

ST. DOMINIC'S



VERITAS  
FOUNDED 1870



GRAMMAR SCHOOL  
FOR GIRLS

# GCSE Options Afternoon

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026

# Overview

- Ms A Doherty (Head of School Year 10)
  - advice for parents and the support pupils are getting in school
- Mr P McMaster (Vice-Principal Curriculum & School Improvement)
  - overview of the options process
- Mr C Crudden (Assistant Head of CEIAG)
  - effective subject choices



Miss A Doherty  
Head of School





## EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS –

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

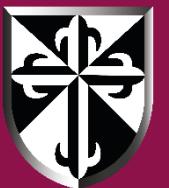
Attendance percentages can be misleading.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Satisfactory
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Poor
85% Attendance	28 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Very Poor
80% Attendance	38 Days of Absence 7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 Days of Absence 9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed	Unacceptable

For some parents, 90% may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week or 19 days of school during the school year – that's nearly 4 school weeks.



Mr P McMaster  
Vice-Principal Curriculum  
& School Improvement



# A key stage in your child's education

- Crucial stage in your child's educational career;
- Decisions made in the coming weeks will have an impact down the line;
- Vital that decisions are effective and informed;
- Review child's academic performance and listen to advice from teachers.



# Support Offered

HIPP Psychology Workshop on Options: Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January

- Year 10 Options Assembly: Wednesday 28th January at 1:35pm
- Year 10 Options Event & PT Meeting: Thursday 5th February 12:25-3:00pm
- Deadline for submission of subject choices to form tutor: Tuesday 17th February at registration.



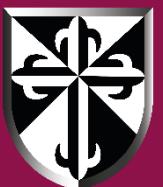
# Curriculum Developments

- The school's curriculum is kept under constant review to ensure it is flexible, broad and balanced, underpins high attainment and meets the learning, progression and career needs of our students.
- For the 2026/7 academic year we are offering a total of 26 qualifications at Key Stage 4.
  - For 2026/27 academic year we have introduced a dual pathway into Digital Technology; students can now opt for one of two routes:
    1. Digital Technology Programming
    2. Digital Technology Multimedia
- Significant curriculum development in the area of CEIAG.



# Subjects not studied at Key Stage 3

- There are a range of subjects that students can study for GCSE that are not offered at Key Stage 3.
  - Business Studies
  - Media Studies
  - Health and Social Care
- Students had a presentation from these teachers on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January.



# Structure of the Curriculum

- All students will take 9 or 10 GCSE subjects.
  - The core compulsory curriculum at GCSE involves English, English Literature, Religious Studies and Mathematics.
  - Ms Hunt sent a letter on 2<sup>nd</sup> February regarding Mathematics Pathways; some students will study Further Mathematics along with GCSE Mathematics.
- The options process allows students to choose a further 5 subjects.
- To ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, students are strongly recommended to take a Science and a Modern language.
  - A second language to GCSE is required to study in the South of Ireland.
  - Science to GCSE is required for a significant number of degree courses/apprenticeships including sport, nursing, primary school teaching and many others. Not studying Science to GCSE can be very limiting down the line.



# Making informed and effective decisions

- Consider your interests, career goals, and university/ apprenticeships requirements.
  - You may not know these yet- keep your options open!
- Choose subjects you enjoy and excel in, but also ones that align with your future plans.
- Research university course/apprenticeship requirements to ensure you're meeting prerequisites.
- Balance your choices with a mix of subjects to keep options open.



# Making effective decisions

- Seek advice from parents, teachers, career advisors, and professionals in fields you're interested in.
- Ultimately, prioritize a combination that both energises you, challenges you and supports your long-term aspirations.



# How the process works

- Complete GCSE Subject Choices form.
- Choose 5 options subjects.
  - Remember DA Science is 2 subjects and TA Science is 3.
- Parent signs form.
- Form returned to form tutor at registration by Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

St Dominic's Grammar School GCSE Subject Choices February						
Student Name: <input type="text"/>	Form Class: <input type="text"/>					
<p>Please complete the following form to select GCSE subject options. It is important that this form is completed following detailed discussion and research.</p> <p><b>General Information</b> To ensure a broad and balanced curriculum and to maximise options later, pupils are expected to take a Science and a Modern language. This requirement can only be waived in exceptional circumstances following discussion with the relevant Head of Department and approval by the Vice-Principal for Curriculum and School Improvement.</p> <p><b>Further Mathematics</b> Do you wish for your child to be considered for Further Mathematics if deemed suitable by the Mathematics Department based on performance data and teacher professional judgement?</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Optional Subjects</b> Students should choose five optional subjects from the list below.</p> <p><b>Please note:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Double Award Science makes up 2 subjects.</li> <li>• Triple Award (Biology, Chemistry and Physics makes up 3 subjects).</li> <li>• Gaeilge is only available for students who completed GCSE Irish at the end of Year 10.</li> </ul> <p>1. Art and Design 2. Biology (Triple Award must be taken alongside Chemistry and Physics) 3. Business Communication Systems 4. Business Studies 5. Chemistry (Triple Award must be taken alongside Biology and Physics) 6. Digital Technology 7. Double Award Science (2 GCSEs) 8. Drama 9. English Language &amp; Literature 10. French 11. Gaeilge (only available to students who completed GCSE Irish in Year 10) 12. Geography 13. Health and Social Care 14. History 15. Irish 16. Mathematics 17. Media Studies 18. Music 19. Physical Education 20. Physics (Triple Award must be taken alongside Biology and Chemistry) 21. Religious Studies 22. Single Award Science 23. Spanish 24. Technology and Design</p>			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>					
<p><b>Key Information:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is insufficient uptake/interest in a subject it may not run.</li> <li>• At St Dominic's we use the 'best fit' approach to build the timetable as we feel this is the fairest approach. Once all option forms are returned the data is entered into SIMS and option blocks are generated to maximise preferences of the majority. In some cases, it may not be possible for students to study all their preferred subjects.</li> </ul> <p><b>Do your research before selecting your optional subjects. Discuss possible career paths with your parents and note any careers you may be interested in</b></p> <p><b>Parental confirmation:</b> I confirm that I agree to the subject choices listed on this form. I understand that in a small number of cases there may be clashes and therefore subject choices cannot be guaranteed. I understand that certain degree pathways/apprenticeships require mandatory subjects and have discussed career pathways with my child. I understand that the timetable will be built based on student subject choices and changes may not be possible at a later date. Subject specific entry criteria may apply.</p> <p>Parental Signature: <input type="text"/> Date: <input type="text"/></p> <p>This form is to be completed and returned to your form teacher during registration by Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024</p> <p><b>For Official Use Only:</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Date Submitted:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vice-Principal (Curriculum and School Improvement) signature:</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			Date Submitted:		Vice-Principal (Curriculum and School Improvement) signature:	
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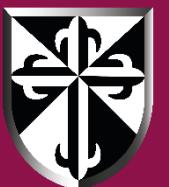
# After forms are submitted

- Students will have some opportunity to alter subject choices after choices are made.
  - However, in the event a subject is over-subscribed preference will be given to students who originally chose a subject in February 2026.
- It is important that students and parents understand that the construction of the timetable for the 2026/27 academic year will begin as soon as subjects are chosen.
- The timetable will be based exclusively on the subject choices made by students. Once the timetable is constructed changes will be facilitated where possible, but this cannot be guaranteed.

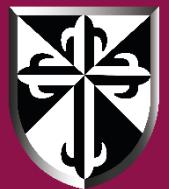


# Best-fit model

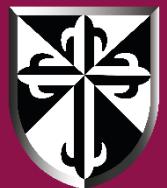
- We do not fix our option blocks and instead build them freshly every year to suit the current cohort of students. Our aim is to maximise preferences and suit as many students as possible.
- At St Dominic's we use the 'best-fit' approach to build the timetable. Once all option forms are returned the data is entered into SIMS and option blocks are generated to maximise preferences for the majority.
- In some cases, it may not be possible for students to study all their preferred subjects due to timetabling 'clashes'.



Mr O Murray  
Careers Department



# Choosing your GCSE Subjects



# How to choose an option

- Research all your options before you make a decision.
- If you have a firm career idea, choose the options you need to meet the entry requirements for the post-16 opportunities that interest you - further education, higher education etc.
- If you don't have a firm career idea, choose options that will give you plenty of choice post-16.
- Ask for help and advice from your family, friends, subject teachers, careers teacher, and others.



# Good reasons for choosing an option

- You're good at the subject.
- You enjoy the subject.
- It fits your career ideas and plans.
- It goes well with your other choices.
- It helps to give you plenty of choice post-16.

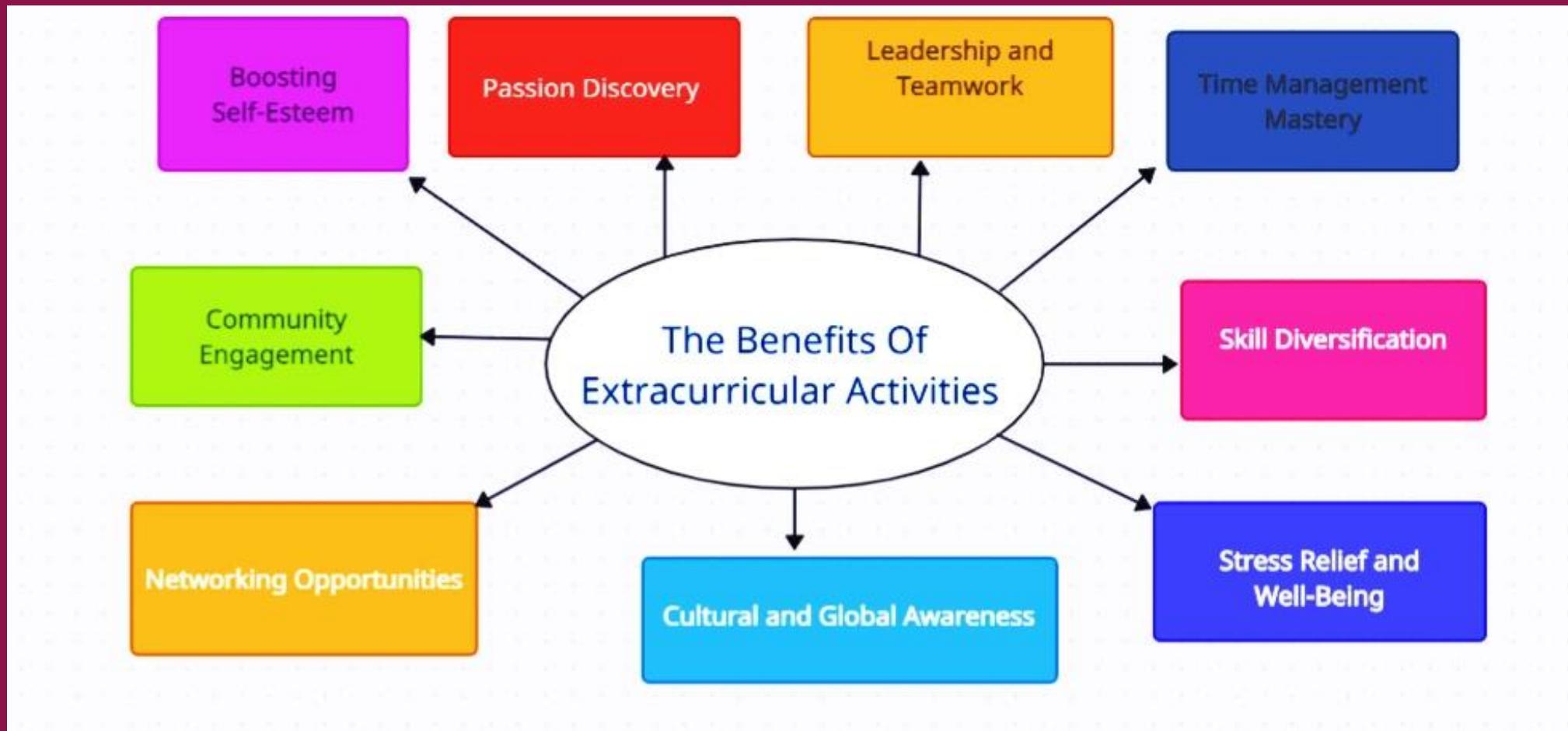


# Bad reasons for choosing an option

- Your friends have chosen it.
- You think it will be easy.
- Someone else thinks that it's a good idea.
- You like the teacher you have now.
- You didn't have time to research your options properly.



# Extra-curricular Activities



# Soft Skills

Dependability  
Critical Thinking  
Teamwork  
Communication  
Integrity  
Problem solving  
Leadership



# Extra-curricular Activities

- Teaching
- Nursing
- Midwifery
- Social Work
- Medicine
- Dentistry
- Therapies

All interview and expect that you have numerous examples of extended periods of time where you have worked in a caring environment



# Higher Level & Degree Apprenticeships

- course fees paid by your employer
- a salary
- guaranteed job
- graduate and postgraduate qualifications
- opportunities for career progression
- gain professional accreditation



# Research

## Interests profile

✓ Quiz last taken 29 Sep 22: I and S and R

[Start >](#)

## Personality profile

✗ Quiz not taken

[Start >](#)

## Work environments profile

✓ Quiz last taken 29 Sep 22

[Start >](#)

## Skills profile

✗ Quiz not taken

[Start >](#)

## Careers library

✗ Careers favoured

[Go to tool >](#)

## Subjects library

✓ Subjects favoured

[Go to tool >](#)

## Know-how library

✗ Guides favoured

[Go to tool >](#)

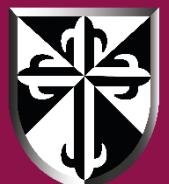
## MOOC

Make your first shortlist

[Start >](#)

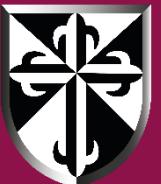
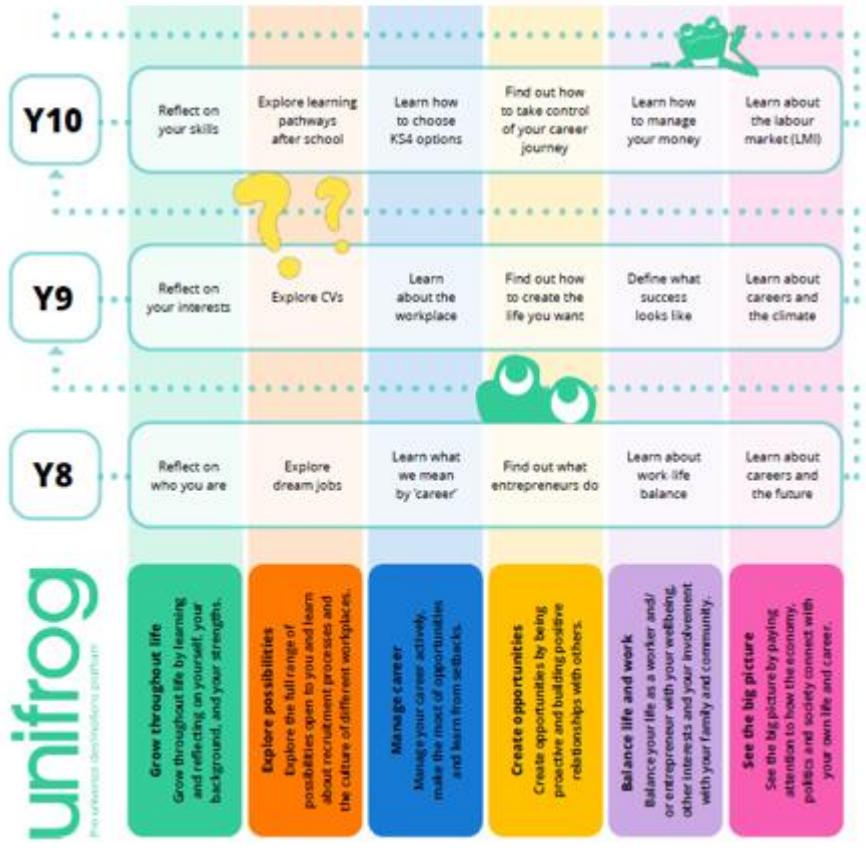
## Webinars

Hear directly from the experts

[Go to tool >](#)

# Year 10

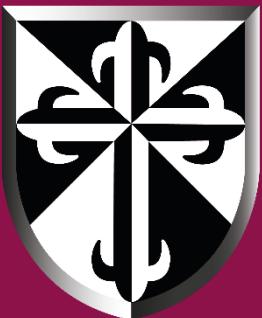
## Workbook



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