

# 2026 – 2028 GCSE Options Process

## For Year 9 Pupils



## Choosing Subjects & Preparing for GCSEs

GCSEs are an important part of school life but also of life in general. They can set you up for your next steps in life, and as such, choosing the right subjects can help you to steer your life in the direction you want it to go in.

Your options can influence not only the subjects you go on to study, but also the college, sixth form and potentially university you'll attend.

GCSEs allow you to develop your academic interests, having dropped one or two subjects you don't wish to continue with at this stage.

## Choosing Subjects & Preparing for GCSEs

Particularly for those who don't yet have a set career path planned or enjoy a range of subjects – choosing your options can be difficult.

So, what should you consider?

## Choosing Subjects & Preparing for GCSEs

An obvious consideration when choosing GCSE subjects is what you would like to study in college or sixth form.

Many A-level subjects don't have specific GCSE-subject prerequisites.

For example, you won't always need to have studied business studies at GCSE level in order to study it in college.

## Choosing Subjects & Preparing for GCSEs

However, some subjects, such as science and maths, will require GCSE qualifications in these subjects in order to be taken at A-level.

The plus side in this instance is that maths and science are compulsory subjects at GCSE level.

The focus will therefore shift to your grades and how deeply you studied these subjects. For example, opting to take triple science.

## Choosing Subjects & Preparing for GCSEs

If you aren't sure of what you'd like to study beyond your GCSEs yet, it's wise to choose a varied range of subjects in order to keep different routes and options open going forward.

Having a range of subjects with transferable skills will give you more freedom when it comes to choosing A-level subjects.

## Choosing Subjects & Preparing for GCSEs

If you have a few ideas as to subjects you might like to study at A Level, check the requirements for doing so and don't drop any GCSEs you'll need if you do decide to go for those.

Additionally, universities may take GCSE subjects and grades into account when considering applications, so if you have even a rough idea of what you'd like to study at degree level, it's worth bearing that in mind when selecting your GCSE subjects.

## Career Considerations

Your career is likely to begin following higher and/or further education, and while it may feel premature thinking about it now, different GCSE subjects lend themselves towards different careers.

The subjects you take at GCSE level may even inspire you to take a particular career route.

## Career Considerations

Subjects such as **English** and **history** help to develop research and writing skills, which lend themselves towards careers in law, journalism, marketing, and publishing.

Subjects like **maths** and **science** promote analytical and problem-solving skills, which lend themselves towards careers in engineering, medicine, finance and almost any career path!

## Career Considerations

**Art** and **design-based** subjects lend themselves towards more creative careers, such as photography, graphic design, and advertising.

Taking a **language** at GCSE level lends itself towards careers in translation, communication, and international business.

**Spanish** is the second most widely spoken language globally in terms of the number of native speakers.

## Career Considerations

Of course, the GCSE subjects you take won't define your entire career, but it's a good idea to bear your future in mind.

The right GCSE subjects can form the foundations and path towards your future dream job.

## General Considerations

Students often wonder whether they should choose subjects they enjoy or subjects they're good at.

And there's often an overlap; enjoying a subject will mean you'll engage more with the content, and being good at a subject makes it more enjoyable.

In terms of your decision, we believe both should be taken into consideration.

It's a good idea to speak to as many people as possible about your GCSE options.

Just remember that the final decision lies with you, so what you think, and feel is important but guidance and advice from people with experience in areas you don't yet have is so valuable.

Take your time, do your research and consider your options carefully.

## How we will provide Options Information

- Subject staff are available to talk to this evening
- Options information will be available on the website.  
<https://www.pensbyhighschool.org/parents/parents-evening/options-evening/>

This will include subject information and information about registering your choices using SIMS OPTIONS Online

- Email address for specific queries:  
[gcseoptions@psf.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:gcseoptions@psf.wirral.sch.uk)



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## Key Dates for GCSE Options for current Year 9 in 2025-26

Thursday 27 November 2025 – Year 9 Parents' Evening (In school)

Thursday 5 February 2026 – Options Evening in school 7pm

Friday 6 March 2026- Deadline for options preference form

Summer term – Options choices confirmed

## Options Evening Subject Information- For 2025-26



**Options Booklet**

Download (pdf)



**3D Art & Design**

Download (pdf)



**Art & Design**

Download (pdf)



**Art – Graphic Communication**

Download (pdf)



**Art- Photography**

Download (pdf)



**Child Development**

Download (pdf)



**Citizenship**

Download (pdf)



## Core subjects

English, mathematics and science

Ethics & Philosophy

PE

ICT (*this can also be delivered through other curriculum areas*)

PSHE

## Option subjects

Choice of 4 other subjects

**(NB It may not be possible to run an option subject if too few students choose it)**

# What subjects are available?

- 3D Design
- Art & Design
- Child Development\*
- Citizenship
- Drama
- Enterprise & Marketing\*
- Ethics & Philosophy
- Geography
- Graphic Communication
- History
- Hospitality & Catering\*
- ICT\*
- Media Studies
- Music\*
- Photography
- Spanish
- Sports Studies\*
- Triple Science (leading to qualifications in Biology, Chemistry and Physics)



*\*Indicates vocational subjects; students can choose a **maximum of 2** vocational subjects.*

# Types of Courses

- All are Level 2 GCSE equivalent and examination courses
- Vocational (Cambridge National/Cambridge Technical/ VCert) courses are identified as such by an asterisk\*
- All vocational courses now have an exam component
- See individual subject information for further details



## Types of Courses

- For students considering post-16 A-level courses, followed by university, we would encourage students to focus on GCSE courses.
- We have had examples of students being told after GCSE results day that vocational qualifications are not accepted as entry currency to post-16 courses.
- This seems to happen on a subject-by-subject basis and varies from year to year.

OPTION A	OPTION B	OPTION C	OPTION D
Drama	Art & Design	3D Design	Art & Design
Geography	Geography	Citizenship	Child Development*
History	Graphic Communication	Drama	Ethics & Philosophy
ICT*	History	Enterprise & Marketing*	History
Media Studies	Hospitality & Catering*	Geography	Media Studies
Photography	Spanish	Media Studies	Music*
Triple Science (Separate Sciences)	Sports Science*	Sports Science*	Spanish

## The process

- Options choices will be made online using SIMS OPTIONS. Instructions are given in the 'Options Introduction' on the website.
- One subject per option block/column.
- List subjects in order of priority.
- Choose 'Reserves'.



Students **MUST** choose  
at least **one** subject  
**from two of the three categories** below:

- Category A – Humanities – Geography, History, Ethics
- Category B – Creative – 3D Design, Art & Design, Drama, Graphic Communication, Photography
- Category C – Languages – Spanish



Students **CAN ONLY** choose **ONE**  
**subject from**

3D Design, Art & Design and  
Graphic Communication

Students **CAN** select **Photography**  
**with** 3D Design **or** Art & Design  
**or** Graphic Communication

# Triple / Separate Science

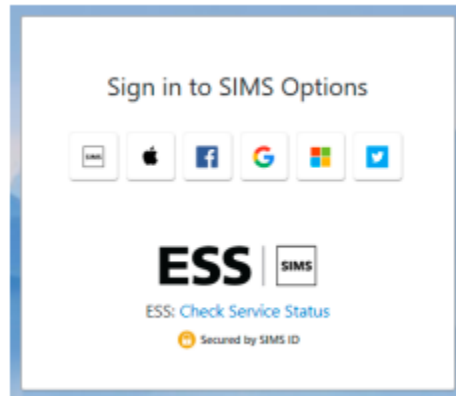
Nationally approximately only 28% of the student population take triple science.

Wirral is a selective authority, which means in relation to our school context, local selection arrangements significantly reduce the proportion of pupils with higher key stage 2 attainment who are significantly more likely to attain a secure pass at GCSE, known as a Grade 5 and above.

To ensure students at Pensby have the best opportunity to attain in science, **only Set 1 will be able to choose triple science as an option.** This is due to the level of challenge and demand in the triple science GCSE courses.

All other students will automatically move onto the combined science course.

**Whilst individual requests will be considered, these will be looked at on an individual basis reflecting on students' prior data, with the final decision being made by the school.**



## Demonstration of SIMS OPTIONS Online

## Key people

- Form Tutor - they have an overall picture of your child's progress at school
- Subject Teachers - they know your child's strengths and weaknesses in each subject and suitability for the courses on offer in Key Stage 4
- Mrs O'Hare (Head of Year 9)
- Mrs Gauntlett (Assistant Headteacher) - has overall responsibility for the Options process
- Mrs Turner (Careers Adviser) can answer specific questions about future career choices
- Parents or Carers – you know your child best as a person



## Key dates

- Options choice submitted online using SIMS OPTIONS
  - By **Friday 6 March 2026**
- Final notification of options before the end of the summer term