



From the Curriculum Director: Mr OT Lomax

26 February 2022

## **PREFERENCE FOR FOURTH YEAR SUBJECTS for September 2022**

Dear Parents,

The purpose of this email is to introduce the curriculum which your child will be following in their fourth and fifth years in the school, culminating in the main GCSE examinations in the summer of 2024. The curriculum contains both compulsory and optional subjects. You will need to choose your child's preferences for languages, the sciences and optional subjects.

Please complete the linked form by Monday 14 March. There is a space for you to include a comment or question if you wish, or you might prefer to email me directly ([oliver.lomax@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:oliver.lomax@abingdon.org.uk)). The Parents' Evenings on 7th and 8th of March will provide an opportunity for you to discuss your child's preferences with their teachers.

In a nutshell, your child can express a preference for either **three** or **four** optional subjects. If they select the option for three separate science GCSEs, they are able to express a preference for three optional subjects. Alternatively, they may opt to study Biology, Chemistry and Physics on a more limited basis leading to Double Award Science GCSE. Double award scientists spend fewer periods per week studying science and this allows them to be timetabled an additional optional subject for GCSE. If, at this stage, they intend to take two or more sciences throughout the sixth form, they would be advised to take advantage of the separate science option, though it is not essential. Within the four option choices which double award scientists make they must study at least one of History and Geography (they may study both).

In order to ensure breadth, we do not allow pupils to choose both Electronics and Computer Science.

Please contact me if you would like further information, or if you wish to discuss your child's choices. We are always willing to consider variations to the usual pattern when they are clearly in the interests of a pupil. On the other hand, you will appreciate that we offer nearly 200 pupils a large number of different possible subject combinations in only three or four blocks of time. Occasionally an unusual combinations may prove to be impossible to timetable and we have to ask individual

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pupils to choose again; that is why we call them 'preferences' rather than 'choices'.

I should also emphasise the importance of letting me know directly of any changes at any time after the 14th of March. The new combination of subjects might prove impossible to arrange. The 'Middle School Curriculum' document can be downloaded via a link from the Abingdon curriculum page (<http://www.abingdon.org.uk/curriculum>). Included in the document is detail on each Middle School subject.

### **Specific notes on particular options**

#### **DRAMA AND THEATRE ARTS**

One or two Sunday rehearsals in the academic year are necessary to prepare for exam performances. Visits to the theatre form an important part of the course, often outside normal school hours, and the costs of these are charged to parents' end of term bills.

#### **MODERN LANGUAGES**

Any pupil intending to take a language to GCSE must have studied that language in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, unless they have thorough previous knowledge of the subject. This would need to be assessed in a test prior to choosing 4<sup>th</sup> Year options.

#### **MUSIC**

Pupils should discuss their suitability for Edexcel GCSE Music with a member of the full-time music staff. All pupils who take this option will be practising musicians who are of a minimum standard of about ABRSM grade 3 to 4 on one instrument (or singing) at the start of the course.

Do contact me by email if you have any questions that I can help to answer.

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Lomax – Curriculum Director  
[oliver.lomax@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:oliver.lomax@abingdon.org.uk)

## Outline of the Fourth and Fifth Year Curriculum

<b>Compulsory Subjects:</b>	<b>Fourth Year</b> (lessons per fortnight)	<b>Fifth Year</b> (lessons per fortnight)
English and English Literature	6	6
Mathematics	5	6
Biology + Chemistry + Physics	15 (or 10 for double award)	15 (or 10 for double award)
Modern Foreign Language (French, German, Spanish or Mandarin Chinese)	5	5
Personal, Social, Health & Citizenship Education	1	Taught during weekly tutor time
Physical Education	1	1

<b>Optional Subjects:</b> Separate scientists choose <b>three</b> Double award scientists choose <b>four</b>	<b>Fourth Year</b> (lessons per fortnight)	<b>Fifth Year</b> (lessons per fortnight)
Geography	5 per fortnight	5 per fortnight
History		
Religious Studies		
Latin		
Ancient History		
Additional languages: German, French, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese		
Greek		
Electronics		
Computer Science		
Music		
Art		
Design & Technology		
Drama		