



BEECHEN CLIFF

GCSE Curriculum Options to start in September 2026

Choices Explained

13th January 2026



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Mr T Markall
Headteacher

Mr A Seal
Deputy Headteacher (Curriculum & Assessment)

Mr I Burnell
Head of Year

Ms E Pascoe
Careers Lead



Year 9 Options Information Evening

- Curriculum aims and outcomes.
- Pathways and options available.
- How to explore the subjects on offer.
- How to submit your choices.
- Questions.



Our Curriculum:

The Beechen Cliff curriculum is designed to provide students with the necessary **knowledge, skills** and **qualifications** to enable them to thrive in their next steps in education or work.

It is designed to be **broad** and **ambitious**. It is designed to meet their needs and interests whilst promoting **British Values** and covering students' **spiritual, moral, social** and **cultural** development.



The Core Curriculum

Everybody studies:

- Maths GCSE
- English Language GCSE
- English Literature GCSE
- Combined Science (2 GCSEs) or Separate Sciences (3 GCSEs)
- PE and Games - Not qualifications
- Tutorial and PSHE Programme



Options choices



In addition students choose four other subjects to study in Year 10 and 11



Curriculum Pathways



To help students make choices that best suit them, we have two “pathways” which they can follow. A third option is to attend a different school - which a very small minority of students choose.



Standard Options Pathway

For most students the following choices are available:

- Choose either History or Geography
- Choose a Modern Foreign Language (French, German or Spanish)
- Choose two other subjects (a second humanities subject and/or language may be chosen)



Standard options choices

Language option

- French, German, Spanish

Humanity option

- Geography, History

Other options

- Art GCSE
- Business Studies Level 1/2
- Computer Science GCSE
- Hospitality and Catering Level 1/2
- Design and Technology GCSE
- Music GCSE
- Music Technology Level 1/2
- Photography GCSE
- Physical Education GCSE
- Religion, Philosophy and Ethics GCSE
- Second language or humanities from the above.

Drama GCSE

We hope to be able to run this subject from 2026. This will depend on student interest as well as other factors.

If you are interested and would like to find out more about the subject, please watch [this video](#) about the course from the Head of Drama at Hayesfield.

If your son would like to study this subject, please indicate this on the options form.



Bespoke Options Pathway

For students who may benefit from a slightly less constrained range of options, any four subjects can be chosen, but no requirement to study a Language.

This could also include additional Literacy and Numeracy lessons.

Mrs Blair or Mr Seal will contact you if this is offered.



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Bespoke options choices

Choose 4 options

- Art GCSE
- Business Studies Level 1/2
- Computer Science GCSE
- Geography GCSE
- History GCSE
- French GCSE
- German GCSE
- Spanish GCSE
- Hospitality and Catering Level 1/2
- Design and Technology GCSE
- Music GCSE
- Music Technology Level 1/2
- Drama GCSE (if available)
- Photography GCSE
- Physical Education GCSE
- Religion, Philosophy and Ethics GCSE

Aspiration

Compassion

Independence

Respect



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Where can you find more information about the subjects?



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- 1. Options Booklet online**
Includes information on all the courses offered, the pathway and decision making timeline.
- 2. [Subject presentation videos](#)**

GCSE Option Choices

September 2026



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Myth Busting

History = Essays....

Aspiration Compassion Independence Respect



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Myth Busting

History = Essays...

My GCSEs are fundamental to the
job I will do in the future....

Aspiration Compassion Independence Respect



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Myth Busting

History = Essays...

My GCSEs are f...
job L...

Some GCSEs have no written work

fundamental to the
future....

Aspiration

Compassion

Independence

Respect



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Myth Busting

History = Essays...

My GCSEs are fundamental to the
job I will do in the future....

Some GCSEs have no written work

There are easy GCSEs

Aspiration

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Independence

Respect



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Myth Busting

History = Essays...

My GCSEs are fundamental to the
job I will do in the future....

Some GCSEs have no written work

There are no GCSEs

GCSE Art/Photography is easy, it's
just....

Aspiration

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Independence

Respect



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Myth Busting

History = Essays...

My GCSEs are fundamental to the
job I want to do in the future....

Some GCSEs have no written work

There are easy GCSEs

GCSE Art/Physical Education is easy, it's
just....

GCSEs don't matter when it comes
to University

Aspiration Compassion Independence Respect



Myth Busting

History = Essays...

My GCSEs are fundamental to the
job I will do in the future....

Some GCSEs have no written work

There are easy GCSEs

GCSE Art/Physical Education is easy, it's
just....

GCSEs don't matter when it comes
to University

PE GCSE = Practical only



Myth Busting

History = Essays...

My GCSEs are fundamental to the
job I will do in the future....

Some qualifications have no written work

Some Level 1 & 2 Qualifications aren't
worth the same as GCSEs

GCSE Art/PE
just....

GCSEs don't matter when it comes
to University

PE GCSE = Practical only



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Myth Busting

BUSTING MYTHS

History = Essays

My GCSE is

fundamental to the

job I will do in my future....

Some Level 1 & 2 Qualifications aren't

practical as GCSE

GCSE isn't as important as GCSE
just because it's a University

PE GCSE = Practical only

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Preparation via Unifrog



Aspiration

Compassion

Independence

Respect



Preparation via Unifrog

unifrog.org/student/home

Students see a version tailored to their age and their answers on the [Made-to-measure questionnaire](#), and can click to see all tools. You see the standard tools for every year group.

Y7 Y8 Y9 Y10 Y11 Y12 Y13 All tools

Recording

- Personality profile**
x Quiz not taken
- Activities**
x Recorded at least 10
- Skills**
x Completed all 12
- Interactions**
x Missing 5 Interaction types
- Academics**
x No Classes selected

Searching

- UK universities**
0 shortlists
- European universities**
0 shortlists
- Oxbridge**
0 shortlists
- Apprenticeships**
0 shortlists
- College / Sixth Form**
0 shortlists
- Irish universities**
0 shortlists

Exploring

- Careers library**
x Careers favoured
- Subjects library**
x Subjects favoured
- Know-how library**
x Guides favoured
- Courses**
x No courses added
- MOOC**

Materials

- UK Personal Statement**
x Subject added
- Subject References**
x No References selected
- CV / Resumé**

Applications

- Post 18 Intentions**



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Advice for making decisions



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Independence

Respect



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Advice for making decisions



**MAKE
A CHOICE
THAT'S RIGHT
FOR YOU.**





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Advice for making decisions

**MAKE
A CHOICE
THAT'S RIGHT
FOR YOU.**

DON'T RUSH
THINGS

YOU'RE
NOT
ALONE

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Independence

Respect



Advice for making decisions

- Think for yourself and do your research – don't do what your friends are doing
- Focus on the subject rather than personalities
- Think long term – find out what you need to achieve your goals beyond Beechen Cliff: 6th Form, College, University, work etc.
- Ask questions about the subjects
- Pick reserve subjects that you actually want to do
- Discuss your option choices with teachers and parents – listen to their advice



Timeline for making decisions

Key milestone	Date
Ignite Day: Options Assembly and Taster Sessions	Thursday 27th November 2025
GCSE Options booklet available on school website	Monday 12th January
Parents' Information Meeting	Tuesday 13th January
Selected students meet with Mrs Pascoe (Careers Lead)	Before Monday 9th February
Senior staff meet all students in small groups	During tutor sessions in the weeks of 19th January and 26th January
Year 9 Parents' Evening	Thursday 22nd January
Deadline to submit options choices via the school website	Monday 9th February



Completing the Options Form

- Complete online on the [school website options form](#)
- Select 4 options **in order of preference**
- **And** give two reserve options (in order of preference)
- **Also** give a preference for Science.

Deadline: Monday 9th February



When will the choices be confirmed?

- Confirmation of allocation will be given in June
- Every effort is made to allocate student's first preferences. However, this is not always possible and therefore we will take into account order of preference and allocate reserve choices if necessary. Further detail is available in the Options Booklet.
- Preference order (including reserve choices) is therefore important.



Completing the Options Form

GCSE Options Form

Step 1 of 2

50%

 For information about how we will use your personal details please see our [Privacy Notice](#).

Pupil Name *

Tutor Group *

First Name

Surname

BY9a

Which set of options will you be following? *

Please Choose

Please Choose

Standard Options

Bespoke Options

I'm not sure, can you show me more information



Completing the Options Form

Which set of options will you be following? *

Standard Options



Languages Option Choice *

Please Choose



Humanities Option Choice *

Please Choose



First Preference Option Choice *

Please Choose



Second Preference Option Choice *

Please Choose



First Reserve Option Choice *

Please Choose



Second Reserve Option Choice *

Please Choose



Science Preference *

Please Choose





Completing the Options Form

Which set of options will you be following? *

Bespoke Options



First Preference Option Choice *

Please Choose



Second Preference Option Choice *

Please Choose



Third Preference Option Choice *

Please Choose



Fourth Preference Option Choice *

Please Choose



First Reserve Option Choice *

Please Choose



Second Reserve Option Choice *

Please Choose



Science Preference *

Please Choose





Completing the Options Form

GCSE Drama (part 1) *

Please Choose

Would you like to select GCSE Drama as an option choice (if it is available)?

GCSE Drama (part 2)

If you have selected 'yes' which option subject from those you have stated above would like it to replace. If you have selected 'no' please leave this box blank.

Would you like
to select Drama
as an option?



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Frequently Asked Questions

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Are students on different pathways taught in different groups?

No – all students are taught together



**My son really wants to study a
subject but only if he is taught
by Mr/Ms X?**

This can't be guaranteed. It is better to
make choices based on the subject
rather than the teacher



Does any subject require equipment or a cost?

- For Photography GCSE a digital SLR camera is needed
- For Hospitality & Catering ingredients will need to be supplied by the student
- For Design & Technology some resources may need to be provided for the final project

*Pupil Premium support
available*



Do I need to be good at a subject to take it for GCSE?

It is sensible to take subjects that you do well in but enjoyment of the subject is also important.

To ensure students have made appropriate decisions the choices will be shared with Heads of Subject and if there are concerns you will be contacted.



Options that can't go together

- Music GCSE **and** Music Technology L2
- We also recommend that students don't study both Art GCSE **and** Photography GCSE.



Can a student change their mind on a subject later in the year?

Yes, but not all options will be available

Some groups may be full or the combination of subjects may not work.

No changes after October.



What is the total number of GCSEs available?

Normally 9 – but up to 11 if Separate Sciences
and/or an additional GCSE is taken



What about additional GCSEs?

Native Language GCSEs:

Recommended: Contact the Examinations Officer

Enrichment Options e.g. Further Maths GCSE

Top set Maths – contact Mr Burnby

Other possible qualifications

GCSE Statistics may be available for some students



Will students be set in Year 10/11?

Setting occurs in Maths and Science in Year 10/11 and to some extent in English.

All option subjects are taught in mixed ability groups.



Can my son choose whether to study Separate Sciences or Combined Science for GCSE?

As part of the options process you can indicate a preference. However, the final decision will be at the discretion of the Science Faculty.



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**“My son has been selected for the
Standard Options Pathway...**

**...but he doesn't want to do a language
or History/Geography”**

Please contact Mr Seal to discuss.



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GCSE Option Choices

Any further questions/queries:

aseal@beechencliff.mnsp.org.uk

headteacher@beechencliff.mnsp.org.uk

or please stay behind to discuss.