



SOLIHULL

Curriculum Policy

Senior School

Owner: Head of the Senior School
Reviewers: Senior School Deputy Head (Academic)
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Version 6

Introduction

The aim of the curriculum is to educate pupils for academic success and personal fulfillment in line with the school's aims:

Ambition: the curriculum is based on rigorous teaching and academically ambitious courses which provide stretch and challenge for all.

Opportunity: the curriculum is flexible, to allow an individualised approach to subject combinations wherever possible; all pupils have access to the full range of the curriculum.

Community: the curriculum seeks to teach the pupils responsible attitudes to learning and the values which will lead to positive citizenship; it also aims to facilitate learning in as wide a range of contexts as possible.

The curriculum seeks to educate the whole person in a broad and balanced way, laying foundations which may be built upon in Higher Education, in employment and throughout life.

The Aims of the Senior School Curriculum

- To meet the needs and abilities of all pupils – taking into account age, gender, academic level, SEND, EAL and other factors.
- To offer pupils the experience of a broad and balanced education which encourages them to fulfil their potential in many diverse areas relevant to their skills, abilities and interests and which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education.
- 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 foster pupils' resilience, encouraging constructive responses to academic challenges and setbacks.
- To enable the pupils to achieve the best of which they are capable in an appropriate range of subjects, the subject-matter being appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan.
- To ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- To ensure that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills.
- To enable pupils to go on to higher education establishments, and/or to pursue a career appropriate to their interests and abilities.
- To encourage pupils to explore and consider the spiritual dimension of life and to take informed decisions about moral and spiritual issues including personal, social and health education which reflects the school's aims and ethos.
- To give the pupils an informed perspective on the role of the individual in society and to encourage them to become responsible citizens, giving them adequate preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- To give the pupils an understanding of core British values and to promote those values across the curriculum and co-curriculum: democracy, freedom of speech, individual liberty and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and respect for the rule of law. In addition, to guard against any content that might seek to undermine these values.
- To ensure all pupils receive appropriate RSE.
- To give appropriate careers guidance for pupils receiving secondary education.
- 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 through a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs.

- To provide opportunity for links with the local community and with schools and other organisations elsewhere in the world.

1. Curriculum Structure

The curriculum is rooted in the core academic subjects whilst aiming to respond to each pupil as an individual through the provision of a number of optional subjects; these options are not offered in pre-determined combinations or a column structure; rather the timetable is designed in response to the choices of a particular cohort of pupils.

The curriculum structure operates on a principle of extension rather than acceleration. Public examinations are not taken early; rather pupils who might have done so are encouraged to explore subjects in greater depth with this work being less exam focused.

The current timetable operates on a two-week structure: alternating week A and week B, on forty periods of forty minutes' duration per week.

Lower School

In the Lower and Middle School much of the curriculum is compulsory.

Options:

Pupils in Thirds have the option to study either French or Spanish. They also have one Greyhound lesson per fortnight where they will develop various skills needed to thrive in the Senior School, such as study skills and time management.

Shell Form pupils study German as a second language before making languages choices in the Fourths.

Fourth Form pupils choose four subjects from Art, Computer Science, ICT, Design and Technology, Drama, Food Preparation and Nutrition, French, German, Latin, Music and Spanish.

Lower School – Number of Periods per Fortnight

Subject	III	Shell	IV
English	8	8	8
Mathematics	9	8	8
Science	8	10	0
Biology	0	0	6
Chemistry	0	0	6
Physics	0	0	6
French	6*	5*	6*
History	4	4	4
Geography	4	4	4
Terriers	4	0	0
Religious Studies	4	4	4
PE	2	2	2
Games	6	6	6
Art	4	4	6*
Performing Arts	2	3	0
Drama	0	0	6*
DT / Food	4	4	
Design Technology			6*
Food Prep and Nutrition			6*
Computer Science	4	3	6*
Latin	5	5	6*
Music	3	3	6*
German	0	5	6*
Spanish	6*	5*	6*
WPD	2	2	2
Greyhound	1	0	0
Total	80	80	80

*In the table * Indicates subjects are optional*

Options Advice

At appropriate times in the year, pupils in the Third, Shells and Fourth Forms 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 instructions on how to input their child's options into the school's online system. 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.

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

Middle School – Number of Periods per Fortnight

Subject	LV	UV
English	12	11
Mathematics	9	10
Biology	7*	7*
Chemistry	7*	7*
Physics	7*	7*
PE	2	2
Academic PE	7*	7*
Games	6	6
French	7*	7*
Latin	7*	7*
German	7*	7*
Spanish	7*	7*
History	7*	7*
Geography	7*	7*
Art	7*	7*
Design and Technology	7*	7*
Drama	7*	7*
Food Preparation & Nutrition	7*	7*
Religious Studies	7*	7*
ICT	7*	7*
Computer Science	7*	7*
Music	7*	7*
WPD	2	2
Total	80	80

A * indicates subjects are optional

Options

In the Lower and Upper Fifth Forms, in addition to the three compulsory subjects there are seven optional subjects to be chosen: pupils may choose to study Combined Science (2 GCSEs) or three sciences; one Modern Foreign Language must be studied.

Optional subjects are chosen from the list below (pupils may not take both ICT and Computer Science):

- Art
- Classical Civilisation
- Computer Science
- Design Technology (Resistant Materials)
- Drama
- French
- Food Preparation & Nutrition
- Geography
- German
- History
- ICT
- Latin
- Music
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Spanish

Sixth Form

In the Sixth Form all pupils are studying for A Levels. In addition to the time provision for A Levels, the timetable also includes our Academic Enrichment programme. In the Lower Sixth this includes certificated and non-certificated Enrichment courses. Enrichment continues into the Upper Sixth with a series of lectures (see below). Sixth formers also have Games, and Private Study as a preparation for the greater independence of life beyond school. In the Lower Sixth just under half of the private study periods are supervised.

Number of Periods per Fortnight

Subject	LVI	UVI
Subject 1	16	18
Subject 2	16	18
Subject 3	16	18
Subject 4	16 – if taken	18 – if taken
Enrichment	4	
EPQ/Guardian Shield/Financial Services	4	0
Games	6	6
Private Study	Up to 18	Up to 18
Total	80	80

Pupils in the Lower Sixth Form study three or four subjects chosen from the list below. 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	Greek
Art: Photography	History
Biology	Latin
Business	Mathematics
Chemistry	Mathematics (Further)
Classical Civilisation	Music
Computer Science	Physical Education
Design & Technology (Product Design)	Physics
Economics	Politics
English Literature	Psychology
French	Religious Studies
Geography	Spanish
German	Theatre Studies

Options Advice

Information about Sixth Form courses is contained in the Sixth Form Subject Choices booklet which is issued to all Upper Fifth Form pupils and new applicants in the autumn term. Upper Fifth Form pupils also have an individual meeting between November and February which looks at their option choices for A Level; the Director of Futures also meets with all Lower Sixth Form pupils to think about their future university choices.

Form Tutors, the Director of Futures and Heads of Departments are also available to offer advice at any time to pupils or to parents.

Enrichment

The Enrichment programme furthers the school's aim of offering pupils a holistic education. For those pupils studying three A Levels the fourth column offers an opportunity to study for a different sort of externally certificated qualification. For 2026-2027 the choice is between the Extended Project Qualification, CISI Financial Services (Level 1 or 2) and the Guardian Shield Award (in-house devised course). The majority of pupils will take the Extended Project Qualification; other courses will run as demand requires.

Enrichment – Non-Certificated Courses

In an educational world dominated by public examinations, Enrichment for the Lower Sixth Form and Upper Sixth Form, 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 provision, contributes towards the balanced education needed to send our pupils out better prepared to meet the challenges of the outside world.

Enrichment for the Lower Sixth Form

For the Lower Sixth Form there are two periods per week allocated to Enrichment. Major activities include:

- **Terriers:** a considerable number of Lower Sixth Form pupils help as instructors with the Terriers activities programme which is provided for the Third Form. On Thursdays they train and assist in looking after the younger pupils.
- **Debating:** This course focuses on building skills in British Parliamentary Debating with sessions looking at key political issues and international events and offering a regular opportunity to debate.
- **Engineering Education Scheme.**
- **Community Sports Leadership Award (QCSL).**
- **Theatre Design**
- **Photography**
- **Philosophy, Ethics, Culture & Society**
- **Learning to Sign**
- **Green Power Racing**
- **Creative Writing**
- **Cooking for University**

Enrichment for the Upper Sixth Form

The Upper Sixth Form has one double period a fortnight of Enrichment on Thursdays. The programme takes the form of a lecture series given by members of staff and external speakers. Topics are very various. Several lectures focus on an aspect of

personal development before the pupils embark on a post 18 pathway such as financial investment and management, interview skills, sexual ethics and feminism and wellbeing. 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.

UVI Enrichment is suspended in the summer term.

Wellbeing and Personal Development

WPD is taught to both sixth form year groups by specialist staff for one period each week.

Oxbridge Preparation

The Oxbridge Co-ordinator oversees the school's support for pupils applying to Oxford and Cambridge universities.

For the most part, this academic extension work takes place within subject departments and comprises extra lessons, talks and interview practice. A key element of the programme is the focused preparation for the various entrance tests.

There are also workshops on the writing of personal statements and interviews among other topics that are relevant across a range of subjects.

Oxbridge preparation is anticipated by academic extension groups from the Third Form onwards in addition to the scholars' programme.

2. Homework

Homework is:

- 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 class work.
- 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.

Homework is set for all Forms from Monday to Friday inclusive. Every pupil is required to do the allotted tasks, graded according to their level in the school, and, in most

cases, it must be allowed to take precedence over all other activities. Homework is set either in a Pupil Planner or in Assignments on the class Team to help with easy reference and to allow parents to view their child's allotted tasks.

Homework Timetable Times (Mondays to Fridays)

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

	Number of Subjects	Time for each subject (minutes)	Total Homework Time (minutes)
LOWER SCHOOL			
III	2	25	50
Shell	2	25	50
IV	2 or 3	30	60/90
MIDDLE SCHOOL			
LV	2	40	80
UV	2	40	80

Sixth Form

There is no published homework timetable. Subjects should generally set the equivalent of about four 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.

3. The Academic Curriculum Beyond the Classroom

The school firmly believes in modelling and facilitating learning across the widest possible range of contexts. Individual departments offer a range of supporting clubs, societies and lecture programmes to enhance their timetabled provision.

Many subjects offer out of lesson support to respond further to the needs of individual pupils in their subject.

Educational visits are an important part of our programmes. Departments take pupils to conferences, museums, fixtures, exhibitions and outdoor education centres amongst others. Extended residential trips are also offered – from sports tours to language exchanges – where pupils can apply their learning and develop their abilities at working together.

Pupils are encouraged to participate in competitions both within the school and externally (e.g. the Maths Challenge, Olympiads, essay competitions).

4. The Co-curriculum

Our academic curriculum is supported by a wide range of co-curricular activities all linked to Solihull's 'Big 6' which comprises: Sport, Music, Performing Arts, Outdoor Education, Academic Enrichment and Charity and Community, which encompasses activities such as the Combined Cadet Force, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and Debating as well as many other co-curricular activities.

In sport a wide range of activities is offered, and all abilities are catered for. Opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills as individuals or part of a team. All pupils have access to individual music lessons. The wide range of ensembles provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their talents. There are drama performance opportunities for all age groups and pupils are able also to prepare for the RADA Shakespeare awards and LAMDA public speaking exams.

5. Careers

Careers advice and guidance are also central to our provision for pupils. Careers provision is led by The Director of Futures who is supported by wider team. Careers education begins in the Junior School and develops through the Lower School Wellbeing and Personal Development programme. Following options advice, individual interviews are held. Pupils have the opportunity to organise work experience with the school's support. The programme of careers lunches reflects the policy of exposing pupils to real life practitioners to help them arrive at informed decisions for their own futures. Pupils have the opportunity to attend careers and gap year fairs. This programme runs throughout the year and draws on the expertise of alumni, parents and others and will typically involve a presentation followed by an opportunity for pupils to ask questions.

6. Inclusion

All pupils including those with SEND have access to all areas of the curriculum. All teachers are made aware of pupils on the SEND register and the AGT register in order that those pupils can be supported and challenged appropriately. Teachers are informed about strategies which will assist the learning and progress of pupils with SEND and will make necessary adjustments to their teaching and assessment. The Learning Support department provides support across the curriculum, most usually in lessons for individuals, pairs or groups of pupils. (See the Learning and Curriculum Support policy).

7. Monitoring

Teachers, Tutors, Heads of Year, Heads of Section, Deputy Heads of Section and senior managers all monitor learning and progress. This monitoring takes the form of class work, tests, homework and examinations. Regular feedback is provided via grades which are subject to detailed tracking. Further information is provided in reports and at parents' evenings. Heads of Department monitor the provision of the curriculum for their subject. This is overseen by the Deputy Head: Academic and the Head of Teaching and Learning.

The curriculum is reviewed annually with the Academic Planning Committee being at the heart of this process.

This policy should be read in conjunction with a number of linked policies, in particular:

Assessment Policy

EAL Policy

Learning and Curriculum Support Policy

Stretch and Challenge Policy

Teaching and Learning Policy

WPD (including RSE) Policy