

10 December 2021

Dear Year 8 Parents/carers

**RE: GCSE Options Choices**

Ahead of the Christmas break, I wanted to take this opportunity to update you regarding the GCSE Options processes for students at John Smeaton Academy.

Over recent months, we have been carefully considering the challenging circumstances that our students have faced as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic. Without doubt, the pandemic has caused significant disruption to our daily lives and, for our students, their education. We are really proud of the way in which our students have adapted to continuing their education through remote learning. We acknowledge, however, that this way of learning is no substitute for students working in a classroom with their teacher.

As a consequence of the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic, we have made the decision to delay the GCSE Options process for students in Year 8. This means that our current Year 8 students will choose their GCSE Options subjects in Year 9. We believe that this provides further opportunities for students to explore the full range of subjects available and the curriculum content for an additional period of time which we believe will help them to make a more informed decision about the subjects that they wish to study at GCSE and beyond. This also provides additional time for you to find out more about the subjects we offer at GCSE to ensure that you and your child/children are able to make more informed choices.

I have spoken to students in Year 8 today and they all seemed very happy with this and appreciative of the opportunity to continue their key stage 3 study for a longer period. During our conversation we also discussed Modern Foreign Languages as the students have recently commenced their study of French. I have explained that, during the course of the summer term, students in Year 8 will be able to select their choice of French or Spanish to study in Year 9. From the response this morning I anticipate that the majority will choose French, however, I would like to reassure you that both languages will be on offer and we will be delighted to be able to support students in studying their choice of either French or Spanish wherever possible.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact the academy via [enquiries@johnsmeatonacademy.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@johnsmeatonacademy.org.uk).

Best wishes



Mrs L Griffiths  
**Principal**