



DROITWICH SPA HIGH SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

Year 9 Options

The subjects and qualifications you study over Years 10 and 11 will affect how you spend your time during your next two years at DSHS. They could also help set you up for a career, university, or college course you would like later in life.

We've made this booklet with the help of our independent careers advisor. It is designed to offer students and families support in making decisions.



General Information

Key dates for 2026

- Launch assembly for Year 9 students – Monday 9th and Tuesday 10th February.
- Year 9 Guided Choices Evening - Thursday 12th February.
- Options form will open – Monday, 16th February.
- Deadline for students making choices – Friday, 13th March.

The Options Process

1. The Core Curriculum

In Year 10 and 11 all students (except in exceptional circumstances) will study:

	Anticipated hours per fortnight in Year 10	Anticipated hours per fortnight in Year 11
English Language and Literature (two separate qualifications, worth a total of two GCSEs)	8	8
Maths	8	8
Science (Students may opt for Triple Science see below)	10	10
Core PE/ Philosophy & Ethics /PSHE (Students may opt for GCSE Religious Studies see below)	4	4

The PE and PSHE curriculums enable and encourage students to:

- have a good grasp of issues facing...
 - ...them personally (e.g. sex and relationships, personal finance)
 - ...society as a whole (e.g. crime and punishment)
- lead active and healthy lifestyles.

NB: students will NOT be entered for the Religious Studies GCSE examinations unless they choose Religious Studies as a GCSE Option.

2. How compulsory subjects will be studied.

Students will spend an anticipated eight hours per fortnight in both English and Maths. Alongside this they will undertake an anticipated 10 hours a fortnight in Science lessons, leading towards the award of two GCSEs in Combined Science e.g. 7-6 [a grade 7 and a grade 6]. Students who opt for Triple Science will have these ten lessons and an additional five lessons as one of their options.

In addition, the non-examined subjects of core PE, Philosophy & Ethics and PSHE are studied in the frequency outlined in the table above.

Students are then given the freedom to pick **four** further subjects (plus a *reserve*) with the only restriction being that **at least one of their four choices** is History, Geography, French, Spanish or German.

3. Optional Subjects

All reformed Level 2 courses are rigorous challenges for students. Furthermore, there are some subjects where less secure prior knowledge will mean that we cannot, if we are to act in the best interests of a given child, allow them to start on the course. Therefore, below is a table that outlines what courses are available and what restrictions are put in place.

Course	Qualification	Notes on suitability / setting	Other notes
Science			
Triple Science (Biology/Chemistry/Physics)	GCSE	Triple Science is worth a total of three GCSEs (one per science) and covers an additional 50% more content during the course.	
Humanities and Languages			
History	GCSE	Classes in these subjects will be loosely 'set' into Standard and Advanced groups based on prior attainment. Students may only pick languages they have studied in Year 9.	Students must opt for at least one from these subjects.
Geography	GCSE		
French	GCSE		
German	GCSE		
Spanish	GCSE		
Arts (visual and performing)			
Art, Craft & Design	GCSE	The course is ideal for those who enjoy expressing ideas visually and want to build a strong portfolio of work. Assessment is based on a personal portfolio (60%) and an externally set assignment (40%), where students respond creatively to a given theme.	
Dance	GCSE	Includes two practical performances and a piece of own choreography, worth 60% of grade. Students must be committed and able to do this. Written paper also a requirement.	
Drama	GCSE	The course is assessed through three key components. Devising Theatre (40%) involves creating and performing an original piece based on a stimulus, accompanied by a written evaluation. Performing from a Text (20%) requires students to perform extracts from a published play, which is externally assessed. Interpreting Theatre (40%) is a written exam that focuses on the study of a set text and the analysis of live theatre.	
Music/BTEC Tech Award in Music Practice	GCSE (equivalent)	This course includes composing music, performing music and a listening exam (worth 40%). Students who are not currently playing an instrument (or singing) to a basic standard will find this course very difficult. Like GCSE music, this course includes composing and performing music. The performance and composition are continually	For both Music courses students should have studied Music in Year 9. For those who have not, we will review their wish to study it

Course	Qualification	Notes on suitability / setting	Other notes
		assessed, and this is different from the final performances that occur in GCSE Music. This course does not include a terminal exam, it is coursework based, and some units are completed in Y10. Depending on numbers the Music department will assess students' suitability and, based on their professional judgement of students' potential to succeed will identify the suitable course. This process will begin immediately once options are chosen.	in Year 10 and 11 on a case-by-case basis. Students can't do both.
Technologies			
Computer Science	GCSE	When selecting Computer Science, it is important to consider the level of mathematical understanding required. The subject involves problem-solving, logical thinking, and applying mathematical concepts. Students confident in mathematics, particularly in reasoning and working with numbers, are likely to find the course more accessible.	
Design and Technology	GCSE	This course focuses on creative design to solve problems and includes technical theory on materials used in the design and manufacturing process.	
Engineering	GCSE	Mathematical concepts, calculations and problem-solving are an essential part of the course. Students will apply algebra, ratios, geometry, and measurement when designing and analysing engineering solutions. A good grasp of maths will support success in areas such as technical drawings, forces, and material properties.	
Food and Nutrition	GCSE	This course has a heavy reliance on theory work and has elements of science included. Students will cook on average once per fortnight. On this course students will learn about: Food commodities, Principles of nutrition, Diet and good health, The science of food, where food comes from, cooking and food preparation.	Students should have studied Food in Year 9. For those who have not, we will review their wish to reconnect with their studies of this subject on a case-by-case basis.
Other			
Religious Studies	GCSE	Students will not be entered for GCSE Religious Studies in the core curriculum. Students must take this option to study the full GCSE course and be entered for the examinations.	

Course	Qualification	Notes on suitability / setting	Other notes
Enterprise & Marketing	Cambridge National	Assessment is through coursework and an exam, with students applying their knowledge to real-world business scenarios. This qualification is ideal for those interested in business, marketing, or starting their own enterprise in the future.	
Child Development	Cambridge National	Students will complete 30% of their qualification in Year 10 (NEA) and 70% in Year 11. On this course students will study the health and well-being for child development, learn how to create a safe environment and understand the nutritional needs of children from birth to five years, and understand the development of a child from one to five years. Attendance is pivotal to success.	Qualifications are equivalent to GCSE.
Health and Social Care	Cambridge National	Students will complete 30% of their qualification in Year 10 (NEA) and 70% in Year 11. On this course students will study the: Principles of care in health and social care settings, Supporting individuals through life events and Health promotion campaigns. Attendance is pivotal to success.	
IT	Cambridge National	Assessment is through two NEA tasks and an exam. Each NEA task contributes 30% to the overall grade with the remaining 40% coming from the terminal exam. This qualification is ideal for those interested in learning more of how to use certain computer programs (whereas Computer Science looks more at the programming aspect).	
Sport Science	Cambridge National	Sports Science is a vocational course that gives students the opportunity to learn about theoretical concepts underpinning the work done in the sport, exercise, health care and the fitness sector. The course can open doors to further study at our sixth form or lead to an exciting career in sport and physical activity. Students are assessed via eight written coursework assignments and one exam. Lessons will at times involve some practical elements that pupils must be willing to be involved in as these are used to develop understanding of a topic area. Practical lessons do not have a focus on 'playing sport' like core PE lessons and a student's practical ability to play sport is not assessed.	

There will need to be enough students opt for a subject in order for it to become viable in the timetable construction. In rare cases we may have to restrict the number of students for a course if it becomes oversubscribed.

4. Confirming Choices

Students will record their options using the DSHS Launchpad site. They will be sent the link they need via email and can do it either in school or from home.

It is very important that students list their options in preference order so that we can prioritise the choices on the rare occasion that we can't satisfy all of them.

We work very hard to try to ensure everyone gets what they want but it is not always possible. Some combinations of options may not be possible, some groups may be over-subscribed, and some groups may be so small that they are not viable. If there is a problem, we will speak to the student affected as soon as possible.

We monitor choices to make sure they comply with the requirements set out. Some students may be given further advice if we feel that they may not have chosen wisely.

5. Supporting and Advice

Useful links

Your young person will have had lots of information about subject choices, in subject videos and the various Q+A sessions, but it will also be helpful if you discuss their choices with them. It's important to choose subjects they find enjoyable, but also to keep a good balance. These links should help you and your young person to make an informed, unbiased decision:

<https://website.droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk/index.php/student-development-and-support/careers/>

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/careersportal/>

Excellent magazine style publication about post 14 choices

<https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/job-sectors/subjects>

Click on a subject and it will give you ideas as to where it might lead.

<https://icould.com/explore/#subject>

Like the above

[National Careers Service](#) – 0800 100 900

Advice for Parents / Carers

- Talk to your son/daughter about what their interests are.
- Find out what they would like to do in the future.
- Let them know that jobs for 16-year-olds are now virtually non-existent. The key to their future is in good education, good training and developing skills and abilities that employers want and are prepared to pay for.
- If in doubt about your son/daughter's option choices, please contact us to make an appointment to see Lindsay Stevens, our Independent Careers Adviser.
- Check that your son/daughter is choosing subjects for the right reasons.
- Try to encourage a variety in their choices – this will allow more choice at Post 16.

The wrong reasons for choosing a course might include:

- × I like the teacher.
- × All the other choices are boring / too difficult.
- × All my friends are doing that subject.
- × I think it will help me get a job.

The right reasons for choosing a course might include:

- ✓ I am good at/enjoy that subject.
- ✓ I know that these subjects will help my career choice, because I have found out about it.
- ✓ I have achieved good marks and exam grades in a subject.
- ✓ I had doubts – however, I asked for (and got) help and advice.

Support for Students

How do I choose?

To help you decide what to study in Years 10 and 11, start by asking yourself what you enjoy doing and what you're good at.

Think about:

- What you're interested in: it could be other cultures and languages, writing projects, helping people, being outdoors or designing things.
- What types of activity you enjoy most - working things out and thinking them through, practical activities or artistic options like painting, drawing, or performing music?
- What you're like at home, as well as in school - what skills have you developed following outside interests?
- There are some subjects so important that everyone must take them, but you still have options in Year 9.

Some hints and tips....

- Get as much information as you can, so you choose well.
- Remember, no qualification is ever wasted.
- If you have a firm career idea, research it, and choose your options accordingly.
- You don't have to have a career in mind at this stage – you just need to choose subjects and courses that will give you plenty of choice later.
- Ask for help from your Head of House, Mrs Stevens in the Careers Hub, your tutor, your PSHE teacher who has been working with you this term on the theme of careers and your subject teachers.
- Choose subjects that you enjoy!

Where can I get help and advice?

The choices are yours, but most people look for advice on important decisions. There's plenty available, but you should do as much as you can yourself to research all the options.

Parents, carers, family, and friends probably know you best, so talking to them can help you work out what might suit you. However, remember that they won't always know a lot about careers or courses you're interested in. If you're planning to work towards a particular career or college course, don't be put off just because it means taking a different direction from friends or family members. Subject teachers know exactly what studying a subject in Year 10 and 11 involves and can advise whether it's right for you.

Mrs Lindsay Stevens [our Independent Careers Advisor] can guide you towards advice about which subjects and qualifications are useful for particular careers. Mr Hayman can answer any questions about the DSHS options process itself. Lindsay will also be at Parents/Guided Choices Evening and is always available via email for you to ask any questions.

