

Tuesday 9 February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

**RE: Virtual Year 8 Options Presentation**

Over the next few weeks your daughter will be making some important decisions regarding her GCSE options. The planned Year 8 Options Evening will be replaced with a virtual presentation delivered by Mr Alderman, Mrs Rooney (Head of Lower School) and Mrs McCourt (Deputy Headteacher). The virtual presentation will explain the curriculum, options process and subjects on offer. Mr Alderman will also provide an important update regarding changes to the start date of GCSE options. Parents and students will be able to access the virtual options presentation from Monday 22 February to Thursday 4 March by clicking here: <https://media.stjulies.org.uk/video/options21.mp4>



We started the Year 8 options process with your daughter in September 2020 with information delivered in assembly and as part of the PSHE programme. We have continued the process by inviting her to interview to discuss her possible career choices and what subjects she will need to achieve her goals. Furthermore, your daughter's prior academic attainment and Key Stage 2 scores will be taken into account, in order to ensure she receives the best possible advice and selects the most appropriate balance of courses for her, so that she achieves her full potential at GCSE. We feel that this bespoke guidance will give her the relevant information so that she makes informed choices for her GCSE subjects.

Please also familiarise yourselves with the curriculum section on the school website [www.stjulies.org.uk](http://www.stjulies.org.uk). This provides lots of information relating to course structure, content and topics.

On Thursday 4 March we will publish a copy of the Options booklet and form. **The deadline for returning the options form will be Friday 20 March.** This can be submitted electronically and a link will be provided on Thursday 4 March to complete this process.

**Important curriculum changes**

It has been agreed, in consultation with Governors and staff, that due to the global pandemic, loss of learning and school closures, the GCSE start date will provisionally move from September 2021 to January 2022. We have a statutory requirement to ensure all students cover the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum, which gives all students a firm foundation of knowledge that supports the study of GCSE courses. Without this firm foundation, students may not fulfil the deep knowledge, skills and understanding required to access most GCSE qualifications. Please be assured that all departments will adjust their curriculum maps over the next two and half years to ensure that your daughter fulfils her potential. We will continue to review the start date of GCSEs pending the agreed reopening of schools.

All students will still be able complete the options process this year as agreed.

Please find enclosed some Frequently Asked Questions relating to the options process. If you have any questions, please contact [options@stjulies.org.uk](mailto:options@stjulies.org.uk). Thank you for your continued support of your daughter's education.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs K McCourt

Deputy Headteacher