



**HARTLAND
HIGH SCHOOL**

Year 9 Options

Spring 2026



**GREENSHAW
LEARNING TRUST**

Y9 Options Guide

Introduction

Welcome! We are so looking forward to the process of Year 9 students selecting their subjects for next year. This is a huge step in climbing their own personal mountains to the very best universities in the country of careers of their choosing.



'Options' is the process of choosing what subjects to study in Years 10 and 11 (also known as Key Stage 4). We have chosen subjects that will enable students to go on to study whatever they want at A Level or other post-16 courses.

This means students should see this as an exciting opportunity to tailor their learning to them, and not something that they should worry about - they can't go wrong with the subjects we have chosen to offer.

Students will need to consider their individual strengths, interests and talents. Students should make choices based on what they enjoy and what they are passionate about. Every combination of subjects that we offer will enable students to access any post-16 course.

In Y10 all students will be required to study:

- GCSE English Language
- GCSE English Literature
- GCSE Mathematics
- GCSE Combined Sciences (two GCSEs)

In addition to the compulsory subjects listed above, students will study four options subjects (select and rank order six from the list below):

- History
- Geography
- RE
- Spanish
- Art
- Business
- Food Preparation and Nutrition
- Drama
- Computing
- Music
- Sport
- Health and Social Care

All students must study **either** history or geography as one of their options. They may study both these subjects if they want to, as two of their options subjects.

Alongside your compulsory GCSE subjects and your options subjects, **all** students study:

- Core PE
- PSHE

There are **no exams** in these two subjects. We know that these subjects are important to ensure our students are healthy, happy, well-informed young people, ready to live safely and successfully in the modern world.

Example student subjects:

Here are some possible subject combinations. These are just examples - there are lots of other possibilities!

	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
Core subjects (compulsory)	English literature	English literature	English literature
	English language	English language	English language
	Maths	Maths	Maths
	Combined science	Combined science	Combined science
	Combined science	Combined science	Combined science
Options subjects (your choice!)	History	Geography	History
	Sport	Spanish	Geography
	Drama	Music	Spanish
	RE	Business	Art
Non- examined subjects (compulsory)	Core PE	Core PE	Core PE
	PSHE	PSHE	PSHE

Choosing subjects

Students should choose their subjects based on which subjects they enjoy and are interested in. Students will select **four** options, as well as **two reserve choices**. This means that all students will study a total of nine qualifications, either GCSEs or Vocational qualifications (BTECs or equivalent).

To support students in making the best choices they:

1. Have had an assembly
2. Are attending Options Evening
3. Will have a tutor time session where they will plan their choices
4. Can talk to their Head of Year, SLT or members of teaching staff during social time

Students then make their choices during tutor time via an online form that they will complete on a school computer. The choices of every individual student will then be checked by senior leaders, to ensure they have been entered correctly and make sense for that student.

In July you will be informed of the subjects allocated to your son/daughter for Key Stage 4. **It is important to note that choices cannot be guaranteed.** We will always do our best to give you your first choices, but we cannot always achieve this. For this reason we ask students to make two reserve choices.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What's the difference between GCSEs and Vocational Subjects?

Both types of qualification are great! The most significant differences are in the balance of theory/practical work and the style of assessment. As a school, we are in the process of deciding whether to offer GCSEs or BTECs in Computing, Music, Sport and Health and Social Care. The qualifications are worth the same and both enable students to go onto study A Levels and Level 3 BTEC qualifications in the sixth form. We therefore advise that students are led by their enjoyment of different subjects and how much they are interested in them, when they are making their selections, rather than the qualification type.

The key differences are shown in the table below.

GCSEs	Vocational (e.g. BTEC)
☐ More theoretical	☐ Usually more practical than GCSEs
☐ More exam based and less practical in many cases (not all)	☐ Mainly coursework but still an exam
☐ More aligned to A Levels	☐ Grades are Distinction, Merit and Pass rather than numbers
☐ Graded as a number from 9 to 1 (nine being the highest)	

Who will be the teacher for each subject?

This cannot be answered until much later in the year so do not assume it will be the same person who teaches you this year. It is wiser to make an option choice based on the subject content and assessment style rather than on who teaches the subject.

Are there boys and girls subjects?

Absolutely not! All subjects are appropriate for all students.

Am I guaranteed to get my choices?

No. We will do all we can to ensure you get your choices but it cannot be guaranteed. Most students do have their first choices. There are a number of reasons for not getting your choices:

- Too few people might opt for a subject so no class can be created
- Too many people opt for a subject so classes fill up. When classes fill up, we generally allocate places based on attendance.

- It may be impossible to timetable some combinations of choices together. This is unpredictable until after selections have been made by students.

Will I be able to change my mind in September?

No. It is important to make the correct choice in the first instance, based on all of the information available. Putting the timetable together is a huge job, which takes many months, leaving very limited flexibility for changes in September.

Who can help me with my choices?

Your subject teachers, Head of Year and families are the first people to ask for advice.

Do I have to put reserve choices on my options form?

Yes. All students must do this. If a subject you have opted for is full or impossible to timetable, you will be allocated one of your reserve choices.

What happens if I don't get my first choices?

We aim to give all students their first choices. If this isn't possible, we allocate reserve choices. In a small number of cases, if this is also impossible, we will meet with students and their parents/carers together, to discuss the best alternative subjects.

Can I pick any subjects?

All students must study either geography or history. This is because research consistently shows the benefits for students of studying a humanities subject (The Sutton Trust, July 2016).

Are some subjects better than others? Will some subjects limit my career choices?

All the subjects we are offering are good subjects. All combinations of subjects are good combinations. No combinations will limit students or impact their careers. Therefore we recommend that students are led in their choices by which subjects they enjoy the most.

How many GCSEs will I get?

All students will get a total of 9 GCSEs or BTEC qualifications.

My child is stuck! I've got a question! What should I do?

Phone the school and ask for a call back to discuss Year 9 Options. Either the Head of Year 9 or a member of the senior team will be in touch.