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24th January 2018

Dear Parent/ Guardian

I hope you had an enjoyable Christmas and a restful break.

It is now time to think about the subjects your son proposes to take for GCSE commencing September 2018. Included with this letter is the application form which is to be used to indicate the subjects your son would like to select. Please discuss the options available as set out on the form with your son, taking account of his strengths and interests, the information contained in his College report along with the advice that you will receive at the forthcoming **J3 Options Morning and Parent Teacher Meeting**. To help you and your son make informed choices a GCSE Options Booklet is also available on the College website and School App.

Subject choice at GCSE is very important in terms of accessing A Level subjects and in turn specific university courses. Therefore, I encourage you to attend the **J3 Options Morning on Friday 9th February** starting at 9am. College staff will take you through the application process which will be followed immediately by the J3 Parent Teacher Meeting where you will have an opportunity to talk to your son's subject teachers. They will advise you further about his progress in specific subjects and his potential to achieve at GCSE and beyond. You will also have an opportunity to talk to Mr Ciaran O'Hare Head of Careers and Careers Officers from Careers Service N.I. regarding the implications of the various choices that your son may select.

Parents/Guardians and students should be aware that they have the responsibility for ensuring that they make the appropriate selection of subjects for those university courses that have specific requirements. Your son has already been given a substantial amount of information regarding implications of subject choices but if you require further guidance, please seek information from university websites and from Mr O'Hare.

The completed subject options application form must be returned to your son's Form Teacher no later than **Monday 19th February 2018** after which time a member of the SLT will discuss your son's options with him. It should be appreciated that the choices made by your son are subject to good performance in the KS3 examinations, acceptance that the choices made are most suitable for him and normal rules and regulations governing progression from KS3 to KS4.

Please note, a subject will only be offered if the numbers of students choosing it are sufficient to form a class. Accordingly, if demand exceeds the number of places available in certain subjects KS3 performance, application and aptitude will be used as a discriminator.

The GCSE timetable will be constructed on the basis of the information collated from the choices made. We endeavour to accommodate all the students' subject options, but if a particular subject has a smaller uptake than expected and cannot be offered, or if the particular selection of subjects that your son has made is considered inappropriate for him, he will be asked to make alternative choices. It will not be possible to accommodate late changes outside of the timetable blocks that are created, so I ask you to seek all possible information and advice before you submit your son's application form.

I look forward to seeing you on Friday 9th February at 9am. Students are expected to attend in full uniform.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Cormac McKinney
Principal