

Stoke Newington School and Sixth
Form Key Stage 4 information
evening.

25th February 2026.

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with responsibility for curriculum.



AIMS:

- 1.To summarise the GCSE and Level 2 qualifications offered at SNS.
- 2.To present guidance for parents and carers about progression routes at SNS.
- 3.To outline the options timeline and process.

- Grading system of 9 to 1 replacing A* to G when curriculum and assessment reforms were made in 2017
- New and more challenging content
- Removal of controlled assessment for non-practical subjects
- Written examination element in all subjects but art, with various weighting depending on course
- Maths, science and languages have tiered papers (higher - grades 9 to 4 and foundation – grades 5 to 1)

GRADE REFORMS

Old GCSE Grade (no longer used)	New GCSE Grade	OCR Cambridge National Certificate
A*	9	Level 2 Distinction *
	8	
A	7	Level 2 Distinction
B	6	Level 2 Merit
	5	
C	4	Level 2 Pass
D	3	Level 1 Distinction
E		Level 1 Merit
F		Level 1 Pass
G	1	
U	U	Fail (F)

MAKING INFORMED CHOICES:

1. Before making any decisions, do plenty of research, making sure that you have a wide knowledge of entry requirements for a range of 6th form and post-16 courses.
2. Do your chosen subjects link to potential post-16 plans, post-18 plans and possible career choices?
3. Consider your strengths and what you enjoy.
4. Keep your options open and choose a broad range of subjects.
5. Don't make choices based on friendships or preferred teachers.

Progression to university

Our sixth form students go on to study at a wide array of universities, including University of Oxford and University of Cambridge, as well as art schools like UAL, and other prestigious London universities like LSE. We have also had students go on to study abroad at institutions such as Harvard.

We pride ourselves on ensuring we offer a broad and balanced programme that enables students to make informed decisions on next steps, which has resulted in students not only progressing to university but also onto apprenticeships, and Art Foundation courses. The key is to keep your options open by getting the best GCSE grades possible. Then, at sixth form, choose A levels or BTECs that are applicable to anything you want to do in future and seek to enjoy your learning.

It is very important that you check that the A level choices you make facilitate you being able to do any degree you might want to do. For example, if you want to do medicine you need to study Chemistry. For more detailed information please look at the Russell Group's Informed Choices website: www.informedchoices.ac.uk

Science A levels can be studied with combined science GCSEs as long as at least 6-5 is attained. To find out more about university you can use these guides:

- www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk
- www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide
- www.independent.co.uk/student/into-university/az-uni-colleges

Qualifications ladder

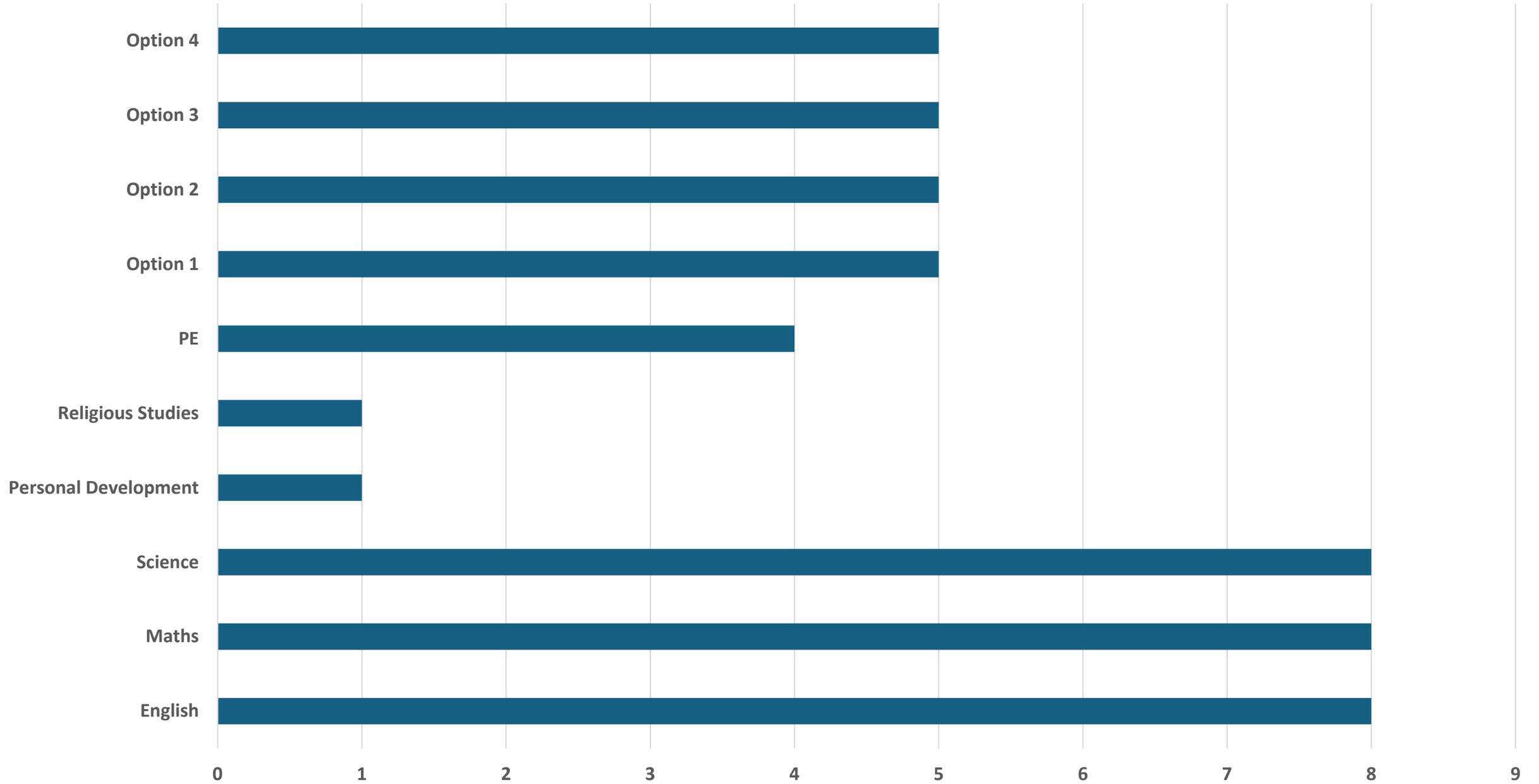
Levels	Academic general qualifications	Vocational qualifications - work ready qualifications	Work based/skills qualifications
5	Honours degree		
4	Degree	Higher National Diploma Higher National Certificate Higher Level Apprenticeship	Foundation degree NVQ 4
3	A level GCSE	BTEC nationals Award, cert & diplomas Short courses	NVQ 3
		Advanced apprenticeship	
2	GCSE 9-4	BTEC firsts Diplomas & certificates Short courses	NVQ 2 Work skills
		Apprenticeship	
1	GCSE 3-1	BTEC introductory Diplomas & certificates Short courses	NVQ 1 ESOL Work skills

Thinking about A levels and BTECs

Many A level and BTECs depend upon you having studied particular subjects at GCSE. In the table below we have set out the 2025/26 entry requirements for our sixth form:

Subject	Minimum entry requirements
Art	4 in Art and 4 English
Biology	6 in Biology and a 6 in one of the other two Sciences (or at least a 6-6 in Combined Sciences), 5 in Maths and 5 English
BTEC Diploma in Business	4 in Maths and 4 average in English is required.
Chemistry	6 in Chemistry and a 6 in one of the other two Sciences (or at least a 6-6 in Combined Sciences), 6 in Maths and 4.5 English
Computer Science	6 in Computer Science and 5 in Maths
Drama & Theatre Studies	5 in Drama and 5 in English
Economics	6 in Maths and 5 in English Literature and English Language
English Literature	A minimum of 5-6 in English Literature and English Language
Film Studies	5 in English Literature
French	5 (preferably 6) in French
Geography	6 in Geography and 4.5 in English
Graphic Communication	5 in Art, Photography, Graphics, Resistant Materials or Textiles
History	6 in History
Mathematics	7 in Maths or 6 with additional support.
Further Maths	7 in Maths (must be studied with A level Maths)
Core Maths	5 in Maths
Music	6 in Music and a highly competent performer on an instrument or singing
Photography	4 in Art, Photography, Graphics or Textiles – 4 in English
Physics	6 in Physics and at least a 6 in one of the other two or 6-6 in Combined Sciences, 6 in Maths and 4.5 average in English
Politics	5 in English Language and a 5 in History, Geography or another humanities subject.
Psychology	5 in Maths, 5-5 in Combined Science and 5 in English Language
Sociology	5 in English Language and preferably a 5 in a humanities subject
Spanish	5 in Spanish
BTEC Extended Certificate in Sport	4 in PE or L2 Merit in Sport, and 4 in English
BTEC Extended Diploma in Sport	4 in PE or BTEC Sport level 2 pass, and 4 in English
Textiles	5 in Art, Graphics, Resistant Materials or Textiles, and 4.5 in English.
Three-dimensional design	5 in Design and Technology or an Art subject.
EPQ	5 GCSEs 9-4

Year 9 Curriculum



Core curriculum below is compulsory for all students.

1. GCSE Mathematics
2. GCSE English Language
3. GCSE English Literature
4. GCSE Combined Science (2 GCSEs)
5. Personal Development
6. Physical Education
7. Religious Studies

It is compulsory to choose subjects from 2 of the following 3 categories:

Category A - Humanities:

1. Geography
2. History
3. Religious studies

Category B – Creative:

1. Art
2. Music
3. Drama
4. Design and Technology: Graphics
5. Design and Technology: Product Design
6. Photography
7. Textiles

Category C - Languages:

1. French
2. Spanish

All GCSE & Level 2 Subjects offered additional to the Core Curriculum:

1. GCSE Art*
2. GCSE Art and Design: Textiles*
3. GCSE Business Studies
4. GCSE Citizenship
5. GCSE Computer Science
6. Level 2 Creative iMedia
7. GCSE Design and Technology: Graphics*
8. GCSE Design and Technology: Product Design*
9. GCSE Drama
10. GCSE Film Studies
11. GCSE French
12. GCSE Geography
13. GCSE History
14. Level 2 Hospitality and Catering
15. GCSE Music
16. GCSE Photography
17. GCSE Physical Education
18. GCSE Religious Studies
19. GCSE Spanish
20. GCSE Triple Science

*Students may not choose:

1. Art ***and*** Art and Design: Textiles
2. Design and Technology: Graphics ***and*** Design and Technology: Product Design

Alongside the core curriculum, students will choose an additional 4 subjects, 2 of which must be from **2 different** green categories.

<p>Core curriculum below is compulsory for all students.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> GCSE Mathematics GCSE English Language GCSE English Literature GCSE Combined Science (2 GCSEs) Personal Development Physical Education Religious Studies 	<p>It is compulsory to choose subjects from 2 of the following 3 categories:</p> <p>Category A - Humanities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Geography History Religious studies <p>Category B – Creative:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Art Music Drama Design and Technology Graphics Design and Technology RM Photography Textiles <p>Category C - Languages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> French Spanish 	<p>All GCSE & Level 2 Subjects offered additional to the Core Curriculum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> GCSE Art* GCSE Art and Design: Textiles* GCSE Business Studies GCSE Citizenship GCSE Computer Science Level 2 Creative iMedia GCSE Design and Technology: Graphics* GCSE Design and Technology: Product Design* GCSE Drama GCSE Film Studies GCSE French GCSE Geography GCSE History Level 2 Hospitality and Catering GCSE Music GCSE Photography GCSE Physical Education GCSE Religious Studies GCSE Spanish GCSE Triple Science <p>*Students may not choose:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Art and Art and Design: Textiles Design and Technology: Graphics and Design and Technology: Product Design
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Examples – 9 qualifications in total:

Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5	Subject 6 Category A	Subject 7 Category B	Subject 8 Free choice	Subject 9 Free choice
English Language	English Literature	Maths	Combined Science	Combined Science	History	Art	Spanish	Drama

Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5	Subject 6 Category A	Subject 7 Category C	Subject 8 Free choice	Subject 9 Free choice
English Language	English Literature	Maths	Triple Science Biology	Triple Science Chemistry	Geography	Spanish	Music	Triple Science Physics

Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5	Subject 6 Category B	Subject 7 Category C	Subject 8 Free choice	Subject 9 Free choice
English Language	English Literature	Maths	Combined Science	Combined Science	Music	French	Computer Science	Citizenship

Submitting choices online – students will receive a link to the options MS form via their school email address on Thursday 5th March.

Subjects 1 and 2 are chosen as a pair and taken from **2 different** green categories. Every combination of category A, B and C subjects is offered.

It is compulsory to choose subjects from 2 of the following 3 categories:

Category A - Humanities:

1. Geography
2. History
3. Religious studies

Category B – Creative:

1. Art
2. Music
3. Drama
4. Design and Technology: Graphics
5. Design and Technology: Product Design
6. Photography
7. Textiles

Category C - Languages:

1. French
2. Spanish

1. Select **only one pair** of subjects from the list below. These are your **first and second** choice subjects.

- Geography & Art
- Geography & Music
- Geography & Drama
- Geography & Design and Technology: Graphics
- Geography & Design and Technology: Product Design
- Geography & Photography
- Geography & Textiles
- History & Art
- History & Music
- History & Drama
- History & Design and Technology: Graphics
- History & Design and Technology: Product Design
- History & Photography
- History & Textiles
- Religious Studies & Art
- Religious Studies & Music
- Religious Studies & Drama
- Religious Studies & Design and Technology: Graphics
- Religious Studies & Design and Technology: Product Design
- Religious Studies & Photography

Subject 3

2. Select your ***third choice subject*** from the list below. Don't select one that you have chosen above already.

- Art
- Art and Design: Textiles
- Business Studies
- Citizenship
- Computer Science
- Creative Media Production
- Design and Technology: Graphics
- Design and Technology: Product Design
- Drama
- Film Studies
- French
- Geography
- History
- Hospitality and Catering
- Music
- Photography
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Spanish
- Triple Science

Subject 4

3. Select your ***fourth choice subject*** from the list below. Don't select one that you have chosen above already.

- Art
- Art and Design: Textiles
- Business Studies
- Citizenship
- Computer Science
- Creative Media Production
- Design and Technology: Graphics
- Design and Technology: Product Design
- Drama
- Film Studies
- French
- Geography
- History
- Hospitality and Catering
- Music
- Photography
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Spanish
- Triple Science

First backup subject

4. Select your ***first backup subject*** from the list below. Don't select one that you have chosen above already. (

- Art
- Art and Design: Textiles
- Business Studies
- Citizenship
- Computer Science
- Creative Media Production
- Design and Technology: Graphics
- Design and Technology: Product Design
- Drama
- Film Studies
- French
- Geography
- History
- Hospitality and Catering
- Music
- Photography
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Spanish
- Triple Science

Second backup subject

5. Select your ***second backup subject*** from the list below. Don't select one that you have chosen above already. (

- Art
- Art and Design: Textiles
- Business Studies
- Citizenship
- Computer Science
- Creative Media Production
- Design and Technology: Graphics
- Design and Technology: Product Design
- Drama
- Film Studies
- French
- Geography
- History
- Hospitality and Catering
- Music
- Photography
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Spanish
- Triple Science

Third backup subject

6. Select your ***third backup subject*** from the list below. Don't select one that you have chosen above already. (

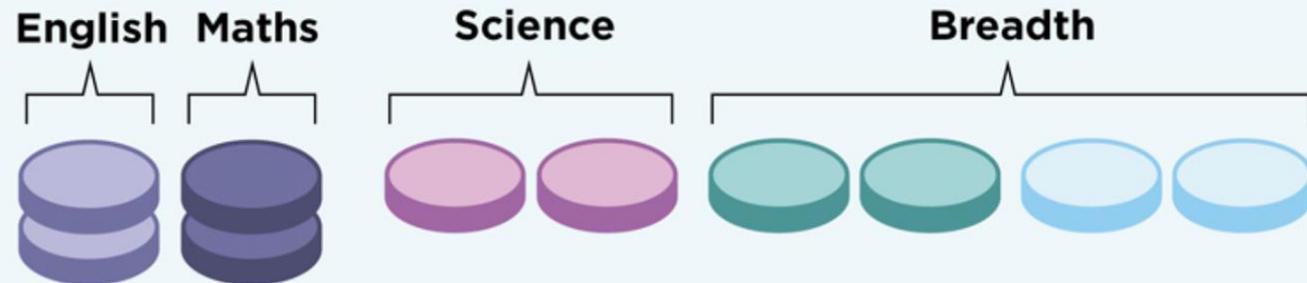
- Art
- Art and Design: Textiles
- Business Studies
- Citizenship
- Computer Science
- Creative Media Production
- Design and Technology: Graphics
- Design and Technology: Product Design
- Drama
- Film Studies
- French
- Geography
- History
- Hospitality and Catering
- Music
- Photography
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Spanish
- Triple Science

Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5	Subject 6 Category A	Subject 7 Category B	Subject 8 Free choice	Subject 9 Free choice
English Language	English Literature	Maths	Combined Science	Combined Science	History	Art	Spanish	Drama

Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5	Subject 6 Category A	Subject 7 Category C	Subject 8 Free choice	Subject 9 Free choice
English Language	English Literature	Maths	Triple Science Biology	Triple Science Chemistry	Geography	Spanish	Music	Triple Science Physics

Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5	Subject 6 Category B	Subject 7 Category C	Subject 8 Free choice	Subject 9 Free choice
English Language	English Literature	Maths	Combined Science	Combined Science	Music	French	Computer Science	Citizenship

Progress 8 and Attainment 8 proposal

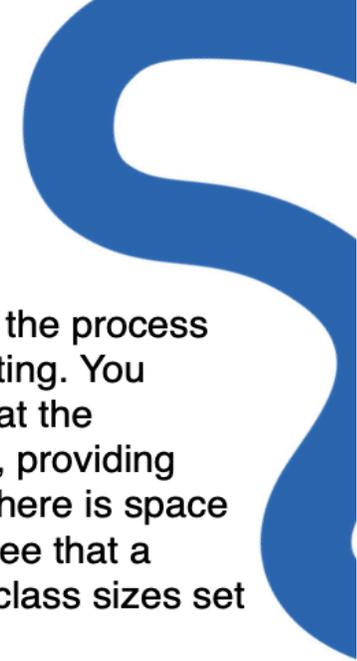


We will do our utmost to fit all students into their preferred choices, but this cannot be guaranteed. This is why we ask students to provide three back-up choices, in rank order, and not subjects chosen previously. Where we are unable to allocate a first choice, we will work down the rank order list and allocate to the first available subject.

The reasons a student may not get their first choices include:

1. **Insufficient numbers for the class to run** – too few students have opted for the subject. We will use back-up choices in rank order.
2. **Oversubscription** – too many students have opted for the subject. The number of spaces in each subject is decided using the maximum class sizes set by the head teacher and governors. Practical and computing subjects will have smaller class sizes than other subjects. When there are too many students opting for the number of spaces available, students with an EHCP are allocated first and then remaining students are randomly selected from all those who requested the subject. Where students are not selected, we will use their back-up choices. All students have an equal right to be selected, and we do not use attainment or behaviour to decide. The random selection process is overseen by two senior members of staff to ensure fairness.
3. **Unforeseen staffing changes** - rarely, a staffing change may mean that a subject must be withdrawn from our offer. If this happens, we will use back-up choices.
4. **Late return of options form** - if we do not receive an options form by the deadline published on the website (20th March), a first choice cannot be considered if it is for an oversubscribed subject and back-up choices will be used.
5. **Subject changes** - Changes are highly unlikely to be made once choices have been submitted.

Changes to option choices



Please be aware that it is highly unlikely that your choice of subjects will be changed after the process has been completed. It is essential that you check your online choices form before submitting. You cannot submit the form more than once. Once the GCSE programme of study has begun at the beginning of Year 9, there is a short window of four weeks where changes might be made, providing there is an exceptional reason, beyond having made the wrong choice, and providing that there is space in the preferred subject. We will do our best to accommodate requests but cannot guarantee that a change will be made because most subjects will be full. We do not go over the maximum class sizes set by the headteacher and governors under any circumstances.

Key dates

- **9th February and 23rd February** - Heads of Subject to present at Year 8 assemblies
- **Week beginning 2nd February** - 1:1 options and post-16 guidance meeting for all students
- **Week beginning 23rd February** - Subject information and guidance published on SNS website
- **Wednesday 25th February** - Year 8 Options Evening
- **Wednesday 4th March** - Year 8 Parents/Carers' evening
- **Thursday 5th March** - Link to online options form sent to parents and carers
- **Friday 20th March** - Deadline for completion and submission of online options form

<https://www.stokenewingtonschool.co.uk/learning/ks4-options>

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