

4<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

CGO/JHW/Science Pathways

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Principal: Julia Collins

I am writing to inform you of some upcoming changes to GCSE Science pathways and setting for our current Year 10 students.

## GCSE Science pathways:

You might be aware that GCSE Science follows one of two different pathways:

- **GCSE Separate Sciences:** this pathway results in students being awarded three GCSE Science qualifications – one for each of biology, chemistry and physics – upon successful completion of those GCSE courses. Each of the three qualifications (GCSE Biology, GCSE Chemistry and GCSE Physics) are standalone courses and require students to sit two 1 hour 45 minute examinations per qualification, six examinations in total. Students completing this pathway will study all topics and additional Separate Science material for each of the separate sciences.
- **GCSE Combined Science:** this pathway results in students being awarded two GCSE Science qualifications – a combined grading on a seventeen-point scale that incorporates the results from each of the three sciences. This pathway requires students to sit six 1 hour 15 minute examinations, two per science, with each of the examination results contributing to the overall combined GCSE grade. Students completing this pathway will study each of the three sciences, but do not study and are not assessed on the additional Separate Science material.

We have taken the decision to make GCSE Combined Science our default offering for the majority of our Year 10 students. GCSE Combined Science can be completed at both Higher Tier (grades 9-4) and Foundation Tier (grades 5-1) and, when completed at Higher Tier, provides students with the necessary grounding that they require in order to be able to progress on to IB and A-Level sciences at Post-16. We view this as a sensible option that will provide all students with the opportunity to succeed in science.

We understand that some of our students will be disappointed that we will not be offering the Separate Science pathway in the same way that we have done in the past. To accommodate this, we have arranged for a programme of top-up lessons to be scheduled each Wednesday afternoon between 14:30 – 16:00. These one-and-a-half-hour sessions will commence at the beginning of Module 4 in Year 10 and will finish at the end of Module 3 in Year 11. They will cover the necessary additional Separate Science content for Biology, Chemistry and Physics at Higher Tier, providing approximately eighteen hours of additional teaching time per science, and will enable the students attending these sessions to sit GCSE Separate Science examinations at the end of Year 11.

The spaces available for these sessions will be limited to twenty and it is envisaged that the twenty students that start these sessions at the beginning of Module 4 in Year 10 will be the



same twenty students completing the sessions at the end of Module 3 in Year 11. Your son/daughter has been given information in a special assembly about how to apply for a place on this separate science pathway and the decisions process that will take place. A summary of the process is outlined at the back of this document, with a permission slip attached that must be completed and returned should your son/daughter wish to apply.

### **Year 10 Science setting:**

At present, students in Year 10 are set based on ability within each half of the Academy (Brunel/Da Vinci & Chaucer/Darwin). At the beginning of Module 4, Year 10 students are going to be regrouped based on their GCSE Science pathway and tier of entry. There will be five groups on each half of the Academy:

- 3x Higher-Tier GCSE Combined Science groups. (Students from these groups are able to apply for the separate sciences)
- 1x Foundation-Tier GCSE Combined Science groups.
- 1x Foundation-Tier group on separate science pathway.

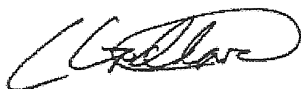
*It should be noted that the three Higher-Tier GCSE Combined Science groups will be of equal ability – there will be no “Set 1”, “Set 2” or “Set 3”.*

The new student groups will be based on current internal assessment data to date, as well as input from current class teachers and advice from Heads of College, Assistant Heads of College and College management teams. Our aim is to ensure that all students are on the most appropriate tier of entry and receiving high quality teaching across all lessons for all groups. Students will be notified of their new groups and letters sent home with further details in due course.

It is envisaged that these groups will then remain as they are until the completion of the course at the end of Year 11 in order to provide the best continuity and consistency possible.

I hope that this letter helps to clarify the upcoming changes to Year 10 GCSE Science setting and pathways. Should you have any queries or would like to discuss any point in further detail, please do not hesitate to contact me ([craig.goddard@leighacademy.org.uk](mailto:craig.goddard@leighacademy.org.uk)).

Yours faithfully



Mr Craig Goddard  
Director of Learning for Science

## Separate Science top-up sessions:

### Details and application form

As detailed in the main body of the letter, there will be twenty spaces available for the top-up sessions being held between 14:30 – 16:00 each Wednesday from Module 4 of Year 10 to the end of Module 3 in Year 11. These twenty spaces are open to students across all Colleges in the Academy.

To apply for a place, students must write a letter, no more than one side of A4 in length, that outlines the importance of Separate Science to them personally and why the opportunity to follow the Separate Science pathway will be beneficial to their future plans. It is hoped that this will encourage students to start thinking about their future plans – providing an opportunity to research the exact requirements of any future courses and careers pathways they might be considering.

Should demand exceed the twenty spaces that we have available, then all applicants will sit an assessment that will cover a range of biology, chemistry and physics topics that have been covered in Year 9 and Year 10 to date. This assessment will take place on Wednesday 12th February at 2.30pm and will last no longer than one hour. These assessments will then be used in the decision process.

Students narrowly missing out will be placed on a reserve list, in order of highest assessment score to lowest, which will be active during Module 4 of Year 10 only. Any student dropping off the programme during Module 4 of Year 10 will be replaced by the next along on the reserve list. It will not be possible to maintain the reserve list beyond Module 4 of Year 10.

Should your son/daughter wish to apply for a place on the top-up course, they will need to fill in the reply slip below and attach it to their letter of application. Please ensure that the letter of application also has their name, tutor group and science class written at the top, too. Completed forms and applications should be returned to their college admin no later than 3.30pm on Monday 10th February 2020. Applicants will be notified on Tuesday 11th February as to whether or not there will be an assessment on Wednesday 12th February.

It is advised that all students applying for one of the Separate Science places should prepare for the possibility of an assessment as early as possible. Students should avoid waiting until Tuesday 11th February to start their preparation. The following areas could be assessed:

**Biology:** Cell Biology (Spec. reference 4.1 [all]), Respiration (4.4.2) & Biodiversity (4.7.3)

**Chemistry:** Atomic structure and the periodic table (5.1 [all]), Bonding & Structure (5.2 [all]) & Chemical Changes (5.4.1 & 5.4.2)

**Physics:** Energy (6.3 [all]), Particle Model of Matter(6.3 [all]) and Atomic Structure (6.4 [all])

To access the AQA Specification, use the link below:

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/science/specifications/AQA-8464-SP-2016.PDF>

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By signing and returning this reply slip, I am requesting a place to attend the Separate Science top-up sessions that will run each Wednesday from Wednesday 26th February in Module 4 of Year 10 until the end of Module 4 in Year 11.

I acknowledge that I will need to attend each week, work to the best of my ability in all sessions and complete any additional work required in order to best-prepare for the Separate Science Higher Tier GCSE examinations. Failure to do so might result in losing my place on these top-up sessions.

I understand that places are limited and that I might not be able to secure one of the 20 spaces that are available and that if I am placed on a waiting list that the waiting list will only be active during Module 4 of Year 10.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Carer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Science Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Tick to confirm that you have completed and attached your letter of application:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_