



St. Thomas More High School
KEY STAGE 4 OPTIONS
STAGE 1
YEAR 8 2026



What is this booklet for?

This booklet is designed to help you make the best choices for Key Stage 4 and subjects you will study in Years 9, 10 and 11. You now need to start thinking about what you hope to achieve in the future.

Note that some of the opportunities we offer may change because we are constantly reviewing what we teach and how we teach it, and because of very high or very low student numbers applying for certain subjects. Any changes will be discussed with you personally if they affect you.

Who should help me make my choices?

- your parents who know you best as a person
- your teachers..... who know you and your strengths in school
who can tell you about their individual courses
- plus Assistant Headteacher Curriculum - Mrs Hardiman
Assistant Headteacher Data and Assessment – Mr Marshall
Deputy Headteacher - Mr Hardiman,
Lead Pupil Progress Mentor (KS3) – Mr Ackred
Pupil Progress Mentor – Mr Spillett

What are the important events?

Thursday 26th March ...	Start of the Year 8 Options Process
Wednesday 29th April ...	Options choice submission deadline

What are YOUR options?

The information in this booklet is designed to help you understand the opportunities open to you in Years 9, 10 and 11. The emphasis is on providing you with a broad and balanced curriculum which has as much choice as possible so that you can specialise in areas which are of particular interest to you.

Until now, you have studied the same subjects as every other student. In Key Stage 4, we offer different subjects and courses to suit students with different skills, interests and plans for the future.

A large part of the curriculum is compulsory for all students but there is also an element of choice which means that you can shape your own curriculum in Key Stage 4 according to your interests and future education and career aspirations.

We have created a two-stage transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 to help you make the best curriculum choices for your future and offer the widest range of experiences to help you reach your potential.

STAGE 1 - TRANSITION

This starts NOW.

In stage 1 you will begin to select the subjects you would like to study in year 9.

The following CORE subjects will continue to be studied by everyone:

- ★ English (which leads to GCSE entries in English and English Literature)
- ★ Mathematics
- ★ Science (either Combined Science, leading to two GCSE awards or three separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics).
- ★ RE

In addition to this all students will take part in Personal Development and can also opt to take Duke of Edinburgh lessons in year 9.

The remainder of each students' curriculum in year 9 will be made up from FOUR other subjects chosen from those outlined on the next page. Full details of all subjects can be found in this booklet.

Our curriculum pathway is made up of a different mix of qualifications, so please take the time to consider all your options and consult with your teachers to find the qualifications which will best suit you.

STAGE 2 - CONSOLIDATION

Towards the end of year 9 you will be asked to make a second decision regarding options.

This process will involve you choosing THREE FINAL options from the four subjects you originally selected in year 8. These are the subjects you will continue studying to achieve your qualifications at the end of year 11 alongside the core.

It is IMPORTANT to remember that students CANNOT start a new course in year 10 that they have not studied in year 9.

STAGE 1 – TRANSITION CHOICES

Transition Pathway Overview				
CORE	CREATIVE/ LANGUAGES CHOICE 1	BREADTH CHOICE 1	BREADTH CHOICE 2	BREADTH CHOICE 3
Students will take all subjects below	Choose ONE from the subjects below	Choose ONE from the subjects below	Choose ONE from the subjects below	Choose ONE from the subjects below
Mathematics	Spanish	Art/Product Design	Art/Product Design	Art/Product Design
English Language	Music	Business Studies	Business Studies	Business Studies
English Literature	Art/Product Design	Creative iMedia****	Creative iMedia****	Creative iMedia****
Combined Science** Or Triple Science***		Computer Science	Computer Science	Computer Science
		Food and Nutrition	Food and Nutrition	Food and Nutrition
		Geography	Geography	Geography
R.E.		History	History	History
Personal Development*		Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
Games*		Media Studies & Film Studies **	Media Studies & Film Studies **	Media Studies & Film Studies **
		Music	Music	Music
		P.E.	P.E.	P.E.
		BTEC Sport	BTEC Sport	BTEC Sport

* Non-examined course, ** Two GCSEs, *** Three GCSEs, **** Cambridge National

About this Pathway

Our “Transition” pathway allows you to achieve the widest range of GCSE and Level 2 qualifications.

The key features of this pathway are:

- ★ The CORE subjects
 - ✓ All students will study these subjects at Key Stage 4.
 - ✓ All except Personal Development and Games will be studied at GCSE level.
 - ✓ English will lead to two GCSEs – one in English and English Literature.
 - ✓ Science will either be Combined Science, leading to two GCSE awards or three separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics.
- ★ HUMANITIES subjects
 - ✓ The HUMANITIES subjects include R.E., Geography and History.
 - ✓ As R.E. is one of our CORE subjects so all students will study at least 1 HUMANITIES subject in years 9-11.
- ★ CREATIVE/LANGUAGES subjects
 - ✓ All students MUST take at least 1 CREATIVE or LANGUAGE subject in addition to their core subjects.
 - ✓ CREATIVE subjects include Art/Product Design and Music
 - ✓ The LANGUAGE we study at St Thomas More is Spanish.
 - ✓ All CREATIVE/LANGUAGE subjects also appear in the ‘BREADTH SUBJECTS’ so students are not limited to one choice from these subjects.

★ BREADTH subjects

- ✓ Students have free choice of any 3 BREADTH subjects (which may include additional CREATIVE or LANGUAGE subjects).
- ✓ We encourage you to think about choosing at least ONE ADDITIONAL HUMANTIES SUBJECTS from the BREADTH options.

★ DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD SCHEME

- ✓ Students in year 9 have the opportunity to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.
- ✓ If you would like to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award please also tick YES on your Options Choice Form.

What to consider when choosing my options?

You will get lots of support to make your options choices. This support will come from your parents, your teachers and all the people listed at the start of this booklet. However, these should be your choices and you should be happy with your final decision.

When choosing your options, you should consider:

1. What subjects do you find interesting/enjoy?
2. Do you have a particular future career in mind? If you do, you should check if any subjects are required by universities/employers for your chosen career area.
3. What subjects are you good at? Look at your reports and speak to your teachers to see which subjects you are performing particularly well in.
4. Try to avoid making choices based on your friends or teachers.
5. Look at the different types of courses on offer and the type of work they require to ensure you balance your workload to suit you.

Will I get my first choices?

Once your list of subject choices has been handed in, we will begin to build the timetable.

We will do our best to give you your first choices, but that is not always possible. Most courses have maximum numbers that they can accept because of the limits of specialist rooms and staff.

If a course has too many people wishing to study it, we may contact you to discuss your choice and possible alternative courses that you may wish to follow.

Note that some courses can be taken in the Sixth Form even if not taken at GCSE e.g. Business Studies.

All courses have a minimum number of students, if this is not reached then the course is unlikely to run.

What do I do now?

1. **Read** this information booklet carefully and **talk** things over with your parent/carer, teachers and tutor, and anyone else who can advise you
2. Begin to think about the courses you would like to choose in **the CREATIVE/LANGUAGE and BREADTH subject blocks** – ensure that you have ONE CREATIVE/LANGUAGE choice and THREE BREADTH choices.
3. If you would like to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award please also tick YES on your Options Choice Form.
4. Confirm your options choices and ask your parent or carer to sign your choices form.
5. Once you have made your final decisions, please hand your completed choices form into the Data Office by **Wednesday 29th April** at the latest. You can hand in your form earlier.

On the following pages you will find an outline of the choices you can make, followed by pages giving full information about all courses. This will help you make your decisions.

If you have any questions that are not answered in this booklet or during the Options process, please do not hesitate to contact us. The easiest way to do this is by sending an email to the following address: ahardiman@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk
Include the Subject Header: **OPTIONS CHOICES**

Transition Option Choice Form 2026

COMPLETE AND KEEP THIS FORM FOR YOUR RECORDS

TRANSITION CHOICES

- ★ All students will study the CORE subjects.
- ★ Choose:
 - ✓ ONE subject from the CREATIVE/LANGUAGE BLOCK
 - ✓ THREE subjects from the BREADTH SUBJECTS BLOCK
 - ✓ Whether you would like to participate in the DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD scheme by ticking YES or NO BELOW

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R.E.		History	History	History
Personal Development*		Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
Games*		Media Studies & Film Studies **	Media Studies & Film Studies **	Media Studies & Film Studies **
		Music	Music	Music
		P.E.	P.E.	P.E.
		BTEC Sport	BTEC Sport	BTEC Sport

* Non-examined course , ** Two GCSEs , *** Three GCSEs, **** Cambridge National

YOUR CHOICES

Creative/Language Choice 1:				
Breadth Choice 1:				
Breadth Choice 2:				
Breadth Choice 3:				
Duke of Edinburgh:	YES		NO	

The choices above have been discussed and agreed with my son. I accept that the school reserves the right to re-negotiate pupils' choices if necessary.

Date the form was returned to school:

Transition Option Choice Form 2026

Please ensure that this form is completed fully and returned to the Data Office, St Thomas More High School **no later than Wednesday 29th April.**

Pupil's name (please print clearly) Form

TRANSITION CHOICES

- ★ All students will study the CORE subjects.
- ★ Choose:
 - ✓ ONE subject from the CREATIVE/LANGUAGE BLOCK
 - ✓ THREE subjects from the BREADTH SUBJECTS BLOCK
 - ✓ Whether you would like to participate in the DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD scheme by ticking YES or NO BELOW

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YOUR CHOICES

Creative/Language Choice 1:				
Breadth Choice 1:				
Breadth Choice 2:				
Breadth Choice 3:				
Duke of Edinburgh:	YES		NO	

The choices above have been discussed and agreed with my son. I accept that the school reserves the right to re-negotiate pupils' choices if necessary.

Signed Parent/Carer Signed Pupil Date:.....