

Contents

	Page
Introduction for Year Nine students	2
Key Dates for Year Nine	3
How parents can help	3
Monitoring Progress	3
The Core Curriculum at Key Stage Four	5
Qualifications and Levels	5
English Bacculaureate	5
Learning Styles	6
Our Examination Entry Policy	6
Selecting your option choice subjects	6
Our criteria for allocating places on courses	7
The Two Pathways	7
The Option Choice form - Copy	8
Core subject information	9
Options subject information	13



MURRAY PARK SCHOOL

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Dear Year Nine Student,

KS3-4 Transition Information

You are now beginning your transition into key stage four and I hope that your studies have prepared you for this next stage in your life.

This is an important time of year as you will need to make decisions about some of the courses you wish to follow during the next two years at Murray Park.

You will all study the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science and PE. SMSC (which includes Citizenship/Religious Studies/Careers, Drugs and Sex Education) will also be covered in key stage four.

You will need to make some decisions about which other subject(s) you would like to study from each of the three option blocks. This is your opportunity to select courses that interest you and in which you will be able to demonstrate skills and talents. You need to think about how you will rise to the challenge of the work required for each course and how each is assessed (how many exams you will take in Year 11). The information you need to help you to make this decision is included in this booklet.

You will studying towards 8 qualifications. Students will be assigned to one of two options pathways, Ebacc or Core. Details of these are outlined on page 7 of this booklet.

We also offer the 'KS3-4 Transition Information Evening' on Tuesday 28th March to give an opportunity for you and your parents/carers to talk to teachers about the subjects. All the information in this booklet is also available on the school website.

You will also have the opportunity to talk with a senior member of staff in the following weeks to discuss your choices and possible career options.

I do need to make you aware that if very few students choose a particular subject then we will not be able to run that subject, similarly if a subject is oversubscribed students may need to choose an alternative. Students are therefore asked to give reserve choices for their options and ensure that forms are returned by the date requested. Take decisions about your reserve as importantly as your first choice in option blocks with more than two choices.

Please READ the information carefully, THINK about your skills and talents, ASK QUESTIONS of the staff who will teach the option subjects and BE ORGANISED to hand-in your completed Transition Form in on time.

With best wishes,

Mr M Owen
Head Teacher

Key Dates For Year Nine students and parents		
Transition Booklet issued and information will be available on the school website	Morning	Tuesday 28 th March
Key Stage 4 Options Evening for students and parents in Cedar Park Hall	Evening 4.30pm & 6pm	Tuesday 28 th March
Senior Teacher meetings	Registration	March - April
Final day for Transition Forms to be handed-in to Tutors or Student services	Afternoon	Monday 3 rd April

How can parents help to prepare students for Key Stage Four?

As parents or carers, you have an important role to play and we would like to ask for your help in the following ways:

1. **Please go through this booklet carefully** with your son/daughter to ensure that he/she fully understands it and then offer help and advice as appropriate.
2. **Encourage your son/daughter to consider subject choices**, and future career opportunities, in an open-minded way. Do not let them be put off by traditional career and subject choices for males and females. It will be beneficial for your son/daughter to consider options from a variety of areas and not to specialise in one or two areas.
3. **Preparation for Key Stage Four - Learning Skills** The final term of year nine is a very important period of time and essential learning skills, needed in years ten and eleven are taught. Examples include listening skills; note taking; coursework skills; and preparing, and keeping to, time frames. Good attendance is expected right up to the end of the year.
4. **Support your son/daughter**, over the next seven terms, in adjusting to the demands of examination courses. Much greater responsibility is expected of young people in years 10 and 11, particularly in managing time, completing homework, meeting deadlines and making good any work missed through absence. It is important that students realise that almost all work produced once they start year 10 will contribute to their final grade.

Monitoring Progress

We expect all students at Murray Park to achieve, or exceed, their target grade. These expectations are based on previous levels of achievement and the grades achieved nationally in that subject. We measure progress regularly, each term, recording a 'Current Predicted' grade for each student in each subject. The 'Current Predicted' grade informs students and parents of the grade they are likely to achieve if current effort levels are maintained.

We have endeavoured to ensure that the information in this booklet is correct at the time of going to print, however, it may be necessary to make some amendments to courses in line with examination requirements.

The Core Curriculum at Key Stage Four

All students will take the CORE subjects

CORE Subjects	This subject covers
English Language GCSE and English Literature GCSE	Spoken and written work plus creative writing. Modern texts, poetry and Shakespeare (two GCSEs).
Mathematics - GCSE	Number, algebra, geometry, measure, statistics and probability (One GCSE).
Science - GCSE	Combined Science (two GCSEs) or, if chosen in the Ebacc Pathway, Triple Science (three GCSEs)
PE (Non-assessed)	Core PE - Practical participation.
SMSC provision (Non-assessed)	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural studies.

Qualifications and Levels...

Level of qualification	Name of award	
Level 1 qualifications	GCSE grades 1-4	
Level 2 qualifications	GCSE grades 5-9 City & Guilds Certificate BTEC First Certificate	Whilst GCSE grades at Level 2 are 5-9 other qualifications use Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction * to grade their assessment.

Some 6th Forms and colleges will only accept GCSEs, not their equivalents such as BTECs, as entry qualifications for their courses. We advise you to look at 6th Form and College prospectuses before you make your choice.

All students study Science as part of their core curriculum. Core Pathway students will study Combined Science (resulting in two GCSEs). As part of the Options process we offer Triple Science on the Ebacc Pathway. The Triple Science course allows for students to take three GCSEs, Biology, Chemistry and Physics. (**Please Note:** To study Triple Science you will need to select it in your options).

KS4 Subject Choices

The KS4 Curriculum is designed to allow students to select a balanced curriculum or to specialise in certain subjects in which they have recognised talents.

English Baccalaureate (EBacc.)

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc.) was introduced by the government in 2011. To achieve the EBacc students must achieve a 'good grade' (5-9) in English, Maths, 2 Science GCSEs, a Modern Foreign Language and History or Geography.

Students will choose 3 Subjects

We do expect **all of our students to choose at least one EBacc subject** as part of their KS4 Options such as: Geography, History, French or Triple Science.

Learning Styles

It is very important that, in addition to selecting subjects, students also consider the type of learning and assessment that suits them. Some courses are 'applied', and are usually more practical courses, where a higher percentage of assessment is based on an object they have made, coursework tasks or 'portfolios' of work. These may suit some students better than courses where a high percentage of marks are for examinations.

Examination Entry Policy

We expect all students to be entered for an examination in all courses. Poor attendance or failure to complete sufficient work required for an examination may result in a recommendation by the school for the student not to be entered. Where a pupil is not to be entered for an examination, parents will be notified. We will contact parents to alert them to any concerns.

The Legal Position

- No charge will be made for entering a pupil for a prescribed public examination.
- The school may, on educational grounds, recommend a pupil is not entered for an examination.
- Failure to complete examination requirements which might include failure to complete coursework requirements and/or failure to sit the final examination(s)* means parents are liable to pay an entry fee.

Failure to sit an examination other than on genuine grounds e.g. illness (confirmed by Medical Certificate) or bereavement, but NOT holiday or interview, will mean parents will be invoiced immediately to recoup expenditure.

Selecting your option choice subjects

1. Read the following pages and find out about the subjects offered
2. Select the subjects you wish to study and record them onto your options form
3. Discuss your choice with your parents/carers and tutor.
4. Complete your form and hand to your tutor.

Our criteria for allocating places on courses will be

- i) meeting special educational needs*
- ii) appropriate ability level for the course selected and recognised talents in that subject*
- iii) a balanced choice of subjects*

Students returning forms after 3rd April will find that places on some courses are no longer available. Forms will be posted to absentees.

The Two Pathways

At the end of Year 9 our transition process is based on making informed choices based on the previous academic performance of each student and their predicted future attainment. We will assign students to one of two pathways according to the data on which their progress is measured. These will be the **Ebacc Pathway** and the **Core Pathway**.

Students who are assigned to the **Ebacc Pathway** will have the opportunity to study Triple Science or Business, History or Geography, French or another subject from a choice of six. This will lead to 8 qualifications including English and Maths. It provides a combination of subjects that will allow students to achieve the English Baccalaureate if they wish.

Students assigned to the **Core Pathway** will study Combined Science, Geography and will choose two other subjects. This will lead to 8 qualifications including English and Maths.

The pathway we believe is most relevant to you is outlined in the form on the next page.

Details of the courses follow in the subsequent pages of this booklet.