

# Choices at 14

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Good evening students and families - and a very warm welcome to Rye College for the launch of our Curriculum for September 2018. This evening we meet in the surrounds of Rye Studio – a superb facility that supports the creative arts across the trust’s schools.

Tonight is a particularly important evening for all of our Year 9 students who, at the end of our address, will start the processing of making the most appropriate curriculum choices to match their wants, ambitions and aspirations for the future. For many, this will be the most important conversation you will have had about your education so far in your lives. We know the single most influential factor in a successful education is the attitude of a child’s family. Therefore, we stress the importance of discussing the choices as a family – and sharing the decision making process.

If you are the type of student who knows what you want to be doing, where you want to be doing it and by what age then I’m sure you’ll have given this matter some thought already. But worry not, if you don’t yet know your particular direction of travel then tonight is about helping you make the right choices so when you do know what you want to be doing you’ll have the best range of qualifications to help you get there. My colleagues here tonight are all prepared to give you individual information, advice and guidance.

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Our mission at Rye College is to ‘create bright futures for all’. We want every child to grow and flourish in our care. We are driven by a pursuit of high academic standards regardless of start points and a desire for all students to experience an exceptional education. Our students will leave with a range of recognised qualifications – that reflect what young people want to study, need to study and are best placed to study given the strengths of the college itself – on departure, each student’s suite of qualifications should have real currency in the world of higher education as well as the workplace.

Our curriculum offer is simple: broad and balanced with an academic core through which all students have the opportunity to study at least one arts qualification. It combines a foundation in the national curriculum subjects, a focus on academic achievement in English, maths, science and the humanities with a broader offer of suitable academic, vocational and technical qualifications. We recognise the ‘squeeze’ on the arts in many schools – but tonight we renew our commitment to arts education and place them centrally in our curriculum offer to you.

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Finally, a short word about ‘Progress 8’: many of you may be familiar with the old ‘5A\* to C including English and maths’ measure that helped you understand what your child was studying and how well they were doing. This has now been replaced by a new progress measure – the so called ‘Progress 8’. The measure calculates how much progress students make between their results in Year 6 and their results in Year 11. It goes on to compare students’ exam results with those of other students with similar Year 6 results. It is designed to offer students a broad and balanced experience across eight subjects with a focus on academic subjects whilst setting realistic expectations for student achievement.

At this point, I would simply like to reassure you that our curriculum offer aligns with this measure and intentions behind it – to ensure all students experience a rounded education of quality. It's a complex subject and more information can be found of on our website:

[www.ryecollege.co.uk/students/choices-at-14](http://www.ryecollege.co.uk/students/choices-at-14).

At this point I'm going to stop talking and hand you over to my deputy, Mr. Dom Downes, who will take you through the detail of the curriculum offer. Enjoy the rest of your evening. We will be about at the end to take questions.