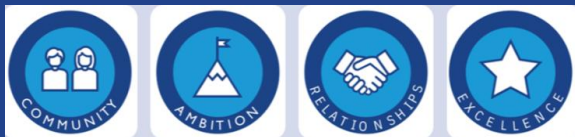


Paignton Academy



We CARE - Believe & Achieve
Our CARE core values and
principles guide our daily actions
and choices



Year 9 Options 2026

- GCSEs/Level 2 qualifications
- Core subjects (examined)
- Core subjects (non-examined)
- GCSEs NEVER lead to a direct career as such- need to specialise for this to happen.
- **GENERAL** CERTIFICATE of SECONDARY EDUCATION.
- GCSEs are the entry route to the next stage of education.
- Grades are more important than the subject (but MUST pass core subjects)
- Colleges/6th Form Schools insist on a certain number of grades in a certain number of subjects
- KEY is to ensure entry onto the next level after GCSE e.g. A' Level/Level 3

Level	Qualification type
Level 1	GCSE at grades 1, 2 and 3
Level 2	GCSEs and BTEC (at grades 4+)
Level 3	A' Level, BTEC, Advanced Diploma
Level 4	Higher apprenticeship; Level 4 Diploma etc.
Level 5	Higher National Diploma (HND)
Level 6	Degree with honours e.g. BA (hons); BSc (Hons)
Level 7	Masters Degree; Postgraduate Diploma
Level 8	PhD or DPhil

Average earnings and higher grades

Exam outcome	Financial impact over a lifetime
Gaining 5 strong passes at GCSE (including English & maths)	£80,000 more than those who do not have 5 strong passes at GCSE
1 grade higher at GCSE across 9 subjects	£207,000 more earned during working lives compared to those with 1 lower grade at GCSE
At least 2 A' Levels	£60,000 more added (£140,000 if 5 strong passes; £267,000 if combined with at least 2 A' Levels)
Degree	An extra £100,000 to £130,000 added (so £367,000 if added to 5 strong passes at GCSE and at least 2 A' Levels)

English & maths

Exam outcome	Financial impact over a lifetime
1 grade improvement in maths at GCSE (e.g. from grade 4 to grade 5)	£14,579 increase in earnings
1 grade improvement in English	£7,266 increase in earnings

What young people (GCSE students) **think** they will start earning when they finally enter the world of work.....

£95,000 a year!

The reality is somewhat different.....





Average (full time) salary in the UK is £34,000 in Torbay it is £27,000

By education	Weekly earnings	Annual earnings
No qualifications	£304	£15,808
GCSEs	£381	£19,812
A' Levels (or equivalent)	£435	£22,620
Degree or equivalent	£740	£38,500

Age	Average salary
16-17	£13,910
18-21	£22,932
22-29	£30,316

• *Community*

• *Ambition*

Relationships

• *Excellence*

Key message

- Choose your GCSE/Level 2 subjects carefully
- Higher grade is MORE IMPORTANT than the subject
- There is a DIRECT link between HIGHER GRADES and how much you earn.
- There is little DIRECT link between the GCSE SUBJECT and how much you earn.

Year 9

Options 2026

- To inform parents and students about the option choices available at Paignton Academy
- To maximise student outcomes to provide greater opportunities once the student leaves Paignton Academy



Dates	
14/15 th January	Options Events (WRC/BRC)
19 th January	PPE Week for Year 9
End of January	Booklets emailed home and to students
28 th January/ 4 th February	Careers Events for all Year 9 students
All February	Parental Phone call requests with ALF/ TLW
10 th February	Exam results sent home
12 th February	Parents Evening
13 th February	Option Booking opens (closes 27 th February)
April	Option Choices will be reviewed against Data Drop 2 Info
Early May	Options Confirmed

DO:

- Choose courses you are interested in and that you enjoy
- Choose a range of different courses, so that you have a broad base from which to choose your post-16 courses
- Read the subject information. Ask the advice of your subject teachers, your tutor and our careers advisers and discuss it with your parents
- THINK VERY CAREFULLY about the subjects you choose. It is very difficult to change course once you have started.

DO NOT:

- Choose a course simply because your friends have
- Allow either a like or a dislike of particular staff to influence your choice
- Make your decision hastily
- Drop any subject you may want to study after Year 11

PA Curriculum 2026-2028

2 week timetable	
English	9 Hours
Mathematics	8 Hours
Science	9 Hours
Physical Education	2 Hours
PSHE and Careers	2 Hours
4 Option Choices	5 Hours Each

At least one option from the following is mandatory:

GCSE Computer Science

GCSE French

GCSE Geography

GCSE History

Remainder of options from the following:

GCSE Business Studies*	BTEC Tech Award Art
GCSE Computer Science	OCR Cambridge National Sport Studies
GCSE Design Technology*	NCFE Health and Social Care*
GCSE French	NCFE Cambridge National Child Development*
GCSE Geography	NCFE Interactive Media (IT)*
GCSE History	WJEC Hospitality and Catering*
GCSE Drama	
GCSE Ethics	
GCSE Music	

Important Emails

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