



SPECIALIST SCIENCE COLLEGE

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THE COOPER SCHOOL

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Dear Parents

January 2017

Key Stage 4 Pathways Evening for Year 8: Thursday 26th January 2017 – 4.30 pm to 7.00pm

In recent years many schools have altered their curriculum offer for students to start Key Stage 4 at the beginning of Year 9, instead of the traditional start date for these GCSE (and equivalent) courses at the beginning of Year 10. At The Cooper School we have also decided to implement this change to our curriculum from September 2017, affecting our current Year 8 students. We need make these changes for the following reasons. Firstly, the new GCSE courses demand far more subject content is taught, thus requiring students to have greater learning time in a significant number of subject areas. Secondly, the DFE's recommended GCSE subjects for the current Year 8 (the EBACC) would reduce students' option choices if we didn't create more time within the Key Stage.

Therefore, we will ask all Year 8 students to consider which subjects they wish to study at GCSE level for Key Stage 4 (Years 9, 10 and 11). All students will study English (Language and Literature), Mathematics, Science (either Double or Triple award), RE, ICT (non-GCSE) and PE (non-GCSE). Students will then be able to choose four additional subjects from the wide range of courses on offer.

The first stage of this process will be the issue of the Guide to Courses Booklet to all Year 8 students during form time. Following on from this we will be holding a Key Stage 4 Pathways Evening on **Thursday 26th of January**, which we hope will provide you and your son/daughter with extra information and advice which will be of help in making his/her decisions about which courses to opt for during Years 9, 10 and 11.

During the evening you are invited to attend two separate events. One of these will take the form of a Curriculum Presentation by senior staff. This will take place in the **Performance Hall at 4.45pm and will then be repeated at 5.45pm and 6.45pm for parents of current Year 8 students**. The presentation will last approximately 20 minutes. Please note that presentations will also be taking place at 5.15 pm and 6.15pm for parents of current Year 9 students (as students in this year group will pursue our traditional pathways).

The second event is a more informal Pathways Fair at which all subjects will be represented. You will have a chance to "visit" as many departments as you like to ask questions about the courses they offer. The Pathways Fair will take place in the Sports Hall and will run from 4.30pm – 7.00pm. **It is highly recommended that parents who are able to arrive in time for 4.30pm start of the Pathways Fair do so, in order to talk to staff before the evening becomes busy with parents of students in both Year 8 and Year 9 attending the same event.**



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We will follow this event with the Year 8 Parents' Evening on **Thursday the 23rd of February** at which you will have the opportunity to discuss your son/daughter's progress with all of their subject teachers to help to finalise choices.

In addition to the Pathways Evening, we will be running events in school to support your son/daughter in choosing appropriate subjects, which will include subject specific information and careers related guidance. Form Tutors, Heads of House and Student Support Managers will be available to support throughout this process and I am available to answer any further queries.

We would like to take this opportunity to reassure you that all Year 8 students have a continued place at The Cooper School and that we are confident that our broad, successful and established curriculum offer is unrivalled. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

Dr. R. Whannel
Assistant Headteacher