



Enjoy Respect Achieve



Steyning Grammar School

KS4 Options Booklet 2026

<https://www.sgs.uk.net/curriculum/curriculum-overview-ks3/options/>

From The Headteacher

Dear Year 8 Students, Parents and Carers,

Choosing your GCSE Options is an exciting time and an important milestone in your learning journey - this is the first time you have some control over which subjects you want to take. Use this booklet as a starting point, and get balanced advice from your teachers and your form tutor, as well as talking to older students, siblings and your parents who have all completed this process or something similar in the past. We have extensive experience in supporting students and parents in choosing their GCSEs - you can be confident we will be there alongside you the whole way.

In this booklet we give you the background information to prepare for your choices, outline which subjects are compulsory and present you with a description of the options you can choose from, including the compulsory and recommended choices. You will also find the key dates on which you will get further support in making your decisions as well as the deadlines for submitting your final choices.

Our curriculum at Steyning Grammar is deep and broad including 4 option choices. These along with the core subjects ensure your academic and character learning prepares you for the great futures that lie ahead for every student. You do not get the chance to make choices again until you are 16 so try to look into the future to guide what subjects you pick. You may have ideas about the world of work that appeal to you already, and this could guide your choices but also make sure your overall selection is broad to keep open as many future pathways as possible.

The options process is there to encourage you to ask questions and don't worry if you are not sure. It is possible to change your mind up to October half term in Year 9 if you need to but it is worth being as certain as possible over your first decisions because our timetable will be built around meeting the initial choices of students so sometimes changes might not be possible. Take your time as this is an important process, and try not to rule anything out until you have explored it in detail.

We will support you in making the right decisions as you step up to your GCSE studies at Shooting Field. We are proud of the learning character you have developed and displayed so far in Year 7 and Year 8; these are great foundations for making your GCSE learning as successful as possible.

Yours sincerely

Mr A Timmons - Headteacher

Flourish at KS4

Our goal is for every student to be 'the best they can be' - for every student to flourish in their academic and character learning. We offer the widest range of subjects to enable students to choose a broad and balanced curriculum that enables them to flourish. Students are supported by dedicated subject teachers as well as a pastoral team second to none.

'A learning culture underpinned by character education enables students to flourish'

Most recent Ofsted

We have the highest expectations of every student. Every member of staff works so that students can achieve the best academic results as well as develop the grit, growth mindset, curiosity and zest needed to go on and be lifelong learners.



FLOURISH @ SGS



What you will be studying in Years 9 to 11

You are about to choose four options. In addition to these options you will also study English, Maths, Science, PE, RE and PSHE. (PE can be further enriched by also taking it as an option)

These four options are important because they are the first step on the pathway towards what you may do when you leave school. Do not worry if you do not have a definite idea of what you want to do when you leave school. Do make sure you choose options that are broad and balanced so that you have a wider choice when you enter College or Sixth Form.

If you have a good idea of what you want to do, you need to make sure your options enable you to do this. Our Sixth Form College Course Directory is a good source of information about what options lead to what pathways. It can be found at:

- <https://www.sgs.uk.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Course-Directory.pdf>

Unifrog is our main website with careers advice, this is linked below as are two other good sources of information about pathways towards particular careers can be found at:

- <https://www.unifrog.org/sign-in>
- <https://www.informedchoices.ac.uk/>
- <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/apprentices>

The types of qualifications

We offer two main types of qualification in years 9 to 11, GCSEs and Vocational level 2 awards (such as BTEC or Cambridge Nationals). They are both equivalent in difficulty. They are different in the way you learn and are assessed. Vocational awards are more focused in the world of work whilst GCSEs are learnt in a more traditional teaching style.

GCSEs are awarded grades on a 1 to 9 scale with 9 being the best grade. A grade 4 is considered a pass grade.

Vocational courses are graded with words. 'Distinction*' is the highest grade, then there is distinction, merit and pass. The grades can be at level 1 or 2. The level 2 pass, merit, distinction or distinction star is equivalent to GCSE pass grades of 4 to 9.

Choosing your options

We encourage all students to study a broad and balanced set of subjects. This means:

- You must take one **Block A subject**.
- You must take one **Block B subject**.
- You need to take **2 Block C subjects**.
- This means you must choose **four options** in total (You will also be asked for a **reserve**)

Block A subjects You must take at least one of these	Block B subjects You must take at least one of these	Block C subjects You must take two of these subjects.	
• <i>Geography GCSE</i> • <i>History GCSE</i> • <i>Religious Education GCSE</i>	• <i>Art and Design GCSE</i> • <i>Dance GCSE</i> • <i>Drama GCSE</i> • <i>French GCSE</i> • <i>Photography GCSE</i> • <i>3D Design GCSE</i> • <i>Spanish GCSE</i> • <i>Textile Art GCSE</i>	• <i>Art and Design GCSE</i> • <i>ASDAN</i> • <i>Business Enterprise CNAT</i> • <i>Business Studies GCSE</i> • <i>Computer Science GCSE</i> • <i>Creative iMedia</i> • <i>Dance GCSE</i> • <i>Drama GCSE</i> • <i>Food Preparation and Nutrition GCSE</i> • <i>French GCSE</i> • <i>Geography GCSE</i> • <i>Health and Social Care CNAT</i>	• <i>History GCSE</i> • <i>Literacy and Numeracy support</i> • <i>Music Vocational Award</i> • <i>Photography GCSE</i> • <i>Physical Education GCSE (Sports Science)</i> • <i>Sociology GCSE</i> • <i>Cambridge National in Sports Studies</i> • <i>3D Design GCSE</i> • <i>Psychology GCSE</i> • <i>Religious Education GCSE</i> • <i>Spanish GCSE</i> • <i>Textile Art GCSE</i>

There are some subjects which we cannot allow you to take together; these are:

Business Studies GCSE and Business Enterprise CNAT; Art, 3D Design or Textile Art; Computer Science and Creative iMedia; GCSE PE and Sports Studies

Please note that we cannot guarantee students get their first choices.

Separate Sciences

All students start studying the Combined Science GCSE course, those that do well in this course in Year 9 go on to study Separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics from Year 10 onwards.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is offered to students in Year 10. Students express an interest in this at the end of Year 9. It is not an option subject. We encourage all students to do this.

The option subjects

More detailed information about option subjects can be found at our KS4 Options Information Evening on 9th January 2025

Block A subjects

Humanities subjects build our understanding of the world as well as build analytical thinking and the ability to construct arguments. **You must take at least one of these subjects.**

Geography GCSE

Geography is an engaging and essential subject for young people wanting to understand more about how our world works. Topics range from physical geography themes such as natural hazards, ecosystems and rivers to human topics such as global poverty, climate change and resource depletion. Employers and universities rate Geography highly for the range of skills developed such as: data interpretation, map reading, analytical thinking, research, decision-making, essay writing, fieldwork, report writing and much more.

History GCSE

History gives you the opportunity to understand why the world is like it is today. The course develops a range of interlinked skills including knowledge and understanding, explaining and analysing events, challenging interpretations, making judgements and the use of primary sources. There are four key topics covered: Changes in Health and Medicine in Britain c500-present day, Germany in Transition 1919-1939, The Development of the USA 1929-2000 and The Elizabethan Age 1558-1603. All of the skills you will learn are transferable and provide a strong foundation for future study and a range of careers.

RE GCSE

Are you interested in the "big questions" of life? Do you enjoy debating moral dilemmas and understanding the diverse beliefs that shape our modern world? GCSE Religious Studies (RE) offers a fascinating insight into the human experience, focusing on two of the world's most influential religions: Christianity and Islam. Themes include Religion & Life, Crime & Punishment, Peace & Conflict and Relationships and Families. You will learn skills of debate, analysis and evaluation. 'The study of religion is the study of people. It helps us understand why the world is the way it is and how we can make it better.'



Block B subjects

You need to choose at least one of these subjects. You can choose up to three if you want to.

Art and Design GCSE

Art and Design allows you to undertake a personal journey developing your own ideas from a chosen theme, experimenting with a range of different materials showing both technical and analytical skills. You will research both traditional and contemporary artists and use that research to inform and inspire the development of your own work. Throughout the course there are opportunities to visit galleries in the UK and overseas to further enhance your studies.

Dance GCSE

In Dance, as a performer, you will develop confidence and self esteem. You will develop self body awareness as well as sensitivity to others and team working skills during a group performance. You have freedom to express yourself and work creatively as you produce your own choreography. You will learn technical, physical, expressive skills and how to apply them accurately in a solo set phrase. You will also learn from the study of professional choreographers in a theoretical setting. There is a ratio of 60% practical and 40% written work.

Drama GCSE

Drama provides the opportunity for you to acquire the skills of making, performing, interpreting and understanding theatre. You will develop your critical analysis and evaluative skills, gaining an understanding of the range of skills which create a performance. You will gain knowledge and understanding of practitioners, playwrights and texts through practical work and visits to live theatre performances. You will perform both devised and scripted work as well as do a written examination. There is a ratio of 30% practical and 70% written work

French GCSE

Our objective is to enable you to develop your French language skills to their full potential, equipping you with the knowledge to communicate in a variety of contexts with confidence. We aim to convey our passion about the benefits that learning a language can bring and we strongly believe in languages as a skill for life and something you enjoy and find rewarding. You will increase your cultural knowledge whilst developing your language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing across six thematic contexts. And in the eyes of the future

Photography GCSE

Photography is an exciting and creative course where you will explore photography through the use of contemporary digital techniques (e.g. Photoshop) and media. You will research both traditional and contemporary photographers and use that research to inform and inspire the development of your own body of work. You are free to present your outcomes in a variety of ways including digital prints, books, videos, or animation.

3D Design GCSE

3D Design enables you to design and create products. You will explore traditional and contemporary designers, architects and themes to inspire the development of your own work. You will experiment with a wide range of media such as metals, wood, glass, plastic and card and ceramics. You will then undertake a personal journey developing your own ideas from a chosen theme and design and create an outcome such as architecture, jewellery, metal or timber product

Spanish GCSE

By the end of the GCSE Spanish course you will have developed your language skills to their full potential. You will be able to communicate confidently in Spanish in a variety of contexts. Being able to speak one of the world's most widely spoken languages is a skill that will be useful for life as well as being enjoyable and rewarding. You will increase your cultural knowledge whilst developing your language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing across six thematic contexts. And in the eyes of the future employers, GCSE in languages will help you to stand out.

Textile Art GCSE

Textiles is a course that enables you to use your creativity and imagination to design and make exciting textiles work. You will explore a wide range of surface textile techniques such as embroidery, applique and printing. Throughout the course you will research traditional and contemporary textile artists and designers to inspire your own work. You will then embark on a personal project to create a textile outcome such as a garment or textile artwork.

Block C subjects (that are not described in Block A or B)

In addition to your Humanity subject and Foreign Language or Creative subjects, you need to choose 2 additional subjects. You can also choose more subjects from the Humanity, Foreign Language and Creative subjects if you want to count as these 2 choices.

ASDAN

Personal Development

For some students, taking 4 GCSE options may not be appropriate. If you think you would benefit from access to a course which gives you the chance to develop work and life skills, you can complete the ASDAN Personal Development Programmes. This option also gives you the opportunity to work in a small group and receive support with aspects of the curriculum that you are finding challenging. You will only be permitted to opt for the ASDAN course with the approval of the SENCO (Mrs Martin) so please discuss this option choice with her at the KS4 Subject Information evening

Business Enterprise

CNAT

This award gives learners the opportunity to develop sector-specific knowledge and skills in a practical learning environment. The main focus is on the knowledge, understanding and skills required to research, set up, run, review and monitor an enterprise that includes: development of key skills in market research, planning, carrying out financial transactions, communication and problem solving; knowledge such as the features and characteristics of enterprises and entrepreneurs, and the internal and external factors that can affect the performance of an enterprise; attitudes and ways of working including communicating and interacting with customers.

Business Studies

GCSE

Business Studies starts by exploring the world of small businesses through the lens of an entrepreneur. You'll learn how to develop an idea, spot an opportunity and turn it into a successful business. You will understand how to make a business effective, manage money and see how the world around us affects small businesses. Then you'll move on to investigating business growth. You'll learn about key business concepts and issues and decisions you need to make when growing or working in a business

Computer Science

GCSE

Computer Science is the beating heart of our technological dependent lives. From CPU's and storage to the magic of the internet, you will examine the world of technology in great detail before developing the programming skills to control and create technology of the future. You will learn and develop the essential problem solving and thinking skills to enable you to create the solutions we need for technology to help us progress. In the future these are skills you will need in every profession

Creative iMedia

Cambridge National

In this subject we train you to use the latest digital tools and we put you into real-world situations where you receive professional creative briefs covering animation, website design, and digital graphics. You learn how to conduct these projects as if they were in the workplace, from research to design, from producing to testing and evaluation. Writing and creative skills are important and heavily used. This subject provides a range of superb employability skills for the future

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Food Prep & Nutrition: GCSE

This is an opportunity to develop your creative cooking skills as well as explore your inner Food Scientist. It will appeal to those interested in cooking nutritious meals, exploring healthy lifestyles, and those with a hidden talent for Food Science experiments. This subject is highly regarded alongside subjects like Science, PE and Health and Social Care, offering a practical yet technical insight in to the food and nutrition industry

Health and Social Care Cambridge National

This course gives you the opportunity to study how people grow and develop over the course of their lives and the factors that may affect them. You also learn about different care services and 'care values' which you will be able to demonstrate practically. With the health and social care sector being a major employer, this course builds a practical understanding, transferable skills and Knowledge.

Literacy and Numeracy Support

If you find developing your literacy and numeracy skills challenging and would like some extra support then this option is for you. You can opt for this if you think you have special needs. Before you opt for it you must have discussed it with your SENCO. Literacy and Numeracy support is not a GCSE and so taking this option means that you gain one less GCSE at the end of Year 11. However, by getting the extra support we will be able to help you get higher grades in your other options.

Music Level 2 Award in Performing Arts

Music allows you to develop your practical, creative and listening skills through a course built around a wide range of music. You will perform in bands, compose music both individually and in groups, and learn how to use music technology to enhance your creative work. A full range of both traditional and contemporary music is studied and you are given the opportunity for self directed learning of your own choice of material.

PE GCSE (Sports Science) GCSE

.GCSE PE allows you to develop your understanding of anatomy, physiology, socio-cultural issues in sport and sports psychology. Through these topics you will learn how the body produces movement and the reasons for sport participation. You will also be assessed in three sports (a combination of team and individual sports), which will contribute towards your GCSE.

Psychology GCSE

With the increase in mental health issues, psychology has never been more important. Many people suffer from depression, anxiety, phobias or other mental health issues. Through GCSE Psychology, we learn about the human mind in terms of mental behaviours and psychological functions. We then try to understand how it works and how it can be kept in a stable state. You will learn the fundamental concepts of the subject of cognitive development, clinical and social behaviour. You will develop your critical analysis, independent thinking and research skills

Sociology GCSE

GCSE Sociology helps students to gain knowledge and understanding of key social structures, processes and issues through the study of families, education, crime and social structure. Students will develop their analytical, assimilation and communication skills by comparing and contrasting perspectives on a variety of social issues, constructing reasoned arguments, using evidence to make judgments and drawing reasoned conclusions. Students will study a variety of topics such as: families & households; the education system; crime & deviance; social structures; theories & research methods

Sports Studies Cambridge National

Sports Studies gives learners the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge about different types of sport, physical activity, skills development and sports leadership to their own practical performance. You will learn about contemporary issues in sport such as funding, participation, ethics and role models, along with completing a module in outdoor and adventurous activities.

What to do next

- Find out about the courses you're interested in: Read this booklet; Go online; Talk to your teachers, PSHE teacher and tutor.
- Go to KS4 Subject Information Evening on Thursday 5th February 5-7pm to get as much information as possible.
- Complete the online option form by Monday 23rd February 2026

Key Dates

On the week beginning **February 2nd** students will have **assemblies** about options and get their options booklets.

February 5th 5-7pm is the **KS4 Subject Information Evening** where students and parents can listen to a talk about choosing options and talk to Learning Leaders of every subject about the different courses. More information will follow.

6th February is when **Applications Open**. Students will receive an email from SIMS-online which will contain a link that is used to apply for options. Students have the opportunity to fill-in the online options form both at home and in a PSHE lesson at school. They can also change their options at any time until the deadline.

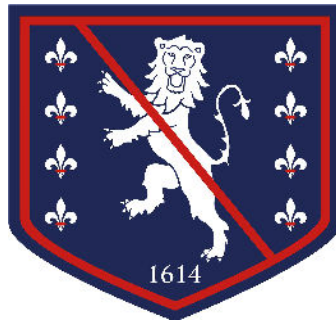
Parents evenings will be run on **Thursday 22nd (Rock Road)** and **Wednesday 28th January (The Towers)**. More details will follow about the arrangements for these in due course.

Monday February 23rd is the **Deadline for Submitting Options**. Students submit options via the email from SIMS-online. After this students' initial login they can access SIMS online from this [link](#). Please note that we do not guarantee students get their first choices.

March 13th is the date where parents are informed about the options their child recorded online. If they do not agree with your thoughts, please get in touch with us

May 18th is the date by which the school will contact you to confirm your options

Please note that we have arranged this options choice system based on recently modified government guidance which is still subject to change at a national level. Should government guidance change, we may need to contact you with regard to making some different choices.



For any queries around options please email:

SFOffice@sgs.uk.net

Queries will be forwarded to the relevant colleague



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