

Holy Rood RC High School

Course Choice - Frequently Asked Questions



General Information

How many subjects will my child take?

Pupils moving into S5/6 will study 5 subjects, choosing suitable courses from the subject choice columns. Pupils in S6 may opt to study 4 subjects with the option of having a study column on their timetable or using this time for work experience placements, volunteering or another leadership opportunity. Core RE/PE courses also form part of the senior curriculum.

How are our subject choice columns structured?

S5/6 columns are structured to allow clear progression from S4 into S5 then S5 into S6. Courses on offer also present opportunities for new subjects to be studied where appropriate. Column 5 allows for courses at Edinburgh College to be selected as well as work experience placement or leadership opportunities.

How will my child be awarded a grade for their qualifications?

National 5, Higher or Advanced Higher courses are assessed through a question paper (exam) or coursework, or both — most of which will be marked by SQA. In some subjects, coursework is marked by a teacher. The courses are graded A to D or 'no award'.

National 3 and 4 courses are made up of units which are assessed by the teacher as a Pass or Fail.

Questions about Course Choice options and process

Why does my child have to pick a 1st and 2nd choice in each column?

Pupils are asked to pick a 1st and 2nd choice so that in the event we are unable to course them into their preferred choice, a backup option is available that is suited to their skills, abilities and interests.

What if chosen subjects do not run? / Will my child get their chosen subjects?

Whilst we try to run all courses available in school, some are not possible due to capacity on the timetable with staffing or poor pupil uptake. In the senior school, pupils can look to study a subject or course at another school as part of the Consortia arrangement across CEC (City of Edinburgh Council) schools if this is not offered in our school. Alternatively, they can look at courses as part of the School College Partnership at Edinburgh College. College courses can be a good option for any pupil looking to gain experience related to a particular chosen career pathway.

Will they get priority if they did not get first choice in S3?

The range of subjects on offer in the senior school timetable offers progression as well as opportunities to choose subjects that pupils did not study as part of their S4 qualifications. However,

we do recommend that S4 pupils think about progression into S5 and would advise that pupils talk to their Year Head or Careers Adviser for advice and guidance if they want to make significant changes for their S5 choices.

What happens if there are no subjects that they want to take in a particular column?

Any pupil who is struggling to make choices should speak to their Year Head for advice.

There are other options available to pupils in Column 5 on the Course Option form which offer opportunities outwith school such as courses at Edinburgh college. We also offer the Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award as an excellent leadership qualification for S6 pupils. For some pupils a work experience placement at that time may be a suitable option depending on chosen career pathway.

Progression may also involve new courses that are related to subjects already studied, usually offered within the same faculty. S6 pupils in particular may wish to consider some new courses to broaden their knowledge, enhance and develop their skills, and add to the range of qualifications they have already gained.

Can pupils do a Higher if they have not done the Nat 5 qualification ('crash' Higher)?

In the senior school, many subjects would require a National 5 qualification for entry into that course; this ensures progression and the required knowledge and skills to be able to cope with the demands of the subject at Higher level. However, some subjects do not require the National 5 qualification and are suitable for pupils who have attained a level and range of qualifications and skills that indicate suitability and likelihood for success in these subjects. An example of subjects that would be suitable for this is Psychology (S6 only), Modern Studies and Business Education. Pupils should always seek advice about 'crash' Highers to ensure this is a good option for them.

Can Highers be taken over 2 years?

National and Higher course are taught as one-year courses with the expectation that pupils complete and gain that qualification at the end of the school year. Sometimes, for various reasons, a pupil may not have made sufficient progress to gain the qualification. In this instance, we recommend that parents/carers and pupils work with the school to agree the best outcome for the pupil. This may involve postponing presentation to the following year or looking for a more suitable alternative qualification.

Questions about support with making Course Choice

Do pupils have the opportunity to speak to subject teachers about course choice?

Teachers will share information about the courses on offer in their faculties. This also gives pupils an opportunity to ask more specific questions relating to course content, assessment and qualifications. Teachers will also talk about skills and careers pathways that these subjects offer.

How do pupils get more detailed information on specific courses?

The Course Information booklets that all pupils received in the Course Choice assemblies provides information on the course choice process, qualifications, and detailed subject course information.

You may also wish to look at the subject choice tool on the My World of Work website: - www.myworldofwork.co.uk

How to support making choices in S5 vs S6?

S6 pupils will have already gained a set of qualifications over both S4 and S5 and should carefully consider skills and interests along with entry requirements for their intended career pathways when making choices for S6. UCAS, individual university and Edinburgh college websites will give more detailed information on courses and entry requirements that will help shape decisions for S6. Pupils in S6 may also wish to consider opportunities to gain alternative qualifications that are both rewarding and allow for personal development, wider achievement and enhancement of skills that many employers and college and universities look for. In Holy Rood, senior pupils can opt for the following courses/opportunities which are all accredited and allow pupils not only to gain recognised qualifications but also to gain a positive personal development experience.

- In S5/6 core PE, pupils have the opportunity to work towards a school-based award or an SQA Leadership Award. Pupils learn about team building, leadership styles, skills and qualities. They participate in practical tasks to help them develop some of these skills, and then put what they have learned into practice in a pupil planned teaching and coaching session.
- S6 pupils can choose to work towards The Pope Benedict XVI Caritas Award which encourages and promotes the ongoing faith journey of young people. This award asks young people to use their faith learning as a starting point for further faith development. This takes place during S6 core RE classes. The award involves 20 hours voluntary faith service in school and 20 hours in a local parish, mosque, or temple. Pupils who are successful attend a national ceremony to receive their award.
- The school offers the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award to S3 pupils and the DofE Silver Award to S6 pupils.

Questions about options once course choices have been made

Can my child change their subjects if they are not enjoying it?

S5/6 pupils have an opportunity to change coursing at the start of the new school session in August.

For information about positive destinations to support course choice and post-school pathways, please have a look at the websites below where you will find lots of information to support pupils:

- **My World of Work** – www.myworldofwork.co.uk
- **Edinburgh College** – www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk
- **UCAS** – www.ucas.com

The new timetable starts in June each year, offering pupils an opportunity to settle into these new courses and supporting a smoother return to study after the summer holiday.

Can my child change their subjects once they have their exam results?

For our senior pupils, SQA results come out on Tuesday 9th August this year, and this may result in some pupils wishing to reconsider their course choices and make changes to their coursing. These changes will be made in August after the results come out. Any pupil wishing to do this should speak to their Year Head. Pupils will be able to access advice from their teachers, Year Head, and the Careers Adviser.

Pupils will be able to make changes where this is availability in courses. We strongly advise pupils and their families to read the Attainment reports and the S5 and S6 Course Information booklets to support making course choices. Please contact your child's Year Head or Careers Adviser if you require further support. There is more information in the pre-recorded presentation about how to support your child with their course choice.

Questions about SQA exams

General Exam information?

We understand that you and your child may have questions about the SQA National Qualifications for this year. Please click the link for SQA updates including the SQA blog and 'Supporting learners as COVID disruption continues': <https://tinyurl.com/mt64ct98>

The school will keep parents/carers and pupils updated if there are any changes to the SQA exams. The exam diet starts on Tuesday 26 April and finishes on Wednesday 1 June 2022. The exam timetable can be accessed on the SQA website: www.sqa.org.uk

Will there be study leave during the exams?

We are waiting on information about study leave for the SQA exams from CEC. We will share information with you as soon as we are able to do so.

Questions about support with exam preparation

How do you support pupils with managing their workload?/ What support will be given to pupils in preparation for their SQA exams?

Supports that were in place for the Prelim exams will continue in preparation for the SQA exams. We offer supported study classes after school and at lunchtime and we would encourage your child to make effective use of this additional support. The Supported Study timetable can be found on the school website, please click on the link: - <https://tinyurl.com/4vymyzu6>

We are also offering a programme of supported study classes for some subjects during the February break. Details of the programme will be emailed to you.

We also run a study club on Tuesdays after school for S4 pupils, this was well attended before the Prelims, and we recommend that our S4 pupils continue to make effective use of this opportunity.

Pupils are given advice on how to manage their workload in PSE, Tutor Time, and targeted attainment assemblies. This includes study plans, time management and different study/revision methods. The Mentoring programme offers support to a group of identified pupils and these pupils should ensure that they work with their Mentor and attend the weekly meetings that provide them with targeted support in preparation for their exams. All pupils can speak with their Year Head who

can provide them with ongoing support for their exams. If a pupil has a concern that is related specifically to a subject, then they should speak to their class teacher for advice and support. We also offer stress busting groups for pupils as well as 1-1 counselling sessions for pupils who require enhanced support.

Questions about support for pupils who are leaving school

What support will pupils who wish to leave school receive with finding college courses/apprenticeships?

S4-6 pupils are asked about to fill in a form about their intended leaving date and preferred career pathway and this is updated each year. This helps inform the school and the Careers Adviser about targeted career support for pupils at various stages throughout the senior school. This allows us to offer 1-1 interviews with the Year Head and Careers Adviser for pupils who are leaving school, and provide support with application forms, CVs, and interview preparation. Pupils can request an appointment with the Careers Adviser for support with finding a positive destination if they are thinking about leaving school. Parents/carers can also contact their child's Year Head or our Careers Adviser for more advice and guidance.

Pupils in S6 will be guided through the application process to university (UCAS) and college, as well as given support if seeking employment, apprenticeships, training, or other pathways.

For information about positive destinations beyond school, please have a look at the websites below where you will find lots of information to support pupils: -

- **My World of Work** – www.myworldofwork.co.uk
- **Skills Development Scotland** – www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk
- **Edinburgh College** – www.edinburghcollege.ac.uk
- **UCAS (University Admissions)** – www.UCAS.com
- **Young Scot** – www.youngscot.org
- **Apprenticeships Scotland** – www.apprenticeships.scot
- **Careers Website** – www.planitplus.net
- **Employment Opportunities** – www.edinburghguarantee.org
- **DYW Edinburgh – Labour Market Information** – www.dyw-edinmideast.com

Contact

If you wish to contact your child's Year Head, please phone the school on 0131 661 5871 or email:

S4 Mr Lindsay year4head@holyrood.edin.sch.uk

S5/6 Mr Campbell year5head@holyrood.edin.sch.uk and year6head@holyrood.edin.sch.uk

Our Careers Adviser is Louise Winser, and she can be contacted via email Louise.Winser@sds.co.uk