

GF/P:/MEB/Option Evening
5 March 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

Re: Year 8 Options Evening

As I am sure you are aware, ensuring that our students receive a broad and balanced education that effectively prepares them for modern life is at the heart of everything we do at Shirley High School. Having recently reviewed our whole school curriculum, we have identified significant benefits to students having more time in National Curriculum subjects at Key Stage 3, thus ensuring a solid foundation of learning before they move into their GCSE courses and more time to resolve any misconceptions. Additionally, many students and families have told us they feel Year 8 is too early for students to make fully informed decisions about their futures, telling us they would welcome enhanced careers guidance before students are required to make decisions that will shape their futures.

With all of this in mind, we have decided to increase our Key Stage 3 provision from two to three years from September 2020, meaning students in Year 8 will continue with their Key Stage 3 subjects in Year 9, before choosing their GCSE Options in the spring term. GCSE courses for the current Year 8 cohort will start in September 2021. Because of this, the Options Evening scheduled for Thursday 2 April 2020 will now be a Parents' Evening, where parents and carers will be able to speak to all of their children's teachers and begin having important initial conversations about their progress and potential suitability for GCSE courses.

In order to support students to make these important decisions about their futures, we have introduced a comprehensive whole school careers education strategy. Students across the whole school are currently participating in 'Careers Fortnight', where employers from a range of industries are running workshops and assemblies, both in and out of school. Year 8 students are also working on a careers unit in their Life Skills lessons and have completed activities and lessons around careers and education pathways in form time and PSHE. I would strongly encourage you to use 'Careers Fortnight' as an opportunity to discuss the future with your child and support them to establish career and education ambitions.

Should you or your child have any questions about the curriculum changes outlined above, or the academic requirements of specific careers or academic pathways, please do contact us on office@shirley.croydon.sch.uk and we will direct your enquiry to the appropriate member of staff.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the way you work in partnership with the school and look forward to seeing you at Year 8 Parents' Evening on Thursday 2 April 2020.

Yours sincerely

Ms G Fair
Vice Principal – Head of Lower School