



**ST HILDA'S**  
CE HIGH SCHOOL

Options Evening 2026



# Options Evening

- An explanation of the options process including an update on the reformed GCSEs and other qualifications.
- Time for discussions with subject staff on the content and structure of the Key Stage 4 courses.



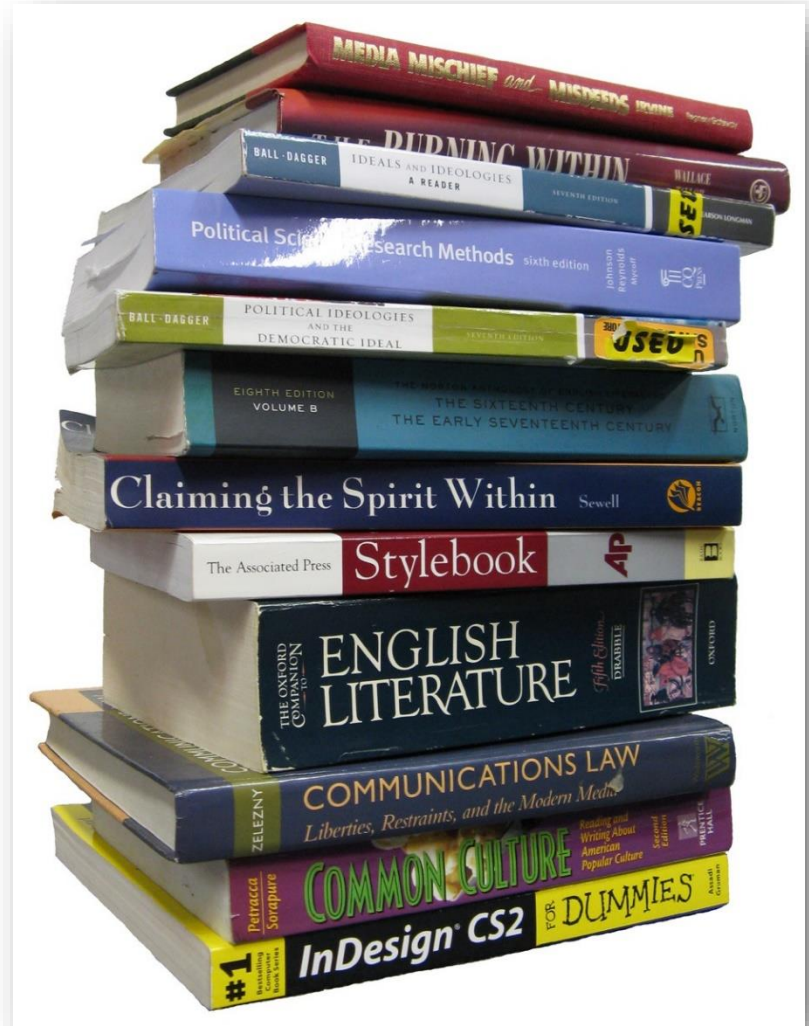
# What students need to consider?

- During the Options Process, over the next term, students will be choosing the subjects they study for the next two years, and it's no fun being stuck with one you don't really like.
- It's also worth looking ahead, as decisions they make now may determine their future choices.
- What do they want to do after year 11?
- Can this help decide which subjects they choose?



# Why choose?

- Sometimes you need a **GCSE in a subject in order to study it at college.**
- In the same way, **university courses** have set entry requirements and often **require certain subjects at A-level.**
- Check carefully as this is not always the case and you can start some subjects from scratch, both at A-level and university.



# What do students have to study?

Subjects you must study are called compulsory subjects. All students must study:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- RE
- Physical Education
- PSHE



# What do I have to study?

- **English:** You study **English Language** and **English Literature**, leading to two GCSEs.
- **Mathematics:** one GCSE
- **Science:** All pupils must study Combined Science, this is a dual award course. You receive two GCSEs. Some of you may be offered the opportunity to take Separate Sciences, leading to GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics.
- **RE:** one GCSE
- **Physical Education:** known as core PE, no qualification.
- **PSHE:** no qualification.

# What can I choose and how do I choose it?

- **If you listen to nothing else today, listen to this bit.**
- **It is vitally important that you understand the options process.**



# What can I choose and how do I choose it?

- You may choose 3 option subjects. You will study these subjects for 5 hours a fortnight, plus your 6 compulsory subjects, giving you 9 GCSEs in total.
- Students **must choose** at least one of either ***Ancient History, History, Geography, Computer Science, Separate Sciences*** or ***a Modern Foreign Language***.
- The other subjects you may select from are:

<b>GCSE Art &amp; Design</b>	<b>GCSE Business Studies</b>	<b>Creative iMedia</b>
<b>GCSE Design &amp; Technology</b>	<b>GCSE Drama</b>	<b>GCSE Geology</b>
<b>Health &amp; Social Care</b>	<b>Hospitality &amp; Catering</b>	<b>GCSE Music</b>
<b>GCSE PE</b>	<b>Sport Science</b>	<b>GCSE Psychology</b>
	<b>GCSE Sociology</b>	

# GCSE, BTEC or CTEC?

## **GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education)**

• **Assessment:** Mostly written exams at the end of Year 11 (some subjects include coursework).

• **Learning Style:** More **theory-based**, with a strong academic focus.

• **Best For:** Students who prefer exams, enjoy academic subjects, and may want to take A-Levels later.

## **BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council)**

• **Assessment:** **Mostly coursework**, assignments, and practical tasks, with some externally assessed units.

• **Learning Style:** **Vocational and practical**, focused on real-world skills and applied learning.

• **Best For:** Students who prefer continuous assessment, hands-on tasks, and practical learning.

## **CTEC (Cambridge Technicals – OCR)**

• **Assessment:** A mixture of **coursework and exams**, similar to BTEC but structured slightly differently.

• **Learning Style:** Also **vocational**, with applied learning linked to specific career sectors.

• **Best For:** Students who want practical learning with a balance of coursework and some exams.

# GCSE, BTEC or CTEC? – A quick comparison

Qualification	Assessment Style	Learning Style	Pathways
<b>GCSE</b>	Mainly final exams	Academic/theory	Leads to A-Levels, sixth form, apprenticeships
<b>BTEC</b>	Mostly coursework	Practical/vocational	Leads to Level 3 BTECs, sixth form, apprenticeships
<b>CTEC</b>	Coursework + exams	Practical/vocational	Leads to CTECs, sixth form, apprenticeships

# Tell me about the GCSE qualifications

## How are GCSEs graded?

- In 2013 the Government announced an overhaul of the grading system for the GCSE examination.
- All of your GCSEs will be graded on a system of 9-1 with 9 being the highest grade.
- This diagram shows you how the new grading structure works:

Old grading structure	New grading structure
A*	9
A	8
B	7
C	6
D	5
E	4
F	3
G	2
U	1
	U

# How does this differ for BTECs/CTECs?

This table shows you how BTECs and CTECs are awarded a grade and what the GCSE equivalent is.

For example a Level 2 Distinction\* is worth a GCSE grade 8.5.

Whereas a Level 2 Pass is worth a GCSE grade 4.

GCSE 9-1 Points		BTEC First Award		BTEC Tech Award	
Grade & Points	Grade terms	Grade	Points	Grade	Points
9		L2 D*	8.5	L2 D*	8.5
8					
7		L2 D	7	L2 D	7
6		L2 M	5.5	L2 M	5.5
5	Strong Pass (DfE)	L2 P	4	L2 P	4
4	Standard Pass (DfE)				
3		Level 1 Pass	1.75	L1 D	3
2				L1 M	2
1				L1 P	1.25
U		U	0	U	0

# Good reasons for taking a subject

- You are good at it.
- You are interested in the subject.
- It gives you a balance in your choices.
- Dropping it might disadvantage you in the future.
- You need it for your future college course.
- You need it for your future career.



# Bad reasons for taking a subject

- You couldn't think of anything else better to do.
- You like the teacher.
- Your friend is doing it.
- Your mum's best friend's brother's auntie's hairdresser's cousin did it and they really liked it.
- That 'cool' kid in your Tutor group is doing it and if he's doing it, it must be good.



# So, who can help me make the right choice?

- **Parents – who know you best of all.**
- Subject teachers – who know your ability in their subject.
- Form Tutor - who sees you every day and is available to talk to about any issues.
- Key Stage leaders - who want the best for you as an individual and may follow up on your conversations with your tutor.
- Senior Leadership staff – who may follow up with you if there are any issues with your options.
- Careers adviser.



# How can I help myself?

## Arm yourself with information:

- What are my strengths?
- What are my areas for development?
- What subject skills do I need?
- Careful consideration of what subjects you choose on Taster Day



# A word of warning

- In some practical subjects such as Art, Design & Technology and Catering class sizes will be limited due to health and safety requirements.
- We do our best to provide the choices that you have selected **but we cannot guarantee that this will be achieved in every case. A course cannot run if insufficient students have opted for it**, whilst other courses may be oversubscribed. As with other parts of the timetable, **the provision of any subject is dependent on the resources and staffing available.**
- It is essential, therefore, that you keep up with your work in all subjects on your present timetable and have a reserve choice in mind.

**WARNING!**

# What are the options?

## Compulsory Subjects

### Subjects

English Language

English Literature

Maths

RE

Combined (or Separate Sciences)

**Subjects you must  
choose at least one of:**

### Subjects

Ancient History

History

Geography

Computer Science

Separate Sciences

A Modern Foreign Language

## Non-Compulsory Subjects

### Subjects

GCSE Art & Design

GCSE Business Studies

Creative iMedia

GCSE Design & Technology

GCSE Drama

GCSE Geology

Health & Social Care

Hospitality & Catering

GCSE Music

GCSE PE

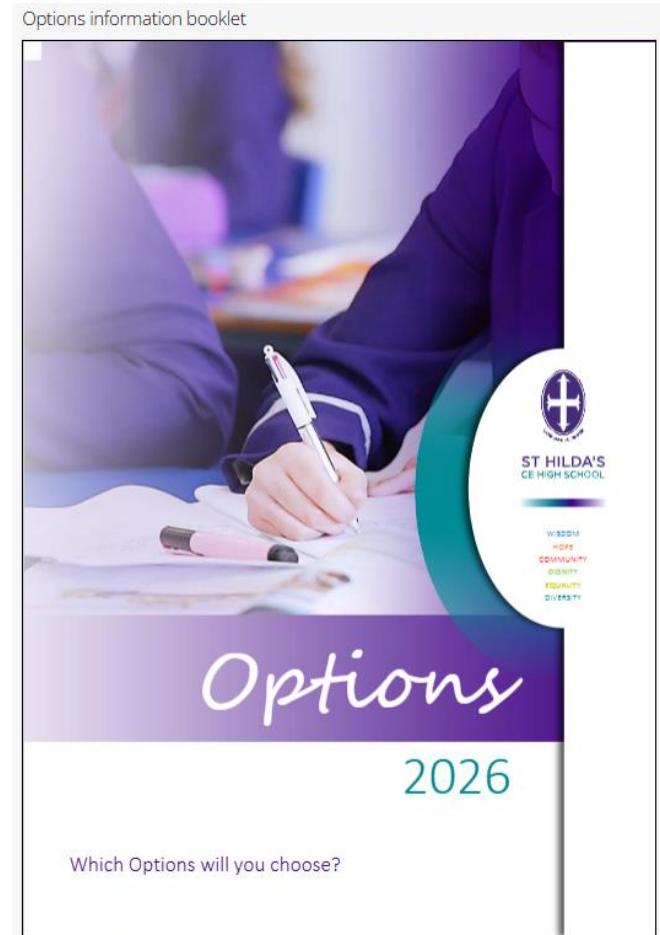
Sport Science

GCSE Psychology

GCSE Sociology

# What now? – Important Dates and information

- Visit the subjects your interested in (if you haven't already)
- Read the Options booklet  
<https://www.st-hildas.co.uk/guided-options/>
- Complete your initial preferences on the Microsoft Form which has been posted to Show My Homework (Satchel One) and there is a link on the website at the bottom of the link above. **Deadline 13th March 2026.**
- You will be asked to choose more than 3 subjects in case we cannot meet your 3 preferences. **Please choose these in order of preference.**
- April – A hybrid interview between teacher, student and parent(s) to confirm choices.



WHAT  
NOW? 

# QR code links



Website page including  
Options booklet and  
Options submission form

Year 9 Options - Final preference  
form



Direct link to Options form

Get thinking!

Talk to your teachers  
tonight and in school  
and talk to your parents.