

31 January 2025



Saffron Walden County High School

Saffron Academy Trust

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Dear Parents/Carers,

Subject choices for Year 8 students going into Year 9 in September 2025

As we outlined in the recent Curriculum Information presentation (a link to which can be found at the foot of this letter), in Year 9, students complete their Key Stage 3 programmes of study. They can also experience 'new' subjects, such as Business, Health & Social Care and Technology specialisms, before finally committing to those subjects that they will take on to GCSE level in Years 10 and 11. This model allows students to work at a higher level, develop foundation skills across a range of subjects, and ensure they can make more informed final GCSE choices during Year 9.

The Core Curriculum in Year 9

- All students will continue to follow a core curriculum consisting of Mathematics, English (Language and Literature), Science, History, Geography, Personal development (including PSHE, RSE, non-GCSE RPE, Careers and Economic guidance and non-GCSE Computing), PE, and one Language (from French, German, Spanish and Latin).

Creative Choice

- All students will select at least one 'creative' subject. They will choose from a wide range of Arts, Technology and Computing/IT courses.

Open Choices

- Two further 'open' choices will allow students to choose two additional subjects. This will include the chance to study a second language, additional creative choices, PE (with PE theory), RPE, or to trial new subjects such as Business or Health & Social Care.

If students wish to study a second language (in French or German) as one of their open choices, this will require them to attend one hour per week of additional teaching after school for Year 9 only. Please note that, for timetabling reasons, it is not possible to study both Latin and Spanish.

This structure allows students to personalise some elements of their curriculum, while maintaining a broad and balanced set of subjects at this stage of their education.



GCSE (Years 10 and 11)

- Around 80% of students will be expected to follow our standard curriculum consisting of Mathematics, English (Language and Literature), Science, core PE and one EBACC subject (Computer Science, Geography, History or a language).
- They will choose three additional options from those subjects they studied in Year 9.
- A small number of students with specific educational needs will be offered an alternative model and we will contact you if we think your child might benefit from this.

Further Information

Also attached to this message is the 'Year 8 Choices Handbook', which provides detailed information about each subject.

After half term, we will be publishing the Y8 Spring Progress Check, in which teachers will forecast the Attainment Band they believe your child will receive in each subject. There will also be an opportunity to meet with teachers (via SchoolCloud) at parents' evenings.

SIMS Options

In the week beginning 10th March, you will be given access to the options module on your SIMS parent app. Using all the information provided, you should complete this form with your child by Tuesday 25th March.

Please see the letter sent at the start of this term with instructions on how to download and log into this app. If you have any concerns about using the app, please contact Mrs L Edwards at admissions@swchs.net. A video detailing how to use the app is in the presentation below.

Curriculum information presentation

If you missed it, please do find the presentation linked below, where Ms Lankester and Mrs Vanderpere-Brown outline our curriculum model and the options process and provide more information about Languages, Science, English and Maths.

[Click here to view the presentation. This link will take you to SWCHS website.](#)

We hope all this information will help your child to make decisions that will allow them to continue to enjoy their time at SWHCS and to make excellent progress.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs K Vanderpere-Brown
Assistant Headteacher

Mr A Wheeler
Year 8 Achievement Co-ordinator

