

# Hamilton Grammar

## S4 Options Guide



Working together  
as a community of learners  
to inspire, motivate and achieve.

**2017/18**

## Introduction

Over the next few weeks your son or daughter will make the very important decisions about which subjects they wish to take forward into fourth year. This will involve choosing subjects from the **National Qualifications (NQ) Framework** - including the **National 4 and National 5** courses, and possibly wider achievement and vocational college courses.

This guide will provide you and your son or daughter with information and advice to assist making these crucial decisions. It lists the timeline for the whole process and should be used in conjunction with the **Senior Phase Course Descriptors for National 4/5** and the **S3 into S4 Option Form**. Both of these documents can also be found on the school's website. Please read them carefully.

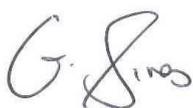
In S4 pupils will study 7 options for 4 periods each week. Maths and English are compulsory however the additional 5 subjects can be;

- 5 additional National Qualifications from subjects already studied or
- 4 additional National Qualifications and a Wider Achievement course or
- 3 additional National Qualifications, college and a course with a Developing the Young Workforce focus or
- 3 additional National Qualifications and 2 Wider Achievement courses

The combination chosen will depend on path your son or daughter wishes to take beyond school.

Our young people will be encouraged to the plan for their post school destination. They will be asked to think about S4-S6 as a whole, building up the qualifications they need over the full three years of the Senior Phase. With this in mind, there is key information that should be completed on their options form **before attending their options interview**, with their Pupil Support Teacher.

If you have any questions, please contact Mrs Cassidy (DHT S3)



Mr G Sives

Head Teacher

## General Information

Our senior options process started at the end of last year when we carried out mock option choices and hosted our annual Careers Convention on **Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017**. At this event parents and pupils had the opportunity to consult representatives from Industry, Further Education and Higher Education, facilitating the crucial post school planning that all seniors need to carry out. It was also an opportunity to seek clarification on the S4 option process which would start in January.

We are now at the next stage of the process – the actual option choices for S4. The timeline for the rest of the process is shown below.

### Timeline for Making Choices - S3 into S4:

- **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January** – Pupils had an Options Assembly and were issued with their Full Reports.
- **W/C 29<sup>th</sup> January** – Their Pupil Support teacher will take pupils through their option form, during PSE. The **S4 Phase Options Form** will be issued at this point. At the start of this week the updated paperwork will also go live on the school's website. You will find it under the '*Information for parents and pupils*' tab.
- CDU pupils will receive their information and forms during the same week, in Life Skills classes.
- **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February** – S3 Parents' Evening.
- **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February** - one-to-one interview with their Pupil Support Teacher. The option form should be completed prior to attending the interview and the form should be brought to the interview. Should parents/ carers wish, they have the opportunity to discuss their son's/ daughter's choices by contacting the appropriate member of the Pupil Support Team, listed below.

Class	Pupil Support Teacher
3B1	Mrs G Buchanan
3B2	Mrs S Sanderson
3B3	Mrs S Sanderson
3B4	Mrs J Graham
3C1	Mr I Dyett
3C2	Mrs D Costello
3C3	Mr I Dyett
3D1	Mrs L McKenzie
3D2	Ms M Morton

- All S4 options will be completed by Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February.
- **The school will endeavour to match pupils to their choices for S4; however, staffing and accommodation constraints may mean that places will be limited in some subject areas.** Any issues with option choices will be dealt with by Mrs Cassidy (Year Head) and Mr MacLeod (DHT with responsibility for the timetable).

## Advice for subject selection

During S4 departments will decide which level of National Qualification a pupil should be presented at based on their ability. Teacher's comments on the S3 report card give an indication of the likelihood of success if a pupil was to choose a subject.

There is no simple formula that we can offer to help parents and pupils choose the most appropriate options for S4 and beyond. Pupils vary considerably in ability, interests and career intentions. We hope that the following list will help to inform the important decisions to be made.

- a) **Ability:** It goes without saying that pupils and parents should try to select options which reflect a pupil's aptitude and ability.
- b) **Interest:** It is important for pupils to show an interest in a subject as this can greatly improve their enjoyment and chance of success. However, pupils may have to prioritise options required as career qualifications in the Senior Phase.
- c) **Friends' choices:** Many pupils simply choose an option because their friends have chosen it. We would strongly advise that **this is not a valid reason** for choosing a particular option.
- d) **Parents' Evenings: Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018 (for Current S3)**  
This is your chance to speak to subject teachers to gain additional knowledge to help support your child's choice. The descriptions of subjects, which are listed in our Course Descriptor booklet, are general outlines and where parents and pupils are unsure of the most appropriate choice, we recommend that pupils ask their teachers for more specific details.

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mrs Cassidy (S3 Year Head). You will also be able to catch up with her at the Parents' Evening on the 1<sup>st</sup> February.

