

# Urmston Grammar School

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11<sup>th</sup> May 2023

## **RE: Modern Foreign Languages - Curriculum Changes**

Dear Year 8 Parents and Carers,

The teaching of Modern Foreign Languages is a real strength in the curriculum at Urmston Grammar School. We have been commended by the Department of Education for being in the 1% of state secondary schools where all students study at least one language up to GCSE. In addition to the knowledge and understanding developed by studying either French and/or German, we are confident languages equip our students with a broad skillset and the cultural capital needed to become successful global citizens. As a school we continuously review our curriculum to ensure it best suits the needs of our students. It is for this reason I am writing to inform you of some changes to our Modern Foreign Languages curriculum which will have implications for your son/daughter in Year 8.

### **Current MFL Curriculum**

At present all students in Year 7 study either French or German before pursuing both these languages in Year 8. Currently when students progress to Year 9 they follow one of two pathways. Some students return to studying the one language they have been taught since Year 7. Other students continue as dual-linguists, studying both French and German throughout Year 9. When considering their GCSE options, all students automatically take their main language studied since Year 7 as their GCSE language. Those who continued as dual-linguists in Year 9 then also have the option to select their second language as one of their GCSE options.

### **Changes to MFL Curriculum**

We are phasing in changes to our curriculum so that all students will only study **one** Modern Foreign Language. Current Year 7 students and those joining each Year 7 cohort in the foreseeable future will study either French or German and this will be their sole language studied through to Year 11. This means there will no longer be the option for students to take both French and German up to Year 11, however we are continuing with our commitment that all students will study a Modern Foreign Language up to GCSE level.

There are a number of reasons for making this change. Currently the number of students opting to study both French and German at GCSE is extremely low. The national picture of limited school funding means staffing an additional GCSE class for a very limited number of dual-language students is becoming unviable. Additionally, when uptake of two languages at GCSE is so low, moving to a model whereby every student studies just one language from Year 7 through to Year 11 will mean

**Urmston Grammar School - Headteacher: Mrs R S Wall**  
**pride, participation, empathy**

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significantly more teaching time can be committed to that language and is in the best interests of the vast majority of our students. We are confident this will help students in making greater progress and ultimately securing even stronger outcomes at GCSE.

## **What are the implication for Year 8 students?**

The current students in Year 8 are in an unusual position as we are implementing this change to our curriculum whilst they have already spent this year studying both French and German. When this cohort progress into Year 9 all students will return to studying just one Modern Foreign Language, which will be the language they started in Year 7. We appreciate this may be disappointing for some students who have enjoyed their second language, and so when this cohort make their GCSE options choices in Year 9 we will still look to offer a second Modern Foreign Language GCSE option. If there is sufficient interest to make this class viable at GCSE we will seek opportunities to support this group of students in their second language when transitioning to Year 10. This will then be the last year group where two languages at GCSE are offered.

The details of these changes will shortly be explained to Year 8 students by one of their MFL teachers who should be able answer any initial queries.

Many thanks for your ongoing support.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Kennedy-Fowler'.

Mr T Kennedy-Fowler  
Deputy Headteacher