



Solihull School

Curriculum Policy

The aim of the curriculum is to educate pupils for academic success and personal fulfilment: it aims to educate the whole person in a *broad and balanced* way, laying foundations which may be built upon in Higher Education and throughout life.

1. General Aims of the Whole Curriculum

- To experience a broad and balanced education which encourages pupils to fulfil their potential in many diverse areas relevant to their skills, abilities and interests.
- To generate a passion for knowledge and learning.
- To encourage the capacity for independent and creative thought, and to challenge and critically appraise ideas.
- To enable the pupils to achieve the best of which they are capable in an appropriate range of subjects.
- To enable pupils to go on to higher education establishments, or to pursue a career appropriate to their interests and abilities.
- To encourage pupils to explore/consider the spiritual dimension of life and to take informed decisions about moral and spiritual issues.
- To give the pupils an informed perspective on the role of the individual in society and to encourage them to become responsible citizens.
- To provide an acquaintance with such a range of academic subjects and extra-curricular opportunities that boys and girls are able to make effective and fulfilling use of their leisure time after leaving school and are also able to pursue intellectual, cultural, aesthetic and physical pursuits of their choice.
- To provide opportunity for links with the local community and with schools and other organisations elsewhere in the world

2. Curriculum Structure

The current timetable operates on 40 periods of 40 minutes' duration per week. This is a change to recent years when a two-week cycle was in operation.

The number of periods given to each subject in each year group in the School is as follows:

Lower and Middle School

In the Lower and Middle School much of the curriculum is compulsory: at GCSE, English, English Literature, Mathematics, French, Physics, Chemistry and Biology are all compulsory subjects. In addition, there are an increasing number of optional subjects from which pupils can choose.

Lower School – No. of Periods per Week

Subject	III	Shell	IV
English	4	4	4
Mathematics	5	4	4
Science	4	0	0
Biology	0	2	3
Chemistry	0	2	3
Physics	0	2	3
French	4	3	4
History	2	2	2
Geography	2	2	2
Terriers	2	0	0
Religious Studies	2	2	2
Music	2	2	3**
PE/Swimming	2	1	1
Games	3	3	3
Art	2	2	3**
Design	2	2	3**
ICT	1	1	3**
Latin	3	3*	3**
German	0	3*	3**
Spanish	0	3*	3**
Total	40	40	40

Options

* In the Shell Form, pupils select two additional languages chosen from German, Latin and Spanish.

** In the Fourth Form, pupils choose three subjects from German, Latin, Spanish, Art, Design (Resistant Materials), ICT and Music.

Options Advice

At appropriate times in the year, pupils in the Third Form, Shells and Fourths will have the subject options explained to them together with an explanation of how their choices may, or may not, affect later courses of study. A letter of explanation is sent to parents together with an options form in which the choices are specified. The form must be signed by parents before it is returned. While every effort is made to accommodate the wishes of every pupil, some subjects may be limited in the number of pupils they can take.

In the Fourth Form the first two choices will be guaranteed but pupils are asked to specify an alternative subject for their third option.

At the end of the Fourth Form pupils make their GCSE choices. It is important to understand that an option subject dropped, or not taken in the Shell or Fourth forms, cannot be taken up again at a later date, for example at GCSE.

(The one exception to this is that GCSE Electronics may be studied without Design having been chosen in the Fourth form options.)

Middle School – No. of Periods per Week

Subject	LV	UV
English	6	6
Mathematics	5	5
Science	0	0
Biology	4	3
Chemistry	4	3
Physics	4	3
French	4	4
PE/Swimming	1	1
Games	3	3
Latin	3***	4***
German	3***	4***
Spanish	3***	4***
History	3***	4***
Geography	3***	4***
Art	3***	4***
Design	3***	4***
Religious Studies	3***	4***
ICT	3***	4***
Music	3***	4***
Total	40	40

Options - 2009-2010

In the Lower and Upper Fifth, in addition to the 7 compulsory subjects, there are 3 optional subjects to be chosen.

Optional Subjects to be chosen from the list below:

German
 Latin
 Spanish
 Art
 Design (Resistant Materials)
 Design (Electronic Systems)
 ICT
 Geography
 History
 Music
 Religious Studies

Sixth Form

In the Sixth Form all pupils are studying for A Levels. In addition to the timetable provision for A Levels, the timetable also includes provision for Enrichment (see below), Games and an increasing amount of Private Study, as a preparation for the greater independence of life beyond school.

No. of Periods per Week

Subject	LVI	UVI
Subject 1	8	8
Subject 2	8	8
Subject 3	8	8
Subject 4	8	8 – if taken
Enrichment	3	4
General Studies	0	0
Games	3	3
Private Study	2	9 / 5*
Total	40	40

*Pupils taking 4 A Levels in the UVI are excused Enrichment in order that they have an appropriate number of private study periods (5).

Pupils in the Lower Sixth study 4 AS Levels chosen from the list below. In the Upper Sixth, the majority of pupils go on to study three of their four AS Levels to A2. However, some pupils do end up with 4 A Levels, including those who follow the Further Mathematics course. The school is able to offer not only a very wide range of subject choices, but also a very wide range of subject combinations. In almost all cases, pupils can do any combination of the subjects listed below, although this cannot be absolutely guaranteed.

A level Subject Choices

Art: Fine Art	Geography
Art: Graphic Design	German
Art: Photography	History
Art: Textiles	Latin
Art: 3-D Design	Mathematics
Biology	Mathematics (Further)
Business Studies	Music
Chemistry	Physical Education
Classical Civilisation	Physics
Design & Technology	Psychology
Economics	Religious Studies
English Literature	Spanish
French	Theatre Studies

Options Advice

Information about Sixth Form courses is contained in the Sixth Form Handbook which is issued to all Upper Fifth pupils and new applicants in January. Form Tutors, the Head of Careers and Heads

of Departments are also available to offer advice at any time to pupils or to parents. For more information see Section 4, Careers and Work Experience.

Enrichment

In an educational world dominated by public examinations, Enrichment for the Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth, which is not specifically directed to examinations, is an important part of our provision. Enrichment embodies the philosophy that there must be more to post GCSE education than the specialist study of a small number of subjects.

We believe that this varied programme, along with our extensive out-of-school sports, drama, music and activities programme, contributes towards the balanced education needed to send our students out better prepared to meet the challenge of the outside world.

Enrichment for the Lower Sixth

For the Lower Sixth there are 3 periods per week allocated to Enrichment, one period on a Monday and a double on a Thursday. The major activities are:

- **Terriers:** a considerable number of Lower Sixth pupils help as instructors with the Terriers activities programme which is provided for the Third Form. On Mondays the instructors are trained and on Thursdays they train and assist in looking after the younger pupils.
- **CCF:** the training of NCOs takes place on Monday period 5 in preparation for the full contingent parade that evening.
- **Community Service:** about 20 pupils are involved in visiting individual pensioners, or helping at local charity shops and Junior Schools on Mondays. An Amnesty International group has also operated successfully in the past. Increasingly, students intent on a career in Medicine volunteer to help in local hospitals and care homes and this can be arranged in Enrichment time.
- **Critical Thinking:** There will be the option to take an AS level in this skill during the year. Students are also offered the chance to learn the skills of debating during Enrichment sessions and the best of them will make up the European Youth Parliament team and represent the school in debating competitions.
- **The Musical:** rehearsals for the ever-popular Easter Term Musical start after the cast is selected at the beginning of the Christmas Term and will occupy Monday Enrichment sessions for the first 2 terms of the year.
- **GCSE Italian**
- **GCSE Spanish**
- **Engineering Education Scheme**
- **Chinese language and Culture**
- **Community Sports Leadership Award**

Alternatively, pupils can choose a circus of some of the following activities: The Universe, Creative Writing, Codes and code-breaking; Business Games; Science issues; Current Affairs.

Enrichment for the Upper Sixth

The Upper Sixth have two sessions of Enrichment, Monday period 5, alongside the Lower Sixth, and an Enrichment afternoon. On Mondays the Upper Sixth have a similar range of options as the Lower Sixth. Pupils are also able in the course of the year to work during part of this time on their coursework, if necessary. The option to revise for examinations is offered in the Summer Term.

Pupils in the UVI who are not studying for 4 A Levels have an Enrichment afternoon by block.

6 options are available:

- **Extended Project Qualification** For the first time this year students have been able to work towards this free standing qualification (OCR specification).
- **Higher Sports Leadership Award**
- **Community Service** – including visits to local primary schools to assist with Science and Language lessons
- **PE assistants** – helping younger pupils on a Games Afternoon
- **On Site Course**
- **Off Site Course**

These last two options offer a rolling programme of several activities. These include: tuition in skiing, climbing, golf, self-defence, riding, film, dancing and basic cooking for university.

In addition a number of speakers come in each year to talk about important social topics such as the dangers of drinking, driving and the use of drugs as well as international topics such as the Middle East and career or GAP year-related topics.

3. Preparation

The value of prep:

- To provide an opportunity for independent learning
- To help establish good habits for self motivated study
- To develop time management skills and a sense of personal responsibility with regard to work and leisure
- To extend the amount of time spent studying beyond the timetabled school day
- To encourage research and investigation; to develop skills in using libraries and other learning resources
- To develop skills of reading and extracting essential facts
- To test understanding of subject content
- To allow practice and consolidation of work done in class and preparation for future classwork
- To learn essential facts
- To provide for differentiation and to allow pupils to work to their best level
- To provide the teacher with an insight into an individual's learning and understanding
- To provide evidence for the evaluation of teaching
- To provide pupils with a bank of resources to which to refer
- To provide the opportunity to learn through experience, correction and feedback
- To strengthen the partnership between pupils, teachers and parents.

Preparation is set for all Forms from Monday to Friday inclusive. Every pupil is required to do the allotted Preparation, graded according to their level in the School, and, in most cases, it must be allowed to take precedence over all other activities. Preparation set must be recorded by the pupil in the Pupil Planner and **parents are asked to sign it each evening** (except in the Sixth Form). The Planner also provides a quick and easy means of communicating between home and School, and vice versa.

Daily Prep Times (Mondays to Fridays)

The following table indicates the approximate allocations of daily preparation time for each year group, and while these may vary slightly in practice, the total preparation time should not be exceeded.

	Number of Preps	Time for each Prep (minutes)	Total Prep Time (minutes)
LOWER SCHOOL			
III	3	25	75
Shell	3	25	75
IV	3	30	90
MIDDLE SCHOOL			
LV	3	35	105
UV	3	35	105

Sixth Form

There is no published homework timetable. Subjects should generally set the equivalent of about 4 hours of work per week for the average pupil. The setting of work is coordinated for groups which are shared by more than one teacher so that pupils are not put under unreasonable pressure.

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