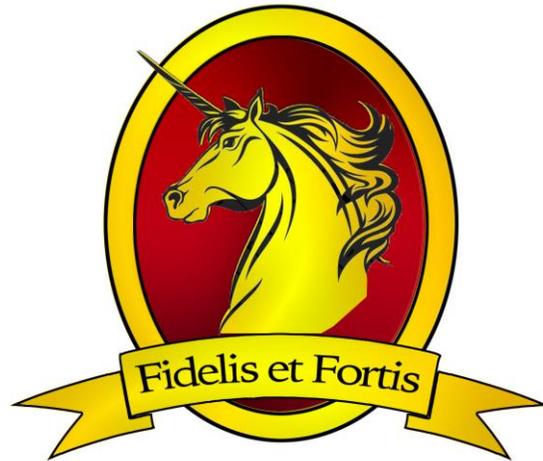


James Gillespie's High School

S2 COURSING INFORMATION

WEDNESDAY 14TH JANUARY 2026



S2 COURSE CHOICE

- The coursing process involves S2 pupils choosing the subjects they wish to study over 2 years throughout S3 and S4 and will take to National Qualification level.
- We understand that this is an important time for all S2 pupils and encourage them to consider the options carefully and discuss these at home, with teachers and with their Pupil Support Leader. PSLs are conducting individual coursing conversations with their S2 pupils over the next two weeks where they will be given advice and can ask any questions.
- All S2 pupils have also had individual appointments with Kyle Hamilton our career coach from Skills Development Scotland and will have received some guidance from him. Kyle will present today and will be based in the dining centre to support with any questions you may have.
- We strongly advise pupils to read all the information and view the links provided in the **‘S2 into S3 Course Choice and Pathways 2026’** booklet to support with making decisions and undertake any other research towards making choices. There are many useful links and detail in this booklet to support with making the appropriate choice. This has been emailed to parents/carers and added to the S2 Year TEAM.

- Pupils will be given the opportunity to study a broad and balanced curriculum and will be timetabled for **8 subjects** for National Qualifications – this includes Mathematics and English which are mandatory.
- Some pupils will attend Support for Learning tutorial groups and therefore be timetabled for **7 subjects**. They will be advised by Support for Learning teachers and their Pupil Support Leader of this.
- Each subject is timetabled for **3 periods per week**.
- Pupils will retain 1 period of PSE and RME, and 2 periods of core PE per week.
- The subjects that pupils choose will continue into S4, when they will be presented for a National Qualification in these at either National 3, National 4 or National 5 level.
- Pupils being presented at National 5 level will sit SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) exams at the end of S4. Teachers will advise of the appropriate level during S4 and will base their decision over the presentation level on the progression, knowledge and skills pupils demonstrate throughout S3.

S3/4 CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

CURRICULUM STRUCTURE FROM S3

S3

- **8 Courses**

- Five curriculum areas plus three free choices (one of these may be Support for Learning)
- You will also have PSE (1 period), core PE (2 periods) and core RME (1 period) per week.

S4

- **8 Courses**

- You will continue to study the subjects in S3 and will be presented for qualification in these in April/May of S4. (National 3, 4 or 5, dependant on your journey).

S5

- **5 Courses**

- College courses and Foundation Apprenticeships are available at this stage.
- You will continue with PSE (1 period), core PE (1 period) and an activity (1 period).

S6

- **Minimum 15 points required**

- You are required to take a minimum of 3 curricular subjects and 15 points to remain for S6.
- Each level is awarded certain points.
- College courses, courses at neighbouring schools and Scottish Baccalaureate are available.
- You will also have a PSE lesson (1 period) and a minimum of 2 study periods.

SUBJECTS STUDIED IN S3/4

The following are mandatory courses of study during S3 and S4:

- Maths or Application of Maths
(as advised by PSL and Maths faculty)
- English or English for Speakers of Other Languages* (ESOL)
- PSE
- Core PE
- Core RME

You will need to choose 1 subject from each of these areas:

- Sciences
- Social Subjects
- Modern Languages

If you wish to study more than one Science, Social Subject or Modern Language, you can select these from the 'free choice' column.

You will need to choose 2 reserve subjects from the 'reserve' column.

This is required in case we have problems making your preferred course choices fit into the column structure or we cannot offer a course due to uptake or staffing changes.

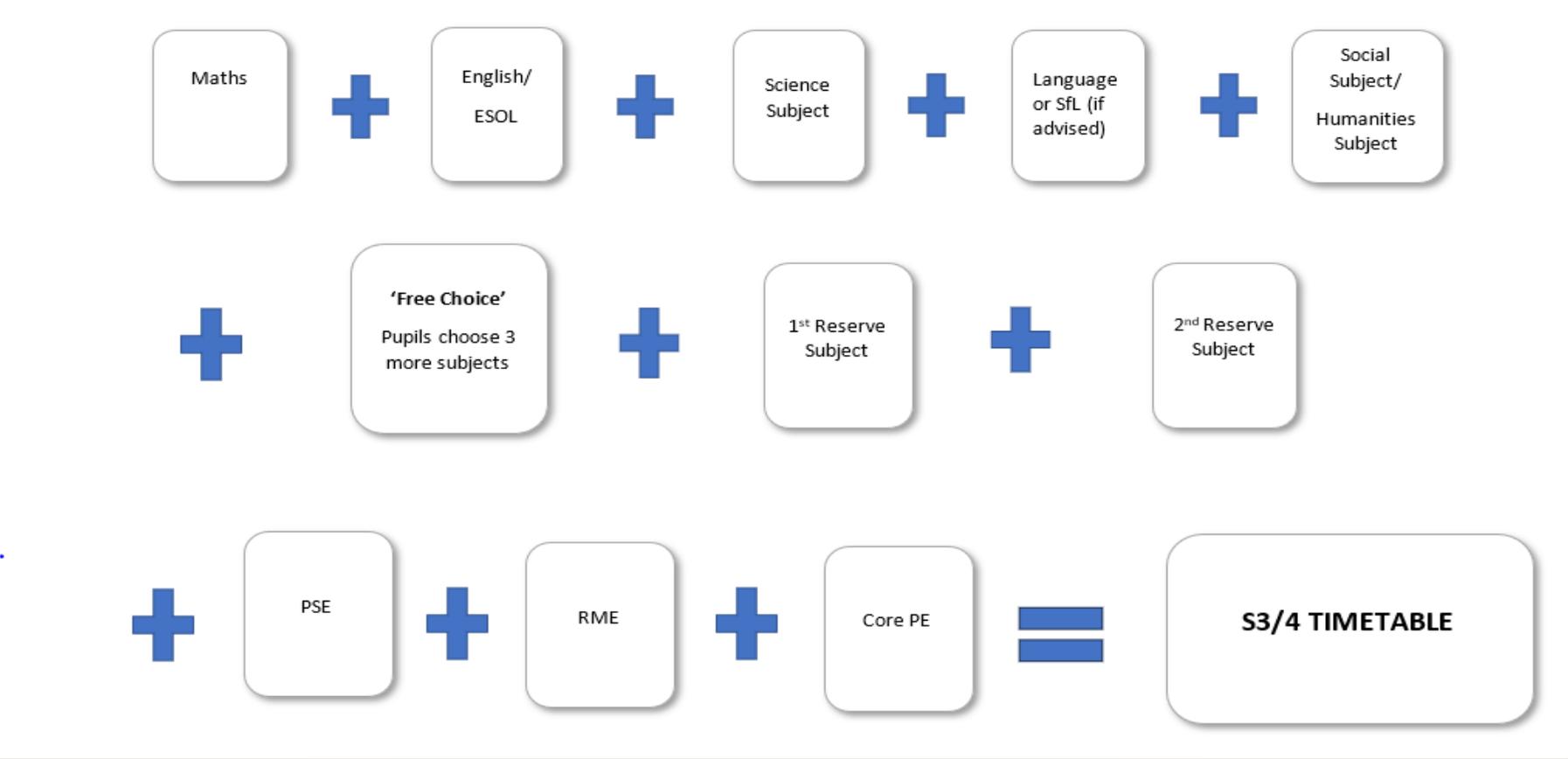
You will then need to choose 3 additional subjects from the 'free choice' column.

Additional notes:

- You must refer to the 'S2 Course Choice and Pathways' booklet for detailed information on each of the courses listed below. Gaelic (GME) pupils must select Gàidhlig in the Language column. However, they can select another language in the 'free choice' column if they wish.
- Gaelic (GME) pupils who wish to study History and/or Modern Studies, must select History GME and/or Modern Studies GME.
- You should only choose Support for Learning Tutorial Group if you have an identified support need and currently receive SFL and/or have been advised to choose this by your Support for Learning teacher or Pupil Support Leader.
- * English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils can choose English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for study in S3/4. More information will be issued about this by English staff, and Pupil Support Leaders can discuss this during coursing conversations in PSE during January.
- Course choices will be made using an online system TOOLS – you will be given more information on this during an assembly and in PSE during January.
- Deadline for course choice is Friday 6th February 2026. If you do not submit choices by then, you may be allocated subjects not of your own choosing.

Please note that the school may need to amend or remove any of the courses due to pupil uptake or staffing capacity. If this occurs, reserve subjects will be used.

STRUCTURE OF SUBJECT CHOICE



MODERN LANGUAGES Choose ONE	SOCIAL SUBJECTS/ HUMANITIES Choose ONE	SCIENCES Choose ONE	'FREE CHOICE' SUBJECTS Choose THREE	'RESERVE' SUBJECTS Choose TWO
Language studied in S1/2:	Geography	Biology	Achieve (King's Trust) Art and Design	Achieve (King's Trust) Art and Design
French	History	Chemistry	'Fast Track' Language for beginners: <i>French, German, Mandarin, Spanish</i>	'Fast Track' Language for beginners: <i>French, German, Mandarin, Spanish</i>
Spanish	History GME (for Gaelic pupils)	Physics	Biology	Biology
Gàidhlig (mandatory for GME pupils)	Modern Studies	Engineering Science	Business Management	Business Management
Mandarin	Modern Studies GME (for Gaelic pupils)	Environmental Science	Chemistry	Chemistry
German	Psychology (note Nat. 5 level only)	Computing Science	Computing Science	Computing Science
Alternative language pathway:			Dance	Dance
Languages for Life & Work (German)			Drama	Drama
Support for Learning Tutorial Group (only as advised by SfL or PSL)			Early Learning and Childcare	Early Learning and Childcare
			Engineering Science	Engineering Science
			Environmental Science	Environmental Science
			Gàidhlig (Learners)	Gàidhlig (Learners)
			Geography	Geography
			Graphic Communication	Graphic Communication
			History or History GME	History or History GME
			Languages for Life and Work (German)	Languages for Life and Work (German)
			Media	Media
			Modern Studies or Modern Studies GME	Modern Studies or Modern Studies GME
			Music or Music GME	Music or Music GME
			Music Technology	Music Technology
			Physical Education	Physical Education
			Physics	Physics
			Practical Cookery	Practical Cookery
			Practical Woodworking	Practical Woodworking
			Product Design & Manufacture	Product Design & Manufacture
			Psychology	Psychology
			Religious, Moral & Philosophical Studies	Religious, Moral & Philosophical Studies
			Support for Learning Tutorial Group (as advised by SfL or PSL)	Support for Learning Tutorial Group (as advised by SfL or PSL)
			Travel and Tourism	Travel and Tourism

Researching subjects that you are interested in is vital before making your choices

Please consult the S2 Coursing and Pathways booklet before submitting your choices: [S2 Course Choice and Pathways 2026.docx](#)

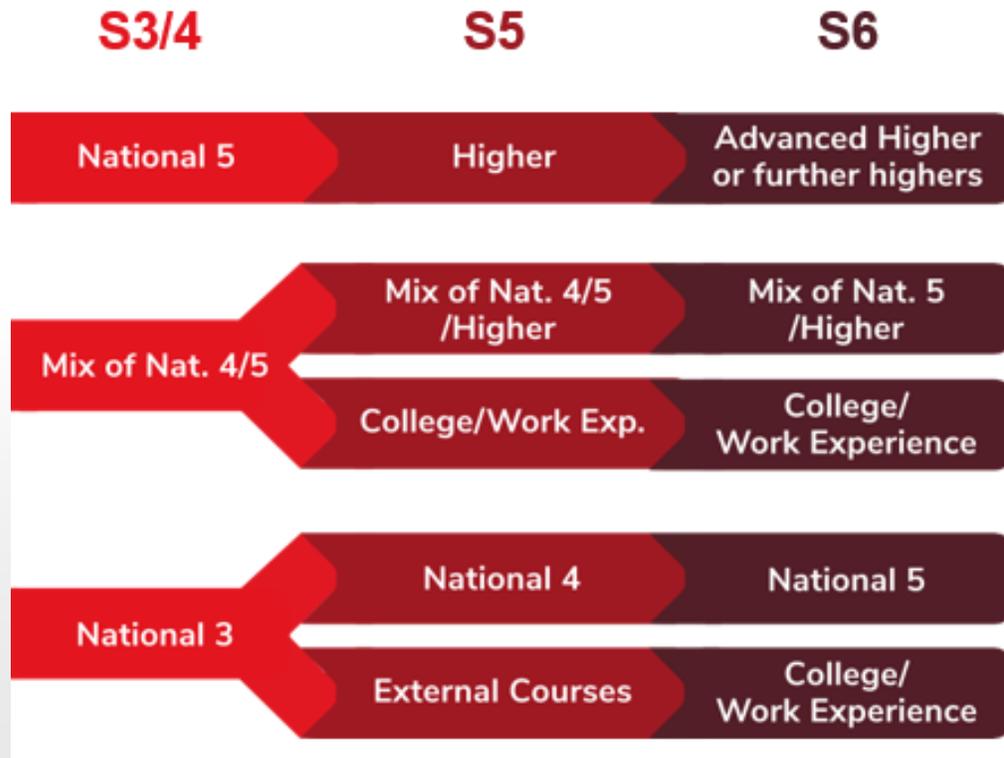
Please research your career options on
<https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/secondary/>

Discuss these course options with parents/carers and your Pupil Support Leader before making your final decision.

Final deadline for submitting your course choices is:
Friday 6th February 2026

**S3 COURSE
OFFERING
2026**

POSSIBLE LEARNING PATHWAYS



- Pupils will progress through different courses at different levels and different paces. Each person's journey is unique to them.
- Pupils will have the opportunity to move through the levels dependent upon a variety of factors including coursework completion, grasp of relevant knowledge and skills, performance in formal and informal assessments, etc.

CHOOSING SUBJECTS

- Pupils will be supported in making this important decision by their Pupil Support Leader supported by Kyle Hamilton, the school's career coach, if required.
- Keep options open – think longer term.
- Build in **breadth** of subjects across different curricular areas.
- Consider the **progression** for that subject – pupils should take the time to research the subjects they may wish to study in, and beyond, school.
- Research all subjects and content of courses in the '**S2 Course Choice and Pathways**' booklet before making any choices.
- Look at department information on the school website and speak to teachers:

<https://www.jamesgillespies.co.uk/course-choices>

- Refer to My World of Work and enter some details to find out possible pathways and job options:

<https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/secondary/>

SUBJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

The following subjects have recommended that some pupils should choose an alternative, and of equal value, National Qualification subject in their area:

- Application of Maths
- E.S.O.L. (English for Speakers of Other Languages)
- Languages for Life and Work
- Support for Learning

These pathways may be more suitable for some pupils and PSLs will discuss this with pupils at their 1:1 meetings.

Pupils cannot choose Application of Maths or E.S.O.L. unless home have received a letter regarding this recommendation.

For pupils who have not received a recommendation letter, they should continue to choose Maths and English.

CAREERS ADVICE

- Pupil Support Leaders will conduct 1:1 meetings with their pupils in January. Pupils will complete an evaluation form to support with this discussion around the most appropriate subjects and future pathways.
- Kyle Hamilton, the school's career coach, will be on hand to offer advice to pupils during this time if their PSL advises this.

Please note the following:

- Pupils are not choosing a career at this moment but thinking of what they may need to pursue a certain career.
- If pupils are unsure of a career path at this time, they should choose a **variety of subjects** in S3.
- Some careers will have specific subject requirements at National 5 level e.g. Medicine and other medical sciences, Engineering, Languages etc. Pupils should do their research before choosing!
- For some courses/colleges/universities, National 5 English and Maths are a basic requirement.
- Pupils will be given opportunities in S5 and S6 to 'mop up' specific subjects to meet any course/college/university entrance requirements.

HOW TO MAKE SUBJECT CHOICES

- Pupils will choose their subjects using an online system called 'TOOLS'.
- After choosing their other subjects, pupils will enter their three 'free' choices in number order of preference e.g. 6 = most preferred choice to 8 = third preferred choice.
- Pupils will be emailed their username and password (which is a 4-digit number) on **Wednesday 28th January 2026** via their school email. Parents/carers will also be emailed these.
- Pupils must have access to a device and the internet to be able to complete the online choice form. *(If any pupil has concerns about this, they must let their Pupil Support Leader know during their 1:1 meeting.)*
- Pupils and parents/carers will be emailed instructions on how to use 'TOOLS' to make subject choices. This will also be added to the S2 TEAM.
- **The final deadline for course choice is Friday 6th February 2026**
- TOOLS will be locked after this date and, if pupils do not choose subjects by then, subjects will be allocated which may not be of their own choosing as the construction of the timetable needs to start.
- If there are any issues, please contact your child's Pupil Support Leader.

CHANGES TO SUBJECTS

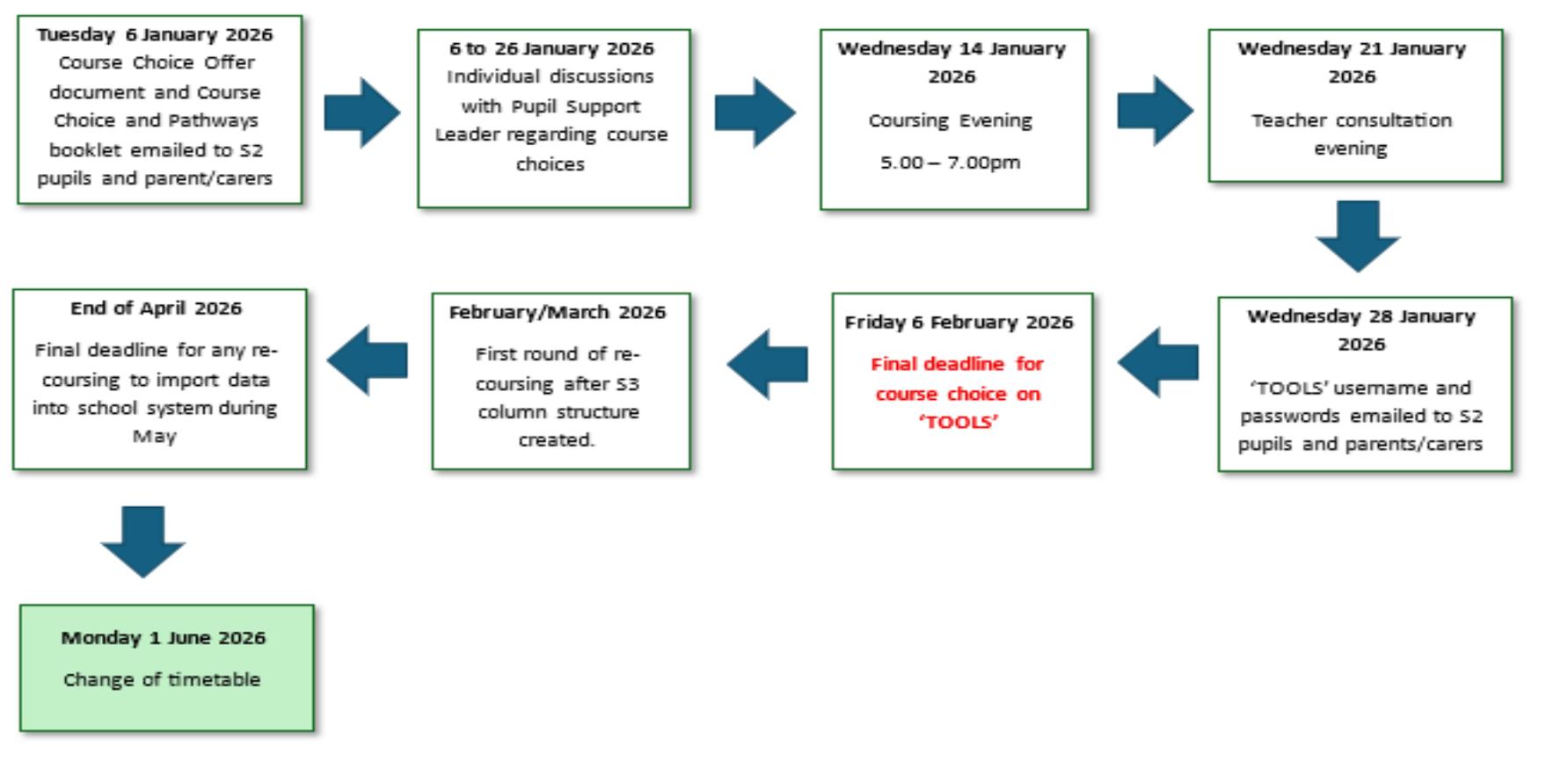
Pupils should thoroughly research their subjects before they make their choices, as we discourage late changes once the deadline has passed.

Pupil numbers for each subject determines the S3 timetable which must start construction in March.

Please note that some pupils may need to take their reserve choice due to the following:

1. Two subjects are timetabled into the same column, which means they run at the same time. This can occur for more specialised subjects where there is only one class for S3.
 2. Subject cannot run due to low pupil uptake.
 3. Staffing changes and subsequent impact on capacity to teach a certain subject.
 4. Class is oversubscribed with too many pupils choosing this to the number of classes allocated for S3. In this instance, pupils will be re-coursed in order of preference of 'free choice' subjects entered on TOOLS for fairness.
- In these cases, PSLs and/or Mrs O'Brien will let pupils know during March and their reserve choices will be used. Pupils should therefore be certain that they are happy with their first and second reserve subjects when choosing these.
 - If there are extenuating circumstances, and a pupil needs to change their subject choice for good reason, they must speak with their Pupil Support Leader immediately.
 - The only changes that will be made from the new timetable in June will be due to any medical reason or around known supports that have been put in place for individual pupils by their PSL or SfL teacher.

S2 COURSE CHOICE TIMELINE 2026



Pupils need to submit their final choices via the online form on TOOLS no later than Friday 6th February

- If any pupil has any queries or issues making course choices, they should contact their Pupil Support Leader in the first instance during their 1:1 meeting or during a PSE lesson.
- If they wish to email their PSL, please email on the school address and request that it is passed to the appropriate PSL:
Admin@jamesgillespies.edin.sch.uk
- For careers and college advice, please email Kyle Hamilton, our Skills Development Scotland careers advisor:
Kyle.Hamilton@sds.co.uk
- For any re-coursing, please email Mrs O'Brien:
Deirdre.O'Brien@jamesgillespies.edin.sch.uk

KEY CONTACTS