



Mercia School
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Headteacher: Mr Dean Webster
Chair of Governors: Mrs Rhona Dodds

Our ref: DW/GD

13 November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you all for your continued support through these very difficult times. Our school attendance is truly superb, and we need to maintain this standard to give your child the very best chance of being successful.

No doubt you will be thinking about GCSE selection ahead. We know that this is an important time for you and your child and we rest assured we have a process in place and a procedure that will be supportive of making the right choices.

I would like to share with you, albeit early compared to other schools, our timetable for GCSE selection. This will come around quickly and I want to make sure you are well prepared and informed throughout. The process for final selections will end in March, therefore between now and then we will ensure there is enough time for considered selection and key conversations.

I have set out the timeline below:

Friday 27 November 2020	Mock GCSE selection	Pupils will complete a mock selection. This is to inform recruitment and determine the impact of our process. This may be useful for you to start discussions at home.
Friday 15 January 2021	GCSE Curriculum Booklet published	We will provide information regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ The Key Stage 4 curriculum process◆ The types of qualifications available◆ Subject specific information, including content breakdown and exam board◆ The pathways to A Level and beyond that we envisage

Monday 18 – Friday 22 January 2021	GCSE Curriculum pupil Assembly	<p>We will share:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The process for GCSE selection ◆ Present the additional curriculum opportunities available ◆ Discuss trajectory to A-Levels or other viable alternatives ◆ Subject presentations, so pupils are informed
Thursday 21 January 2021	GCSE Parent Curriculum Evening	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Introduce the subject offers available ◆ Outline the programme of study ◆ Discuss trajectory to A-Levels or other viable alternatives
Thursday 11 February 2021	Year 9 Parents' Evening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Opportunity to discuss academic progress and attainment with individual teachers
Monday 22 February – Friday 5 March 2021	Year 9 1 to 1 sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Personalised discussion regarding subject choices and post 16 education
Friday 12 March 2021	GCSE Submission Deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Information returned for completion of 2021-22 timetable

In addition, since September we have had informal conversations with pupils about their aspirations, destinations and careers. This has sharpened thinking in preparation for this process. We will continue to use Mastery Time and assemblies throughout this process, to support selections. Indeed the Mastery programme will take pupils through course expectations, pathways ahead and opportunities. Your child will be in a position to make highly informed choices, as is our commitment at Mercia School. Knowledge will be at the heart of what we do.

Mock Selection

As one of our 'original originals', on board since the school's inception, you will be acutely aware I have to recruit every year new excellent teachers to meet our growth. To ensure I get the very best teachers I must advertise for jobs in December and January, or run the risk of not acquiring the very best talent for your child.

Therefore, I would appreciate some indication of what your child is thinking in terms of possible selections. This will enable me to recruit the right people. The selections are not binding and can be changed. The mock selection will also allow us to measure the impact of our process for subsequent years. We will be able to monitor changes and understand which events were more informative.

I will write to you on 27 November with the details and the deadline for this mock process. Pupils will be informed also, to support your discussions at home.

Parents' Evening

I am fully aware that you have not had a specific subject parents evening due to staffing levels in the first year and the pandemic in year 2. We will endeavour to ensure you have subject teacher interaction as timetabled. I am hopeful government school restrictions will be lifted by February, I will keep you posted of any changes but please appreciate this is something we would want also.

Year 9 Curriculum

I am delighted that your child is now experiencing high quality Drama and RE in their curriculum. Not only will this enrich their knowledge and complement other studies, it will also allow your child to express their opinion and practically perform. This is in line with your child's personal development in preparation for GCSE study. We are thrilled with our additions to the curriculum and pupils are thriving.

Due to government measures, there are no sporting fixtures, public performance events and trips allowed in schools. In addition no outside providers are allowed into school to perform enrichment. This has compromised our culture and makes us all extremely sad. We have done what is in the best interest of children, but we know it's been a compromise.

However, having had a period of dedicated self-study to catch up missed learning, we will be introducing enrichment opportunities after Christmas for Year 9 pupils. Our Performing Arts team are also producing a pupil showcase event. We will record the performance so you can see your child perform if selected. In addition, University Challenge will also take place this term too.

Please be assured we are doing our all to ensure your child has the Mercia Experience, despite some difficulties. The support you have shown us has meant a lot in these difficult times.

We know that you are aspirational for your child and appreciate your continued support. This is a very exciting step in the Mercia journey and we are eager to move ahead with you.

Yours faithfully



Dean Webster
Headteacher