

Prepare | Aspire | Succeed



KS4 Options Frequently Asked Questions

What is the EBacc and why should my child take EBacc subjects?

The EBacc or English Baccalaureate is a set of subjects at GCSE that keeps young people's options open for further study and future careers. The EBacc is made up of subjects which are considered essential to many degrees and open up lots of doors.

The EBacc is:

- English Language and Literature
- Maths
- Sciences
- Geography or History
- A language

Research shows that a pupil's socio-economic background impacts the subjects they choose at GCSE and that this determines their opportunities beyond school. A study by the UCL Institute of Education shows that studying subjects included in the EBacc provides students with greater opportunities for further education and increases the likelihood that a pupil will stay on in full-time education. Sutton Trust research reveals that studying the EBacc can help improve a young person's performance in English and maths.

Can my child switch colour routes?

We are open to discussion about changing routes if appropriate for individual children because of specific reasons why their current route will not meet their needs or future career aspirations. The key difference between the colour routes is the opportunity to take some subjects and not others, for example, we ask students on Blue to select a humanities subject and a language and students on the Green Route study Prepare Aspire Succeed Leadership in Block B. Regardless of the colour route, students will be taught in the same mixed ability classes for their option block subjects, so an Art group in block C will have students from all three routes in.

Option blocks are taught in mixed ability groups, will my child's colour route affect their Core sets?

Maths, English and Science are set according to ability and are timetabled in a different way to the option blocks. This means that your child's set for any of the core subjects is not affected by their colour route.

Why are Separate Sciences and Computer Science only on Blue route?

Separate Sciences and Computer Science are only offered in Blue as they are challenging subjects in terms of both knowledge and skills. Computer Science is very technical and involves writing and understanding computer code. Separate Sciences are challenging due to the amount of Science covered, with 13 hours of study across the fortnight timetable. In order to take either subject students should be showing an aptitude and enthusiasm for the subject and be working at a 3+.

Can my child take History and Geography?

Yes, this is possible on all colour routes. It could impact other choices and whether they can fit with both subjects, but students can take both if they would like to.

My child has been studying both French and German in Year 9, can they take both languages at GCSE?

Yes, this is possible. It could impact other choices and whether they can fit with both subjects, but students can take both if they would like to. The only restriction is that a student could not study French, German, Geography and History because the option blocks don't permit this combination and we feel that this combination of subjects narrows a student's curriculum too much.

My child has specific SEND and I am not sure about what subjects they should choose. What should I do?

Please contact Ms Hibbert, SENDCO with specific SEN queries, she will be happy to advise and consider with you the best route or combination of subjects for your child.

We have looked through the booklet, talked about it at home, and spoken to teachers and we are stuck on the final choice. What can we do?

Email options@cottesloe.sch.bucks.uk with the options and blocks that your son or daughter would like to choose and the possible subjects for the final block. We will be happy to look at possibilities and work with you and your child to reach a decision.

My child is on Blue Route, do they have to take a language?

Ideally, we want as many of our students as possible to choose a language, whichever colour route they are on. Choosing a language as part of a student's KS4 options will also add depth and support TCS' expectations that students follow a broad and balanced curriculum beyond KS3 when the number of subjects naturally narrows.

Continuing to study the language they are taking in Year 9 is open to all TCS students; we don't limit opportunities for any student. For some students this expectation is no

problem; they want to continue learning French or German at KS4. We also know that some students would rather not do this and there is some flexibility in this decision, but we suggest that those on Blue route should choose one as part of their option choices. We ask that students really consider everything surrounding this decision by watching the video clips from Miss Goddard, Head of MFL about why choosing a language is a good thing.

When will my child find out about their options?

We inform students of their confirmed choices in June of Year 9. This seems like a long time from when they submit their form however, it takes time to coordinate the option block groups to fit into the whole school timetable for the following academic year, making sure specialist teachers can be timetabled to teach the groups. There are lots going on behind the scenes before we are able to confirm options.