

29 January 2021

Dear Parent,

Year 8 – Final Options Form

At the end of this communication is the link for the final option form, which has a deadline of **Monday 8th February 2021 (noon) for submission.**

As I have previously communicated, there are a number of subjects that we anticipate being oversubscribed, and a number of subjects that have had very low uptake.

I'd like to take the time to go into a bit more detail at this point.

Our initial findings from the three straw polls that are now completed show us that the combination of subjects in Blocks A, B and C will allow the overwhelming majority of students to have their first choices in these blocks.

In Block D however, there have been a very high number of choices for Business Studies. As you may be aware, there is a national shortage of Business Studies teachers, and we consider ourselves exceptionally fortunate to be able to run it at all, using a teacher from the maths department to teach it. Therefore we can only commit to running one class. The numbers from Straw Poll 1, 2 and 3 indicate that if numbers stay the same, **only one third** of children opting for Business Studies will be able to take it. I am therefore asking parents and students to consider their reserve choices in Block D with great care and consideration.

Two parents have emailed into the Options email account to ask how we will reduce the number of children to a single class of 30 and what criteria we will apply. Firstly, any students whose forms are late and submitted after the deadline will not be considered for this option. Of the children who submit their form within the deadline and selected Business Studies, we will then select 30 students 'out of a hat' in order to make up the class. I appreciate that some parents may feel very strongly that their child deserves a place over others, but in the interests of fairness and inclusivity, we will be selecting 30 children at random to make sure that all students who submitted their form on time have an equal chance of getting in. We anticipate this taking place when the children return, so that the allocation of places in this subject can be as open and transparent as possible.

Based on this process, I would ask parents to consider this choice very carefully. If your child is not selected as one of the 30 in the class, they will be given one of their reserves or other preferences in that block.

In terms of subjects with very low intake, I am also asking parents to prepare for French in Block D, RE in Block D, and History in Block D not to run at all. The numbers at Straw Poll 3 were very low, but as we expect them to go up once the Business Studies students are redistributed, we have left them all in on the final form.

As I know parents will appreciate, allocating four choices to 240 children has been made more problematic with current circumstances, but once students return, we will be able once again to engage in face-to-face discussions with the children about what they have chosen – a process which we know they value so much.

We look forward to receiving your child's final choices by Monday 8th February 2021 at noon.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=PBU-HUqGb0uP0Ea7P2oAzyphOsqG98NCp2oqmPUjrthURFgxR0UzS1JCU1IWWUJQSThNRjhBRDA5Uy4u>

Yours sincerely,

Miss Shelton
Assistant Headteacher