



6<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

**Re: Year 8 Curriculum**

At Arnold Hill Academy we are ambitious for our students and are determined that all are well-prepared to succeed and prosper as they move through school and into higher education, employment or training. We are constantly asking ourselves if we are doing all that we can for our students and reviewing our curriculum is an important part of this process.

Our curriculum is designed to meet the students' needs and aspirations regardless of performance table measures. We recognise that the quality, breadth and depth of the curriculum is important at all Key Stages. With this in mind we have decided that our curriculum in Year 9 would be more effective if we were to develop it more as a '*bridge*' between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The new GCSE examinations are more demanding than they have previously been, with increased content and demands on knowledge retention especially within the core of English, Maths and the Sciences. With that in mind it makes good sense for students to begin studying GCSE topics in these core subjects in Year 9.

We also believe it is important however that young people study the full national curriculum and are given the opportunity to learn the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. We believe our curriculum should also provide for learners' broader development. To this end we have decided that in Year 9 all students will study Geography, History and BPE (Beliefs, Philosophy and Ethics) within the bridging year. The units of work studied by Year 9 in these three subjects will include topics which feature on the National Curriculum and also have close links to GCSE topics, therefore providing a strong '*bridge*' for those who wish to specialise and chose one of these options to study for GCSE in Year 10 and 11.

The National Curriculum for England includes statutory programmes of study for languages at Key Stage 3. They are issued by law and schools must follow them unless there is a good reason not to. Learning a modern foreign language is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures. A high-quality languages education should foster pupils' curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world. The teaching should enable pupils to express their ideas and thoughts in another language and to understand and respond to its speakers, both in speech and in writing. It should also provide opportunities for them to communicate for practical purposes, learn new ways of thinking and read great literature in the original language. Language teaching should provide the foundation for learning further languages, equipping students to study and work in other countries. We believe that talented linguists should have the opportunity to study two languages at Key Stage 3; we will therefore be offering French in addition to Spanish *in Year 7, 8 and 9 for some students*. All students will continue to study languages into Year 9. Whilst we recognise that we have talented linguists studying both French and Spanish, we also recognise that some students may not feel as confident with languages. With the new model, these students will be delivered a more diverse offering which focuses on language as a communication.

Arnold Hill Academy is part of the Spencer Academies Trust

Registered office: Arthur Mee Road, Stapleford, Nottingham NG9 7EW

The company's registered number is 7353824



The subjects of core PE and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) are also important and necessary parts of all students' education and will be taught in Year 9 too with PSHE taught within BPE. Bright Days will continue to be used to further boost our PSHE provision throughout the year.

By Year 9 students at Arnold Hill have told us they want to take more control of their education and want to be making choices over what they study. With this in mind in Year 8 students will choose one option to study in Year 9 which they will continue studying into Year 10 and 11. The choice can be made from the following Faculties: PE, Design and Technology, the Arts and Business and Computing. The units of work studied by Year 9 in these subjects will include topics which feature on the National Curriculum and also have links to GCSE topics, therefore providing a 'bridge' between Key Stage 3 and 4. Finally, I want to be clear that later in Year 9 our students will be able to make 2 additional option choices which they will study in Years 10 and 11.

The number of hours assigned to subjects in Year 9 are summarised in the table below:

Year 9 - Bridging Year									
English	Maths	Science	History	Geography	BPE	PE	MFL	Futures Option A	
4	4	5	2	2	1	2	3	2	2

Yours faithfully

**Matt Robertson**  
Head Teacher