

Mr. A.McLellan Key Stage 3 Options Introduction

Thank you for being here tonight. As parents and carers, you play a crucial role in guiding your child through key moments in their education. Selecting GCSE courses is one of those important moments and as a school we want to support you during this process.

As I look around the hall, I appreciate that your child might be overwhelmed, excited or even indifferent about making their choices, however as adults we appreciate that the decisions young people make now could influence them into the future. Our aim this evening is to help you understand why the Key Stage 4 Options process matters. During the course of the evening, we will support you and your child, in making the best choices and decisions.

Why GCSE Choices Matter

GCSEs are not just another set of exams they are the foundation for future learning and careers. The subjects your child chooses could impact their options for further education, training, VI Form study, university, or employment. Employers may look at a set of GCSE results as a measure for how committed, disciplined, and resilient a child was at school. My advice to all young people is to select subjects that align with what you enjoy. A well-chosen combination of GCSE courses can open the doors to a bright future.

Balance Passion with Practicality

While we want students to follow their interests, it is important that they balance their passion with a sense of practicality. Some careers have specific subject requirements. For example, careers in engineering may encourage students to focus on Maths or Physics, whereas a Marine Biologist may have to focus on Geography and Biology.

Ultimately a GCSE student should study subjects they feel motivated and engaged in. Being motivated is crucial as evidence suggests that students will perform better in subjects where they feel engaged, happy and focused. If a young person selects a subject because of peer pressure or because they think it is easy, it can lead to student disengagement or underperformance.

The role of the Parent/Carer

As parents and carers your role is to support, guide and encourage. You know your child better than anyone. You know what motivates and excites them. Talk to them about their choices, encourage them to reflect and think about the future. Ask them to explore career pathways and complete their own research on what they would like to do . Please take the time to talk to our teachers who can help you and your child in the decision-making process. Encourage your child to ask questions before they make their final decision.

Final Thoughts

Choosing your GCSE subjects is not about deciding your entire future. As a school our intention is to support students in selecting subjects that they enjoy, keeping as many doors open as possible. With the right support from school and home, students will make informed decisions supporting them on their journey at St Albans.

I would like to finish by saying thank you for your time. Should you have any further questions please let me know or speak to the experts we have in the room this evening who will be able to guide and support you.