

27th February 2026

To the Parents or Carers

In September 2026 your child will begin the Key Stage 4 curriculum. During this Key Stage they will complete GCSE qualifications, or a combination of GCSE and Vocational qualifications. As such, it marks a very important stage in their education. We hope that our Options Evening which took place on Thursday 26th February, in addition to the other events taking place during this term will help them make the best decision for their future.

Our aim is to provide a range of options that will allow your child to achieve the grades they require to successfully take the next step in their future.

Every student will follow one of four Guided Pathways when they begin Year 10. Each pathway is designed to promote a seamless transition into Further Education, and we are confident that each pathway will provide students with the opportunity to access the University or Apprenticeship of their choice upon completion of their studies. All Guided Pathways are specifically designed with this goal in mind.

Key features of the Year 9 Options process for 2026 include:

- Four Guided Pathways – A, B, C and D. Within each of these pathways there are a series of carefully selected option programmes which allow all students to access a personalised curriculum. As I explained during our Options Evening, there is no best or worst pathway. All pathways are designed to allow each student to be successful.
- Pathway A students will study and be assessed in English Language, English Literature, Maths, Triple Science (Biology, Chemistry & Physics), Spanish, and 1 free option.
- Pathway B students will study and be assessed in English Language, English Literature, Maths, Triple Science (Biology, Chemistry & Physics), and then select 2 options.
- Pathway C students will study and be assessed in English Language, English Literature, Maths, Combined Science, Spanish, and then select 2 options.
- Pathway D students will study and be assessed in English Language, English Literature, Maths, Combined Science, History or Geography and then select 2 options.
- All students will continue to study PE (one lesson per week) and PSHE/RE (one lesson per week). Students will not be assessed or gain qualifications in these subjects unless they were to select PE (Sport) as one of their options. A student who selects Sport will have three lessons per week in this subject in addition to the one lesson which all students receive.
- All students will have the opportunity to achieve 8 GCSEs or equivalent Vocational qualifications.

The Guided Pathways reflect the diverse and changing employment and career opportunities available to your child in the global economy of the 21st century. One pathway does not necessarily suit the needs of all students. Having more than one

pathway allows us to provide flexibility in curriculum provision at Key Stage 4 and ensures we provide the most appropriate courses for our students.

During the next four weeks each student will have the opportunity for a 10 minute conversation with a member of our Senior Leadership Team (SLT). During this conversation we will asking the following questions:

- Which subjects do you enjoy?
- Which subjects have you been successful in?
- Do you know what job you would like to do in the future? What grades/experience do you need for this job?
- Do you know what you would like to do when you leave Smith's Wood? What grades do you need to access this course?

To ensure this conversation is effective we would urge all students prior to sitting down with the member of SLT to think hard about the questions above, discuss them with as many people as possible, in addition to looking online at jobs they are interested in and the qualifications they need to enter this career. Our careers advisor Mrs Long is also available for students to speak about plans for their future.

Student Options Forms will be completed through a Microsoft Form. The draft form will be completed in school during the tutor session on Thursday 26th March. This allows us to see which options students have indicated they are interested in studying, enabling us to have any necessary conversations. We will then send the final Options Form to you as the parent/carer via MCAS on Wednesday 15th April so you can complete this as a family. The deadline for completing this form is Wednesday 22nd April. During the summer term we will confirm which subjects your child will be studying in September 2026 as they begin Year 10.

The presentation shared during the Options Evening in addition to links to our school YouTube channel which hosts the subject videos can be found on the school website under the 'Student Life' Year 9 Options section or by clicking this link [Options Evening presentation](#).

We have done our best to ensure that students are placed on the Guided Pathway we feel most appropriate.

If you wish to discuss making a change to the Guided Pathway your child has been allocated, or have any questions, please contact me s.friswell@smithswood.fmat.co.uk

Yours sincerely,



Mr Friswell
Vice Principal – Curriculum