

Northstowe Secondary College



***Year 8 Guided Pathways
KS4 Course Information
Booklet 2025***

Year 8 Guided Pathways

KS4 Course Information Booklet 2025

Introduction

This booklet contains all the information you need to prepare you for your Year 9 curriculum pathway. We hope you will find it useful. It is divided into six sections which will lead you through the main decisions ahead.

1. Key Dates
2. Personalising Learning at NSC
3. The Core Curriculum
4. Course Outlines for Additional Subjects
5. Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
6. Frequently Asked Questions

In order to help you make the right choices ***and for the right reasons***, read the information in this information booklet carefully.

Once courses have been allocated it is very difficult to make changes and your preferred subject may no longer be available due to timetable and group size restrictions.

1. Key Dates

YEAR 8 GUIDED PATHWAYS CALENDAR 2025

Thursday 13th February 5-7pm

Key Stage 4 Pathways Evening

In school event with an introduction to KS4 at Northstowe, an explanation of the Guided Pathways Process and an opportunity to talk to Curriculum leaders about the subjects offered.

Key Stage 4 Course Information Booklet Published – Friday 14th

Look through the information booklet with your family.
What stands out? What is a definite no for you?

Week beginning 24th February onwards

Pathway Support Drop- Ins and Meeting

Miss Leaney will be running a mixture of drop-in and invited support sessions. You can use these to think about the future and the impact it might have on their KS4 preferences.

Class-Based Subject Introductions

Some time will be spent in lessons, going over the subjects you can choose from, to explain more what they involve and what the advantages are. In How to Thrive, there will be a focus on pathways and future.

Key Stage 4 Preferences Form opens online – Friday 28th Feb

The online form that allows you to choose your options will be open from today.

Week beginning 3rd March

Pathways Support Assembly

A whole year group assembly going over the pathways process and introducing some key subjects not currently studied in year 8

Pathways Morning

A morning of activities related to careers, new subjects available and the importance of Modern Languages

Week beginning 3rd March and 10th March

Tutor Mentor Sessions

You will have time to go over your report with your Form tutor and discuss what you are currently thinking of for your options.

Week beginning 10th March

Year 8 Report Sent Home

Look at your report with your parents/guardians and decide which subjects you are good at and which you enjoy.

Thursday 13th March 2025

Parents' Consultation Evening

An opportunity to talk to your individual teachers about your progress and potential within a given subject. Focus on making appointments with the subject that you are considering.

Monday 17th March 2025

Hand in Key Stage 4 Preferences Form

Complete the **Choices** Form online **by 9am** on this day.
Where there are limits on class sizes, preference will be given to students who complete their form on time.

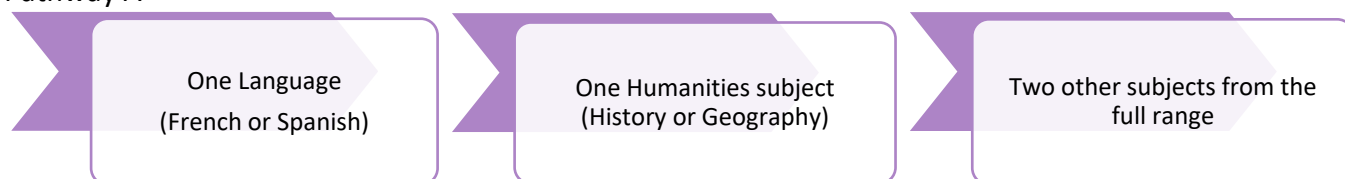
2. Personalising Learning at Northstowe Secondary College

Northstowe Secondary College is committed to achievement for all and will support every student to achieve the qualifications and grades that reflect their individual ability, needs and future aspirations.

Students have studied a broad range of subjects in year 7 and 8, with a strong focus on those subjects that are not compulsory for Key Stage four. Our students' achievement is crucial, and we are committed to personalised learning, which is one reason why we allow students to move onto their guided pathway in year 9.

Here at Northstowe we have 2 Pathway options for our students:

Pathway A



Pathway B



The majority of children **will be on Pathway A**. As a family, you will be informed which Pathway is suggested for your child by email. If you believe they would be better suited to an alternative route, you must contact Mrs Morrison by email (smorrison@northstowe.education) **before** the Preferences form is opened **Friday 28th February 2025**.

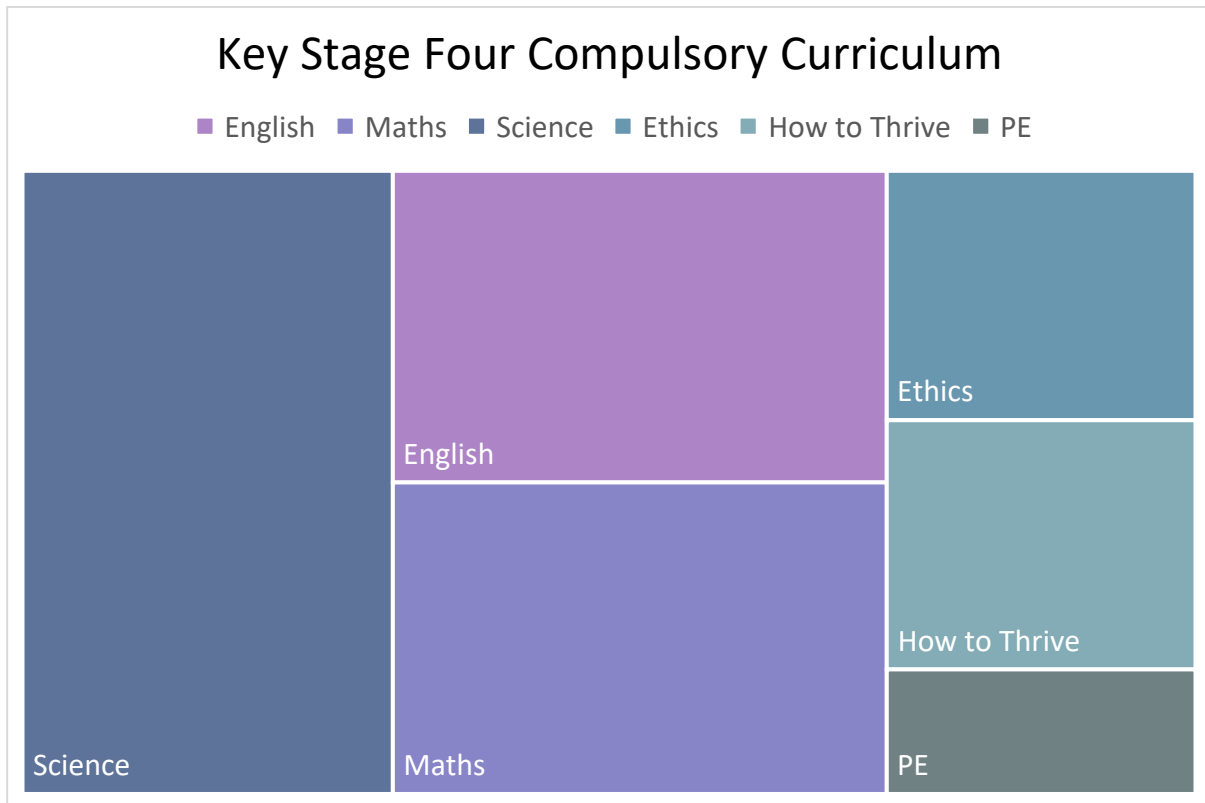
Whatever their pathway, the success of our students is based on:

- Students being guided onto the most appropriate courses in year 8.
- High expectations of achievement established through our target setting and monitoring in Key Stage 4.
- High quality teaching and learning, underpinned by the same high expectations.
- Effective support and intervention
- Regular communication between parents, subject teachers, and tutors.

Please be aware, it is not always possible to accommodate all selections.

We have to maintain reasonable class sizes and are also limited in the number of different combinations that will be possible. As a result, we ask you to indicate all the courses you would consider and identify **additional preferences to the total number you will actually be allocated**. You can rank your choices, but we will look at all the courses that you express a preference for in order to find your final courses. Where numbers are limited, student learning values will be used to prioritise entry on courses.

3.The Core Curriculum



This compulsory curriculum takes up approximately 65% of a child's lessons a week. The remaining lessons form part of our Guided Pathways programme that personalises provision for students through access to up to **4 additional GCSE/vocational courses**.

Core Qualifications

English Language	1 GCSE
English Literature	1 GCSE
Mathematics	1 GCSE
Separate/Combined Science	3/2 GCSEs

Students will also have non examined Ethics, How to Thrive and PE lessons each week.

Exam Skills

Your child will receive a wide range of support on how to prepare effectively for exams, throughout Years 9-11.

An information evening during Key Stage Four will also help you to understand the exam procedures and provide practical ideas for how best to support their revision at home.

Science

We offer two course routes here at Northstowe:

- Combined Science: Trilogy GCSE
- Separate Sciences (also known as “Triple Science”)

Each course offers two tiers: Higher (grade 9-4), Foundation (grades 5-1). The subject content for both types of examination is largely similar with all students studying Biology, Chemistry and Physics throughout GCSE. However, those who sit the Separate Science examination will require a larger subject knowledge than for Combined Science and each exam paper is for a longer duration.

Entry to either Combined or Separate Science will be decided based on progress in Science throughout Year 9 and therefore all students will study the same Science course until the end of Year 9. Our goal is to achieve the best possible grade for our students, so in collaboration with families we decide on the most appropriate route. We do this in Year 10 so students can mature as learners and get familiar with the demands of the GCSE.

Combined Science: Trilogy GCSE

The Trilogy set of GCSEs gives pupils 2 GCSEs in Science, however all three disciplines of Biology, Chemistry and Physics are taught and examined. Pupils study each science discipline with a specialist teacher and two GCSE papers per discipline. Your child’s grade is calculated by the total marks of these 6 papers combined, therefore each paper is worth 16.7% of their overall grade. There are 21 required practical activities which are also assessed in the examinations with questions relating to these practicals accounting for 15% of marks.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/combined-science-trilogy-8464>

Separate Sciences

This enables pupils to gain 3 GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. By following the Separate Science route, pupils are better prepared for the transition into A Levels in Biology, Chemistry or Physics. Pupils carry out 28 required practicals. These are assessed in the examinations with questions relating to these practicals accounting for 15% of marks. Each exam is worth 50% of the overall grade of that discipline.

More information can be found here:

GCSE Biology: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/biology-8461>

GCSE Chemistry: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/chemistry-8462>

GCSE Physics: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/science/gcse/physics-8463>

4. Course Outlines for Non-Compulsory Subjects

This section of the booklet outlines the breadth of qualifications that NSC offers at Key Stage 4 which will form your non-compulsory allocated subjects.

GCSE or 'Vocational'?

Northstowe Secondary College is committed to providing every student with the opportunity to achieve **high quality vocational and applied qualifications alongside their traditional GCSE subjects.**

BTECs and Cambridge Nationals are the vocational qualifications we offer. By applying learning to real-life situations, these qualifications offer a more practical approach than traditional courses. These courses have a coursework or controlled assessment element, so can help to spread out the load of learning across the course, but still have an external exam at the end.

These courses do require students to organise their time and work hard. Due to the organisational demand, we would **rarely approve a student studying more than two vocational courses.** Students can move from a vocational path at Key Stage Four to a more traditional A level route at Post-16 and vice versa.

Curriculum Area	Subject	Page Number
Creative Arts	GCSE Art	8
	GCSE Photography	9
	GCSE Drama	10
	GCSE Music	11
Computing, Technology and Food	GCSE Computer Science	12
	GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition	13
	GCSE Design & Technology	14
Humanities	GCSE Ethics (Religious Studies)	15
	GCSE Geography	16
	GCSE History	17
Languages	GCSE French	18
	GCSE Spanish (entry requirement)	19
Physical Education	OCR Cambridge National in Sports Studies	20
Health and Wellbeing and Society	BTEC Tech Award Health and Social Care	21
Business and Media	GCSE Business Studies	22
	GCSE Media Studies	23
Careers and FAQs		24-26

Course Type: GCSE

Grading System: 1-9

Exam Board: EDUQAS



Students can only study one of GCSE Art **OR** Photography

Why study GCSE Art, Craft & Design?

This fast-paced course is an exciting and rewarding option which encourages a self-motivated and adventurous approach to Art & Design. It is important to have a commitment to, and love of the subject.

What will I study? Course Content

1. The first mini project is a skills-based unit which explores the theme of 'Food.' Using this subject matter, you will have the opportunity to experiment with different mediums such as painting, drawing and printmaking. This will allow you to understand the objectives of the GCSE, explore your strengths, develop your artist research skills, develop your skills, and grow in confidence.
2. The second project builds on previous project knowledge allowing you to develop both technical and research skills in more depth whilst exploring your own ideas, so you can produce creative outcomes to be proud of. This is also used to prepare you for the ten-hour mock exam and July.
3. The final project is an externally set brief where you are able to develop ideas and explore materials prior to producing the final piece in the ten-hour exam.
4. The course culminates in learning how to hang your own exhibition to display your work for the external examiner.

How will I be assessed?

Coursework (60%): **Internally** set and marked (produced during Years 9-11). All coursework produced can be used as part of this grade.

Exam (40%): **Externally** set and internally marked brief, where all sketchbook preparation is produced in lesson time. Final piece is produced in the ten-hour exam just after Easter. Both the sketchbook preparation and final piece count towards this 40%.

Recommendation from the Subject Leader:

For art students that are enthusiastic, creative, and imaginative. This course is excellent if you wish to go on to study creative courses such as animation, architecture, fashion, graphics, illustration, photography, textiles or set and costume design.

Course Type: GCSE

Grading System: 1-9

Exam Board: EDUQAS



Students can only study one of GCSE Art **OR** Photography

Why study GCSE Photography?

This dynamic course offers an exciting and rewarding opportunity, encouraging a self-driven and adventurous approach to photography. Students will develop their skills in creating, composing, and editing images both manually and digitally, using industry-standard software. A passion for the subject and a strong commitment to learning are essential for success in this course.

What will I study? Course Content

1. The first project is a skills-based unit where students will learn the basics of photography including; how to use a DSLR, how to plan and take high quality photos shoots using studio equipment, how to edit their own images using manual techniques and Photoshop.
2. The second project builds on previous project knowledge allowing you to develop both technical and research skills in more depth whilst exploring your own ideas, so you can produce creative outcomes to be proud of. This is also used to prepare you for the ten-hour mock exam and July.
3. The final project is an externally set brief where you are able to develop ideas and explore materials prior to producing the final piece in the ten-hour exam.
4. The course culminates in learning how to hang your own exhibition to display your work for the external examiner.

How will I be assessed?

Coursework (60%): **Internally** set and marked (produced during Years 9-11). All coursework produced can be used as part of this grade.

Exam (40%): **Externally** set and internally marked brief, where all sketchbook preparation is produced in lesson time. Final piece is produced in the ten-hour exam just after Easter. Both the sketchbook preparation and final piece count towards this 40%.

Recommendation from the Subject Leader:

For Art students that are enthusiastic, creative, and imaginative. This course is excellent if you wish to go on to study creative courses such as animation, architecture, fashion, graphics, illustration, photography, textiles or set and costume design.



Course Type: GCSE **Grading System:** 1-9

Exam Board: AQA

Why study Drama?

GCSE Drama is a course that builds on many life skills essential for most careers, such as communication, collaboration, empathy, and creativity. It is also brilliant at developing confidence and helps students with public speaking. Beyond GCSE drama there are further courses available, including Drama A Level (AQA) and BTEC Level 3 Performing Arts (Acting). There are also numerous different opportunities for careers varying from acting to theatre/film production to drama/media facilitation.

What will I study? Course Content

Within the Drama GCSE course, students will explore a range of Practitioners and their styles of performances, creating their own thought-provoking performances using practitioner techniques. Students will also explore a range of diverse plays, as monologue/duologue and ensemble performances. Students will learn how to produce high quality performances.

Students will practically explore their chosen play text to analyse and evaluate for the written examination part of the GCSE Course. In addition to this, students will have many opportunities to explore live theatre, take part in performance workshops and create their own work.

How will I be assessed?

A combination of teacher assessed/externally moderated and by a visiting examiner.

- Component 1: Understanding Drama (Written Exam) (40%)
- Component 2: Devising Drama (30%)
- Component 3: Texts in Practice (30%)

Recommendation from the Curriculum Leader:

This course will suit anybody who enjoys Drama and performance! If you enjoy creating your own productions, exploring characters and developing your performance skills – this is the course for you.

GCSE Drama students are encouraged to get involved in extra-curricular clubs and Drama productions!

Course Type: GCSE **Grading System:** 1-9



Exam Board: OCR

Why study Music?

The **British music industry is a multi-million-pound industry**. It offers a vast range of career **opportunities** from performing to producing music and song writing.

Students who study music at any level also go on to pursue a wide range of different careers.

Employers' welcome applications from students that have studied Music because musicians can self-manage, work in teams, communicate effectively, solve problems, and have good customer awareness.

What will I study? Course Content

GCSE Music is a practical subject with a very strong performance element. In most lessons, you will be performing or creating music. **It is essential that anyone choosing this course plays an instrument or sings.**

During the course of the year, **you will perform a range of music** and develop your musical literacy and performing skills. **You will compose individually and in small groups**, using computers and iPads. Finally, you will listen to music of various genres and be taught how to listen carefully and analytically.

How will I be assessed?

- Integrated Tasks: a solo performance, composition, and commentary (30%)
- Practical Portfolio: a group performance, composition, and commentary (30%)
- Listening Test: a written exam, assessing knowledge and understanding of different areas of study; The Concerto Through Time, Film Music, Rhythms of the World and Conventions of Pop Music (40%)

Recommendation from the Subject Leader:

This course will suit anybody who enjoys music and is ready to be challenged to further develop their skills as a performer, composer, and listener.

Again, it is essential that anyone choosing this course plays an instrument or sings.

Instrument/singing lessons are strongly encouraged for all GCSE Music students.

There is no requirement for students to have taken a particular Music Grade (ABRSM, Trinity etc) prior to taking GCSE Music, though to achieve the highest performance marks, students would need to be performing at a Grade 5 level by the end of Year 11.

GCSE Music students are encouraged to get involved in extra-curricular clubs and performances.

Course Type: GCSE**Grading System:** 1-9**Exam Board:** OCR**Why Study Computer Science?**

Computing and technology is part of everything we do! Being able to understand *how computers work* will provide you with the skills to solve complex, challenging and often exciting problems. Computing enables you to make a positive difference in the world and could possibly lead to a career that enables you to change how the world works. It provides great opportunities for true creativity and innovation. It's amazing, it's the closest thing we have to a superpower!

What Will I Study? Course Content

You will learn about how the computer 'thinks,' and how it can be programmed to do the things you want! How to write code and solve everyday problems. You will learn about how computers are connected and how they share information across a network, their vulnerabilities, and the threats that we face in society. You will have an opportunity to debate new technologies and how they impact us and our future.

How Will I be Assessed?

Computer Systems – assessed by written Examination (50%).

Computational Thinking, Algorithms and Programming – assessed by written Examination (50%).

Recommendation from the Lead teacher:

This course is aimed at students who enjoy learning about *how* computers work, and who enjoy *problem solving*. You should enjoy working your way through new, exciting, and often challenging problems with resilience and perseverance. This course is excellent if you wish to go on and study or work in the field of Engineering, Networking, Software Development, Systems Analysis, Web/App Development, Cyber Security or Computer Programming, or just want the capability of designing your own solutions to whatever problems you may face.

All Computing students are encouraged to engage in extracurricular projects either in school or out.

FOOD PREPARATION & NUTRITION

Course Type: GCSE **Grading System:** 1-9



Exam Board: AQA

Why Study Food Preparation and Nutrition?

Studying Food Preparation and Nutrition will encourage students to cook and develop higher level culinary skills through a range of practical opportunities. Students will also gain the knowledge and understanding required to conduct food science investigations in addition to learning about nutrition and healthy eating.

What Will I Study? Course Content

Food preparation skills will be taught during practical cooking lessons at least once every 2 weeks in Years 9 and 10. In year 11 the practical focus will be limited to within the parameters of the coursework briefs, which are published by the exam board at the start of the final year.

Theoretical content includes:

- **Food, nutrition & health:**
Learning about the functions and main sources of macro and micronutrients, Nutritional needs, diet, and health.
- **Food science:**
Heat transfer and cooking methods, functional and chemical properties of key food groups, raising agents.
- **Food safety:**
Food spoilage and contamination, principles of food safety including buying, storing, preparing, cooking & serving.
- **Food choice:**
Factors influencing food choice (religion, activity levels, cost, seasonality etc.), food labelling & marketing, British and international cuisines, sensory evaluation.
- **Food provenance:**
Food sources, food and the environment, sustainability of food, food production and processing.

How Will I be Assessed?

(50%) Written Exam study for an exam at the end of Year 11

(50%) Written coursework with some elements of practical assessment (throughout Year 11)

- 1) Food science investigation (15%)
- 2) Food preparation assessment (35%)

Recommendation from the Lead Teacher:

You are advised not to take food simply because you like cooking. The majority of the course is theory based, with approximately 20% of your overall grade based on your cooking skills. We will cook at least once every 2 weeks throughout Year 9 and Year 10; however, most of Year 11 will be spent completing the coursework tasks and revision. The desire to learn about the theoretical aspects related to food & nutrition is vitally important.

AQA: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/food/gcse/food-preparation-and-nutrition-8585/specification-at-a-glance>

Course Type: GCSE Design and Technology (8552) **Grading System:** 1-9

Exam Board: AQA



Why Study Design Technology (Product Design)?

GCSE Design and Technology will prepare students for a wide range of careers in Design, Construction and Engineering as well as providing skills for life, mental wellbeing through hobbies and teaching students to be informed consumers able to participate responsibly in society. The course is creative, involving research, design, development, making and evaluation of the students own and existing work. Theoretical knowledge underpins each aspect of the design process.

What Will I Study? Course Content

The GCSE Design and Technology (Product Design) course we offer at Northstowe Secondary College, will provide students with a breadth of core technical knowledge and understanding that consists of:

- new and emerging technologies
- energy generation and storage
- developments in new materials
- systems approach to designing
- mechanical devices
- materials and their working properties.

All of the theory that is covered in lessons will be reinforced through practical projects that you can take home.

How Will I be Assessed?

Question paper (Externally assessed) 2 hours (100 marks) – **50% of GCSE**

Coursework (Practical) (100 marks) – **50% of GCSE**

Recommendation from the Lead Teacher:

GCSE Design and Technology will prepare students to participate confidently and successfully in an increasingly technological world and will develop practical skills working with materials such as wood, metal, and plastics. Students will gain awareness and learn from wider influences on Design and Technology including historical, social, cultural, environmental, and economic factors. Students will get the opportunity to work creatively when designing and making and apply technical and practical expertise. It should be noted that this course involves a considerable amount of theory and whilst this is backed up through practical work students shouldn't expect to be in the workshop for all lessons. Please contact Dr Winn if you have any questions or require further information about the course.

AQA: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/design-and-technology/qcse/design-and-technology-8552>

ETHICS/RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Course Type: GCSE

Grading System: 1-9



Exam Board: AQA

Why Study Religious Studies?

There are now over eight billion people in the world. Well over half of the world's population follow one of the religions we study and all of us will have experiences of and/or opinions on the topics covered on our course.

Our GCSE covers the two biggest world religions, Christianity and Islam, two contemporary ethical themes and two textual studies, ensuring you have a diverse choice of intriguing subjects to explore.

You will be challenged with questions about belief, values, meaning, purpose and truth, enabling you to develop your own attitudes towards religious and ethical issues. You will also gain an appreciation of how religion, philosophy and ethics form the basis of our culture. You will develop analytical and critical thinking skills, the ability to work with abstract ideas, leadership and research skills. All these skills will help prepare you for further study.

You will find GCSE Religious Studies to be both challenging and rewarding. It equips you to understand the diversity of religion and non-religious belief in our community and the world today. It also helps to foster your own spiritual and moral development.

Religious Studies lessons offer you a structured and safe space during curriculum time for reflection, discussion, dialogue and debate on current events of a religious, moral or philosophical nature, whether local, national or global. By engaging in the topics covered in this course you will develop a sound understanding of key issues, beliefs and practices that affect us all.

What Will I Study? Course Content

The course is comprised of two components.

Component 1: The study of religions: beliefs, teachings and practices – Exam: 1 hr 45 / 50% of final grade

- Islamic Beliefs and Islamic Practices
- Christian Beliefs and practices

Component 2: Thematic Studies – Exam: 1 hr 45 / 50% of final grade

- Relationships and Families
- Peace and Conflict
- Crime and Punishment
- Human Rights and Social Justice

Each of the eight units takes approximately a term to complete, starting in Year 9 and culminating with the GCSE exams in the summer of Year 11.

How Will I be Assessed?

- Two written exams of 1 hour 45 minutes each for Component 1 & 2.
- 96 marks, plus 6 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) for each component, making a total of 204 marks.
- Each unit has a common structure of two five-part questions of 1, 2, 4, 5 and 12 marks.

Recommendation from the Subject Leader:

Do you want to develop a deeper understanding of the beliefs that drive our behaviour? Are you interested in wrestling with ethically and morally divisive topics? If so, this course is for you!

Develop your ability to...

- Become an independent learner
- Give reasons for opinions, both yours and those of others
- Evaluate different beliefs and practices
- Hone your debating and critical thinking skills

Course Type: GCSE

Grading System: 1-9 **Exam Board:** AQA



Number of Option Choices: 1

Why Study Geography? ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THE WORLD AROUND YOU?

You will study a variety of Physical, Human and Environmental Geography along with learning how to use and apply a variety of Geographical and numerical skills. Geography is a useful, exciting, and relevant subject. You will learn about processes and events that affect real people in Cambridge, the UK, and the World - Geography is all around us.

Geography helps you to be aware of your surroundings and other people's viewpoints. It will help you to make important decisions in life. Geography students have high levels of skills that employers look for - the ability to research, have opinions, make decisions, analyse information, and write reports.

What Will I Study? Course Content

Paper 1: Living with the Physical Environment

- Challenges of Natural Hazards - (Including tectonic, weather hazards and climate change)
- Physical landscapes in the UK - (Including coasts and glacial landscapes)
- The Living World - (Ecosystems – including Tropical Rainforests and Cold Environments)

Paper 2: Challenges in the Human Environment

- Urban Issues and Challenges - (Including Urbanisation)
- Changing Economic World - (Including the development gap)
- Resource Management - (Including food, water, and energy)

Paper 3: Geographical Applications

- Synoptic Issue Evaluation questions (from pre-release)
- Fieldwork Questions (Human and Physical)

All students studying GCSE Geography will have the opportunity to go on a variety of trips. There will be two compulsory fieldtrips to locations such as The Norfolk coast and an optional foreign trip to countries such as Nepal and South Africa.

How Will I be Assessed?

Paper 1 – 1 hour 30 mins exam (88 marks and worth 35% of GCSE)

Paper 2 – 1 hour 30 mins exam (88 marks and worth 35% of GCSE)

Paper 3 - 1 hour 15 mins exam (76 marks and worth 30% of GCSE)

Regular prep tasks, end of unit tests and exams set throughout the course will help you prepare for your GCSE's

Recommendation from the Subject Leader:

GCSE Geography will help you to develop and extend your knowledge of places, environments, and processes on Planet Earth. The subject also lends itself to **SO MANY CAREER OPTIONS!!** Here are some ideas:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| ▪ Town Planning | National Park Ranger | Chartered survey |
| ▪ Police Officer | Travel Agent (Pilot/Holiday Rep.) | Weather forecaster |
| ▪ Teacher | Conservationist | Cartographer |
| ▪ Researcher/ Analyser | Estate Agent | Volcanologist |

Course Type: GCSE

Grading System: 1-9



Exam Board: Edexcel

Why study History?

History is a subject that will allow you to gain a thorough understanding of how Britain and the wider world came to be as they are today. It is a subject that encourages you to think critically about information and not just accept it at face value. History also develops skills of analysis, debate, and extended writing and because of this, it is considered to be a reputable and demanding subject that is well respected by colleges and employers.

What Will I Study? Course Content

- **Medicine in Britain, c1250-present**
This is our thematic unit in which students will study the changes and continuities in the development of medicine in Britain over the last millennium. They will learn how individuals and institutions; science and technology; and attitudes in society influenced the development of medicine. This unit will finish with a study on injuries and treatments in the British trenches during the First World War.
- **Early Elizabethan England, 1558-88**
In this British depth study students learn about the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Students will explore Elizabethan society and government. They will consider the problems of her legitimacy, gender, and the issue of marriage. Students will learn about the religious divisions and the threats Elizabeth faced including Mary Queen of Scots. They will learn about the conflicts abroad including the Spanish Armada. They will also learn about the Elizabethan age of exploration and discovery, including the roles of Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh.
- **Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941-91**
Our period study will be an examination of the development of the Cold War after the Second World War right up to the collapse of the Soviet Union. It will look at the key differences between capitalism and communism and how the USA and Soviet Union competed to have greater influence around the world. Students will learn about a number of key events that shaped the second half of the 20th Century. Some key events studied are the creation of nuclear weapons, The Berlin Airlift, building of the Berlin Wall, Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
- **The USA, 1954-75: conflict at home and abroad**
The Modern Depth Study will focus on a short time span within America. Students will learn about the Civil Rights Movement in America, focusing on a range of individuals, organisations and events that played a big part in the struggle for African American equality within the United States. The second part of this unit will focus on the United States involvement in the Vietnam War. Students will learn about the development of the war, the nature of combat and tactics during the war as well as the impact the war will have within American society.

How Will I be Assessed?

Paper 1: *Thematic Study and Historic Environment* – 1 hour 20-minute exam worth 30% of the final grade
 Paper 2: *Period Study and British Depth Study* – 1 hour and 50 minutes exam worth 40% of the final grade
 Paper 3: *Modern Depth Study* – 1 hour and 30 minutes exam worth 30% of the final grade

Recommendation from the Subject Leader

If you are someone who wants to be able to make sense of the key events in the world today and you are fascinated by the thoughts and actions of people in the past, then this exciting course is for you. You will be challenged in your lessons, but if you are capable of justifying your views with evidence and explaining it to others, then you have the tools to be an effective historian.

Course Type: GCSE

Grading System: 1-9

Exam Board: AQA



Why Study French?

Having another language is a significant competitive advantage in a globalised marketplace. Languages support first-language literacy, open doors for future job opportunities, encourage analytical and problem-solving skills, and enhance listening skills and memory. Studying another language at GCSE brings enormous cultural capital, covering art, music, fashion, cuisine, film, global issues, ethics, geography, travel, history and more. Learning a language shows kindness in reaching out to others in both writing and speaking, curiosity about the diversity of the world, and hard work as it connects with every other subject at school – plus it is just fun and immensely satisfying to communicate in another language!

What Will I Study? Course Content

Theme 1: People and Lifestyle

- 1. Identity and Relationship with Others (Describing family, friends, identity, nationality, relationships, marriage, and civil partnership.)
- 2. Healthy Living and Lifestyle (Fitness, mental health, parts of the body, going to the Doctor, addiction, food, and drink)
- 3. Education and Work (My studies, my school, Post-16, jobs, and ambitions)

Theme 2: Popular culture

- 1. Free-time Activities (weekend activities and socialising, e.g. sport, TV and films, the arts, music, reading, food shopping and eating out)

- 2. Customs, Festivals and Celebrations (birthdays, religious, national, and cultural celebrations, and traditions across the French speaking world.)
- 3. Celebrity Culture (The world of media, music, fashion, fame, and influence.)

Theme 3: Communication and The World Around Us

- 1. Travel and Tourism (Holidays, places of interest, transport, and weather)
- 2. Media and Technology (Technology, social media, and internet safety)
- 3. The Environment and Where People Live (Home, neighbourhood, region, and social, political, and environmental concerns.)

How Will I be Assessed?

25% Speaking: Exam: teacher-conducted

50 marks at F&H. 15 minutes supervised prep F&H, then exam: 7-9 mins F, 10-12 mins H. 3 sections: role play, read aloud + conversation, photo card + conversation

25% Writing:

50 marks at F&H. 1 hour 10 mins F, 1 hour 15 mins H. Instructions in English. 5 sections at F, 3 sections at H
Foundation: photo card, 50-word writing 5 bullet points, 5 short grammar tasks, translate from English to French, 90-word writing 3 bullet points

Higher: translate from English to French, 90-word writing 3 bullet points, 150-word writing 2 bullet points

25% Listening Exam:

40 marks at F (x 1.25 so /50), 50 marks at H
35 mins F, 45 mins H (inc 5ms prep)
2 sections: questions and answers in English, dictation

25% Reading Exam:

50 marks at F&H
45 mins F, 1 hour H
2 sections: questions and answers in English, translation from French to English

Recommendation from the Subject Leader:

You are enthusiastic and motivated about communication and willing to be outward-looking. Anyone can learn a language well enough to communicate, and there is flexibility in the GCSE to do so with genuine proficiency. Learning a language combines problem-solving and creativity with practical real-world situations and culture and develops a number of skills useful across all subjects.

SPANISH (ENTRY REQUIREMENT)

Course Type: GCSE

Grading System: 1-9

Exam Board: AQA



Entry requirement: Students must be achieving **P or P+ and Always or Mostly in Learning Values for French** in their Progress reports.

Why Study Spanish?

Having another language is a significant competitive advantage in a globalised marketplace. Languages support first-language literacy, open doors for future job opportunities, encourage analytical and problem-solving skills, and enhance listening skills and memory. Studying another language at GCSE brings enormous cultural capital, covering art, music, fashion, cuisine, film, global issues, ethics, geography, travel, history and more. Learning a language shows kindness in reaching out to others in both writing and speaking, curiosity about the diversity of the world, and hard work as it connects with every other subject at school – plus it is just fun and immensely satisfying to communicate in another language!

What Will I Study? Course Content

Theme 1: People and Lifestyle

1. Identity and Relationship with Others (Describing family, friends, identity, nationality, relationships, marriage, and civil partnership.)
2. Healthy Living and Lifestyle (Fitness, mental health, parts of the body, going to the Doctor, addiction, food, and drink)
3. Education and Work (My studies, my school, Post-16, jobs, and ambitions)

Theme 2: Popular culture

1. Free-time Activities (weekend activities and socialising, e.g. sport, TV and films, the arts and food shopping)

2. Customs, Festivals and Celebrations (birthdays, religious, national, and cultural celebrations, and traditions across the French speaking world.)
3. Celebrity Culture (The world of media, music, fashion, fame, and influence.)

Theme 3: Communication and The World Around Us

1. Travel and Tourism (Holidays, places of interest, transport, and weather)
2. Media and Technology (Technology, social media, and internet safety)
3. The Environment and Where People Live (Home, neighbourhood, region, and social, political, and environmental concerns.)

How Will I be Assessed?

25% Speaking: Exam: teacher-conducted

50 marks at F&H, 15 minutes supervised prep F&H, then exam: 7-9 mins F, 10-12 mins H
3 sections: role play, read aloud + conversation, photo card + conversation

25% Writing:

50 marks at F&H. 1 hour 10 mins F, 1 hour 15 mins H
Instructions in English. 5 sections at F, 3 sections at H
Foundation: photo card, 50-word writing 5 bullet points, 5 short grammar tasks, translate from English to French, 90-word writing 3 bullet points

Higher: translate from English to French, 90-word writing 3 bullet points, 150-word writing 2 bullet points

25% Listening Exam:

40 marks at F (x 1.25 so /50), 50 marks at H
35 mins F, 45 mins H (inc 5ms prep)
2 sections: questions and answers in English, dictation

25% Reading Exam:

50 marks at F&H
45 mins F, 1 hour H
2 sections: questions and answers in English, translation from French to English

Recommendation from the Subject Leader:

You are enthusiastic and motivated about communication and willing to be outward-looking. Anyone can learn a language well enough to communicate, and there is flexibility in the GCSE to do so with genuine proficiency. Learning a language combines problem-solving and creativity with practical real-world situations and culture and develops a number of skills useful across all subjects. Languages are valued in the workplace and help keep a wider range of degree courses and further education paths open to you. As you will be working on a slightly shorter course, you will need to show that you can work well at your current language and that you can work independently too.

Course Type: OCR Cambridge National 1/2 in Sport Studies

Grading System: Level 1 Pass- Level 2 Distinction*

Exam Board: OCR



Why Study Cambridge National in Sport Studies?

This course designed for students who are inspired and motivated by the sports industry and who want an academic and practical introductory programme to sport. The Sport and Leisure industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in the UK and an exciting place to work. If you would like to not only develop your own sporting talents, but also learn what it is like to work in the sports industry then this is the course for you!

What Will I Study? (Course Content)

Students must undertake **3 units of work, 2 of which are compulsory** and listed below:

- **Unit R184 – Contemporary Issues in Sport (worth 40%)**
- **Unit R185 – Performance and Leadership in Sports Activities (worth 40%)**
- In addition to the mandatory units, students will complete **1 of the below optional units:**
- **R186 – Sport and the media* (worth 20%)**
- **R186 – Increasing Awareness of Outdoor Adventurous Activities (OAA)* (worth 20%)**

**The optional units will be determined by the size and makeup of the group/s.*

How Will I be Assessed?

The mandatory unit R184 (contemporary issues in sport) is assessed externally by an exam, taken at the end of Year 11. All other units are assessed internally via coursework, controlled assessment, or practical performance.

Pupils will be encouraged to use their experiences and skills developed in this qualification to support in the organisation and running of sporting events in school and the local community.

Recommendation from the Subject Leader:

There are many options available to school-leavers: further education, higher education, vocational degrees, and apprenticeships and jobs that offer workplace learning. If you're not sure about the path you wish to take, the flexibility of Cambridge National in Sport Studies makes it valuable choice, as it offers useful practical experience as well as a recognised qualification.

Students taking this course need to have a real interest in both playing sport as well as a thirst for gaining knowledge about topics related to sport such as tactics, rules, officiating, coaching, cultural influences, and training.

General Reminder

As a reminder, as part of the core timetable in KS4, pupils will still experience Core Physical Education. Core Physical Education is an opportunity for students to get involved in a variety of physical activities, develop personal fitness, and gain an understanding of healthy, active lifestyles.

Cambridge National in Sport Studies is an opportunity gain a formal qualification in PE, core PE remains a subject for all students to engage and experience.

Course Type: BTEC Tech Award **Grading System:** Level 1 Pass, Merit, Distinction, Level 2 Pass, Merit, Distinction, Distinction*



Exam Board: Edexcel

(Limited spaces)

Why Study Health and Social Care?

To learn about the diverse career opportunities in the Health and Social Care industry such as Nursing, working in Childcare, working with the Elderly and vulnerable and other NHS careers.

You can also develop skills, knowledge and understanding that will enable you to:

1. Communicate and interact well with other professionals as well as people you may come into contact within the Health and Social Care Sector
2. Develop and understanding of the needs of your clients, young children, the elderly, people with additional needs and the general public.
3. Explore factors that can affect people throughout their lives and the support that can be available to them.

What Will I Study? Course Content

Component 1: Human Lifespan Development (changes throughout our lives).

Component 2: Health and Social Care Values (how to recognise good practice in your work).

Component 3: Health and Wellbeing (looking at physical, social, intellectual, and emotional factors).

How Will I be Assessed?

Component 1 & 2: Internally assessed and graded at Level 1, Level 2 (Pass, Merit and Distinction). Each unit is worth 30%. Both units will be assessed in year 10 through the internal assessment process.

Component 3: Externally assessed, internally supervised over 3 hours. (40%) This unit is assessed in year 11.

Recommendation from the Subject leader:

Learners who successfully complete this qualification will be prepared to continue their studies at Level 3. This could include vocationally related qualifications and GCE A Levels. Learners could also progress to an Apprenticeship.

Course Type: GCSE

Grading System: 1-9

Exam Board: AQA



Why Study Business?

Business Studies helps students understand more about how and why businesses operate in the way they do. Students are able to relate what they study to everyday activities, such as purchasing goods, and the news reported in the media. As well as developing students' knowledge and understanding of the world of business, this course helps students to develop a range of skills such as: decision-making; interpreting and managing information; devising solutions to problems and issues.

Students are encouraged to develop a lifelong interest in, and enjoyment of, business subjects, and to develop and apply their knowledge and skills to understand today's issues in local, national, and global contexts.

Students will undertake explorative research and business analysis where they will carry out location studies and market research activities.

What Will I Study? Course Content

Students will be studying subjects such as Business in the Real World, Influences on Businesses, Business Operations, Human Resources, Marketing and Finance to develop their skills and understanding of businesses and how they operate. Students will apply their knowledge and understanding to different business contexts ranging from small enterprises to large multinationals and businesses operating in local, national, and global contexts. This will help the students to develop an understanding of how these contexts impact on business behaviour, by applying their knowledge and understanding to business decision making.

How Will I be Assessed?

Students will be sitting two exams:

Paper 1 will be on Influences of operations and HRM on business activity.

Paper 2 will look at Influences on marketing and finance on business activity, both are worth 50% of their overall grade.

Recommendation from the Subject leader:

The successful completion of a Business course at Key Stage 4 will prepare learners for employment or further education. GCSE Business will encourage students to make informed choices about a wide range of further learning opportunities and career pathways as well as develop life skills that enable them to become financially and commercially aware. Progress on to a Level 3 Business course or a modern apprenticeship would be an expected pathway.

Course Type: GCSE **Grading System:** 1-9

Exam Board: Eduqas



Why Study Media?

The course seeks to develop students' understanding of how these products influence us, who the target audience is and how each product represents society. Media is certainly a first step into a longer career of further education and potential employment opportunities within a diverse media industry. As Media is a new subject for most students, an interest in some of the types of text we will study is essential: this may be films, television, video games, newspapers, the Internet, or even new media technologies.

What Will I Study? Course Content

Exam paper 1 (40%) - Learners will explore how different forms of media follow generic conventions, use media language, represent events, issues, places, individuals and social groups, address audiences and reflect their industrial context.

Exam paper 2 (30%) - Learners will explore a range of media to demonstrate media issues and their understanding of theoretical frameworks including media language, representation, audiences, and media industries as it applies to each form.

Controlled assessment (30%) - Learners will develop media projects, applying their knowledge and understanding of taught theory to create convincing examples of a finalised media product, e.g. a magazine.

How Will I be Assessed?

70% Examination

30% Controlled assessment (Coursework)

Recommendation from the Lead Teacher:

The course is divided between practical production work (coursework) and preparation for the written exam. As part of the practical work, students will be required to use industry standard IT software, typically Photoshop and InDesign to create media products such as magazines or film posters. Consequently, good IT and written skills are required for this course.

The industry is expanding rapidly and there are a vast range of employment opportunities and higher education courses available. The GCSE is an excellent intermediate step towards a career in the media industry.

This course emphasises analytical and theoretical skills as well as a creative and practical approach. Many students seek to continue with the subject into Sixth Form and then into university.

5. Careers Support and Guidance

Miss Leaney, our Careers Coordinator, is available to help you with your careers and GCSE-related questions and to help you find the answers you need.

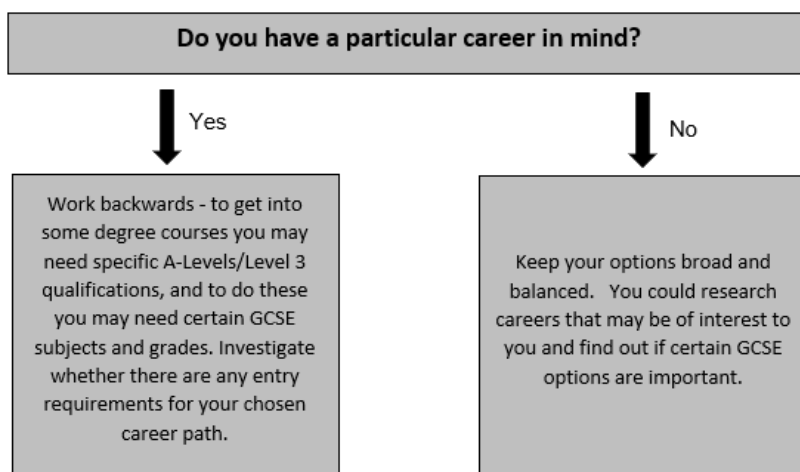
She will be running optional pathways support sessions to help you on Tuesdays after-school and Friday lunchtimes. Please arrange an appointment by email, careers@northstowe.education, or by visiting Miss Leaney.

Will the GCSE Options I pick affect my future?

While your future career may seem a long way off, it's important that you think carefully about your GCSE choices. The decisions you make now – and the grades you will achieve – can have an impact on what you can do later in life.

Sometimes you need a GCSE in a subject in order to study it at A-level. In the same way, some university courses have set entry requirements and specific GCSE requirements in terms of the subjects studied, the number of GCSE passes, and the grades achieved. For example, studying Medicine may require you to take science at GCSE and achieve a grade 9-4.

Some A-level options don't require you to have studied them at GCSE first – for example, Psychology, Economics, Media Studies, or Law. In general, however, no career will be closed to someone with a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 4.



Useful Resources

- Meridian Pathways – On the Year 8/9 page, you will find information, conversation starters, useful websites, and activities you can do to help with choosing your GCSE options. <https://pathways.meridiantrust.co.uk/year-8-9>
- Unifrog - You can explore different jobs in the Careers Library, which includes a section on entry requirements, and any GCSEs you may need to take to get into this career. You can also explore different subjects in the Subject Library. There is also a webinar on choosing your options in the resource library. <https://www.unifrog.org/>
- Advice on Choosing Your Key Stage 4 Options Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9uwSv1fZfA>
- icould - <https://icould.com/stories/choosing-your-gcse-options/>

6. FAQs, Key Terms and Contacts

Can I do the same subjects as my friends?

Answer: This is not a good basis for making your decision. Your friends will have different ideas to you and may enjoy different types of subjects. Choose subjects for yourself and try not to be influenced by your friends. Remember you will have lots of core subjects in common

I like my teacher. Can I be in his/her group next year?

Answer: The teacher that you will be given will depend upon the choices you have made. It is not possible to choose a teacher. Choose a subject because you like the subject and think you can do well in it.

Will I get the subjects that I have requested?

Answer: We try our very best to give students the preferences that they have requested. Unfortunately, we are a small school and in a small minority of cases, it is not possible to give all choices due to the combination of subjects that you are wishing to do. Please bear this in mind when choosing your preferences.

Do I have to choose any particular subjects?

Answer: Students on Pathway A must choose a language and a humanities subject. Students on Pathway B must choose at least one language or humanities subject. This is to ensure a balanced curriculum up until the age of 16.

If you are concerned about your allocated pathway, please email Mrs Morrison (smorrison@northstowe.education) before Friday 28th February 2025.

What is a Vocational qualification?

Answer: BTECs and Cambridge Nationals are work related qualifications suitable for a wide range of students, built to accommodate the needs of employers and allow progression to university. They provide a more practical, real-world approach to learning alongside a key theoretical background.

Should I know what I want to do after GCSEs already?

Answer: No, not necessarily. It is always good to have this in mind if you can but for now make decisions based on areas you like and achieve well at. Many A-level options don't require you to have studied them at GCSE first – for example, Psychology, Economics, Media Studies, History or Law. In general, however, no career will be closed to someone with a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 4.

Make decisions around what leaves you with the best opportunities to make the next steps later on.

Where can I go for help?

Answer: You have a big support network around you. This includes your family, tutor, siblings, friends, and fellow tutees. Remember that lots of people have done this before so make use of their experience. You could even go online and start looking at Post 16 choices that you may be interested in. If you are at all worried, speak to your tutor.

Key Terms

Coursework: work which can be produced in school or at home and makes up a proportion of the final grade.

Controlled Assessment: a piece of work that has to be produced in school in controlled conditions (under the supervision of a member of staff) and makes up a proportion of the overall final grade.

External Assessment: work that will be assessed by the exam board, usually in the form of an exam.

Course Leader Contacts:

GCSE Art/Photography	Mrs Davies kdavies@northstowe.education
GCSE Drama	Mr Skinner sskinner@northstowe.education
GCSE Music	Mr Mulholland bmulholland@northstowe.education
GCSE Computer Science	Mr Racovitan mracovitan@northstowe.education
GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition	Dr Winn
GCSE Design & Technology	Dr Winn dwinn@northstowe.education
GCSE Geography	Ms Dunham cdunham@northstowe.education
GCSE Ethics	Mr Wilson twilson@northstowe.education
GCSE History	Mr Thomas rthomas@northstowe.education
GCSE French	Ms Sebborn
GCSE Spanish (entry requirement)	msebborn@northstowe.education
OCR Cambridge National in Sports Studies	Mr Robinson brobinson@northstowe.education
BTEC Tech Award Health and Social Care	Ms Joyce cjoyce@northstowe.education
GCSE Business Studies	Mr Rasmussen mrasmussen@northstowe.education
GCSE Media Studies	Mrs Morrison smorrison@northstowe.education
Guided Pathways Process	Mrs Morrison