



Together, pursuing 'life in all its fullness.'



'Whilst we have time let us do good to all.' (Galatians 6:10)

Year 9 Options Information

Thursday 15th January 2026





KS4 Curriculum



Students study fewer subjects in Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3.

At Harris, the following GCSEs are compulsory:

- **English Language**
- **English Literature**
- **Maths**
- **Science Combined (2 GCSEs), or Single Sciences (3 GCSEs)**
- **Religious Studies**



Options



Students take 3 additional subjects: options.

Most students will leave with 9 GCSEs. Those who take single sciences, or a GCSE in their home language may take 10.

The Government recommended minimum is 8 to ensure a broad foundation of learning, equipping students for a range of post-16 options.

Students will also continue to have 2 hours a week of core PE and one hour a week of PSHE; these are statutory subjects designed to facilitate students' physical and mental wellbeing and equip them for life inside, outside, and beyond school.



Why take 9 GCSEs?



- Most students take between 8 and 10 subjects.
- Unless there are specific educational or health circumstances involved, fewer than 8 leaves little scope for choices and narrows experience. It would also need to be explained if and when a student applies for university. (ucas.com)



Why take 9 GCSEs?



Even if you decide you don't want to pursue a subject after GCSEs, having 9 GCSEs demonstrates:

- That you are a 'rounded' person
- That you motivated;
- That you are disciplined
- That you can commit
- That you are ambitious.



Why take 9 GCSEs?



Subjects and vocational courses often rely on knowledge and skills that span several subjects and disciplines – most commonly, Maths and English, but being able to

- Evaluate
- Interpret
- Communicate
- Think creatively
- Problem solve

And many other skills featured across a full curriculum are desirable, and even essential, skills for later courses and careers.



Ebaccalaureate



Students considering a University (Higher education) path later on usually take a **Humanity** subject (Geography or History) and a **Language** (French, German, or Spanish).

This combination of subjects, when complemented with English, Maths and 2 Science qualifications, is called the **EBaccalaureate** and is considered the combination of subjects that best facilitate entry to established University courses and higher future earnings.

It is strongly advised that those planning to pursue an academic path include these subjects when they pick their options.



Ebaccalaureate - Languages



We strongly believe that learning a language is important to expanding students' cultural and career opportunities. We offer trips to France, Germany, and Spain to enhance pupils' experience of learning the language and experiencing another culture.

It is worth remembering that we are in a global economy and that being able to communicate in another language is highly valued by employers.

We strongly recommend you researching the impact that having a language GCSE can have on your future options; you don't just have to take our word for it!



Choosing options



If students do have some sense of what they would like to do or study in the future, researching or asking employers/universities about the most favourable subjects considered for a course/career is a good idea.

Many universities publish their entry requirements and their preferred subjects on the admissions section of their website.

It is highly unlikely that any choices made at this stage will close doors forever.

The GCSE subjects which are likely to be vital for the vast majority of future careers are those that are already compulsory. It is also worth noting that many A-level, T-Level, and BTEC subjects (aside from those studied in the core, and languages) can be taken up post-16 without having studied them at GCSE.



Selecting your options: see page 6 in your booklets.



- We don't pre-allocate option blocks.
 - We use the My Child At School App to collect responses.
 - You will be asked to provide three choices **in rank order**
 - You will also be asked to provide two reserve choices
- 
- An icon showing two stylized human figures, one blue and one orange, with green and red heads respectively, standing side-by-side.
- There is no guarantee that your child will receive all three of their preferred choices, so **please select reserve choices carefully.**
 - The collection form will not open until March 2nd and will close on March 6th. This is to allow time to consider all options; for students to engage in discussions with their tutor and for parents to discuss their child's performance with subject teachers so that realistic and fully-informed decisions can be made.



Changing your mind



The best advice is to think carefully and maturely about your options to avoid picking the 'wrong' ones.

The most common reasons given that students want to change are:

- I didn't know that it would be like this
- I don't find it interesting
- None of my friends are in my group
- I picked it to be with my friends but I don't like it
- It's hard
- I couldn't think of a reserve so I just put a random choice down

There are opportunities to change your mind up until the end of September. This is dependent on the option blocks and the group numbers. It cannot be guaranteed. The nearer to the end of September, the more difficult it is to change. **We cannot change options after September.**



Key events – see page 5 in your options booklet



Event	
1	Thursday 15th January Options information evening
2	Monday 26th January – Friday 13th February Optional Student Meetings
3	Weeks beginning 19th and 26th January Tutor Option Discussions
4	Thursday January 29th Parents' consultation evening
5	Thursday February 26th Higher education information evening for higher attainers
6	Monday 2nd March Options Form open on MCAS
7	Friday 6th March Options Form Deadline



Options available this year:



1. GCSE French OR German OR Spanish
2. GCSE History
3. GCSE Geography
4. GCSE Art & Design
5. GCSE Business
6. GCSE Computer Science
7. GCSE Design and Technology
8. GCSE Drama
9. GCSE Principles in Food Preparation and Nutrition
10. GCSE Music
11. GCSE PE OR OCR Cambridge Nationals Sports Studies.

If you are fluent in a home language such as Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Cantonese, Polish etc. We can enter you for a GCSE in that subject (as long as a GCSE exists!) Speak to Mrs Kinsella if you are interested in this.

Sadly there are no GCSEs available in Latvian, Romanian nor in African languages.