



Fulford School

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Wednesday 29 January 2020

Dear Parents/Carers of Year 8 students,

I am writing to outline a change to our options process which will impact upon current Year 8 students and to outline the key reasons for this change.

From September 2020 onwards, we will be changing our curriculum model. Students will no longer make their Key Stage 4 option choices in Year 8; instead, they will make these choices in Year 9. This means that your son/daughter will not be making his/her Key Stage 4 option choices until this time next year. From now on, Key Stage 3 will run for three years (from Year 7-9) and Key Stage 4 will run for two years (from Year 10-11).

This change to the Fulford School curriculum model very much reflects the national picture. We took the decision in 2016 to move our Key Stage 4 options process to Year 8 rather than Year 9. At that point, over half of all secondary schools were operating a three-year Key Stage 4. The number of schools that plan to continue with this system beyond this year is enormously reduced. One of the most significant factors in our original decision to move to a three-year Key Stage 4 was to ensure that Fulford School students would not be disadvantaged through a reduced amount of curriculum time by comparison with students in other schools. The national change to a three-year Key Stage 3 curriculum model means that this issue is no longer significant.

One of the disadvantages of the previous curriculum model was that students had to make subject choices very early in their secondary school lives. The increased length of Key Stage 3 within the new curriculum model offers a broader Year 9 curriculum and means that students will have an additional year of learning and maturing before making these choices.

Ultimately, we plan the secondary curriculum over the course of five years and the division between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is very artificial. As you may be aware, GCSEs were recently reformed and the vast majority of assessment is now through terminal examinations at the end of Year 11. Under the previous curriculum model, Year 9 was considered a 'foundation year' which was focused upon the development of subject-specific skills rather than GCSE content. Under the new model, this will remain very much at the heart of our Year 9 curriculum design.

I have explained this change to Year 8 students in assembly today. There will be senior staff at the front of school at each of the forthcoming parents' evenings to answer any questions that you may have about this change to the curriculum model. Additionally, we intend to run a curriculum-based information evening for parents later in the school year, details of which will be sent to you nearer to the time.

If you have any queries in relation to any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Mr T Johnson
Deputy Headteacher
Curriculum and Achievement



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