

**KS4 – Year 9
Curriculum Information
Booklet**

2019 - 2020



**A Catholic
Voluntary Academy**

Dear Year 8 Student,

Welcome to all of you who will soon be embarking on your GCSE or equivalent courses at The McAuley Catholic High School. This booklet will give you details of our courses and an idea of what we have to offer you for both your academic and personal growth.

Did you know the law has changed? Students continue their education and training until at least 18 and will continue to study English and Mathematics if a grade 4 or better is not achieved in these subjects at GCSE. This means that students will need to think carefully about choices after Year 11. For example, at age 16 students can choose to continue their learning at a Sixth Form (e.g. here at McAuley) or college, secure an apprenticeship or a job with training.

Therefore, to ensure you are fully ready for that transition in Key Stage 4 we aim to:

- provide a broad and balanced curriculum
- provide challenge with support, developing our students as independent learners
- promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- prepare students for the opportunities, experiences and responsibilities they will face in the future
- provide a broad and enriching range of opportunities beyond the classroom
- provide a solid base from which our students can continue their learning into the Sixth Form, University, employment and in their adult life

Options time is an important point in your education, as it is here that you get to choose the subjects that you will study for the next three years. We know that it can be a difficult time and can cause anxiety because there are many questions that you may have: Which subject is right for me? What if I don't know what I want to do at all? Rest assured that we will help you to make choices about future learning that is right for you.

This booklet and the options process are designed to make this time less worrying for you and your Parents/Carers. They will help you to start making decisions about your learning and to choose subjects that suit your aspirations, skills and needs.

Please use all the information available to you: this booklet; advice from teachers; your tutors and your Parents. All of these people know you in some way and may be able to suggest whether they think a subject would suit you as a learner.

The deadline for submitting your Options Form online will be **Thursday 11th April**. We hope that the information we will provide over the coming weeks allows you to make the right choices that will see you succeeding over the next three years and beyond.

Essential Learning: What does everyone do?

- ◆ Religious Education
 - ◆ English
 - ◆ Mathematics
 - ◆ Science
 - ◆ Physical Education
 - ◆ PSHEE
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Additional Learning: What can you choose?

We want our students to be committed to their subjects and so we allow them to choose two subjects that make up their Additional Learning. Whilst we do give as much choice as possible, most students will be expected to take one EBacc subject.

You will all be allocated a one to one meeting with a Senior member of staff to discuss your chosen curriculum and to offer advice and support. At that meeting, you will also be informed which subject that you have been allocated to from the list below:

- ◆ History
- ◆ Geography
- ◆ French
- ◆ German
- ◆ Additional Literacy and Numeracy support

Your Additional Learning subjects will be chosen from the list below:

- Art
- Business Studies
- Enterprise and Marketing
- Creative IMedia
- Drama
- Technology Resistant Materials
- Technology Electronics
- Food Preparation & Nutrition
- Hospitality & Catering
- French
- Geography
- History
- Music
- Photography
- Spanish
- Triple Science
- BTEC Performing Arts
- BTEC Sports Studies
- Cambridge Nationals Health & Social Care

What are GCSE's?

GCSE stands for General Certificate of Secondary Education. It is highly valued by schools, colleges and employers, so will be useful whatever students are planning to do afterwards. The qualification mainly involves studying the theory of a subject, combined with some investigative work. Some subjects also involve practical work.

What are BTECs?

BTEC qualifications are particular types of work-related qualifications. Courses that have been designed in collaboration with industry, so they can equip students with the skills and knowledge that employers are looking for. The qualifications offer a mix of theory and practice.

What is the English Baccalaureate?

This was introduced by the Government in 2011 as a *standard* that some students can aim for in their KS4 studies. To achieve the English Baccalaureate, students must complete and obtain a Grade 5 or higher in the following subjects:

- ◆ Maths
- ◆ English Language
- ◆ Two Sciences
- ◆ A Language (e.g. Spanish or French)
- ◆ Geography or History

The English Baccalaureate will provide excellent preparation for students who wish to go on to study 'A' Levels in the school's Sixth Form and it is becoming increasingly clear that the students who have achieved good grades in the English Baccalaureate combination of subjects are receiving more interest from universities and employers. More information on this will be given **at the Information Evening on the 7th March, at 6pm on the Cantley Lane Site.**

Your choice of courses will need to be guided carefully to make sure that you follow a curriculum that is tailored to your abilities and future needs. This is why it is important that you seek advice and guidance in your choices from your Form Tutor, Subject Teachers, and the school's independent and impartial careers advice provider, CareersInc.

You have the opportunity to find out more about your GCSE subjects during the Year 8 'Curriculum Fayre' which will take place from Monday 4th March to Wednesday 6th March at 12.45 pm each day in the Acacia Road Theatre.

As mentioned earlier we are also holding a Curriculum Information Evening on Thursday 7th March from 5.00 pm in the Cantley Lane Hall to provide information about the transition to KS4 and to answer any questions that Parents or students may have.

KS4 Options Timeline:

Year 8 Options Assembly	-	February
Year 8 Subject Fair	-	4 th - 6 th March - Acacia Road Theatre
Information Evening	-	7 th March 2019 at 5pm, Cantley Lane Hall
Year 8 one-to-one meetings with Senior staff	-	8 th March – 22 nd March 2019
Online choices completed	-	11 th April 2019

You should remember these:

Do's:

- ◆ Do choose subjects which you like
- ◆ Do choose subjects at which you are successful
- ◆ Do choose subjects which you may need for a career or further education
- ◆ Do find out everything that you can about the subject before you choose it. Once you have started a subject we expect you to stick with it for three years
- ◆ Do talk to the people who know you
- ◆ Do listen to the advice your subject teachers give you

Don'ts:

- ◆ Don't choose a subject just because your friend has chosen it
- ◆ Don't choose a subject just because you like - or dislike - a particular teacher, they may not end up teaching you

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How many subjects do I have to choose?

A. Most students will be allocated one Ebacc subject and will then have two free choices.

Q. What is a BTEC subject and what is the main difference between that and a GCSE?

A. A BTEC is a subject that is partly assessed using coursework. Typically, it suits students who perform better in classwork than in examinations, providing they work to complete all the tasks set. Most GCSE's are examined at the end of the course.

Q. Are BTEC subjects and Cambridge Nationals worth the same as GCSE subjects?

A. All subjects are worth the same: one GCSE.

Q. Can I do a mixture of BTEC and GCSE subjects?

A. Yes, that is absolutely fine.

Q. Can I do more than one Design and Technology subject?

A. No - students can only choose one Design and Technology subject.

Q. Will I get all of my first choices?

A. While most students do get their first choices, we do have to allocate some back-up choices, so it is important that you select back-up choices that you are willing and able to do. If you have a specific career direction or outside interest in mind, you should write it on the options form so that we can take this into account when we allocate subjects.

Q. Do I have to take the Ebacc subject that I have been allocated?

A. Yes, most students will be expected to study an Ebacc subject as these qualifications are increasingly important in today's global community. They are also valued by universities and employers.

Q. When do I find out which subjects I have been given from my choices?

A. You will find out which subjects you have been allocated by July 2019.

Q. If I start a subject and later realise that I have made a mistake, what can I do?

A. Please think very carefully about your choices as changes are not permitted after you start the course.

Thinking ahead

The McAuley Sixth Form

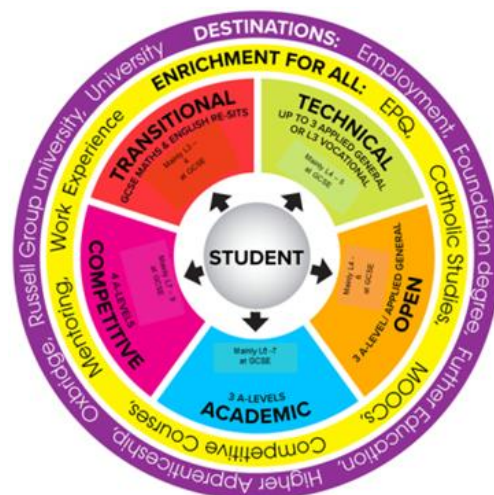
Did you know? All young people are required to be in education, employment or training after leaving Year 11 up to the age of 18.

The vibrant and successful **McAuley Sixth Form** offers you an opportunity to complete your Year 7 year journey by continuing with us for an extra two years after Year 11. The 'Pathways Wheel' below shows how your recommended Sixth Form pathway depends on your GCSE grades.

The McAuley Sixth Form offers you a route to your chosen pathway when you're 18 or 19 years old, whether it be in education, employment or training, whatever your GCSE starting point.

The Sixth Form experience and being treated like an adult helps you develop the independent skills, responsibility, initiative, humanity and confidence needed for success in the adult world.

Our wide range of Level 2 and Level 3 (A Level) courses cater for a wide range of interests.



As a result, the McAuley Sixth Form has a reputation for very high levels of success – consistently amongst the best in South Yorkshire and beyond - which allows Sixth Formers to progress to their chosen; Universities, Graduate Training Programmes, Higher Level Apprenticeships, Uniformed Services or Employment.

For more details about entry requirements, the Sixth Form curriculum and experience, please visit our online prospectus at mcauleysixthform.org.uk

The Sixth Form Team wish you good luck with your option choices and every success in your GCSE's.

