

# FERNDOWN

## Upper School



### Options Booklet 2026-2028

#### Information for Parents & Carers

**Please read this document carefully as it gives you information on:**

Which subjects are still compulsory to study in Year 10 & 11.

Which subjects you can choose in Year 10 & 11.

Advice to help you make your choices.

How to complete the options form.

#### **Important Dates:**

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January- Options launch to students P1-3

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January- Options Evening for parents and year 9 students- 6.30-8.30pm

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> January- Year 9 Online Consultation Meeting 4-7pm

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February – Deadline for complete the options form

## **Introduction to the Option Process**

For the first time in their education, students are able to have some choice in the subjects that they study in Years 10 and 11. Part of the curriculum is fixed; the remainder of their timetable will be made up of subjects that they choose which could include GCSEs or vocational qualifications.

The aim of this information and the GCSE options presentation is to help students to make the most appropriate choices for their future. It is important that they seek advice and talk to people who can help them with these decisions. They include their subject teachers, subjects' leaders, Heads of House, Heads of Year, tutors as well as yourselves as parents and carers and older students who are taking the course already.

We are committed to ensuring that students enjoy their experience of learning in years 10 and 11 and that they strive to achieve the best that they can be. They should aim to choose courses that suit their needs and that will challenge them and help them to develop life skills to prepare them for their future after Ferndown Upper School.

Below you will find:

- An outline of the curriculum structure in years 10 and 11 and the subjects which all students will study.
- A summary of the options subjects which students can choose from.
- A timescale of when you need to make your decision by.
- Details of how to complete the options form.
- Details of how your choices will affect opportunities during their time at FUS and beyond.

## **FUS Core Curriculum**

The subjects shown below are subjects which all students must take. These form the Core Curriculum:

English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Core PE. PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education which includes Citizenship and Religious Education) and Careers are taught through the tutor program in Years 10 & 11.

In addition, during year 9, all students have been studying GCSE Ethics & Philosophy. They will take the exam in Summer 2027 at the end of year 10.

## **Accessing information about the courses on offer**

All students have received a more detailed copy of this options booklet today. Their booklet contains an outline of all the courses on offer with course content, careers links, exam boards and the name of the subject leader who can be contacted if you have any queries. Please encourage your child to use their booklet to help them make appropriate choices. A copy of this booklet and the students booklet can also be found on our school website.

## **Examinations and Assessments in Options**

Different qualifications have difference assessments requirements for Key Stage 4 (GCSE and GCSE equivalent courses). Many qualifications have coursework elements that contribute towards the final grade whereas some courses are 100% examined via external examinations in Year 11.

We advise that you look at the options carefully and consider your child's personal strengths and the workload requirements with various coursework/ examinations combinations. Please feel free to ask our staff via email or at the Year 9 consultation evening about this.

## **Careers Advice**

It is vital that students are aware of all the options available to them post-16 and their choices in Year 9 play an important part in this. Our Careers staff offer advice and guidance to students on a range of issues including their plans for the future.

There are a number of ways to access high-quality careers guidance:

1. FUS Careers Advisor- Careers advice is available at the Options Evening, from our careers adviser, Miss Giles. For further information about how to get careers advice and our outstanding careers programme go to: <https://fernup.dorset.sch.uk/information/careers-programme/>
2. Our teachers- Our school is also fortunate to have over 60 graduate teaching staff who are experts in their fields, who come with a range of invaluable experience and careers knowledge. Please contact our Heads of Subject using their emails on their associated option pages where they are more than happy to advise and support you.

3. UNIFROG- This is a one stop shop where students can easily explore their interests and successfully apply for their next best step after school. Students have been sent a log in via school email to access this resource and one of their careers sessions today gave them an opportunity to start exploring the resources on Unifrog.

## **Completing the Options Form**

**Students are required to complete their option choices on the Bromcom student portal by Monday 2nd February. Full instructions have been issued to students in their option booklet today.**

**Students have a choice of THREE option subjects. They must choose ONE subject from each block.**

**Students must make ONE reserve choice in each block** in case subjects are not available due to timetable restrictions or small numbers opting for their first choice making the subject not available to run. **If subjects are over-subscribed, students' career aspirations will be taken into account along with their behaviour and attendance record.**

There are some restrictions with regards to subjects. Students can:

- Choose Either PE GCSE or Health & Fitness (Vocational) – not both

Students can only choose maths statistics (Block C) if they are currently in maths groups X1, X2, Y1, Y2. This is due to the high mathematical content of these courses. Please speak to your child's maths teachers if you have any queries about this.

## Option Blocks

Block A	Block B	Block C
Computer Science	Art & Design	Art & Design
Drama	Business Studies	Geography
Food & Nutrition *	Health & Social Care	Health & Fitness
French	History	Maths Statistics
Geography	Media Studies	PE
Health & Fitness	Music	Photography
Health & Social Care	Photography	Textiles
History	Product Design	Food & Nutrition
PE	Spanish	
Sociology	Textiles	
Spanish	Sociology	



To enable us to understand your choices better and how these link to your career aspirations, please complete the form which can be accessed via this QR code.

**\*Food & Nutrition** - Students who wish to choose Food & Nutrition must complete the Microsoft Form which can be accessed via the QR code above.

**\*\* Maths Statistics** – students who choose this subject will also be given additional science lessons on their timetable. These lessons will be used to give students an extra lesson in each of the three science disciplines- Biology, Chemistry and Physics. These classes will focus on grade 7-9 and prepare students for A Levels in these subjects. Students who are likely to take maths or a science subject at A Level are strongly advised to opt for maths statistics at GCSE.

## **Frequently asked questions for parents**

### **1. What if my child is not interested in any other subject for a reserve choice?**

*We advise that you write in the comment box in the Microsoft form to explain why, but it is important you consider this as you may not get all your first choices*

### **2. What is the reasoning behind not having a language as a compulsory option?**

*At FUS we believe in offering a full range of choices to our students. We offer two different languages in our options allowing our students to pick up to two if they are passionate about this. If your child is a keen linguist and is interested in taking this forward, we highly recommend learning an additional language as this opens many futures options.*

### **3. How will we be notified of what options have been given /granted and when will this be also will there be time from notification to GCSE course starting?**

*We will give final confirmation of options in Early Summer 1 half term just after Easter. However, before this point, many conversations led by our Curriculum Manager, Mrs. Milsom or Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Chater will happen with students to ensure their choices, course demand and student aspirations are considered before final decisions are made. If reserve choices are required all parents and students will be communicated with before course confirmation.*

### **4. What is the difference between a vocational qualification and a GCSE qualification?**

*Vocational qualifications AND GCSEs are 'Level 2' Qualifications. Vocational qualifications generally have a higher coursework component compared to their GCSE equivalent. These courses are less academically demanding in terms of terminal or final exams. In some cases, higher university entries may not consider vocational options at GCSE, though this view is restricted to the most competitive universities like Cambridge and Oxford. Most universities accept vocational qualifications at GCSE and Sixth Form level.*

### **5. PE is a core subject; do they have to pick one of the PE options too?**

*No, students do not have to pick PE as an additional subject. However, all students will get one hour a week Core PE to ensure they complete physical activity/ exercise as required by the national curriculum in our fantastic sports facilities.*

### **6. How will I know if I enjoy a subject which I've not experienced yet (e.g. Business Studies, Sociology, Media) Are we able to change subjects if we change our minds?**

*Students have been given a presentation about these subjects by subject staff and more information can be found in the options booklet issued to students.*

*Students will have up to 4 academic weeks to decide whether a course is for them. If within this time they decide they may want to change, conversations will be had between them, parents and our options team. It may not be possible during this period to swap to another course which is already full so decisions need to be taken carefully in the first instance. Before taking on the subject, why not talk to students who may already take it in other year groups? Or talk to the teachers who deliver it to informed as much as possible?*

#### **7. My child is in a top maths group, should they do maths statistics in option C?**

*We would strongly advise that if your child is in maths groups x1, x2, y1, y2, that they take GCSE maths statistics in option C. The course has proven very successful for our able mathematicians for some years now and is an excellent qualification for those students who are likely to pursue an A Level in maths, biology, chemistry, physics, geography and psychology. We will have individual conversations with all those students who are in X1, X2, Y1, Y2 who do not choose maths statistics to check that they have chosen subjects wisely in line with their career aspirations. It is important to still choose a reserve choice as set changes following year 9 maths end of year assessments, may mean your child is no longer eligible to take maths statistics.*

Subject representatives can be found in the following rooms tonight			
Art	E2	History	B10
Business Studies	B17	Maths Statistics	A10
Computer Science	B17	Media GCSE	B15
Drama	B1	Music	A2
Ethics & Philosophy	B13	PE GCSE	Cafe
Food & Nutrition	E8	Photography	E16
French	Cafe	Product Design	E14
Geography	B5	Sociology	Cafe
Health & Fitness	Cafe	Spanish	Cafe
Health & Social Care	A9	Textiles	E5

Careers & SEND representatives can be found in the cafe.

