



SOUTH WILTS
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

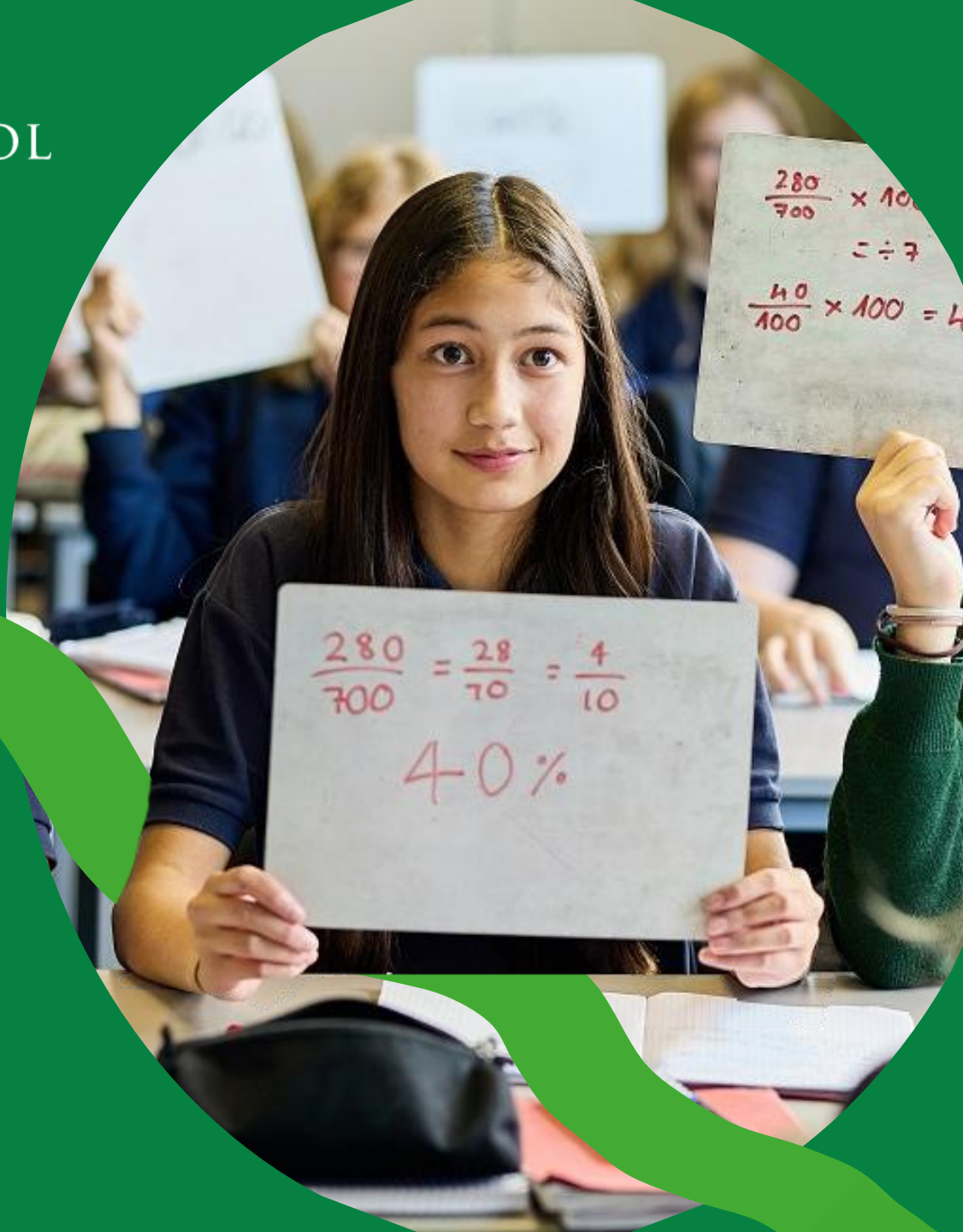
GCSE OPTIONS 2025-26

Mr Lean – Deputy Headteacher
Miss Hodgson – Head of Year 9


THE SUNDAY TIMES

**SCHOOLS GUIDE
2026**

**STATE SECONDARY
SCHOOL OF THE YEAR
SOUTH WEST**



OUR AIMS

Our aim is to provide a broad, balanced and flexible curriculum.

We aim to prepare students to be able to:

- gain a place at any university in the UK or overseas;
 - obtain a place on a higher, advanced or degree apprenticeship;
 - enter gainful, fulfilling employment.
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OVERVIEW

1. The curriculum model for Year 10 & Year 11
 2. What are GCSEs like?
 3. Issues to consider when choosing GCSEs
 4. Next steps in the options process
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THE CURRICULUM MODEL FOR YEARS 10 & 11

The 'average' South Wilts student gains 10 GCSEs

English Language

Science 2

English Literature

Science 3

Mathematics

Option 1

Religious Studies

Option 2

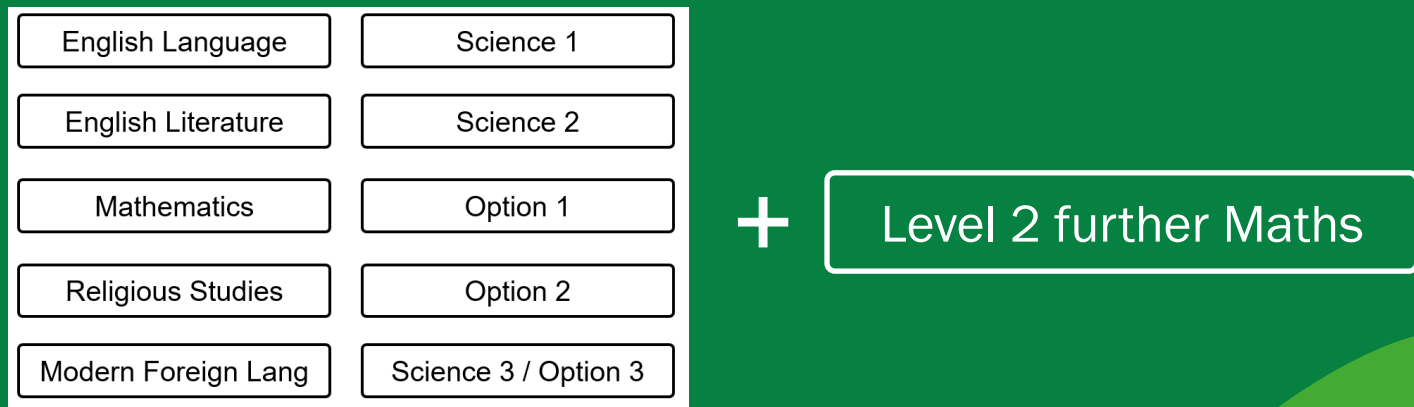
Science 1

Option 3

THE CURRICULUM MODEL FOR YEARS 10 & 11

The 'average' South Wilts student gains 10 GCSEs

Top set maths students will gain the equivalent of **11 GCSEs**



Some SEND students may, with the agreement of the SENDCo and Deputy Headteacher, study a slightly reduced programme

THE CURRICULUM MODEL FOR YEARS 10 & 11

Compulsory subject	Lesson allocation
English (language and literature)	7
Maths	7
Science	12
Religious Studies	3
Core PE	3
PSHE	3

As an academic grammar school, we only offer GCSE qualifications and do not offer any vocational qualifications.

All options have 5 lessons allocated every two weeks.

Optional subjects	
Art and Design	Music
Computer Science	PE
French	Food Preparation and Nutrition
German	Design Technology
History	Geography
Spanish	Drama

THE CURRICULUM MODEL FOR YEARS 10 & 11

Why does South Wilts make GCSE Religious Studies compulsory?

- Religious studies remains a legal requirement in all schools in the UK, and Ofsted look that all schools provide a certain amount of Religious Studies in the timetable.
- The national curriculum states the legal requirement that:

'Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which: promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.'

All state schools... must teach religious education... All schools must publish their curriculum by subject and academic year online'

(National Curriculum in England: Framework Document, DfE, September 2013, p.4)

THE CURRICULUM MODEL FOR YEARS 10 & 11

Why does South Wilts make GCSE Religious Studies compulsory?

At SWGS, our view is that if students are required to undertake studies in the subject, then they should achieve a GCSE for their efforts. As a result, all students undertake the AQA GCSE RS.

A frequent comment from parents is; *'but it's optional at other schools...'*

This is true, but the students there **still** have to spend time doing a programme of study. For the GCSE, we only ask that students undertake 3 hours of study **per two week cycle**.

Other option subjects have **five hours** of study. What this means is that even if we replaced RE with a different option – it wouldn't have enough time to be successfully taught.

THE CURRICULUM MODEL FOR YEARS 10 & 11

Why does South Wilts make GCSE Religious Studies compulsory?

It is also worth noting that the RE GCSE is **very** different to what your experience of the subject was if you were at school prior to 2005!

It incorporates lots of ethical questions and current events – two of the units are ‘Peace & Conflict’ and ‘Crime & Punishment’ – in this way, it also provides students with an introduction to aspects of A-level study.

Finally, it’s a subject that SWGS students find straightforward, and excel in. In summer 2025’s GCSE exam we achieved:

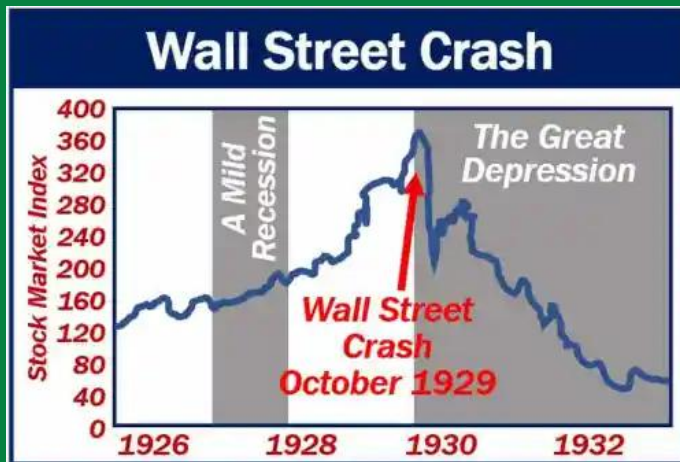
75.2% Grade 9-7 (*National average: 31.0%*)
97.4% Grade 9-5 (*National average: 61.6%*)

WHAT ARE GCSEs LIKE?

1. History – Using Evidence & Reaching Judgements

Question:

Study Sources A and B, which give different views on the causes of the 1929 Wall Street Crash. How far do these sources support the view that speculation was the main cause of the Crash? Use both sources and your own knowledge to support your answer.



WHAT ARE GCSEs LIKE?

2. Music – Analytical and Conceptual Skills

Question:

You will hear an excerpt of a Baroque concerto. Describe two musical features that are typical of the Baroque period and explain how they contribute to the character of the piece.



WHAT ARE GCSEs LIKE?

3. English Literature – Critical Thinking & Interpretation

Question:

Starting with this extract, explore how the writer presents conflict in the novel. In your answer you should consider the writer's methods and how these contribute to the reader's understanding of the characters.

Robert Louis Stevenson – *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

"I was slowly losing hold of my original and better self, and becoming slowly incorporated with my second and worse. When I would come back from these excursions, I was often plunged into a kind of wonder at my vicarious depravity, and as I surveyed the ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance, rather of a leap of welcome."

WHAT ARE GCSEs LIKE?

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) was introduced by the Government in 2010. It is not a qualification in itself but is a measure of how well a student has achieved across 6 academic subjects.

English Language

Science 2

Mathematics

Modern Foreign Lang

Science 1

History or Geography

South Wilts Grammar School values all the subjects it offers at GCSE equally and would urge students to make choices that reflect what they want to study, which may also include creative and performing arts and technology.

WHAT ARE GCSEs LIKE?

GCSEs are an academic qualification that is mostly exam based

Solely examination assessment

Computer Science
Geography
History
Mathematics
Religious Studies
Science

Some non examination assessment (NEA)

* Art & Design
* Design Technology
* Drama
English
* Food Prep & Nutrition
Modern languages
* Music
* Physical Education

Students are therefore advised to only take one options subject with a substantial Non-Examined Assessment component.

Students can take a maximum of two if they have a clear career aim that supports them choosing more than one.

** = Subjects that have a large NEA component*

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING GCSEs



Interest in and enthusiasm for the subject



Who the teacher of the course might be



How choosing the subject, or not, might affect Sixth Form choices



What other students might be doing the course (friends)



How choosing the subject, or not, might affect Higher Education and/or careers options



Which subjects might seem easier

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING GCSEs

How choices affect the subjects you could study in Sixth Form?

Art (Fine Art)	Drama & Theatre	French	Music
Biology	Economics	Geography	Philosophy & Ethics
Business		German	Physics
Chemistry	English Language	Government & Politics	Product Design (DT)
Classical Civilisation	English Literature	History	Psychology
Computer Science	Environmental Sci	Mathematics	Sociology
Core Mathematics	Extended Project	Maths (Further)	Spanish

Facilitating subject

An A-level subject that Russell Group universities say keep the widest range of degree course options open

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING GCSEs

We will do our best to ensure that all students are able to study the courses they wish. However, occasionally this is not always possible.

We allocate places on courses based on the order of preference. The order you put them down matters a great deal!



THE OPTIONS PROCESS

You will
choose
3
subjects



THE OPTIONS PROCESS

4. Option 1 - please choose one *

	Subject
Art	☐
Computer Science	☐
Design Technology	☐
Drama	☐
Food Technology	☐
French	☐
Geography	☐
German	☐
History	☒
Music	☐
PE	☐

THE OPTIONS PROCESS

Any student whose choices are unable to be met will be seen by a member of SLT.

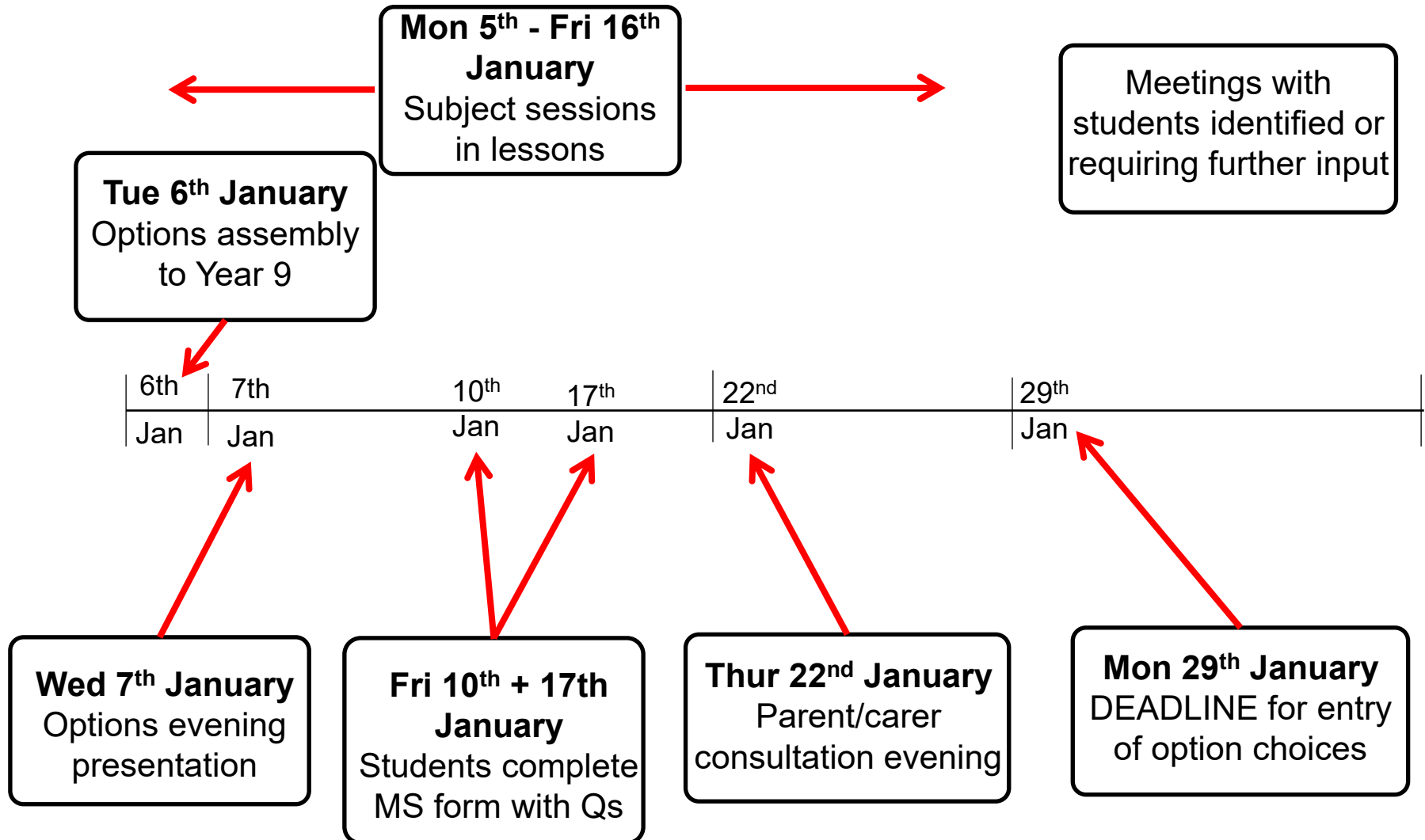
When this process is complete a letter will be sent confirming the option choices made.

Once a student has started a course in September it is exceptional for a course change to occur.

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What next?

Timeline



TRANSITION FROM YEAR 9 TO YEAR 10

The transition from Year 9 to 10 is an important one.

Students will follow the choices they make for the next two years.

Choices could have implications on what students' study post 16.

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ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

- Option booklet
 - Subject teacher
 - Tutor and Head of Year
 - PSHE Lessons
 - 1:1 mentoring
 - Other students
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ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Head of Year – **Miss Hodgson**

ELSA / Pastoral Support – **Mrs King**

Tutor(s)

School Nurse – **Mandy**
(Tue lunch drop-ins)

Lay Chaplain – **Katie**
(drop-ins, 1-2-1's, 10:10)



SENCo – Special Educational Needs
Coordinator
Mrs Proctor

ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

SWGS Safeguarding Team



Designated
Safeguarding
lead

Jill Bellamy



Deputy DSL

Jake Lean



Deputy DSL

**Keisha
Kirby**



Deputy DSL

**Lou
Edwards**

GEOGRAPHY FIELD TRIPS



HISTORY BATTLEFIELDS VISIT



MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES IMMERSION





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