



Year 9 Guided Subjects 2026

Guided Subject Information Booklet *for Parents/ Carers and Students*



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Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to Brixham College's Guided Subject Booklet for 2026

This booklet includes information for parents and students in Year 9 as they prepare to begin their Year 10-11 learning journey. We hope you will find the details informative outlining the core subjects which students must study, along with the Guided Subjects where students have opportunity to make their own choices following advice and guidance.

Our curriculum is designed to be ambitious to meet the needs of all learners, allowing them to be successful in learning and successful in life.

In addition to reading the information in this booklet, we would strongly encourage your son/ daughter to consult with the Tutor/ Teachers so that the fullest possible information is available before making decisions about courses. Please do not hesitate to contact the Tutor for advice and guidance with selecting an appropriate pathway.

We will provide as much advice and guidance as possible to you and your parents/carers. It is important you read all information available so that you fully understand the requirements of the courses. This is an extremely important time of year for our Year 9 students, and you have our full support in working together on this process.

The booklet refers to the application process. This will open on **Monday 9th March**, after the Year 9 Parent Partnership Evening and Year 9 Assessments. The application form will be accessed via a link through email; parents will receive this on the **9th March**. Applications need to be returned by **Friday 20th March**.

The following pages offer further clarification about Key Stage 4 and the Guided Subject process. Should you require further guidance at any point during the process, please do not hesitate to contact the Pastoral Team or myself.

Mrs L Redfern
Vice Principal



Key Contacts

For anything relating to the Guided Subject Process

Role	Name	email
Year 9 Tutor	Mrs Lakeman	Lorna.Lakeman@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk
Year 9 Tutor	Mrs Southcombe	Lisa.Southcombe@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk
Year 9 Tutor	Mrs Perrin	Harriett.Perring@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk
Year 9 Tutor	Mr Darlington	Paul.Darlington@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk
Year 9 Tutor	Mrs Farley	Rachel.Farley@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk
Year 9 Tutor	Mr Hardman	Graeme.Hardman@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk
Year 9 Tutor	Mrs Harris	Gemma.Harris@brixhamcollege.tsat
Year 9 Head of Year	Mrs Stinton	Marissa.Stinton@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk
Vice Principal	Mrs L Redfern	lisa.redfern@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk

For specific 'Next Steps' Advice and Guidance

Head of 6 th Form	Mr J Haines	jason.haines@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk
Assistant Principal Careers	Mrs L Aston	lizzie.aston@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk
SENco mainstream	Mrs S Lander	samantha.lander@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk

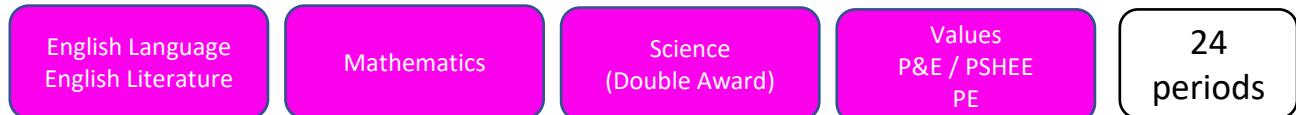


Introduction to Key Stage 4

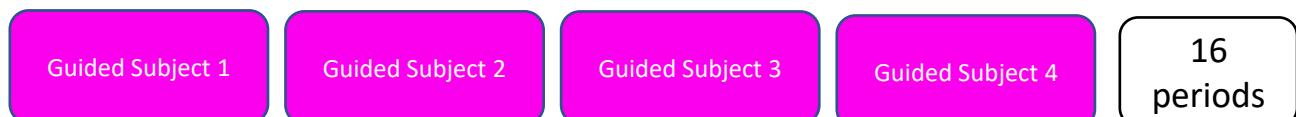
Key stage 4 consists of Year 10 and 11 and is made up of 3 elements at Brixham College:

- The Core (The compulsory Curriculum)
- Guided Subjects (Some highlighted to indicate **English Baccalaureate subjects**. This will be further explained.)

Key Stage 4 – The Core (Compulsory Curriculum / 75minute lesson)



Guided Subjects (75minute lessons)



Guided Subjects

Students have a wide range of Guided Subjects to choose from to complement the core subjects, to allow students to follow subjects they are most interested in and enjoy. Some of the subjects are GCSE subjects and some are vocational subjects. All staff will provide thorough advice and guidance to ensure that students are comfortable with their two year journey which will lead to academic success. GCSE subjects are typically examination based subjects which are assessed at the end of Year 11. BTEC and Vocational subjects are mainly coursework based subjects, where assignments are completed throughout the course. There is also an exam element in the coursework subjects.

The colours represent the type of qualification:

Note: EBacc explained in Pathway section

Examination subjects	Coursework and Examination	Coursework with Examinations
Computer Science (EBacc)	Photography	Child Development
French (EBacc)	Art / Textiles	Sport
Geography (EBacc)	Catering	Travel and Tourism
History (EBacc)	3D Design	Health and Social Care
Spanish (EBacc)	Music	
Business Studies	Design Technology	
Philosophy & Ethics		
Sociology		
Triple Science		

Guided Subjects – How do I select appropriate subjects?

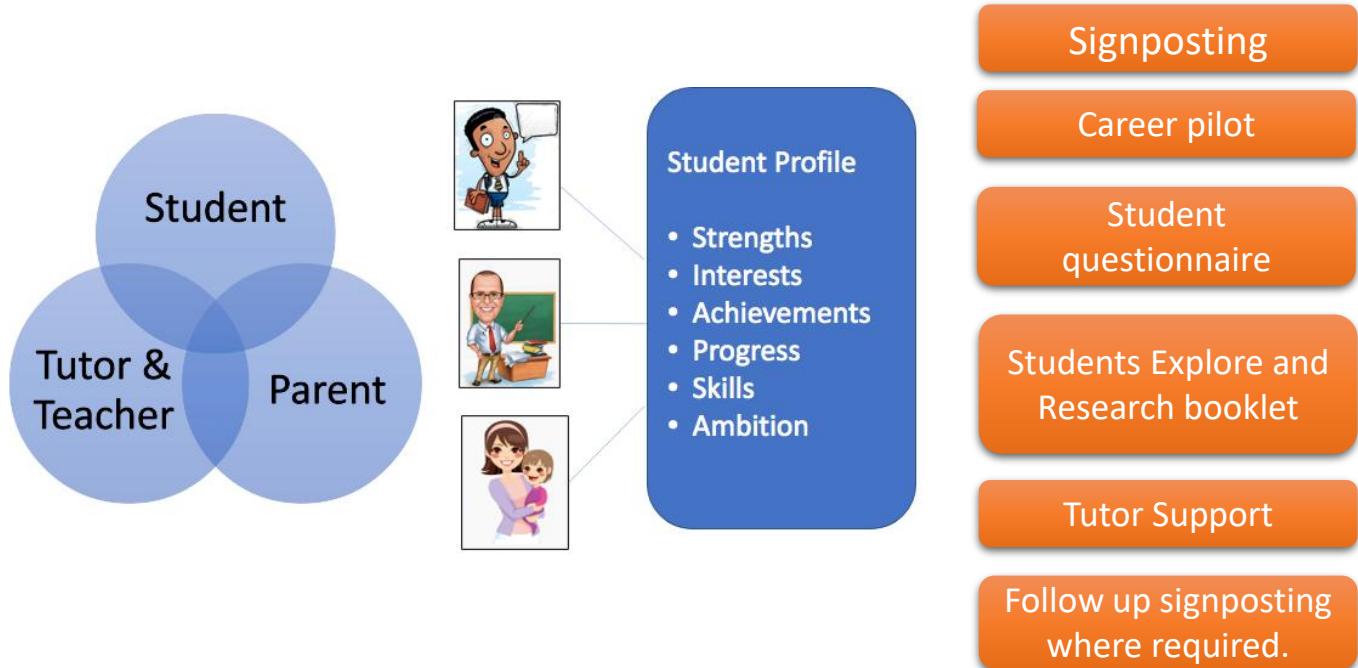
Subjects studied should be wide ranging and balanced. Current employment trends would advise young people to not singularly qualify for the job they want, but to qualify for as many jobs as they can.

To ensure a balanced selection, students should look carefully at the information about the courses on offer, taking particular notice of the demands of each course. Whilst there is flexibility within the Guided Subject offer we will ensure students follow appropriate pathways which will enable them to have a good progression route for the next stage of their life at Brixham College and beyond.

Students have been encouraged to ask as many questions as possible in preparation for this decision.

Supporting the students with decision making

It is important we all play our part in supporting the child with making appropriate decisions. It is quite normal at this stage for young people not be 100% sure of what they want to study or what they want to be in the future. It is therefore really important to listen to those around you as well to inform decision making.

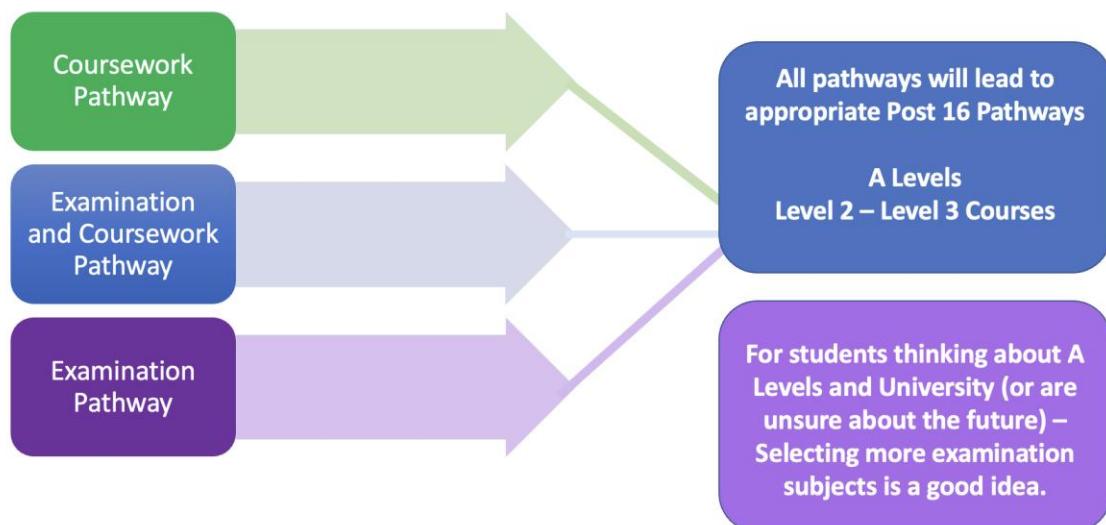


This is an important stage of the process, understanding what the student is good at and interested in are important factors when narrowing down subjects which they want to continue in, or explore. Understanding the requirements of each course will be very important in enabling the student to make informed decisions. Please see the 'Guided Subject overview' booklet to glean further information on courses.

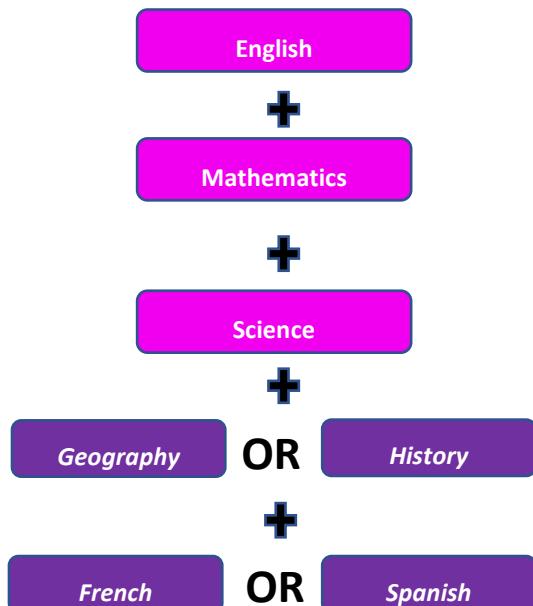
Pathways to Success

The below gives a very broad indication of the kind of pathway a student may follow. Inevitably, through the application process students will have a blend of pathways, but may lean towards a course preference. This will be very much based on their individual strengths and interests, following advice and guidance.

The pathways provide some indication of potential Post 16 pathways. Again, these are very broad indications of potential progression routes. It must be stressed that no one pathway is better than another. It is important when coming to a decision on Guided Subjects that a broad and balanced approach is taken, and a mixture of GCSE and coursework subjects can be appropriate for many.



The English Baccalaureate



The EBacc (English Baccalaureate) is an award which supports students to study a broad and balanced curriculum involving specific GCSEs that are recognised by Universities as qualifications which hold high academic status. **Whilst we do not prescribe specific pathways for students to follow, many students may want to study EBacc subjects.** In order to achieve the award, students will need to gain a grade 5-9 in the following:

- English, Maths and Science (Science can Include Computer Science)
- History OR Geography
- French OR Spanish

It is strongly recommended that students with aspiration for A Level and University pathways follow the English Baccalaureate. It is also worth considering for all students who have demonstrated the aptitude to achieve grade 5 in all of these subject areas.

STEP 1 – First Preference

Students will select one subject from each block

Conditions

1. Maximum of **two blue** subjects in the pathway
2. Maximum of **two green** subjects in the pathway
3. Minimum of one purple subject and no restrictions on the number of

STEP 2 – Second Preference

Students will select a second subject from each block

(Please indicate a **purple subject** in your 2nd choices if you have **NOT** selected one in your first choice).

Block A	Block B	Block C	Block D
Catering	Textiles	Art	Catering
3D Design	Design Technology	Business studies	Business Studies
<i>History</i> <i>OR Geography</i>	Child Development	<i>Geography</i>	3D Design
Photography	Computer Science	Health and Social Care	**Triple Science**
French	History	History	<i>Geography</i>
Sociology	Spanish	Spanish	Music
Sport	Catering	Sport	Photography
Travel & Tourism	Geography	Philosophy & Ethics	Sport

Block A	Block B	Block C	Block D
Catering	Textiles	Art	Catering
3D Design	Design Technology	Business studies	Business Studies
<i>History</i> <i>OR Geography</i>	Child Development	<i>Geography</i>	3D Design
Photography	Computer Science	Health and Social Care	**Triple Science**
French	History	History	<i>Geography</i>
Sociology	Spanish	Spanish	Music
Sport		Sport	Photography
Travel &	Geography	Philosophy &	Sport

Example

The red box indicates the students 1st Choice. Students will be asked to select a subject from each block and tell me the two subjects that are most important to them

They have followed the rules with the Arts, and included one purple subject

The yellow box indicates the students 2nd choice subjects – no conditions apply

Guided Subject Blocks

We have distributed Guided Subjects into 4 blocks to provide a broad and balanced curriculum offer for our learners. Students will be asked to select **One preference** from **each block**.

- These are Coursework Subjects – These are BTEC and Vocational Qualifications
- Examination and Coursework subjects – These are GCSE subjects
- Examination Subjects – These are GCSE subjects
- Examination Subjects (English Baccalaureate) – These are GCSE subjects

Block A	Block B	Block C	Block D
Catering	Textiles	Art	Catering
3D Design	Design Technology	Business studies	Business Studies
<i>History OR Geography</i>	Child Development	<i>Geography</i>	3D Design
Photography	Computer Science	Health and Social Care	**Triple Science**
French	History	History	Geography
Sociology	Spanish	Spanish	Music
Sport	Geography	Sport	Photography
Travel & Tourism	Catering	Philosophy & Ethics	Sport

Provisional

Frequently asked questions

Why is it necessary to choose subjects?

There are so many subjects that are available to you during secondary education that it is not possible for you to study them all. You will need to select, with the help of your parents/Carers and teachers. Those subjects that are most appropriate for your interests, ambition and ability.

Why do students only have 4 choices?

Some subjects are classed as Core which means that it is a statutory requirement to study them up to GCSE level. Schools are also encouraged to ensure many students take another subject from the English Baccalaureate to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum.

Does this mean that Guided Subjects which are not the EBacc are less important?

Absolutely not. We value all subjects as highly as each other and are particularly proud of our high achieving practical subjects. Students are strongly recommended to use their Guided subject choices to pursue their interests and subjects they are most passionate about. Students should also be encouraged to follow new subjects which are interest to them, following their research and reflection on their skills and qualities.

Coursework Qualifications (BTEC or Vocational Qualifications)

BTEC and Vocational qualifications are alternative qualifications to GCSE that are equally as challenging but offer a different approach to learning. The final qualification (If passed at Level 2) is equivalent to a pass at GCSE. BTECs and Vocational Qualifications are available in Sport, Travel and Tourism, Health and Social Care and 3D Design.

What are the grading systems at GCSE and BTEC??

In 2017, the new GCSE grade system was introduced, with papers graded from 9-1 rather than A*-G. The new numerical grades apply to all GCSE subjects. There is no exact equivalence between the old and new grades. However, grades 7 and above are roughly equivalent to the old grades A-A*, and grades 4-6 are roughly equivalent to the old grades C/B.

New GCSE Grades									
U	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
U	G	F	E	D	C	B	A	A*	
Old GCSE Grades									

Coursework - BTEC / Vocational Grading

	D*	D	M	P	U
GCSE Equivalent	8/9	7	6	4	U

What is a good balance?

The curriculum on offer should provide you with a broad, balanced and relevant set of qualifications. It may be important to specialise in one or two subjects if you want to continue to study them after 16.

If you are uncertain at this stage, a good place to start is making sure that you chose subjects you already have a strong interest in.

Why do students only study 9 GCSEs?

As GCSEs have been reformed to be more challenging with more content and increase emphasis on terminal examinations, we believe 9 subjects is the appropriate balance for our students. These numbers would meet entry requirements for colleges, employers or Universities, some will stipulate specific grades for entry requirements.

What about students who struggle with GCSE or equivalents?

Appropriate considerations are made at Key Stage 4 with students who have had appropriate adjustments at Key Stage 3. We tailor the curriculum to meet the needs of our students and will speak with students and families where this is required or advised. We would get in touch with parents in these circumstances.

How do GCSE choices effect students going to 6th Form college and University?

Students will need at least grade 4 or above to be accepted into 6th Form and certain subjects will have other specific requirements where entrance grades are higher. For further information on 6th Form subjects or guidance please contact the Head of 6th form Mr J Haines. jason.haines@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk

How can students ensure they are matching their GCSEs to aspirations?

Students should do as much research and take as much advice as they can. We have excellent Careers Advice within the school and students and parents can contact Mrs L Aston to make an appointment.

lizzie.aston@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk

What if students know what they want to do when they leave school?

They don't need to worry about this. The guided subjects provide a firm foundation for further study so we recommend that students focus on choosing the subjects that they enjoy and do well at as that should ultimately lead to success.

What to avoid

- **Don't** choose a subject because your friend has chosen it – you may be placed in different groups.
- **Don't** choose a subject because of a teacher – you may have a different teacher.
- **Don't** choose a subject because you think they are an easy option – there aren't any easy subjects, they all require the same amount of work and effort in different ways.



Can a student change their mind?

It may be possible to change your mind in the first 6 weeks of starting the course **but you should not expect this to be the case**. Changes would need to be agreed with Mrs Redfern within the first six weeks otherwise valuable teaching time is lost and you will struggle to catch up. **Changes can also only be made if there is a place available in the subject with the student is wishing to move to.**

Why is there reserve choices on the Guidance Form?

Despite our best efforts, we cannot offer infinite combinations of subjects. Sometimes student subject choices may be a popular selection within the year group, and therefore places can be limited. Students will be asked to provide reserve subjects, and conversations will take place where reserve subjects are required to secure the best pathway possible.

What Criteria are used to ensure this is fair?

- **Criteria 1:** The Guided Subject Form was submitted by the deadline
- **Criteria 2:** Ensure students have selected appropriate subjects, taking into account: Progress, Attitude to learning, enrichment, strengths and interests, future aspirations.
- **Criteria 3:** Fairness in achieving first place subjects, whereby possible for all students (Ultimately, this is difficult to achieve across the board and is very dependent on student selection)

Please note some courses may be withdrawn if there is insufficient demand.

Please note Guided Subject blocks can also be subject to change, depending on student interest. Where movement of blocks impacts on a student and their selected pathway, individual appointments will be made to support them with reviewing their pathway.

With this thought in mind, we advise students to put as much thought into the reserve choices as what they do with their first 4 choices.

Final suggestions for students to consider when making their choices

- What do I enjoy studying? What are my strengths?
- How do I learn best and will the course suit me?
- If I choose this subject now, will it keep more options open for later for further study, training or work?

Some things for parents/ careers to consider with students:

- Some students may say they really like a subject but really they believe it is an easier option. All subjects are demanding and they will have to work hard to gain a qualification in any subject at GCSE level.
- Encourage the English Baccalaureate subjects where these are appropriate for the student.
- Check students aren't choosing because of friendship groups or teachers. Groups and teachers can not be guaranteed due to timetabling complexities.
- Use your experience to advice students on the positive that each subject could provide.
- Support students with positive conversations where reserve subjects are used, or if indeed subject are removed due to low numbers or other reasons. We understand that this is very disappointing for the student, however, this will not be a barrier to them following this interest at Post 16.



Accessing further information

Please access the college website following the links to information on Guided Subjects. Scroll to the bottom of the page and you will be able to open links to the following resources:

<https://brixhamcollege.co.uk/learn-with-us/year-9-guided-subjects/>

- Parent and Student Guided Subject Information booklet (Frequently asked questions)
- Guided Subject Overviews (Information on each subject)
- Guided Subject Presentation for students and Parents/ Carers

Please see the Key contact at the start of this booklet for Tutor email addresses.

Head of Year: Mrs Stinton: Marissa.Stinton@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk

Event and Application information including deadline

Step 1

Year 9 Assembly regarding Year 9 Guided Subjects

Step 2

Year 9 Values Lesson Guided Subjects leading on to Careers

Step 3

Thursday 12th February – **Guided Year 9 Guided Subject Information event**

Step 4

Thursday 5th March – **Year 9 Parents Evening**
Please make appointments with subjects you are considering

Step 5

Working through subject preferences with your child. Discussing first and second choices.

Step 6

Monday 9th March – **Application Opens**

Step 7

Friday 20th March – **Deadline or Guided Subject Application Forms**



Monday 30th March – **Year 9 Reports sent home**



Thank you

*Mrs Lisa Redfern
Vice principal Quality of Education
lisa.redfern@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk*



Welcome to Brixham College's Guided Subject Information Evening

Hopefully this evening will provide you with a range of advice, guidance and information which will support you and your child through the Guided Subject process.

Order of Events for the evening - 6.00pm – 7.30pm

- Presentation in the main hall with Mrs Redfern (6.00 – 6.30pm)
- Opportunity to visit subjects to find out further information (6.30 – 7.30pm)

Presentation:

- Support around the student
- Key Stage 4 Curriculum
- Guided Subject offer
- Appropriate Pathways
- EBacc Pathway
- The process of selecting Guided Subjects
- Frequently asked questions

Other support and information:

- Mrs S Lander (Coverhub 6.30 – 7.30pm)
- Mr J Haines - Head of 6th Form (The Quad)

In your pack you will have several question cards. If you are unable to meet with a member of staff, or have remaining questions, please pop your question on the card provided and leave it on the box at the sign in desk by the entrance to the hall. If you have a question following the evening, please contact either:

Tutors (See contact list in the information pack)

Mrs Stinton (Head of Year) Marissa.Stinton@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk

Mrs Lisa Redfern - Vice Principal lisa.redfern@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk

Mrs L Redfern
Vice Principal Quality of Education



Guided Subjects

Selecting Guided Subjects:

- Select a **First choice** from Block A, B, C, D
- Select a **Second choice** from Block A, B, C, D
- Remember to consider a balance with **examination** and **coursework** subjects

Block A	Block B	Block C	Block D
Catering	Textiles	Art	Catering
3D Design	Design Technology	Business studies	Business Studies
<i>History OR Geography</i>	Child Development	<i>Geography</i>	3D Design
Photography	<i>Computer Science</i>	Health and Social Care	**Triple Science**
<i>French</i>	<i>History</i>	<i>History</i>	<i>Geography</i>
Sociology	<i>Spanish</i>	<i>Spanish</i>	Music
Sport	Geography	Sport	Photography
Travel & Tourism	Catering	Philosophy & Ethics	Sport

Note: Restrictions on the number of 'Art' qualifications that can be taken. For example, a student may not be able to take Art and Textiles, or Art and 3D Design.

Triple Science – Current grades will inform pathway

Conditions

1. Maximum of **two blue** subjects in the pathway
2. Maximum of **two green** subjects in the pathway
3. Minimum of one purple subject and no restrictions on the number of

