



# Saffron Walden County High School

## Year 8

# Choices Handbook 2026

**SAFFRON WALDEN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL SEEKS TO BE A LOCAL SCHOOL OF  
EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY**

## Year 8 Course Choices

Dear Parents/Carers,

In the week beginning 9<sup>th</sup> March, you will be asked to use your child's SIMS profile to indicate which subjects they would like to study in Year 9. We will explain how to access this platform and how to indicate choices at the parent information evening. This process will need to be completed by Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March. We hope this booklet will help inform those decisions.

In Year 9, students complete their Key Stage 3 studies and maintain a broad and balanced curriculum. All students study English, Maths, Science, History, Geography, a language and PE.

In addition, all students will continue to follow a Personal Development programme, which includes PSHE, Careers, Core Computing and Core RPE (but not leading to a qualification in these subjects).

Beyond this, students can make some individual choices and personalise their studies to reflect emerging interests and skills. They can select which of four languages to study and they will have more time devoted to this choice than in Years 7 and 8. They can also choose which creative course to follow from an extensive list. There remains two 'Open Choices' in which students can select additional subjects that interest them, including a second language (those choosing an additional language have an extra lesson afterschool on a Friday each week during Year 9).

The Year 9 curriculum also allows students to trial some courses which do not feature in Year 7 and 8, including Latin, Spanish, Health & Social Care or Business Studies, before making a final decision whether to study these for GCSE in Years 10 and 11. This allows students to work at a higher level and develop foundation skills across a range of subjects thereby helping them to make more informed final GCSE choices. We firmly believe that combining this broad curriculum with some personalisation puts our students in a strong position as they select which subjects they wish to continue to study when making their final GCSE options next year.

Please note that timetabling constraints and room capacities mean that we cannot guarantee to accommodate the individual requests of every student. We will contact parents where this is an issue, or where we feel that course choices are inappropriate for an individual student, given their academic profile.

We hope this booklet provides sufficient information to allow parents and students to make informed, sensible and balanced choices. The Year 8 pastoral team will help to ensure that appropriate guidance and support is offered to all involved in this important decision-making process. In addition, you can request a tutorial with a Careers Advisor or discuss possibilities further with Mrs Pieri in Learning Support. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need further explanation or discussion.

The current Year 8 is a hard-working group of young people with immense potential. We look forward to working with them, and you, to ensure they make the best possible choices as they move into Year 9, and during next year's options process.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Norman  
Deputy Headteacher

# CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Key Dates	3
The Year 9 Curriculum at SWCHS	4
Alternative Provision	6
Years 10 and 11	8
 <b>OPTION SUBJECTS - COURSE DETAILS</b>	
Art & Design	10
3D Design – Ceramics	11
Computing (Computer Science & Digital Information Technology)	12
Dance	14
Drama	15
Food Preparation and Nutrition	16
3D Design – Architecture	17
Music	18
Product Design	19
Textile Design	20
Modern Foreign Languages	22
Latin	24
Business	25
Health and Social Care	26
Physical Education	28
Religion, Philosophy and Education	30

## **2025 Key Dates**

- Year 8 Parents Curriculum Information Evening: Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026
- Publication of this guidance booklet: 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026
- Year 8 Progress Check: published in the week beginning 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026
- Year 8S online Parents' Evening: 12<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- Year 8W online Parents' Evening: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- SIMS profile completed between 9<sup>th</sup> March and 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026

## The Year 9 Curriculum at SWCHS

The figures in brackets indicate the number of taught hours per two-week timetable cycle:

### Core subjects

- Mathematics (7)
- English – Language and Literature (7)
- Science (9)
- Core PE (4)
- Geography (3)
- History (3)
- One Language from French, German, (Latin, Spanish - if eligible) (5)
- Personal Development: Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, including Careers Education, Computing skills (**not** leading to a GCSE qualification), Religious Education\* (**not** leading to a GCSE qualification) and Relationships and Sex Education (3)

\*In Core Religious Education, students learn about Human Rights, Animal Rights and Social Justice. We will be learning about Christian and other religious perspectives through parables and stories.

### Further subjects

- One Creative Choice (3)
- Open Choice 1 (3)
- Open Choice 2 (3)

### Creative Choices

All students will study at least one 'creative' subject, from a wide range of Arts, Technology and Computing/IT courses:

Art & Design #	3D Design (NB This is the ceramics course) #
Computer Science	Dance
Digital Information Technology	Drama
Food Preparation & Nutrition	3D Design – Architecture #
Music	Product Design
Textile Design #	

# At GCSE all these subjects are specialist versions of a single Art GCSE specification. Students may study **a maximum of two** of these subjects in Year 9, but will then have to opt for **only one** in Years 10 and 11

### Open Choices

The two 'open' choices will allow students to select two additional subjects from an extensive list. This provides opportunities to:

- Study a second language (either French or German). **Please note that this will require students to attend 1 hour per week of additional teaching after school in Year 9 only.**
- Try out new subjects such as Business or Health & Social Care, before opting for them as GCSE courses
- Try out different Arts and Technology courses where some combinations are not feasible at GCSE. The final choice of GCSE course can then be made from an informed position later in Year 9.

Subjects available are:

French or German (in one block only)	Art & Design #
3D Design (NB This is the ceramics course) #	Business
Computer Science	Dance
Digital Information Technology	Drama
Food Preparation & Nutrition	Health & Social Care
Music	Physical Education
Product Design	Religion, Philosophy and Ethics
3D Design – Architecture #	Textile Design #

# At GCSE all these subjects are specialist versions of a single Art GCSE specification. Students will be able to study a **maximum of two** of these subjects in Year 9, but will then have to opt for **only one** in Years 10 and 11

The possible permutations of these further subjects can be summarised as below:

Creative Choice (3 periods)	Open Choice 1 (3 periods)	Open Choice 2 (3 periods)
<p><b>One of:</b></p> <p>Art &amp; Design #</p> <p>3D Design (NB This is the ceramics course) #</p> <p>Computer Science</p> <p>Dance</p> <p>Digital Information Technology</p> <p>Drama</p> <p>Food Preparation &amp; Nutrition</p> <p>3D Design – Architecture #</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Product Design</p> <p>Textile Design #</p>	<p><b>One of:</b></p> <p>Art &amp; Design #</p> <p>3D Design (NB This is the ceramics course) #</p> <p>Business</p> <p>Computer Science</p> <p>Dance</p> <p>Digital Information Technology</p> <p>Drama</p> <p>Food Preparation &amp; Nutrition</p> <p>Health &amp; Social Care</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Physical Education</p> <p>Product Design</p> <p>Religion, Philosophy &amp; Ethics</p> <p>Textile Design #</p> <p>3D Design – Architecture #</p> <p>French</p> <p>German</p>	<p><b>One of:</b></p> <p>Art &amp; Design #</p> <p>3D Design (NB This is the ceramics course) #</p> <p>Business</p> <p>Computer Science</p> <p>Dance</p> <p>Digital Information Technology</p> <p>Drama,</p> <p>Food Preparation &amp; Nutrition</p> <p>Health &amp; Social Care</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Physical Education</p> <p>Religion, Philosophy &amp; Ethics</p> <p>Product Design</p> <p>Textile Design #</p> <p>3D Design – Architecture #</p>

### Alternative Provision

Where this best meets their individual learning needs, a small number of students will be invited by the school to follow an alternative 'enrichment language' and structured Study Support programme in Year 9 (5 periods), and a full Study Support programme in Years 10 and 11. Parents of these students will be contacted in the summer term.

As it will be the school who makes this decision, students should initially make their language option as normal (using the information provided in the Languages section below) and the school will approach relevant parents later in the year.

### The English Baccalaureate Performance Measure

The EBacc is not a qualification in itself; it is a suite of qualifications that was identified as supporting students to have the widest career opportunities. The previous government thought that around 90% of students should be advised to take the EBacc qualifications. The curriculum is currently under review, but it remains the case that these subjects are highly regarded.

Students 'achieve' the 'EBacc' by gaining 9-5 grades in each of the following subject categories:

- GCSE English Language (not Literature)
- GCSE Mathematics
- Two GCSE Sciences – *either* two of the three 'separate' sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) *or* GCSE Combined Science *or* GCSE Computer Science with one other GCSE Science (but where at least two have been studied)
- **Either** GCSE Geography *or* GCSE History
- A GCSE in a modern or ancient foreign language: at SWCHS, French, German, Spanish or Latin count

### **Summary**

We feel that our curriculum offers all students a challenging and enjoyable Year 9, whilst maintaining genuine breadth of study. The 'open' choices, together with those within the Languages and Creative areas, allow students to personalise their curriculum whilst maintaining a broad and balanced set of subjects. This approach will ensure that our students meet the current national expectations and therefore will be in the best position for applications at both 16 and 18 for progression to higher level courses, apprenticeships, or employment.

## Years 10 and 11

Looking further ahead, students will study GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11. There will be a further options process during Year 9 to allow students to make informed final choices about which subjects they wish to continue to study going into year 10.

In Years 10 and 11, students will follow the following core subjects:

Subject	Periods per Cycle
English and English Literature (2 GCSEs)	7
Mathematics	7
Science (separate or combined)	10
Core PE	4
Core provision will also include the following: Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education, including Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), Computing skills, Careers Education, and Religious Education ( <b>not</b> leading to a GCSE)	

Options will be reduced to **four** GCSE or equivalent subjects, each with an allocation of 5 periods per cycle. Students will study:

- At least one EBacc subject
- Two open options – these can include other EBacc subjects.

### Further Information

Students and parents have online access to 'Unifrog', the school's careers guidance package. Students can research preferred career paths, and which qualifications are most likely to support progression into a particular career. This can be found at: <https://www.unifrog.org/>

You can also find information about qualification requirements for certain University pathways here: <https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/>

# Creative Options

We strongly recommend that students follow a creative subject to GCSE level. Many employers actively seek those who have some creative background, and a growing number of careers now require it. Furthermore, at this stage of their education, students do not know for sure what their next step will be so keeping a creative element to their portfolio is sensible.

Briefly, skills developed in these subjects' compliment those nurtured in more desk-orientated ones. Students must take more independent decisions and become resilient in exposing their work to scrutiny. All these highly regarded subjects not only develop creative decision-making skills but also encourage dedication, organisation, the development of self-confidence and attention to detail.

Please note that some subject combinations in these subjects at GCSE level are prohibited by the examination board beyond Year 9. Please see general guidance above, and a separate brochure giving details of Art and Technology courses will give additional information on how to choose these subjects for Year 9, and subsequently for GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11.

## ART AND DESIGN

For further information, contact Miss Wyman: [cwyman@swchs.net](mailto:cwyman@swchs.net)

### Year 9 Course Outline

During the Year 9 course students focus on developing their skills and confidence as artists through experimentation and personal inquiry. The course focuses on building students experience with a wide range of drawing, painting and print making processes, as well as investigating diverse and interesting artists to inform their ideas. The Year 9 experience focuses on fostering a love of the subject whilst developing skills, creativity and an inquiring mind. During the workshops and practical tasks there is a real focus on creativity, problem solving, critical thinking and learning how to communicate through the visual language of Art. Students undertake fun, exciting and investigative work from a range of starting points to assist in building strong foundation of skills, knowledge and understanding. The course will allow students to develop a personal response using a wide range of materials, processes and techniques including drawing from observation and imagination, painting, experimental print making, collage, mixed media and their own photography. Students also explore how to compile and present their work through imaginative use of sketchbooks and design sheets, as well as how to evaluate and annotate their own work.

### GCSE Course Outline

**Examination board:** AQA

**Component 1:** Coursework 60% of GCSE award

**Component 2:** Externally set non exam assessment 40% (set by exam board)

### Overview

Throughout the GCSE course there are opportunities to visit galleries and museums to build an appreciation of art and design as well as providing a springboard for new projects. The GCSE course focuses on the continued development of subject knowledge and fostering independent creativity across a range of coursework projects.

### Year 10 content

During Year 10 students work on portfolio projects based on the theme of natural forms exploring drawing, painting, print making and ceramics. The natural forms project focuses on drawing using a wide range of media and developing ideas into print design for lino, etching and mixed media.

### Year 11 content

In Year 11 students undertake their mock exam project based on a cultural theme, the project focuses on three-dimensional design, developing clay sculptures. The second part of Year 11 consists of the externally set task, set by AQA. This consists of a 'lead in period' followed by a practical task completed under exam conditions. The GCSE Art course provides an excellent opportunity for students to follow specialist pathways in creative Arts subjects; teaches the required drawing, painting skills, creative understanding and aesthetic appreciation to successfully progress onto A Level courses. Studying Art and Design provides an excellent platform to further study at university in all creative subjects. Art courses offered within the art department provide a high level of specialist support and challenge for students of all abilities.

## **3D DESIGN: Ceramics**

For further information, contact Miss Wyman: [cwyman@swchs.net](mailto:cwyman@swchs.net)

### **Year 9 Course Outline**

During the Year 9 3D Art course students focus on developing their skills and confidence as artists through experimentation and personal inquiry. The course focuses on building students experience with a wide range of drawing, designing and making processes, as well as investigating diverse and interesting artists to inform their ideas. The Year 9 experience focuses on fostering a love of the subject whilst developing skills, creativity and an inquiring mind. During the workshops and practical tasks there is a real focus on creativity, problem solving, critical thinking and learning how to communicate through the visual language of Art. Students undertake fun, exciting and investigative work from a range of starting points to assist in building strong foundation of skills, knowledge and understanding. The course will allow students to develop a personal response using a wide range of three-dimensional materials, including clay construction, wire, card and modrock. Students also explore how to compile and present their work through imaginative use of sketchbooks and design sheets, as well as how to evaluate and annotate their own work.

### **GCSE Course Outline**

**Examination board:** AQA

**Component 1:** Coursework 60% of GCSE award

**Component 2:** Externally set non exam assessment 40% (set by exam board)

### **Overview**

Throughout the GCSE course there are opportunities to visit galleries and museums to build an appreciation of art and design as well as providing a springboard for new projects. The GCSE course focusses on the continued development of subject knowledge and fostering independent creativity across a range of coursework projects with a focus on making three-dimensional works of Art.

### **Year 10 content**

During Year 10 students work on portfolio projects based on the theme of 'natural forms' and 'sculptural heads'. The natural forms project focuses on drawing and designing using a range of media and developing ideas three dimensional ceramic pieces. The sculptural element of project focuses on clay construction techniques, glazing and decorative techniques for ceramics.

### **Year 11 content**

In Year 11 students undertake their mock exam project based on a cultural theme, the project focuses on three-dimensional design, developing clay and other three-dimensional materials. The second part of Year 11 consists of the externally set task, set by AQA. This consists of a 'lead in period' followed by a practical task completed under exam conditions. The GCSE Art course provides an excellent opportunity for students to follow specialist pathways in creative Arts subjects, teaches the required drawing, painting skills, creative understanding and aesthetic appreciation to successfully progress onto A Level courses. Studying three-dimensional Design provides an excellent platform to further study at university in all creative subjects. Art courses offered within the Art Department provide a high level of specialist support and challenge for students of all abilities. The GCSE 3D Art course teaches a high level of practical skills, a vast array of media and creative processes whilst celebrating individual creativity, embracing experimentation and independent learning.

## COMPUTING

For further information contact, contact Mr Laight: [mlaight@swchs.net](mailto:mlaight@swchs.net)

Within computing, there is an opportunity to study either, or both, of **Computer Science** (GCSE) and **Digital Information Technology** (Btec Level 1/2). Computer Science requires high levels of proficiency in Maths. We therefore recommend students to be forecast an 'Above' as their Forecast Attainment Band in Maths in their latest Progress Check to pick Computer Science. Students who are not forecast 'Above' in Maths are advised to choose the Digital Information Technology course instead. We will contact parents where this is an issue, or where we feel that course choices are inappropriate for an individual student, given their academic profile.

### GCSE Computer Science

#### Year 9 Course Outline

Throughout our Year 9 course there will be a focus on programming techniques. Pupils will learn to improve their designing and planning of programs in order to program more competently in turn. There will be many opportunities to work in teams, designing and programming together. Pupils will build on the basic knowledge of Python that they gained in Year 8 and will develop their skills and learn new techniques that will allow them to write more complex programs. This will include the use of subroutines and more complex data structures.

There will be a variety of theory topics linked to various areas of Computer Science. This will include mathematical conversions between binary, decimal and hexadecimal number bases and calculating file sizes of images and sound.

### GCSE Course Outline

**Examination board:** AQA

#### Overview

The course comprises 2 written exams – one on algorithms and programming and the other on theory. Each paper carries an equal 50% weighting.

#### Year 10/11 content

Pupils will cover a range of theory topics whilst also maintaining and developing their programming skills. Programming challenges will be completed in at least one lesson a fortnight.

Across the two years the main theory topics studied include areas such as Computer Systems, Databases, Searching and Sorting Algorithms, Data Representation, Cyber Security, Networks, Ethical, Legal and Environmental Impacts.

### Digital Information Technology (Btec IT)

#### Year 9 Course Outline

Our Year 9 IT course comprises a lot of skill building, there will also be a focus on using software in a professional manner. This will build upon skills and content taught in the **Social Network** and **Big Data** topics taught in Year 7 and Year 8 Computing lessons.

Pupils will learn about current information technologies that are used in businesses, along with methods of protecting data, and designing systems.

There will be a focus on (Microsoft Excel) spreadsheets and user interface design; learning what they are used for, and a variety of skills to allow pupils to manipulate and present data and use the full capabilities of the software. Another skill-based topic for the year will centre around design. Pupils will learn about principles of design and then practise designing interfaces considering a range of users and taking their needs into consideration.

They will complete a project that helps them to fit these skills together, this will give them a chance to use their creative skills to develop various assets in a variety of media, utilising a range of programs.

The skills that we cover will be useful in many careers and situations later on in life and are highly transferrable to other subjects.

## **Year 10 and 11 Course Outline**

**Examination board:** Edexcel

### **Overview**

The course comprises of 2 coursework components and an exam component. The exam is a written paper.

### **Year 10 content**

Pupils will start with theory and learning about the content for the first component which is assessed by a 6-hour controlled assessment. The first component which relates to collecting, presenting and interpreting data. Students will learn about the importance of data and develop skills to allow them to fully analyse and present the data. This will contribute 30% of the student's final qualification.

Pupils will also start preparing for the content for the other controlled assessment component which covers interface design and project management. We will also cover some of the content for the exam unit.

### **Year 11 content**

At the start of Year 11 pupils will start working towards the exam component. This covers topics such as: communication technologies, accessibility and inclusivity, impacts of technology, laws surrounding technology, systems security. The controlled assessment for the user interface design and project management will be sat at the end of the Autumn term of Year 11. This contributes to 30% of the final qualification. The exam will be sat at the end of Year 11. This is the final 40% of the qualification.

## **DANCE**

For further information, contact Miss Knowles: [kknowles@swchs.net](mailto:kknowles@swchs.net)

### **Year 9 - Foundation Year**

In Year 9 students will complete a foundation year course, in dance, across 3 periods a fortnight. The focus will predominantly be working on increasing confidence through the demonstration of performance skills and creative projects. We will explore several genres of dance and look at example professional works to help assist this process.

Students will have the opportunity to perform on stage in front of an audience and begin to gain some knowledge and understanding of features of a production.

**Examination board:** AQA

### **Year 10 & 11 GCSE Dance Description of course**

The Year 10 & 11 GCSE Dance course allows pupils to develop new dance skills, as well as those acquired from Year 9, and any previous dance experience. The course allows pupils to develop confidence, self-awareness and team working skills. It is a creative subject, where there is great opportunity to express yourself in a non-verbal way and use your imagination.

Pupils will have lots of opportunity to work with others, both performing and choreographing dances across a wide variety of styles, some of their own choice and others from set works. Most lessons take place in the Dance Studio and theory lessons are integrated into the timetable to compliment the practical elements.

The exam board supplies a range of anthology works for pupils to study in the form of theory-based works, these are short films choreographed by professional dance companies. The anthologies are an effective way to support the integration of theory and practice together. Practically pupils will be required to perform, in a group, as a soloist, dancing two short set phrases, as well as in front of a live audience from time to time. Pupils also have to craft and create their own choreography piece using a starting point set by the exam board, this can be a group or solo piece of work.

40% Theory: Component 2 Dance Appreciation

Written Exam: 1 hour 30 minutes

60% Practical: Component 1: Performance and Choreography

Performance: Set phrases through solo performance (approx. one minute)  
Duo/trio performance (max 5 minutes duration)

Choreography: Solo or group choreography (solo two to two half mins or group dance for two to five dancers (three to three and a half mins))

### **Comments**

As the course is very practical and students will be expected to use extra-curricular time for rehearsal. We look forward to students using their creative ideas to produce some original dance ideas. It is encouraged that students are dancing in some capacity outside of school

## **DRAMA**

For further information, contact Mrs Hassani: [chassani@swchs.net](mailto:chassani@swchs.net)

### **Year 9 Course Outline**

Year 9 is a bridging year where students are given the opportunity to develop skills in devising, live theatre evaluation and script work. The course allows students to develop skills in group work and helps to build confidence in speaking and working with others.

### **GCSE Course Outline**

**Examination board:** Eduqas

### **Overview**

The Drama GCSE course develops students' creativity, personal growth, confidence, communication and analytical skills through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding. It encourages students to explore all key areas of drama such as performing, devising, directing and designing. It provides opportunities for students to see professional and local theatre and to develop their skills as informed and thoughtful audience members.

Through the study of this course, students will be given opportunities to participate in and interpret their own and others' drama. They will explore the forms, styles and contexts of drama and will learn to develop collaboratively their ideas, and to reflect on their own and others' performances.

### **Year 10 content**

In Year 10 students complete Component 1. Students initially explore practically the genres of Physical Theatre, Melodrama and Theatre in Education, and practise the written element of Component 1. Students then complete Component 1 – devising from a stimulus using a specific genre.

Final performance - 10% of GCSE

Portfolio – 20% of GCSE

Evaluation in controlled conditions – 10% of GCSE

### **Year 11 content**

In Year 11 students complete Component 2 and Component 3.

### **Component 2**

This unit is the Exploration of script in small groups. Students stage and perform the extracts and write their artistic intentions for performance. They complete a mock exam which is internally examined and then a final performance which is externally examined and worth 20% of GCSE.

### **Component 3**

Students begin preparation for Component 3 which is the final written exam, worth 40% of their Drama GCSE. This involves the exploration of a set text including context, staging, design, characters and style and structure. Students watch a live theatre production to evaluate for their Component 3 exam.

## **FOOD PREPARATION AND NUTRITION**

For further information, contact Ms S Ward: [sward@swchs.net](mailto:sward@swchs.net)

### **Year 9 Course Outline**

Leading on from Food in Years 7 and 8, our fresh and exciting Food Preparation and Nutrition course equips students with an array of culinary techniques, as well as knowledge of nutrition, food traditions and kitchen safety. Whilst practical skills are an important focus of the Food Preparation and Nutrition course, we also begin to introduce students to develop knowledge in the following key areas: food, nutrition and health, food science, food safety, food provenance and food choice.

This course will inspire and motivate students, opening their eyes to a world of career opportunities and giving them the confidence to cook with ingredients from across the globe!

Please note that parents need to be willing to provide ingredients on a regular basis and that students will need to practise their cooking skills at home in order to develop and extend their practical ability.

### **GCSE Course Outline**

**Examination board:** AQA

#### **Overview**

This is a subject with a great variety of content where students are given the opportunity to work both independently and as part of a team, investigating foods, developing culinary skills and techniques, exploring elements of food science, use of ingredients and nutrition. It is important to highlight that the GCSE course comprises a balanced 50% coursework and 50% written examination, culminating at the end of year 11. While there are ample opportunities for hands-on practical work, the curriculum also emphasises a considerable theoretical focus.

#### **Year 10 content**

Students will develop their knowledge and understanding of crucial aspects such as food safety and hygiene, food provenance, production and processing, along with further exploration of scientific principles integral to food preparation. With practical skills, there is a specific focus on fostering creativity in dish selection and enhancing independent culinary abilities. This not only provides students with valuable practical experience but also encourages them to express their creativity in the kitchen.

#### **Year 11 content**

Students begin the main coursework, which is divided into two separate tasks; A Food Investigation completed in the autumn term and a Food Preparation assessment completed in the spring term. Together these are worth 50% of the grade. Once the coursework is completed, students will revise for the written exam which makes up the other 50% of the final GCSE grade.

## 3D DESIGN - ARCHITECTURE

For further information, contact Mr D Bennett: [dbennett@swchs.net](mailto:dbennett@swchs.net)

### Year 9 Course Outline

This highly creative course is based on three-dimensional design in the form of Architecture that builds on students experience of the subject in Years 7 and 8.

In Year 9, students engage in two units that blend creative thinking whilst introducing architectural techniques, providing a fulfilling, and rewarding experience. These projects expose students to a variety of skills, including the use of industry-standard CAD/CAM programs and machinery for creative design, prototyping and crafting functional and visually appealing interiors and architecture. The course mirrors real-world design practices, offering opportunities for both collaborative teamwork and individual work. Throughout, students enhance their communication skills, preparing them to effectively present themselves as designers, especially if they choose to pursue this course in subsequent years.

### GCSE Course Outline

**Examination board:** Edexcel

**Component 1:** Coursework 60% of GCSE award

**Component 2:** Externally set assignment (set by exam board) 40% of GCSE award

### Year 10 content

Students embark on Component 1, which involves producing a personal portfolio including a sketchbook and a three-dimensional model. They undergo the design cycle, involving the analysis of the project theme, research, investigation, design, development, physical manufacturing of an architectural model, and evaluation. The theme for this project is 'Organic Architecture,' aimed at fostering an appreciation for the profound influence of the natural world on architecture. Additionally, it raises awareness of the importance of the environment and sustainable issues.

### Year 11 content

Students continue to work on completing Component 1, and they also undertake a supportive mock examination project that contributes to the assessment of Component 1. In early January, the exam board releases Component 2. Students are provided with a specific brief by the exam board, tasked with designing and creating a 3D outcome of their choice in response to the given theme. This process mirrors the journey of Component 1, involving the creation of a sketchbook with research, designs, and development work to aid in producing the final model. The final model is produced during a designated 10-hour exam period, during which students are required to work independently in controlled exam conditions.

This GCSE not only nurtures creative abilities but also equips students with practical skills and knowledge that can be applied in a variety of contexts within the creative sectors.

For those aiming to deepen their understanding of architecture and have a passion to study it more in-depth, there is a direct progression onto our A-level course.

## MUSIC

For further information, contact Miss Law: [claw@swchs.net](mailto:claw@swchs.net)

### Year 9 Course Outline

Year 9 Music will broaden musical experience while venturing further into understanding the way music works. It will develop an understanding of music theory through Composition, Listening and Appraising. Music in Year 9 encourages imagination and embraces creativity.

### Musicians will enjoy activities based around:

- Listening to and understanding how music is created. Continuing from Year 8 in developing analytical and evaluation skills; the musical elements will be at the centre of study. Music theory will be embedded with more consistency.
- Composing - using a combination of practical and software-based activities. Students will develop a toolkit to be able to create their own musical ideas.
- Performing - as soloists and in class ensembles. Students will perform music from a variety of styles and genres. For those looking toward Year 10, it is a good idea to start to learn an instrument or study singing during the Year 9 course (if not already learning).

### GCSE Course Outline

**Examination board:** WJEC/Eduqas

### Overview

The Eduqas GCSE in Music is centred on three areas and offers a broad and coherent course of study: Component 1 – Performing; Component 2 – Composing; Component 3 - Appraising

### Year 10 and 11 content

Students will:

- Engage actively in the process of music study.
- Develop performing skills individually and in groups to communicate musically with fluency and control.
- Develop composing skills to organise musical ideas.
- Recognise links between the activities of performing, composing and appraising.
- Develop knowledge, understanding and skills needed to communicate as musicians.
- Develop awareness of a variety of instruments, styles and approaches to performing and composing.
- Develop awareness of music technologies and their use in the creation and presentation of music.
- Recognise contrasting genres, styles and traditions of music, and develop some awareness of musical chronology. Four Areas of Study from a wide variety of genres develop students' knowledge and understanding of Music. Two set works of music form a core focus for study.
- Develop as effective and independent learners with enquiring minds.
- Reflect upon and evaluate their own and others' music.
- Engage with and appreciate the diverse heritage of music, in order to promote personal, social, intellectual and cultural development.

*Students are expected to attend at least one extra-curricular Music activity to help with Area of Study 1 & 2 above.*

## PRODUCT DESIGN

For further information, contact Mr J Duddy: [jduddy@swchs.net](mailto:jduddy@swchs.net)

### Year 9 Course Outline

This exciting course builds on students' experience of Product Design in Years 7 and 8, developing their skills and knowledge. It also introduces engineering processes and manufacturing techniques to further enrich their experience within the subject.

During year 9, students participate in two units of study that conclude with a series of design, practical, and user-centered tasks. These activities provide a comprehensive overview of designing and crafting a variety of innovative and creative products. In the practical tasks, students get to work with a diverse range of materials, processes, and machinery, helping to build confidence in preparation for the subject at GCSE for those who decide to pursue the course further.

### GCSE Course Outline

**Examination board:** Edexcel

#### Overview

This course aims to deepen students' knowledge and understanding of design and manufacturing, enabling them to generate ideas, develop, and skilfully manufacture high-quality prototypes in response to diverse issues, needs, problems, and opportunities. By encouraging students to take design risks, the course cultivates resourcefulness, innovation and develops independent skills.

#### Year 10 content

Students immerse themselves in focused projects for the majority of the year, honing both theoretical understanding and practical skills. In June of Year 10, students undertake the main coursework component, which constitutes 50% of the overall GCSE grade. Students will undertake a single design and manufacture project form a set contextual challenge set by the exam board. The main investigation and research section of the coursework is completed within this year.

#### Year 11 content

Students continue with the coursework project, dedicating a significant portion of the year to the design and manufacture stages —from the initial concept to the creation of the final physical outcome. Upon completing the coursework, students follow a well-structured revision plan for the 1 hour and 45 minute written exam, which accounts for the remaining 50% of their overall grade. This exam occurs in the summer term.

Studying GCSE Product Design equips students with practical problem-solving skills, creativity, and a solid understanding of design processes. These valuable skills are applicable across various careers and fields, fostering adaptability, innovation, and a foundation for further education or professional pursuits.

For those aiming to deepen their understanding of the subject, there is a direct progression onto our A-level course.

## TEXTILES

For further information, contact Miss T Costa: [tcosta@swchs.net](mailto:tcosta@swchs.net)

### Year 9 Course Outline

Throughout Year 9, students work in sketchbooks and are taught a variety of art and designing techniques to help communicate their design intentions. Students experiment with different media, including photography and CAD to design and manipulate their own textile ideas. Students also learn how to do various printed textiles, decorative techniques, fashion illustration and presentation techniques enhancing learning in Years 7 and 8

### GCSE Course Outline

Textile Design is a creative subject that involves the selection, manipulation and creation of new fabrics and uses a range of technical processes to create exciting practical outcomes. It teaches students to work in multi-disciplinary ways and gives students the skills to progress their career in the fashion or textiles industry. The course is primarily fashion based and covers a variety of design and make projects. The course is suitable for all students and can be adapted to suit personal preferences i.e., menswear or womenswear. The course encourages creative thinking and allows students the freedom to explore their own personal influences.

**Examination board:** Edexcel

Component 1: Coursework 60% of GCSE award

Component 2: Externally set assignment (set by exam board) 40% of GCSE award

### Overview

There is direct progression onto our GCSE Textiles course which continues to focus on the selection, manipulation and creation of new fabrics and uses a range of technical processes to create exciting practical outcomes.

### Year 10 content

Students begin their component 1 coursework in the form of a personal portfolio. The coursework project comprises of a sketchbook, garment and portfolio pages. Students will complete a design and make project using an internally set assignment. Throughout the project students will produce a variety of sketchbook pages of research, designs and practical textile samples. Students then use their inspiration, designs and development work to make a corset or jacket inspired by their theme.

### Year 11 content

Students work through a smaller mock coursework project where they are given the opportunity to have a trial run at producing a garment/accessory in controlled conditions.

Students are then given a set brief by the exam board and are asked to design and make a fashion garment/accessory. Students create a sketchbook featuring research, designs, development work to help produce their final product. The final model is produced during a designated 10-hour exam period, during which students are required to work independently in controlled exam conditions.

# OPEN OPTIONS

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

For further information, contact Mr J Sleightholm ([Jsleightholm@swchs.net](mailto:Jsleightholm@swchs.net)) - French, Ms C Hall ([Chall@swchs.net](mailto:Chall@swchs.net)) - German or Ms S Hargett ([Shargett@swchs.net](mailto:Shargett@swchs.net)) - Spanish

### Year 9 Course Outline

**French and German** are options that are offered to all students.

### GCSE Spanish

There is an opportunity for more able linguists to take the GCSE Spanish option. The pace of learning is necessarily faster in GCSE Spanish, because this is taught from scratch and students need to be at GCSE standard within 3 years. To opt for the GCSE Spanish course, a student must be forecast to be 'Above' the end of Year 8 standard in French and/or German in the Year 8 Spring Progress Check.

Even if they have family backgrounds in Spanish (eg a relative who speaks Spanish or holidays in Spain), we find that, if students have not shown this aptitude in their French and German studies, they struggle with the demands of the GCSE Spanish course.

### Two Languages

Students can choose to study two Languages in Year 9. Students who wish to take two Languages will, for their second language (which must be French or German), only have three of the five lessons during normal curriculum time in Year 9. The additional compulsory lessons will take place 3:30-4:10 each Friday. Students who wish to take two languages will need to be able to attend these afterschool sessions. If they continue with two Languages in Year 10, all their lessons will be in normal curriculum time.

### Native speakers

We recommend that Native speakers (who can read and write fluently in their native language) take a different language for GCSE. There may still be an opportunity for them to gain a qualification in their native language without studying the course for *that* language (depending on the school's ability to examine the speaking element of the exam, which would be possible for someone taking one of the languages we offer i.e. French, German or Spanish). It is important, however, for students to gain a thorough understanding of the exam requirements, which is why native speakers should still take a different language in curriculum time. We recommend these students discuss this with the MFL Department.

### Enrichment Spanish

A very small minority of Year 8 students will be approached by the school in the summer term with a view to doing a one-year Spanish Enrichment course in Year 9 as part of a Study Support programme for them. This is not to be confused with the GCSE Spanish course.

The Languages team work closely with the Year team and the Learning Support team to identify individuals, who, due to their learning needs, we feel would benefit from this programme. Students who have done this course have found it to be very enjoyable and rewarding

Students who follow this one-year course will NOT continue with Spanish (or any other language) beyond Year 9; they will continue with their other options instead.

As it will be the school who makes this decision, students should initially make their language option as normal (following the information above) and the school will approach parents individually later in the year.

**In brief, students who, in their Year 8 Spring Progress Check, are not forecast to be 'Above' in at least one Language (and who have not studied Latin in Year 8) must choose either French or German on their Option form.**

Languages are taught in a wide range of engaging and interesting contexts and broaden students' cultural knowledge of the countries where the language is spoken.

We aim to offer opportunities to take part in some exciting language trips.

## **GCSE Course Outline**

**Examination Board** – Edexcel.

% of exam work –

- Listening 25%
- Reading 25%
- Writing 25%
- Speaking 25%

During the GCSE Language courses in Years 10 and 11, we will aim to improve students' language skills so that they will be able to communicate more confidently and fluently. They will also increase their independent use of language, by gaining a more secure knowledge of key grammatical structures. This will enable students to speak and write on a broader range of topics, using language more creatively and giving opinions on various issues.

At GCSE students will also explore more cultural contexts and use a wider range of authentic resources.

Students will also begin to understand the purpose and relevance of language for communication in today's world. In a competitive business environment, language skills are vital and therefore viewed very favourably by employers and universities.

In school, students can have the opportunity to work in small groups with the Language Assistants, and we also look forward to them participating in one of the numerous and exciting Foreign Language trips that are run at Key Stage 4.

## **LATIN**

For further information, contact Mrs C Wheeldon [cwheeldon@swchs.net](mailto:cwheeldon@swchs.net)

### **Examination Board – WJEC/Eduqas**

Latin gives you the unique opportunity to expand your knowledge of language, literature and ancient civilisation. This enables you to develop keen analytical and problem-solving skills, attention to detail and a sophisticated appreciation of literary criticism. Considering English derivations from Latin broadens and enriches your vocabulary.

Reading Latin texts, written in the original language 2000 years ago, is an exciting challenge and the set literature covers a variety of genres from historical accounts to witty poems and epic adventure. This opportunity to read what real Romans wrote gives you a unique insight into their intriguing world, which has influenced our modern culture in so many ways.

### **Year 9 Course**

In Year 9, we will explore the fascinating Roman culture of Pompeii, Roman Britain and other parts of the Roman Empire, such as Arles and Lusitania.

### **GCSE Course**

Latin Language - 50%

Latin Literature and Sources paper - 30%

Roman Civilisation paper – 20%

From Year 10 onwards, we begin to study the sources (texts in English and artefacts) set for the Roman Civilisation paper, which cover an aspect of Roman culture e.g. the Roman family, daily life in a Roman town, slavery in Roman times.

In Y11, we study a range of engaging Latin texts, based on a set theme: past themes have included 'Love and Marriage', 'Roman Entertainment' and 'Superstition and Magic'. Studying these original Latin texts brings to life the views of real Romans and we hone skills in literary criticism, considering how the writers have manipulated the Latin to express their ideas.

In addition, we extend learning beyond the classroom to broaden students' knowledge of the ancient world and inspire them. There is the opportunity to visit Pompeii at the beginning of Year 11, so that students can have the incredible experience of seeing first-hand this Roman city frozen in time.

All assessment is by examination at the end of Year 11.

## **BUSINESS**

For further information, contact Mrs Boulton: [mboulton@swchs.net](mailto:mboulton@swchs.net)

### **Year 9 Course**

In today's world business is all around us, which makes it a constantly evolving, exciting subject to study. If you are interested in the world around you and current issues, then Business is the course for you. We use examples from companies that you know (local, national and international firms) and work out why they make the decisions that they do.

Year 9 is our foundation year. We start off by looking at what are businesses and what they aim to achieve. Who are people that create businesses and what are the skills and characteristics that entrepreneurs like Richard Branson and Alan Sugar need to be successful in business? We then move on to discuss the reasons for some of the decisions that businesses make such as their choice of location, type of ownership and why they need to create a business plan.

You will also gain an overview of a business's four key functional areas of Finance, Marketing, Human Resources and Operations. You will develop the ability to calculate how much money the firm is making from sales, what their profits are and how to account for inflows and outflows of money. You will also understand how to find out, through market research, what the customers want and how to ensure that your product is the one that they buy as a result of your pricing strategies and promotion. The people who work in an organisation are very important and you will learn how they are recruited and rewarded for their efforts. You will also study the production processes that different firms use comparing methods that a large car production company would use with those that smaller firms might use.

Business students develop a range of skills that will be useful to them in later life. You will develop the ability to think commercially and creatively, analyse data and make judgements based on those numbers and draw on evidence to make informed decisions and solve business problems.

### **GCSE Course**

**Exam:** 100% of final grade

**Examination board:** AQA

In the GCSE course you will study the issues that companies face as they grow for example why they may want to float on the stock market, expand their product range, open new branches and expand into different countries. You will also explore the external influences on business and how firms respond to changes in technology, the economic climate and legislation. Businesses also make decisions regarding ethical issues, such as keeping costs low without exploiting their workers or their suppliers. In the study of Human Resources you will look at how organisations are structured, recruitment and selection, motivation and training methods. In Operations the topics covered are production processes, procurement, quality and customer service.

In Marketing you will learn about market segmentation, the different types of market research and how businesses use Product, Price, Place and Promotion effectively. In Finance you will find out about how businesses raise finance, cash flow, income statements, statements of financial position and how to analyse the performance of a business using ratios.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

For further information, contact Mrs N Thompson ([nthompson@swchs.net](mailto:nthompson@swchs.net))

### Year 9 Course

In year 9, the focus is on building a strong foundation of knowledge that will support students with the upcoming GCSE units. Students will explore how lifestyle choices impact physical, intellectual, emotional and social health and development. They will also be introduced to various health, social care and early years settings, learning essential terminology and developing the necessary skills for successful coursework and exam completion. At three points in the year, students will complete an end of topic test to support and demonstrate their understanding of each section. Key topics covered in KS3 include;

- Care values
- Individual rights
- Introduction to theories such as; Maslow's hierarchy of needs
- Healthy lifestyles (inc. eating disorders and obesity)
- Job roles in and around the health and social care sector

Students also draw on learning from Science, PE and PSHE to apply their knowledge to a variety of contexts.

### Years 10 and 11

**Exam:** 40% of final grade

**Non- examination assignments:** 60% of final grade

**Examination board:** OCR

In the examined course in Years 10 and 11 students study **three units**:

#### **RO32 – Principles of care in health and social care settings**

In this unit students will explore effective communication and the importance of communication to accommodate to an individuals preferences or needs. Students will also identify the rights of individuals and why it is crucial to maintain and uphold these, particularly when dealing with those who are vulnerable.

#### **RO33 – Supporting individuals through life events (non-exam assessment)**

Students will investigate development through different life stages, studying the factors that affect development and the key events that may take place during each stage.

#### **RO35 – Health promotion campaigns (non-exam assessment)**

Students will research and critique existing health campaigns and their significance, ultimately creating their own health campaign, emphasizing its importance and impact.

To be successful in the course, it is essential that students can work independently, show resilience when work is challenging and be a positive contributor to group tasks. Students need to be committed and organised to keep up to date with the coursework.

Students who thrive in Health & Social Care show interest in people and the relationships that are formed. They show understanding of others and are able to evaluate the impact that positive interaction can have on a person. They are open-minded and accept that we all need support at times. Health & Social Care is an essential subject for anyone who wishes to work with people in a medical, educational or social setting.

However, the course also develops skills that could be used in any workplace including communication, presentation skills, working with others, time management, independence and knowledge of health & safety.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

For further information, contact Mr Sindell: [bsindell@swchs.net](mailto:bsindell@swchs.net)

### Year 9 Course Outline

All students will start Year 9 following a foundation PE course. The course will appeal to students with a genuine interest in how the body works and how it performs in sporting activities.

**A prerequisite of this course is that students take part in a minimum of one extra-curricular sport either in school or out of school.**

In Year 9 students who choose this option will have 3 additional lessons to core PE, 1 theoretical lesson per fortnight, 1 theory/practical lesson applying theoretical components in action and the remaining lesson will focus on practical performance.

### GCSE

In Year 10 and 11 students will work on theory in classrooms for 3 of the 5 allocated lessons covering the critical aspects such as; the body in action, diet, health and hygiene and principles of training to improve fitness and performance. 2 lessons of 5 will be used to supplement core PE and extra-curricular sport to enable students to achieve as high a standard of practical performance as possible. Practical performance assessment is an integral component of the course.

Students continuing the course from Year 9 into GCSE should note that **students need to be fully committed to PE at SWCHS and should be actively engaged in regular sporting activity**. A commitment to extra-curricular sports clubs is essential, particularly in sports that students choose to be assessed in. Candidates will be assessed in three sports, to include a combination of team and individual sports.

### AQA GCSE PE – Option 1

Assessments – 60% Written 40% Practical

#### Paper One

Applied anatomy and physiology  
Movement analysis  
Physical training  
Use of Data

#### Assessment

Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes  
78 marks  
30% of GCSE

#### Questions

Answer all questions.  
A mixture of multiple choice/objective test questions, short answer questions and extended answer questions.

#### Paper 2

Sports psychology  
Socio-cultural influences

Health, fitness and well-being

Use of data

**Assessment**

Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes

78 marks

30% of GCSE

**Questions**

Answer all questions.

A mixture of multiple choice/objective test questions, short answer questions and extended answer questions.

Practical 40% Assessment of three sports (individual/team) and analysis of performance in one sport.

## RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

For further information, contact Mrs Popple [apopple@swchs.net](mailto:apopple@swchs.net)

### Year 9 Course outline

Following on from topics studied in year 7 and 8, the year 9 option course will cover all three aspects of Religion, Philosophy and Ethics.

We will begin with an Applied Ethics study with the overarching focus being on the nature of rights. This will consider the rights of humans and animals and consider whether artificial intelligence should be granted rights. We will also study ethical dilemmas such as IVF, human organ trafficking, factory farming and bloodsports.

In the spring term, we will reintroduce the anthropological, sociological and psychological approach to religion in the modern world posing such questions as:

- Is religion still relevant today?
- How can religion and science be compatible?
- Where can religious influences be seen in contemporary art and media?

In the summer term we will focus on a theological aspect of Christianity considering the question: Was Jesus the Messiah or a Social Revolutionary? In this topic students will be introduced to the idea of scholarship and literary criticism.

All three topics are designed to support the learning in the GCSE where students will study the following:

### GCSE Course outline

**Exam Board:** AQA 8062

### Assessment

Written exam 100%

2 papers (1 hour 45 mins each)

### Paper 1: Study of Religion (Christianity and Islam)

- Christian Beliefs (including the nature of God, Creation, the life of Jesus, beliefs in the afterlife)
- Christian Practices (including worship, prayer, Christmas and Easter, Baptism and Holy Communion, pilgrimage, mission and evangelism)
- Islam Beliefs (including life of Muhammad, Sunni and Shi'a core beliefs, predestination and angels)
- Islam Practices (including the Five Pillars, festivals and the importance of zakah)

### Paper 2: Thematic Studies (including comparing Christian and Muslim teachings on the topics)

- Theme A: Religion, Relationships and Family (including types of family, marriage, contraception, homosexuality, gender equality)
- Theme B: Religion and Life (including life after death, value of the world, animal rights, abortion and euthanasia)
- Theme D: Theme F: Religion, peace and conflict (including peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, causes of war, pacifism, responses to war and to the victims of war, weapons of mass destruction and terrorism)
- Theme E: Religion, Crime and Punishment (including types of crime, causes of crime, corporal punishment, capital punishment and forgiveness)