

Options Introduction Video 2026 – Transcript

Welcome to St Alban's Catholic High School's **Options** presentation for 2026. My name is Mrs Block, Deputy 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 **Options** 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.

Good evening and welcome. My name is Mr O'Neill and I am the Head of Year 9. As Head of Year 9, I'm delighted to introduce this curriculum options presentation. Year 9 is an exciting and important stage, as students begin to make choices that shape the next part of their learning journey. This video will guide you through the options available, explain how decisions should be made, and highlight how we support every student to choose subjects that suit their strengths, interests, and aspirations. Please take your time to watch carefully, and don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions.

Students in year 9 are sometimes unsure about the subjects that they would like to take at GCSE. Their route through to GCSE can be uncertain and even worrying for them. Our **Options** 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. Practical subject are assessed by both coursework and a final examination. All students will take GCSE examinations in English, mathematics, science and religious education. Our **Options** process aims to help students to choose three further option subjects. The process will ensure that students get the opportunity to understand what more about the other subjects before they make a decision to study the subject at GCSE.

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 our subject areas will benefit them in later life. Students will, of course, always have their preferences and the **Options** process will help them decide which of these subject skills will be of most benefit to them.

Students must study RE, English, Science and Maths. These four core subjects will lead to six or seven GCSE qualifications. This Options process will support students to choose the additional three subjects to study.

We recognise that, for some students, **nine or ten** GCSEs is not appropriate. For this reason, there will also be an alternative course available. This course will start in Year 10 and will 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 this alternative course is relevant and applicable to your child, our SENDCo, Mrs Pickard, will be in touch with you.

GCSE Choices

It is important for students to keep their future options open. We believe that it is generally best that students keep their choices as broad and balanced as possible. This means that students learn a variety of skills and knowledge that will best prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences in later life.

- That you may need in the future that you enjoy and want to study
- That you believe you can manage

It is important to remember that the choices that the student makes will be the subjects that they will carry through to GCSE and will involve a two year study commitment. Therefore, it is always a good idea for students to do their own research into subjects as well as speaking to staff. We also have a dedicated Careers Advisor on site to offer support and guidance to students about potential post-16 option. Staff in school are always on hand to support with this. By taking a proactive role in the process, students can make more informed choices and to take a greater responsibility in designing their own curriculum.

Do Not Consider Subjects

- **Just because your friends are doing them**

It's completely natural to want to stay with your friends. However, options choices last for **two or three years**, and timetables change—so there's no guarantee you'll always be in the same classes anyway.

The most important question to ask is: *Is this subject right for me?* Choosing a subject because it genuinely interests you and suits your strengths will help you stay motivated, enjoy lessons, and achieve your best—no matter who else is in the room

- **Just because you think they are an “easy option”**

There are no easy GCSEs. You'll do better in subjects you enjoy and are willing to work hard at, not ones you choose to avoid effort.

- **Just because you like the teacher**

It's great to enjoy learning from a particular teacher, but teachers can change, while the subject stays the same. Choose a subject because you enjoy the content, not just who teaches it.

If you need advice about the best subjects to choose , there are a number of helpful websites available, such as successatschool.org. Remember, you can always speak to your subject teachers, or other members of staff in school. We will always try our best to help and support.

At St Alban's we aim to ensure that students make informed choices. As Year 9 progresses students will learn more about what a GCSE in each subject will involve. This will be done in lessons and in special assemblies at the end of the Spring Term. Some students will be confident that they know the subjects they plan to study, while others may still be uncertain. We plan that students will have many opportunities to ask questions to ensure that the final choices they make at the end of Year 9 will be the best for them now and in their future.

An assembly will be held on Thursday 5th March to share the process with students. The following week, week commencing 9th March will be an opportunity for all departments to share with students what GCSE looks like for their subject to help students get a flavour of what the subject will entail to determine if it is of interest to them.

We will then hold our options information evening where students and parents can speak with the different departments to further understand what GCSE study looks like and ask any questions. Students will have some time to discuss with their family and ask staff any further questions before making their final choices by 17th April.

We look forward to meeting you on 18th March.

Thank you for watching.