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Slide: January 2026 to June 2026: Key milestones

- The slide above outlines the GCSE Options process for the rest of the academic year.
- When we return in the new year, Year 9 students will attend an assembly explaining the GCSE Options process.
- A GCSE Options Course Booklet will be emailed to parents and students on 7 January.
- Throughout January, students will take part in PSHE sessions to support their decision-making. These will focus on making effective choices, using Unifrog, and hearing advice from current Year 10 students about their GCSE options.
- Students will have access to Unifrog, an online platform designed to help them explore subjects, interests, and future pathways. Each student will have their own personal account.
- **On 15 January**, parents and students will have the opportunity to discuss subject choices and next steps with Year 9 subject teachers.
- **On Friday 16 January**, you will receive an email with instructions on how to log in and select your daughter's GCSE option choices. Changes can be made up until the deadline.
- The deadline for submitting GCSE options is **3:20pm on Friday 27 February**. After this time, no further changes can be made during Year 9.
- **Between March and May**, the school uses students' GCSE and A-Level choices to create the academic timetable for the following year. While we understand that preferences can change,

students will have a final opportunity to request a change at the start of September, up until 25 September. After this date, changes cannot be made.

Slide: An outstanding curriculum for all - broad and balanced offer

- When designing our curriculum, our aim is to ensure that your daughter receives the best possible education and is well prepared for her future.
- We want her not only to achieve strong exam results, but also to leave school with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to succeed in whatever she chooses to do next.
- With this in mind, our curriculum is designed to provide a well-rounded education that reflects and underpins our school's values.

Slide: An outstanding curriculum for all: Our Core Curriculum

Our curriculum design centres around some key principles.

- All students study our core curriculum. This includes English (Language & Literature), maths, triple science, one Modern Foreign Language, PSHE and new for next September, a **Higher Qualification Project**. I will share what this entails shortly.
- Following the school's curriculum review that took place last year, the school will be making some changes to its **Religious Education** (RS Religious Studies) provision. Religious Education is a statutory entitlement for all students from Year 7 through to Year 13. From September 2026, students in Key Stage 4 will have the option to study RS at GCSE level. All students will receive RE education through the school's assembly, tutorial, and PSHE programme. In Year 10, students will also complete wider reading of a non-fiction philosophical text to deepen their understanding and critical thinking. This approach supports the development of informed, reflective citizens who can engage thoughtfully with ethical issues, society, and the wider world.
- **Should a student choose to pursue RS (Religious Studies) at GCSE, the school expects them to complete the course in its entirety.**
- To support your child's wellbeing, all students undertake compulsory PE each week.
- The curriculum is designed to be challenging, pushing your child to think critically and solve problems, which prepares her for life after school.
- The curriculum includes lessons that teach practical skills such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. We also look at media literacy, financial education and sustainability.
- Our curriculum also promotes respect for all cultures and backgrounds, ensuring a positive learning environment for everyone.

Slide Core Offer: Maths, English, Science

- Students across all classes will study exactly the same content.
- In Maths, there are two tiers. Tier 1 students study GCSE maths, along with an enrichment course and tier 2 students study GCSE maths.
- In English students will be taught all the same texts.

- All of our students are entered for the higher tier examinations.
- Some of the group sizes may differ in number and the pace is adapted to support the needs of our students

Slide: Higher Project Qualification (HPQ)

From September 2026, all students will study for the Higher Project Qualification (HPQ). Studying the HPQ in Key Stage 4 gives students a unique opportunity to take charge of their own learning by exploring a topic they are passionate about, while developing critical research, analysis, and project-management skills. It strengthens independent thinking, problem-solving, and presentation abilities, preparing students for post-16 study and future pathways.

Completing an HPQ demonstrates ambition, self-motivation, and academic rigour—qualities highly valued by universities, employers, and apprenticeship providers. The qualification also promotes confidence, resilience, and a deeper understanding of how different subjects connect in the real world. As part of this course, students will further develop key study skills and core computing skills. All students will begin and complete this Level 2 qualification.

We recognise that aspects of the HPQ may push students outside their comfort zone, whether through presenting their work or managing their workload alongside other subjects. This challenge is an important part of their learning journey, and it is essential that students are supported to develop resilience and independence as they progress through the course.

Therefore, we will not be removing students from the HPQ, even if they find it difficult at times. Instead, we will work with them—and with you as parents—to ensure they are supported, encouraged, and equipped to succeed. We kindly ask for your partnership in promoting perseverance so that your daughter can gain the full benefits of this valuable qualification.

Slide: GCSE Option Subject Choices

- All students study 7 GCSEs, a level 2 qualification and then 3 further GCSE subjects of their choosing. We are delighted to be able to offer students a choice of up to 17 subjects.
- We do not make our students select either History or Geography, instead we give our students the flexibility to pick subjects that align with their strengths and interests, helping them go deeper into areas that they enjoy.
- Due to the nature of the Product Design and DT Textile courses, we stipulate that students cannot study both as there is too much overlap.
- You will notice that there are a few subjects that are not taught in years 7,8 and 9. We have listened to our students and this year, all year 9 students will receive a taster session in Astronomy, DT Textiles and Photography before they have to make their subject choices.

Slide: NEA subjects

Students can choose from

The benefits of studying a NEA subject

- Develops practical and applied skills that cannot be assessed through written exams.
- Builds independence, organisation, and time-management, as work is completed over an extended period.
- Allows students to demonstrate strengths in coursework rather than relying solely on exam performance.
- Encourages creativity, problem-solving, and real-world application of knowledge.
- Reduces pressure on final exams by spreading assessment across the course.

Students should consider:

- Requires sustained commitment, which can be challenging alongside other subjects.
- Can increase workload during busy periods of the year which some students find stressful.
- Deadlines are fixed and must be met, leaving less flexibility than exam-based subjects.
- Teacher guidance is limited due to strict rules, so students must work independently.
- The quality of the final grade depends heavily on consistent effort.

We recommend that students think very carefully whether they can manage studying more than one subject that includes a Non-Exam Assessment (NEA). Students should not study more than 2 NEA subjects. Many students find it challenging to manage their time effectively when completing NEA coursework, which can lead to increased anxiety—especially if they fall behind on deadlines. When this happens, the school will provide support to help students catch up and succeed; we will not withdraw students from their NEA subjects.

We kindly ask for your support in encouraging your child to stay organised, meet deadlines, and develop the resilience needed to manage these important responsibilities

Slide: DT Limited Spaces

- Every year our practical subjects remain very popular, in particular GCSE DT textiles and GCSE food preparation.
- This year, we are able to offer 20 places for our GCSE food preparation course and 20 places for GCSE DT Textiles.
- If your daughter is considering studying GCSE Textiles or GCSE Food Preparation, then we ask that they prioritise this subject as a subject change request at a later date is unlikely. Places are limited on the grounds of health and safety reasons and capacity.
- In the event one or both of these are oversubscribed, I will meet with all students to check that they still wish to study the subject. If they do then student names go into that and those who are unable

to study the subject are the put on a waiting list. Priority is given to these students if a space becomes available.

- I would also like to add that if a course has very low demand, the school may need to make the difficult decision not to run it, as it would not be viable to deliver.

Slide GCSE PE Subject Guidance

- Please make sure that your daughter speaks with her PE teacher and checks the GCSE course booklet so that she is aware of the commitments required outside of school for this course.

Slide GCSE RS Subject Guidance:

The purpose of students studying GCSE Religious Studies is to develop a deeper understanding of different religious and ethical perspectives, to think critically about moral issues, and to build the ability to analyse and evaluate a range of viewpoints.

This course is **not** intended as a platform for students to explore or promote their own personal faith. Instead, it focuses on academic study, respectful understanding, and balanced evaluation of religious and philosophical ideas.

Slide: The Certificate in Maths- this is not part of our GCSE options offer

- The Certificate of Further Maths is a level 2 certificate qualification and is an enrichment course.
- It is not considered a GCSE and it is not required to study A Level Maths and A Level Further Maths. This certificate provides additional challenge for those students who are able to master the skills required at GCSE a lot faster and therefore the additional pressures of studying this extra course is unlikely to impact on their other studies.
- With this in mind, towards the end of this academic year, a small group of students is identified by the staff within the Maths Department. This group is based on consistently strong outcomes in both Maths and Science.
- Students are not at a disadvantage if they do not study this level 2 qualification.
- In July 2026, we will endeavour to notify parents of those students who will be studying this qualification.

Slide: Typical reasons given for wanting a subject change request

This year 44 subject change requests were made, that is nearly 21% of the cohort.

This academic year, students will have up until the 25 September to make a request. Please note, we cannot guarantee that a change can be made despite our best efforts. There are times when we are unable to make changes. To avoid disappointment, it is important that students access and consider all information available to them now to make an informed decision. Please see PowerPoint slide for reasons given for subject change requests.

Slide: How you can support your child

- We find many students are still unsure what they want to go onto to study for A Levels or Degree. In this instance focusing on what they enjoy and their key strengths is key.
- For those who do know what they want to study or they have in mind a possible career path, then we would advise that they look at the degree that they may want to study, identify what A Levels may be required and then look at our Sixth Form prospectus to identify which GCSE subjects are required to study particular A Levels. Please click on this link for the **Sixth Form Course Prospectus and A Level Subject Course Prospectus 2026-2028** [Nonsuch High School for Girls - Sixth Form Prospectuses](#)
- Please let your daughter pick what they want to study and not what you would like to study or think that they should study.
- Your daughter needs to engage with Unifrog. She will be asked to take a quiz. It will provide an interest profile for her and she can access a careers library.
- Can I also recommend that students think very carefully if they are considering studying two practical NEA subjects. Many have a high non-examined element to the course which means that there is a significant time commitment throughout years 10 and 11 to complete practical work.

Useful links

- <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/explore-careers>
- <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/what-can-i-do-with-my-degree>
- <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings/>
- www.unifrog.org/student/home.com
- <https://www.ucas.com>
- <https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/subjects>