Subject Choices Guidance

We are delighted that you are considering joining St Benet Biscop Sixth Form as a place to continue your studies.

During the coming few months, we will work closely with all students to give them individual guidance on their subject choices as it is very important that students start with an appropriate programme of study. We have to balance a number of elements, including aspirations and interests with the relative difficulty of courses, in order to ensure that our students leave St Benet Biscop having achieved their full potential.

We use a range of national data in order to identify the relative difficulty of subjects. This information is then used to guide students towards choosing a suite of subjects for which they are suitable. At St Benet Biscop we offer the following pathways to students:

- 3 A-levels and an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)
- 3 A-levels
- 3 vocational courses
- A combination of 3 A-levels and vocational courses

Students are directed towards a pathway and advised to choose subjects based on their likely GCSE performance and their likely average GCSE grade. Most students at St Benet Biscop complete three A-levels and many also follow an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

Entry Requirements

Students who join our Sixth Form do so voluntarily. In signing up for Sixth Form, therefore, students are agreeing to abide by all of the general requirements of students at our school. The decision to join Sixth Form should be carefully considered.

An excellent work ethic, attendance and punctuality record are all essential for success, as is a contribution to the wider dimension of Sixth Form life, such as full attendance at, and participation in, all aspects of our Core Curriculum and support for the school ethos. A student with poor attendance (unless there are genuine medical reasons), poor punctuality or a poor work ethic in Year 11 is unlikely to succeed in Sixth Form where the academic demands are greater. Throughout Year 11, all of these factors will be reviewed and, if necessary, discussed with students during the transition to Sixth Form.

For each specific course in Sixth Form, entry requirements will vary, depending on the degree of difficulty of the course, as well as each student's track record over their two years' study of the subject in Key Stage 4. The 'make up' of a student's GCSE grade in the subject is evaluated too. For example, a student may have a '6' overall at GCSE in a particular subject that they wish to pursue at A-level. However, if in the key written exam component they achieved a '5', our strong advice may well be not to take the subject at A-level, if extended writing is a key feature of the A-level. Some courses will require a higher minimum entry grade, either in the subject itself or in a related subject. For example, entry to certain Science courses will have a minimum requirement not only in Science, but in Maths too, given the degree of Maths involved in the A- level. Many subjects will have a minimum requirement in English, if written work is a key feature of the A- level. Finally, we also look very closely at the combination of A-levels that a student is proposing to study.

For example, we may feel that a student has the potential to succeed in one of the harder A-levels but a combination of two or three such subjects may well prove too much and, in such cases, we may well advise strongly against the proposed combination.

Further information about individual courses is contained in this booklet and, throughout Year 11, entry requirements and their suitability for different subjects will be discussed with students.

Finally, it is important to note that all courses are 'subject to viability' – i.e. the school will determine if a course can run where numbers are very small. Students will be kept well informed if, following the Sixth Form options process, a course is not viable.

To ensure students succeed in the Sixth Form, it is imperative that students returning to St Benet Biscop Sixth Form fully adhere to our expectations.

As highlighted at the Sixth Form Open Evening, leaders in school support and guide students in Year 11 to the most appropriate suite of subjects by considering their overall GCSE performance and the combination of subjects they wish to study.

The information below, by subject, is in conjunction with the broader, but equally important, expected entry requirements:

> Students should demonstrate, and have demonstrated in Year 11, an excellent work ethic, excellent attendance and punctuality.
>
> Students should fully adhere to the Sixth Form Dress Code and have adhered to expectations about the school uniform throughout Year 11.
>
> In general, students need *5 Standard pass grades including Maths or English* and are expected to meet the academic entry requirements for each course they would like to study.

On a case-by-case basis we may allow a student to study a course if they haven't achieved all of the entry requirements or have not studied the subject before, providing they have shown what we consider to be strong all-round GCSE performance and providing that the relevant Subject Leader agrees.

At a glance entry requirements are listed below. Please see subject pages for further details.

Grade 7 in the relevant subject:
Biology, Chemistry, Maths and Physics (Science subjects also require a grade 6 in Maths)

Grade 6 in the relevant subject:
English Language, English Literature, French, Geography, History, Religious Education (Philosophy and Ethics)

Grade 6 in English Language and Grade 5 in Maths:
Psychology

Grade 5 in the relevant subject:
Art, Drama and Theatre Studies

Grade 5 in English Language or Literature:
Media Studies

Grade 5 in English Language and Maths
Criminology

Grade 4 in English Language and Maths
Business, Early Childhood Development, Health and Social Care, Information Technology, Sport