

# Mount St. Joseph

*"A community of Learners, Believers and Friends"*

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Headteacher: Mrs A Devany



28<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Dear parents and carers

## Year 9 Options

I hope you and your family are keeping well. As you may be aware, Year 9 students are required to make choices in terms of what they wish to study to GCSE examination level in years 10 and 11. These subjects should reflect the abilities, interest, aspirations and needs of each student. Following feedback from students and parents we have made some changes to the options process and the key stage 4 curriculum.

The selection of option subjects should be made through discussion between parent and carer, student and school. In order to support your child's decision, they will attend a series of assemblies delivered by the Head of department of each subject. This series of presentations will be available to watch via our website or via the school Twitter page. The presentations will be found at [Year 9 options](#), following the options evening. During Personal Development Time in the mornings, there will be opportunities to ask their teacher questions about options and the process before the choices are made.

To provide you with further information about the options process, we would like invite parents and carers to attend an options evening with their child, on **Thursday 12th February from 4.30pm until 6.30pm**. On the evening there will be presentations by myself and the head of Year 9, Miss Steadman explaining the options process in more detail. You will also have the opportunity to discuss option subjects and their suitability for your child with the teaching staff.

The purpose of the evening will be to explain how the options process works; information and support on choosing the correct options; information about the examination process and grading system; and the support and guidance the school can offer parents and carers and students in preparing students for their final GCSEs in Year 11.

If you have any questions or queries before the 12th February, please email [SHenshaw@msj.stoccat.org.uk](mailto:SHenshaw@msj.stoccat.org.uk) and we can then address these during the presentation at options evening. The deadline for submitting any questions is **Tuesday 10th February 2026**.

Furthermore, on **Friday 13th February**, you will receive an options booklet and a link to an Option Choices e-form. This online form must be submitted by **Wednesday 6th March 2026**.



Many subjects such as English Language, English Literature, mathematics, Religious Education and science will remain compulsory. All students will study at least eight qualifications all of which are rigorous courses at GCSE or equivalent level following the revised grades 9-1 curriculum.

Please note that in rare instances students may not get their first option choice. If, for example, not enough students choose a subject, then it may be withdrawn. Additionally, some subjects may be oversubscribed; if this happens your child will be informed. We shall make every effort to ensure that your child makes a wise choice and ensure they study their desired subject.

Please also look out for other information on the options process via our school Twitter page @MSJBolton. Please also read the frequently asked questions below.

I look forward to seeing you at Options evening.

Yours faithfully

*S. Henshaw*

Mr S. Henshaw  
Deputy Headteacher

## Choosing your options

Now is the time for you to choose the optional subjects you wish to study for the next two years. Choosing could involve lots of decisions:

- Shall I take this subject or that?
- What combination of subjects and what levels will be best for me?

So far you have been learning the basics in many subjects. Now you will be able to study some subjects in more depth. Choosing will give you a chance to concentrate on subjects which you are good at.

Frequently Asked Questions	Answers
<b>Why isn't there a completely free choice?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Curriculum means there are some compulsory core subjects.</li> <li>• These include English, maths, Religious Education and science.</li> </ul>
<b>Why are there not more choices?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "It is beneficial to do better in 9 qualifications than do worse in 10".</li> <li>• To ensure students have the best opportunity to succeed at the highest level in each subject we give them the maximum amount of time.</li> </ul>
<b>Factors to consider when choosing your Options</b>	
<b>Are you good at a subject?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability in a subject is a solid foundation upon which to base future studies especially to examination level.</li> </ul>
<b>Do you like the subject?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoyment and interest in a subject are a big help when studying.</li> <li>• However, do consider why you like a subject. Is it because you like the teacher? If so, it may well be that the same teacher will not be taking you in Years 10 and 11.</li> </ul>
<b>Do you know the demands of the subject?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out about the subject before you choose.</li> <li>• Does the subject require a project or controlled assessment?</li> </ul>
<b>Are you willing to work hard both in class and at home?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is vital for all GCSE subjects if you are to be successful.</li> </ul>
<b>Is it wise to choose a subject because a friend has chosen it?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is not advised.</li> </ul>