



ABINGDON

From Curriculum Director: Oliver Lomax

14 November 2014

To all fifth year pupils and their parents

TENTATIVE PREFERENCE FOR SIXTH FORM SUBJECTS

This letter outlines in brief, the process of choosing A level subjects for next year. A Levels in the UK are changing and we are not yet able to publish precise details of courses starting in 2015. However, last year's version of a document called "The Sixth Form" is available on the curriculum area of the school website (<http://www.abingdon.org.uk/curriculum/>). This provides a guide to likely course content but is not correct in every regard for courses starting in September 2015. An updated version will be published before you are asked for your final A level preferences in Lent Term.

1. Sixth Form Entry Qualification

Now is the time to consider the subjects that you wish to study in the sixth form and your career options. During the next few months your immediate academic target will be the successful completion of your GCSE courses. In order to qualify for the sixth form *from within the school* you will need at least **3As and 4Bs at GCSE, including English and Maths**. Pupils who do not reach this level, and who wish to be considered for a sixth form place, are interviewed by the Head shortly after the GCSE results are published. You should plan your holiday arrangements accordingly. Note that a C grade in a particular subject at GCSE is considered insufficient preparation for the study of that subject at A level at Abingdon.

2. How the A levels are structured

Owing to forthcoming changes to A Levels in the UK, the structure of some courses starting in 2015 will differ from previous years. For subjects affected by the reforms, exams taken in the lower sixth will no longer count towards the final A Level result. Instead, all exams will be taken at the end of the upper sixth year. Other subjects, not yet affected by the reforms, may follow a similar, linear structure, with AS and A2 exams taken at the end of the upper sixth. Details of how each course will be structured will be published before you are asked for your final A Level preferences in Lent Term.

3. Number and selection of A-level subjects

At Abingdon, we wish you to express your preference for *four subjects*, and a backup fifth preference. You should assume that you will be studying all four throughout the sixth form, for the whole two years. Some Abingdon pupils drop to only three subjects in the upper sixth, and sixth form tutors will advise if they think this is appropriate. Our aim is to create the sixth form curriculum which is most suitable for each individual.

4. The range of sixth form subjects

The available A level subjects at Abingdon are Ancient History, Art & Design, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Design & Technology, Drama & Theatre Studies, Economics, English Literature, French, German, Geography, Government & Politics, Greek, History, Latin, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Music, Philosophy, Physics, Psychology,

Abingdon School, Park Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 1DE

Tel: 01235 521563 Fax: 01235 849079

www.abingdon.org.uk

Religious Studies and Spanish. Government & Politics is currently taught at St Helen and St Katharine. Drama & Theatre Studies is taught in conjunction with that school.

Any of these courses may be withdrawn if, for example, insufficient numbers of pupils choose a particular subject.

We do not allow you to study both Business Studies and Economics. Neither do we allow you to study both RS and Philosophy.

You may study **either** Mathematics **or** Further Mathematics, but not both.

At this stage we welcome preferences for any combination of subjects. When the timetable is constructed, however, there are always some pupils with subject combinations that are difficult to fit in. We shall inform you and your parents as early as possible if this seems likely to be the case.

5. The elements of the Sixth Form timetable

Your lower sixth timetable has two main components. First, you will be studying four main A level subjects, for a total of about 36 lessons a fortnight. Secondly, the remaining lessons include one of compulsory General Studies, some optional General Studies courses, extra further mathematics lessons if appropriate, and supervised private study.

6. General Studies

The sixth form involves more than the study of specialist subjects in depth. Your experience will be enriched in General Studies by contact with fields of study different from your A level subjects, covering a wide range of issues from key life skills to complementary studies that enhance your university applications. For example, you might choose to take up a new language to GCSE.

7. Seeking guidance

Your task is to combine the information, opinions and guidance available to you from your parents, your tutor, your subject teachers, the master in charge of university entrance and grades required for entry to higher education (Mr Swarbrick), the master in charge of careers (Mrs Gibbard) and the ISCO tests. If you have any queries about the suitability for you of any particular subject course, consult your teacher in that subject and/or the head of department concerned.

8. Timescale and deadlines

You are asked to complete the Fifth Year Tentative Preferences webform online by **Monday 24 November. Each boy has been sent the link to this form via his school email account.** This deadline is necessary to allow early planning of the timetable and staffing for the next academic year. After mocks, early next term, there will be a parents' evening, and then you will be asked for a final preferences in early February 2014.

If you are unsure about your subjects, please list on the webform the other subjects you are seriously considering.

Yours sincerely

Oliver Lomax
(oliver.lomax@abingdon.org.uk)
Curriculum Director
Telephone: 01235 849113