



The Cottesloe School

KS4 Options Frequently Asked Questions

Can my child switch colour routes?

We are open to discussion about changing routes if appropriate for individual children because of specific reasons why their current route will not meet their needs or future career aspirations. The key difference between the colour routes is the opportunity to take some subjects and not others, for example we ask students on Blue to select a humanities subject and a language and students on Green Route study Prepare Aspire Succeed Leadership in Block B. Regardless of colour route, students will be taught in the same mixed ability classes for their option block subjects, so an Art group in block C will have students from all three routes in.

Option blocks are taught in mixed ability groups, will my child's colour route affect their Core sets?

Maths, English and Science are set according to ability and are timetabled in a different way to the option blocks. This means that your child's set for any of the core subjects is not affected by their colour route.

Why are Separate Sciences and Computer Science only on Blue route?

Separate Sciences and Computer Science are only offered in Blue as they are challenging subjects in terms of both knowledge and skills. Computer Science is very technical and involves writing and understanding computer code. Separate Sciences are challenging due to the amount of Science covered, with 13 hours of study across the fortnight timetable. In order to take either subject students should be showing an aptitude and an enthusiasm for the subject and be working at a 3+.

Can my child take History and Geography?

Yes, this is possible on all colour routes. It could impact on other choices and whether they can fit with both subjects, but students can take both if they would like to.

My child has specific SEN and I am not sure about what subjects they should choose. What should I do?

Please contact Ms Hibbert with specific SEN queries, she will be happy to advise and consider with you the best route or combination of subjects for your son or daughter.

We have looked through the booklet, talked about it at home, spoken to teachers and we are stuck on the final choice. What can we do?

Email the options@cottesloe.sch.bucks.uk email address with the options and blocks that your son or daughter would like to choose and the possible subjects for the final block. We will be happy to look at possibilities and work with you and your child to reach a decision.

My child is on Blue Route, do they have to take a Language?

Ideally we want as many of our students as possible to choose a language, whichever colour route they are on. Choosing a language as part of a student's KS4 options will also add depth and support TCS' expectations that students follow a broad and balanced curriculum beyond KS3 when the number of subjects naturally narrows.

Continuing to a study the language they are taking in Year 9 is open to all TCS students, we don't want to limit opportunities for any student. For some students this expectation is no problem; they want to continue with learning French or German at KS4. We also know that some students would rather not do this and there is some flexibility in this decision, but we do ask those on Blue route to choose one as part of their option choices. We ask that students really consider everything surrounding this decision by watching the video clips from Miss Goddard, Head of MFL about why choosing a language is a good thing.

Some universities are now placing more value on language studies and are explicit in their recognition of the value the skills studying a language develops. Currently University College London (UCL) requires a modern language GCSE at grade 5 (C) or above for applications to all courses, regardless of whether the degree is related to languages in any way. Students without a GCSE in a language can still apply to UCL, but once enrolled they are expected to complete a short language course or undertake a half course unit in a language as part of their degree. Whilst this is currently the case for only one university, we want to highlight how having a GCSE in a language is valued by higher education and employers, so students are aware that decisions now could impact on choices later. Of course, not everyone will want to go to university and not every university will expect a language to have been studied, but we feel it is important to add this into the decision making.

When will my child find out about their options?

We inform students of their confirmed choices in June of Year 9. This seems like a long time from when they submit their form however, it takes time to co-ordinate the option block groups to fit into the whole school timetable for the following academic year, making sure specialist teachers can be timetabled to teach the groups. There's lots going on behind the scenes before we are able to confirm options.