

4.- HEAD OF STUDIES

My name is Alberto Soria, and I am the Head of Studies for ESO in a secondary school.

Usually, all the information you are getting now, or later from your induction tutor, has already been given to parents in a meeting for all students who have enrolled before you. I check which course you have been placed in by the school council, so that I can also place you in a certain group and see your timetable. On your timetable I show you which kind of areas, which subjects you are going to have throughout the school year – I also show you where to find your classroom and those classrooms for specific purposes.

Compulsory secondary education, which is now starting for you if you are in the first year or any other, lasts four years, and those four years are divided into two levels (cycles); the first level consists of the first and second years, and the other of third and fourth years.

Some of the subjects you are going to be taught are compulsory while others are optional. Within the compulsory subjects, there are some which are fundamental (Spanish and Mathematics). These will provide you with the bases you need in order to learn the rest of your compulsory subjects better, such as Biology, Social Sciences, Technology, Music, P.E., and Art.

You also have other kind of subjects which are called optional, and which provide you with a wide range of possibilities depending on your interests or the aptitudes you can show: these optional areas or subjects include a second foreign language, professional initiation, and also a classic culture.

If you are already in the fourth year, this range of possibilities widens since you will be able to choose among different kinds of Mathematics (a or b), or also among five subjects: Physics and Chemistry, Biology and Geology, Music, Art Education and Technology.

The school year is divided into three terms: at the end of each term you will receive at home information about your grades in each subject, and also about your in-class behaviour.

The school year starts in the second week of September, and it goes through to the third week in June.

When you have finished the fourth year and passed all your subjects, you will have graduated in secondary education: this diploma makes it possible for you to access the work market, or to continue with other types of studies such as vocational training or 'A' level (higher certificate).

If you have not retaken a course during your primary education, you have the chance of retaking two courses and being there until you are eighteen. There is also the possibility of accessing vocational training if you are over sixteen: first you can go through the social guarantee programs.

Come on and experience secondary education!