

Y9 Options

We are delighted to welcome pupils, their parents and families to the start of our Year 9 Options process. This is an exciting time for Year 9 pupils but it is also a time of change and perhaps some uncertainty about future careers, choices and subject options.

The courses that are on offer in Y10 and Y11 allow for variety of learners to excel, for example, your child may wish to choose academic subjects such as History and RE, or more practical subjects such as Engineering and Dance. To support your child in making these choices we have selected them to follow a pathway of qualifications. This will allow them to maximise their GCSE or Vocational choices to ensure there is a smooth transition in to post-16.

Purple Pathway	A selection of Core and optional GCSE or BTEC subjects leading to Post-16 study at school or college, also enabling access to Apprenticeships. Pupils are encouraged to fulfil the English Baccalaureate by studying a humanities subject and a language. All courses will be level 2 standard.
Green Pathway	A selection of Core, optional GCSE or BTEC subjects, including vocational courses taken in school and leading to Post-16 study at school, college or employer-based training including Apprenticeships. Pupils have the option to fulfil the English Baccalaureate by studying a humanities subject and a language. All courses will be level 2 standard, however there will be a variety of level 1 courses available.
Blue Pathway	A selection of Core and BTEC subjects that require more vocational or applied learning. Pupils access a range of subjects, both academic and vocational which have progression routes at a range of Post-16 providers or employer-based training including Apprenticeships. Most courses will be level 1 standard, but some students will be encouraged to study a level 2 course.

What is the English Baccalaureate?

This is not a stand-alone qualification but is recognition that a pupil has studied a set range of five GCSEs as part of their KS4 studies. These must be in GCSE English, Mathematics, two Science qualifications, a Language and either History or Geography. To fulfil the English Baccalaureate, a pupil must gain a minimum of Grade 5 in all of these subject areas.

Level of Qualifications

Level 2 Courses – these are also known as GCSE courses and are graded 9-1 (9 being the highest). There are other Level 2 courses such as BTEC courses that are graded as Distinction*, Distinction, Merit or Pass. We would expect all of the purple pathway pupils to be accessing level 2 qualifications.

Level 1 Courses – these are GCSE or BTEC qualifications below Level 2 courses. They have the potential to lead onto Level 2 courses either at school or in Further Education. These are usually equivalent to Grades 1 – 3 at GCSE. We have many vocational courses that provide access to Level 1.

Entry Level Courses – these qualifications work towards Level 1 courses. They have the potential to lead onto Level 1 and Level 2 courses at either school or Further Education. Many of these subjects develop the skills required for employment. We have many vocational courses that provide access to Entry Level courses

Support and Expectations

At Fir Vale School we have high expectations of all our students. This is particularly the case at Key Stage 4. We expect a high level of commitment from all our students in Years 10 and 11.

This commitment involves:

- Consistently high attendance and punctuality
- Completing classwork, coursework and homework to the best of your ability and meeting required deadlines.
- The best attitude and effort possible in all subjects
- Reaching your potential

Pupil Profile

To make sure that when you start KS4 you are heading in the right direction answer the following questions below.

What are your strengths?

These could be your skills, talents or qualities you have.

<i>e.g enjoy reading</i>	



Thinking about my future.....

What do I want to do in the future?

You may know a specific job or an area of work that you would like to focus upon. Write your ideas down.

<i>e.g Engineer</i>	

Do you know any subjects which you should study at GCSE for your chosen career path? (e.g. if you wish to be an engineer you must have GCSE Maths and English)

What do I want to do when I leave Fir Vale School?

Would you like to go to college, sixth form, apprenticeship or full time work?





Sheffield Futures are a service for all young people aged 13-19. It offers each young person the practical help and advice they need to get the best start life.

Our Careers Advisor, Mrs Sarah Little can be found in the careers room (next to the LRC) during break or lunch times. Mrs Little will also be providing you the help and support you need when making your post-16 choices.

Making the right choice

It is important you take your time when choosing your subjects, whatever you chose for the next two years will influence your future choices.

Reasons to choose a subject:

- You're good at it
- You like it
- It will help you in the future (career pathway and further study options)
- It keeps your options open (broad and balanced)



Do not choose a subject because:

- You like or don't like the teacher
- Your friends are taking the same course
- You think it will be easy



Where to get advice and support:

- Read this booklet
- Talk to your subject teachers/form tutor
- Talk to your family, especially older brothers and sisters
- Ask Mrs Sarah Little for careers guidance slittle@firvale.com
- Talk to Ms Charlton (Deputy Headteacher) acharlton@firvale.com
- Talk to Mr Hussain (Head of Y9) bhussain1@firvale.com or Miss Saddiq (Deputy Head of Y9) asaddiq@firvale.com

Questions to ask yourself

1. What is the subject about? What will you learn?
2. How is the subject taught?
3. Are you expected to do a lot of independent study and research?
4. How is the subject assessed?
5. What skills do you need to be successful in this subject?
6. Which subjects are you good at, or currently have difficulties with?
7. Which subjects do you like or dislike?
8. What advice have your subject teachers given you?
9. Do I need to take part in the subject practically?
10. Which subjects do you need to choose to study for Post-16 courses, Apprenticeships or careers you are considering?

We aim to offer all of you a personalised curriculum that reflects both your ability and your interests. We hope to offer each of you the option choices that you want. However, it is important to highlight that we are not always able to offer you all of your preferred options. This is due to student numbers for certain courses and the availability of staff. You will receive a letter in May confirming your final choices.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you require any further support.

*Miss Charlton
Deputy Headteacher*