



Principal: **Robert P. Robson**
BSc (Hons), MA, QTS, AST, FcolIT, FRSA

23rd February 2016

CURRICULUM CHANGES FOR NEW YEAR 12 STUDENTS (STARTING SEPTEMBER 2016)

Dear Parents and Carers,

As I am sure you are aware, the government have made, and are making, a number of changes to Post 16 (sixth form) qualifications along with alterations at other key stages. The changes to the qualifications that we offer in the sixth form started last year with the abolition of some AS levels and will continue for the next three years until there has been a complete change to what the Department for Education refers to as 'reformed qualifications'. This means that some A levels will take a linear form (as they did many years ago), whilst others will continue on a modular basis in which the AS level grade at the end of the first year will still count towards the final A level grade.

Unfortunately, until that point when all of the A Levels have been moved to the linear structure, the situation will be rather a confused one and we, like many schools, are trying to steer a course through a difficult landscape so that we give our students the best advantage. For students starting in September 2016, nearly 70% of the subjects offered within our sixth form will have been reformed. We have consulted with staff at other sixth forms, universities and the examination boards widely and we believe that many of these reformed A level subjects require more time to ensure all of the content is delivered and assessed appropriately. We are also aware that the new examination fees system of running both AS standalone qualifications and full A level qualifications is not sustainable.

The Sixth Form and Senior Leadership teams have made some decisions about our Post 16 offer that have been approved by the Samuel Whitbread Governors.

We have decided that from September 2016:

- **We will be increasing the amount of teaching time allocated to our Year 12 students in the majority of subjects.**
- **We will be asking most students to choose 3 A levels plus the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), not 4 A levels as previous students studied before the reforms were introduced. The EPQ is a well-respected qualification which carries more UCAS points than an AS Level. Some students will be permitted to study four A Levels where it will advantage them in their university application (Further Maths and the Technical Baccalaureate are examples of qualifications that can be useful for some degree or job applications).**

SAMUEL WHITBREAD ACADEMY | Shefford Road | Clifton | Shefford | Bedfordshire | SG17 5QS
t: 01462 629900 | f: 01462 629901 | e: SWA-Info@BEMAT.org.uk | www.samuelwhitbread.org.uk

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Samuel Whitbread Academy



Etonbury Academy



Robert Bloomfield Academy



Langford Village Academy



Gothic Mede Academy



Gravenhurst Academy



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- **In exceptional circumstances, students may choose to study an additional AS Level if they can demonstrate that this will give them an advantage in their intended career or university degree.**

Studying 3 A levels will not affect students' future ambitions in applying for an apprenticeship, a job or university. For the vast majority of degree courses the entry requirement is based around 3 A Levels and the Sixth Form team will be able to advise students if studying 4 A Levels will give them a greater advantage in progressing onto their future degree course.

Moving Forward

Students **must carefully choose** 3 A levels which they believe will benefit them the most towards their future career path, apprenticeship, employment or university opportunity. Students will now not be dropping a subject whilst they move from year 12 to 13 so it is vital this process involves excellent careers guidance, individual research and effective support.

The Process

Over the next four weeks we will be working closely with all of our current Year 11 students and our external applicants.

1. On the 25th February, senior staff will be visiting year 11 tutor groups to inform students of these changes and take questions.
2. Students will then rank their top three choices and have a fourth option as a reserve. The form tutor and a member of the Senior Team will help support these changes. If these choices have changed, a new sixth form application will be given out and we will ask parents to sign this. The deadline for this will be **Friday 11th March, 2016**.
3. Priority appointments will be given to students who require careers guidance.
4. Conditional offer letters will still go out as planned by the end of March, 2016.

Any parents wishing to find out more about these changes are more than welcome to attend a brief (20 min.) presentation on **Thursday 3rd March, 2016 in the Main Hall at 530pm**.

I am sure you will agree our sixth form has excelled over recent years and we believe the extra teaching time will give them an even better chance in securing the best possible grades to fulfil their ambitions.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Robson
Principal

Nishi Saran
Acting Vice Principal

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