

# Key Stage 4 Options Information

For Year 9 students and those supporting them at home



## Options contact

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## Why do students select GCSE options?

Year 9 students at The Roundhill Academy study 15 different subjects. We believe in giving students a broad and varied curriculum in Key Stage 3. At GCSE we ask students to narrow this to a curriculum of 9 subjects: deepening and developing their knowledge and skills ready for their GCSE exams and coursework.

There are also some additional choices that students can make that require after-school or outside-of-school commitments

## Why must my child must choose at least one of Geography, History, or Computer Science?

These subjects form part of the EBacc (English Baccalaureate) group, which is valued by employers and further education providers. To ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, every student must take at least one of these subjects as part of their GCSE options. Students can take more than one of these if they choose.

## What can they choose?



Students will study English Language and English Literature, Maths and Science (Combined or Triple) GCSEs.



Students will also complete Core PE and PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) lessons. These help to support their wellbeing and support their careers education.



Students choose at least one of the following EBACC subjects: Geography, History or Computer Science. Students may choose more than one of these if they wish.



Students then choose up to three of the following options (so that they have 9 in total): Art or Textiles, Business Studies, Design Technology, Drama, Food Preparation and Nutrition, French, CNAT Health and Social Care, Music, GCSE PE or BTEC Sport, Religious Studies, Sociology, Triple Science.



Students may also be offered the opportunity to study Further Maths or Statistics GCSEs in Year 11

## What is the difference between GCSEs and BTECs/CNATs?

When your child chooses their Year 9 options, they'll usually decide between traditional GCSEs and more vocational qualifications. GCSEs are academic subjects like English, maths, science, and history. They focus on theory, developing broad knowledge, and are assessed mainly through exams at the end of Year 11. GCSEs are a good route for students who may want to go on to A levels and then university. Vocational courses (such as BTECs or Cambridge Nationals) are more practical and focus on skills linked to specific areas like business, health and social care, or digital media. They combine coursework with some exams and are ideal for students who prefer hands-on learning or want to start preparing for a particular career. Both routes can lead to further education and training—it's about choosing the path that best suits your child's strengths and interests.

## How should my child decide which options to take?

Encourage your child to think about:

- Subjects they enjoy and do well in.
- Future plans, such as A-levels, college courses, or careers.
- How each subject is assessed (coursework, practical work, or exams).
- They should also ask teachers for advice about the content and expectations of each course before making a final decision.

To help, all students will take part in Options assemblies in November and December.

## What happens if my child's preferred combination of subjects isn't possible?

While the school aims to give every student their first choices, some combinations are restricted – for example, students can only take Art or Textiles, not both.

If a subject is full or cannot run, the school will look at your child's reserve choice and Attitude to Learning scores to make a fair decision. Any affected student will be spoken to individually to agree on an alternative.

## Options Roadmap 2025/ 2026

