



January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

This is an exciting time for all our Year 8 students as we start the process which will lead them to make their Key Stage 4 course choices in March. From Year 9 students will take our core curriculum for around 76% of their time and have some choice in the remaining 24% of their curriculum time. There are lots of opportunities for students to get help, support, and guidance during this term. This includes form time sessions, assemblies, taster lessons in new subjects as well as guidance interviews with senior members of the school staff.

In response to parental feedback, we now run a simplified course choice process which has worked well and remains in place going forward. All the key information will be available in our comprehensive Course Choices booklet. Students will be issued with paper copies of these booklets during form time, and the booklets will also be available to download from the school website.

For your information I have included a schedule of events which will take place to enable you and your child to make the best decisions over the coming months.

Year 8 Course Choice Process 2026

15th January: Initial launch assembly for students
19th to 23rd January: Tutorial programme – Your Choices and Your Future
26th January – 13th February: Taster lessons
26th February: Assembly – how the process works (AM form time)
26th February: Booklets and pathway information released (PM form time)
26th February: Booklets available online
26th February to 12th March: Opportunity for 1-1 guidance interviews
12th March: Year 8 parents' evening
16th March: Deadline for course choice forms to be returned to tutors
22nd May: Confirmation letters sent home
July: Year half moves to facilitate option choices completed
October: Course change window (subject to availability)

** Dates are estimates and may need to change*

From 23rd February onwards we will also have a dedicated email address for all non-subject related option queries coursechoices@hbk.acesmat.uk. I look forward to helping your child to make their decisions to ensure that they can achieve their full potential.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Pinder
Vice Principal