



YSGOL  
AFON WEN

School Lane, Hawthorn, Pontypridd CF37 5AL  
Telephone : 01443 841228  
Headteacher : Mrs C Crockett

15<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

### GCSE Option choices

At this time of the year we start discussing option choices with Year 9 pupils in preparation for their move into Year 10 and the start of their GCSE courses.

For the first time in their school life, pupils will be able to have a choice over the subjects they take during the next two years. These are very important decisions that may well influence their career choices in the future. In light of this, we want to assure you that we will help and support you and your child to make informed choices which are appropriate for them as individuals.

As we prepare to move to the options process for Year 9 pupils, we would like to outline some key dates and signpost support that is available online for you as parents. This will help shape and understand how you can support your son/daughter to make informed choices.

### What subjects will pupils study in Year 10 and 11?

Some familiar subjects that the pupils have studied in Key Stage 3 will continue into Key Stage 4 and will lead to GCSE or equivalent qualifications. There are four compulsory core subjects; Mathematics, English, Science and Welsh. In addition, it is a statutory requirement that students receive Ethics & Philosophy (Religious Studies) and core PE lessons until the age of sixteen. Pupils can also choose to take a formal GCSE qualification in these subjects within the option choices. The school also timetable pupils to gain additional qualifications in the Welsh Baccalaureate (worth the equivalent of one GCSE) and the BTEC Teamwork qualification.

Finally, pupils will also have the opportunity to **select three option subjects** to study for the next two years. These will include subjects that your child has studied previously, along with subjects that are only offered from Year 10. For example, Art, Drama, Hairdressing, Hospitality & Catering, Travel & Tourism, Public Services, Health and Nutrition, French, Geography, History, IT, Digital Film and Media, Music, PE, Photography, Product Design and Textiles.

Over the coming weeks, we will deliver a programme of advice and support so that your child is equipped to make an informed choice about their future studies and career plans. Please see the option process on the next pages.





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**GCSE Option Program 2026**

**Week commencing 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

On Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2026 there will be a “Making choices” assembly with Mrs Jenny Rosser from Careers Wales.

On Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026, Year 9 pupils will have talks from members of the Royal Navy, Police, HM Prison and from an entrepreneur Lesson 5 on this date.

**Week Commencing 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

Year 9 interim report published with a summary of academic attainment and attitude to learning. This will help to inform pupils and their families about areas of strength that could be a focus for next academic year.

English Teachers will complete a “Job Matching Quiz” [www.careerswales.gov.wales/plan-your-career/job-matching-quiz](http://www.careerswales.gov.wales/plan-your-career/job-matching-quiz) with pupils to see if that sparks ideas about future careers.

**Week Commencing 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

Week of assemblies introducing each of the GCSE option subjects, what is involved in the course, how it is assessed and what careers might be linked to it in the future.

Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> February	Creativity Faculty	Art, Photography, Drama, Digital Film & Media, Music, French
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> February	Innovation Faculty	Digital Technology & Computer Science Product Design, Textiles Hospitality and Catering, Construction
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> February	LiFE Faculty	PE GCSE, Health & Social Care Health & Nutrition, Public Services Travel & Tourism History, Geography, RE GCSE

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026 – Year 9 Core subject parents evening 3.15pm – 6.00pm**

Progress Evening on site for core subjects. This will also provide an opportunity for you to discuss potential GCSE option choices for your child with their teacher. Further details to be sent out via Class Charts.

**Week Commencing 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026** - February half term break.





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### **Week Commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026**

Pupils will be given a “free choice” option form (shared on Google Classroom and the My Child at School App) where they will select the three subjects that they feel they would like to study at KS4 at this point. This will be the starting point of the creation of the option columns.

### **Week Commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026**

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March – Year 9 Options Evening 3.15pm – 6.00pm

Progress Evening on site for non-core subjects. This will also provide an opportunity for you to discuss potential GCSE option choices for your child with their teacher. Details to be sent out via Google Classroom and the My Child at School App.

The Year 9 prospectus will be made available via Google Classroom and the My Child at School App as well as on the school website. Please sit down with your child to ensure that they have read through the information explaining the options available. It is important that pupils understand what the subjects are about and are aware of what is on offer. Many of these courses are completely different from KS3. In order to support this research, the teaching staff have compiled a short video on each subject for you to watch.

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March - Second open option choice.

Pupils will be given a second “free choice” option form (shared on Google Classroom and the My Child at School App) where they will select the three subjects that they feel they would like to study at KS4 at this point. This will inform the creation of the option columns. Option columns will then be published to pupils.

### **Week Commencing 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026 - FINAL OPTION CHOICE**

Option blocks will be made available from which your child will select their options from the columns of subjects available. A letter detailing the option blocks available will be sent to you. The options form will be available online via the Year 9 Google Classroom and the My Child at School App.

All learners will be required to have completed their online Option form by Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

An individual support meeting will take place with members of the extended leadership team to discuss potential option subjects.

**A confirmation letter of option choices will then be sent early in the summer term.**

Please note: There are no guarantees that pupils will be allocated to their first option choice. Pupils will also need to select a second choice for each option block. If pupil numbers for subject areas are insufficient or exceed resources allocated for the subject, it may be necessary for the second choice to be selected.





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We realise that this is the first time that your child has had to make any formal choices about their education that might impact on their future career path. We hope to work in partnership with you to ensure that your child makes the best possible choices as they progress onto the next phase of their education. Please could we emphasise the importance of adhering to deadlines given during the option process and that your child should read the options booklet carefully, watch the subject presentations, reflect upon their choices and seek advice from parents, subject teachers, and their form tutor. This is an exciting milestone in our pupils' journey through the school and we are here to support them throughout.

Please ensure that you discuss the importance of adhering to deadlines given during the option process.

**Support options for pupils and parents are available via the Newsletter, School Website and Careers Wales.**

**The Careers Wales website has some useful resources:**

<https://careerswales.gov.wales/courses-and-training/year-8-and-9-subject-options>

Within this website there are several useful pages and documents:

**Advice about how you can help your son/daughter**

<https://careerswales.gov.wales/parents/your-child-in-years-7-8-and-9>

On our school website you will find a dedicated section for Careers at [Careers and Work Related Experiences - Supporting Your Child at Home](#)

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school. Please ask to speak to Miss L Phillips (Year 9 Progress Leader) or any member of the Senior Leadership team.

Thank you for supporting your child in choosing their Key Stage 4 options.

Yours sincerely

**Mrs S. J. Brewer**

**DEPUTY HEADTEACHER**

