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20th January 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

Year 9 Parents' Information Evening - Options

I would like to invite you to attend our Year 9 Parents' Information Evening on Tuesday 25th January. This event will run from 4:00pm until 6:30pm.

Last year, the school introduced a new intuitive and easy to use online appointment booking system. This allows you to choose your own appointment times with teachers and you will receive an email confirming your appointments. Please be advised that appointments are allocated on a first come, first served basis. During the appointment, the system will display a countdown on the screen which indicates how long you have left with the teacher you are currently talking to. Please be aware of this timer as meetings do end once it ticks down to 0:00. If there are follow-up questions for staff, these should be sent in via email to the Academy office in the usual way.

Appointments can be made from now onwards and will close at 10:00am on 25th January. Should you wish to make any changes after this date, please contact me at kerrick.newstead@holbrookacademy.org. Appointments will take place virtually through a video portal accessed via the link below. If you make an appointment and then cannot attend it for whatever reason, please let the Academy office staff know in advance.

Please note, you will need:

- a device with a microphone and speaker/headphones
- a compatible up-to-date web browser, such as:
iPhone/iPad: Safari Note: there is a known issue joining video calls using iOS 14.2. Please upgrade any iOS 14.2 devices to iOS 14.3, or use an alternate device.
Android: Chrome or Firefox
Windows: Chrome, Firefox or Microsoft Edge (Chromium - download here)
Mac: Safari, Chrome or Firefox
Linux: Chrome or Firefox

We have found that appointments are best carried out using a smartphone. However, should you not possess a smartphone with a forward facing camera, a laptop or computer with a webcam will work perfectly. Should you require access to loan equipment for the evening, please contact the Academy office before the end of the week.

We do recommend that you use a headset or earphones with a microphone to reduce echo. Of course, where more than one person is in a call, this may not be possible

Please visit <https://holbrookacademyschool.schoolcloud.co.uk> to book your appointments. A short guide on how to login and book appointments is included with this letter.

If you do not have access to the internet, please contact me on kerrick.newstead@holbrookacademy.org and I will be happy to make arrangements on your behalf.

This information evening marks the beginning of Year 9 Options Fortnight, and is the ideal opportunity to begin discussions around those choices and to help guide your child towards a set of results that opens the most doors for them when they leave the Academy. Our vision for Year 9 Options is to find every student a route to success, where everyone achieves a broad and balanced set of qualifications in subjects that they thrive in.

Holbrook offers a wide range of subject qualifications at GCSE, including vocational courses. These lead to three distinct Pathways:

- The English Baccalaureate (Ebacc): Students complete the compulsory core subjects, plus a humanities subject (History or Geography) and a Language (French or Spanish). This then leaves them with two additional subjects to choose, and our timetable is constructed to give students on this pathway as much choice as possible for those two additional areas of study. This is the pathway that is proven to offer the best opportunities to students later in life. It is strongly recommended that the majority of students take this pathway.
- The Non-Ebacc Pathway: Students complete the compulsory core subjects, plus any four chosen subjects from the options blocks. This will not result in students achieving the Ebacc, which is a preference for entry to some universities. Great care must be taken to ensure that students on this pathway are clear about their future options post-16.
- The Support Pathway: This route will be offered to students who may find it difficult to complete a full range of subjects, with some time being given instead to interventions and Alternative Curriculum opportunities.

To support students in making their decisions, Holbrook has a busy and robust plan. This week, students will receive an Options booklet, detailing all the subjects' course content and giving them some advice about their choices. For Options Fortnight, we have a range of supportive opportunities planned:

- Videos from options subjects shown in form time - two per day.
- Students will receive a paper-based Options form so that they can start to think about blocking, but may not yet pick their options.
- All lessons include some content on the KS4 curriculum, and give students time to ask questions of their subject teachers.
- Teachers of subjects without KS3 lessons (Business, Health and Social Care, Sociology) may appear in form time to answer key questions in person.
- All Year 9 students will have a five minute slot with a member of the careers team or senior staff to discuss their choices.

Should you wish to discuss your child's options at any point, please contact the school office to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Mr K Newstead
Assistant Headteacher

Browse to <https://holbrookacademyschool.schoolcloud.co.uk/>

Step 1: Login

Fill out the details on the page then click the *Log In* button.

A confirmation of your appointments will be sent to the email address you provide.

Step 2: Select Parents' Evening

Click on the date you wish to book.

Unable to make all of the dates listed? Click *I'm unable to attend*.

Step 3: Select Booking Mode

Choose *Automatic* if you'd like the system to suggest the shortest possible appointment schedule based on the times you're available to attend. To pick the times to book with each teacher, choose *Manual*. Then press *Next*.

We recommend choosing the automatic booking mode when browsing on a mobile device.

Step 4: Choose Teachers

If you chose the automatic booking mode, drag the sliders at the top of the screen to indicate the earliest and latest you can attend.

Select the teachers you'd like to book appointments with. A green tick indicates they're selected. To de-select, click on their name.

You may book other teachers not listed on the screen by clicking *Add a Teacher*.

Teacher	Student	Subject	Room
Mr J Brown	Ben	English	101
Mrs A Wheeler	Ben	Mathematics	101
Mr J Brown	Andrew	French	101

Step 5a (Automatic): Book Appointments

If you chose the automatic booking mode, you'll see provisional appointments which are held for 2 minutes. To keep them, choose *Accept* at the bottom left.

If it wasn't possible to book every selected teacher during the times you are able to attend, you can either adjust the teachers you wish to meet with and try again, or switch to manual booking mode (Step 5b).

Step 5b (Manual): Book Appointments

Click any of the green cells to make an appointment. Blue cells signify where you already have an appointment. Grey cells are unavailable.

To change an appointment, delete the original by hovering over the blue box and clicking *Delete*. Then choose an alternate time.

You can optionally leave a message for the teacher to say what you'd like to discuss, or raise anything beforehand.

Once you're finished booking all appointments, at the top of the page in the alert box, press *click here* to finish the booking process.

Step 6: Finished

All your bookings now appear on the *My Bookings* page. An email confirmation has been sent and you can also print appointments by pressing *Print*. Click *Subscribe to Calendar* to add these and any future bookings to your calendar.

To change your appointments, click on *Amend Bookings*.