

Pathways Video Presentation 2020 – Transcript

Welcome to St Alban's Catholic High School's **Pathways** presentation for 2020. My name is Mr Berry and I am the assistant headteacher with responsibility for curriculum at the school. Please can I recommend that you watch this presentation with your child. It is important that throughout the **Pathways** process, you and your child are talking about their possible choices as well as their concerns and questions. In this way, we can, together, ensure that students are best prepared to make the choices that are suitable for them as individuals.

Students in year 8 are often unsure about the subjects that they would like to take when they get to GCSE. Their **Pathway** towards GCSE can be uncertain and even worrying for them. Our **Pathways** process is designed to help students to see a clearer path to the future knowing that they may change direction if they need to and with guidance at all stages.

The current GCSE specifications are designed to stretch and challenge students. They contain increased content and most are assessed by final examinations only. All students take will take GCSE examinations in English, mathematics, science and religious education. Our **Pathways** process will help students to fully understand the challenge of each of the other subjects available before they make a decision to study the subject at GCSE. To enable this to happen we will begin to consider our **Pathway** towards GCSE during the second half of year 8.

At St Alban's we believe that education should be challenging, fun, broad and balanced. For this reason we encourage students to choose a range of subjects to engage them as learners and to keep their options open for further study in the future.

The skills that students will learn in all of our subject areas will be of benefit to them in later life. Students will, however, always have their preferences and the **Pathways** process will help them decide which of these subject skills will be of most benefit to their future path.

We recognise that, for some students, nine or ten GCSEs is not appropriate. For this reason, there will also be an alternative course available in **Pathway Block A**. This course will start in Year 9 and be flexible and adaptable to the needs of the group. There may be elements of the course that will be externally accredited although that is not the overall reason for its existence. If you believe that this alternative course may be an appropriate part of your child's **Pathway** at the school, please let us know.

As we begin the **Pathways** process, I encourage you to talk as a family and consider the subjects your child might choose in the future and how you can support them in their choices. In the second half of the Spring term students will have extended assemblies with a talk from each subject leader about how their subject will develop over the next three years. This will outline how each subject will build on key stage 3 knowledge and skills and what they can expect to learn. This will also give them time to talk to their subject teachers and the subject leaders about any questions or concerns they have.

In addition to these assemblies, students will have taster lessons in each of the subjects on offer. These lessons will give them more information about each subject and will help students understand what they can expect from a GCSE lesson in each subject.

Following the **Year 8 Pathways Evening on the 11th March 2020**, students begin to consider their initial **Pathway** choice of four subjects. This will not commit them to a subject but will help us to best target the next stage of the process. There will be plenty of opportunities, later in the process, to change their **Pathway** if they wish to.

We have designed an online system for students to make their **Pathways** choices. Students will make a main and a reserve choice in each of the four blocks. In this example, there are eight choices available. Please note that a number of subjects are also available in other blocks to help students make a broad and balanced set of choices. You will be given details of how to access the online system at the **Pathways Evening**. These initial choices will need to be made by the end of the Spring term.

Year 9 has become a transition year, blending key stage 3 subjects with GCSE subjects. At the start students will be building on the skills they have been taught to help them decide whether each subject is the correct choice for them as individual.

Students will have the opportunity to change **Pathways** at half term. We will accommodate as many **Pathway** changes as we can. If a subject is unavailable, due to limits on class size, I will speak to each student individually to decide how to proceed. I will also, where appropriate, contact you as parents and carers.

There will be another opportunity to change **Pathways** at the end of the autumn term.

It is our hope that by Christmas, the majority of students will have a clear view of their **Pathway**. During this term subject areas will begin to teach content that will both complement the skills that were developed in the previous term and help lead them toward the GCSE course. This means that any student who has changed **Pathway** will not have missed any important information.

During this term there will, where necessary, be dialogue between subject leaders, parents/carers and students. Any **Pathway** changes during the term will be guided by this dialogue.

During the summer term student will start to consider their final GCSE choices. They will have studied the subject for a year, completing the Key Stage 3 curriculum and being introduced to the GCSE curriculum in each subject. It is our belief that this will give them the information necessary for an informed choice about which three subjects to continue to GCSE.

Final choices will be guided by subject staff and each student will discuss these choices with their form tutor as well as, of course, with parents and carers. Where there is any uncertainty students will be interviewed by the head of year or a member of the senior leadership team to help them make an informed choice. These interviews can, where appropriate, include parents and carers.

It is expected that students will then follow their **Pathway** through to the examinations at the end of year 11. This will ensure that they have sufficient time to learn and practice the skills and content needed in each of their subjects. The **Pathways** process will also ensure that groups are stable and committed to each subject by the start of year 10.

Thank you for watching this presentation. May I warmly invite you to the **Year 8 Pathways evening on Wednesday 11th March 2020**.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school. Our telephone number and my email address are on the screen.