other pathways may choose these subjects but students in pathway 1 may find such a combination very challenging.

What is the English Baccalaureate?

- The English Baccalaureate was introduced in 2010 and is awarded to students who achieve a GCSE graded A*-C in English, Mathematics, two science subjects, a Modern Foreign Language and either History or Geography. We strongly encourage your daughter to ensure she is eligible to achieve this if she is on pathway 2 or 3.

My daughter has been allocated pathway 3 but is particularly talented at Performing Arts?

- We realise that every student is an individual. Therefore there will be some flexibility regarding choices. If, at the time of the interview, parents, the student and the teacher feel that it is in the best interests of the student to follow a particular course, then we shall endeavour to ensure this happens.

Key Stage 3 Internal Examinations

Why are the KS3 internal examinations important?

- Performance in the examination is the key indicator of how your daughter will achieve in her GCSEs. Students should therefore take her studies in Year 9 and her examinations very seriously.

When will the examinations take place?

- The examinations will take place between Monday 14th May to Friday 18th May 2012.

We plan to take a holiday during this time. What should we do?

- The Principal will not authorise any absence at any time. Any absence will therefore be unauthorised and may hinder her progress in Year 10.