

Curriculum Policy – Senior School

1. **Academic Challenge.** Pupils should be challenged by the academic rigour of the curriculum. This is achieved by the provision of a wide range of academic subjects across the curriculum, through Quality First Teaching, evidence-based approaches, and setting in some subjects. Tracking, evaluation and intervention form an integral part of ensuring pupils have an academic experience which allows and supports them to achieve the best they can.
2. **Breadth and Balance.** Pupils should retain a broad range of subjects through to 16 and be able to maintain a balance between types of subject, e.g. Arts & Sciences. This is achieved through the compulsory core subjects up to GCSE together with a broad range of optional subjects. In the Sixth Form pupils are encouraged to take an appropriate mix of subjects for their A Levels and all are expected to participate in the timetabled enrichment programme (BTC – Beyond the Classroom) in the Upper Sixth.
3. **Flexibility and Choice.** Older pupils gradually choose their course of study to suit their abilities and interests. GCSE & A Level pupils have a free choice from a wide range of options. One set in the Fourth and Fifth Forms studies for three separate sciences; other pupils study for examinations in Double Award Science.
4. **Access and Suitability for All.** All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. This does not preclude the school making professional judgements about pupils' ability to take a subject at GCSE or A Level.
5. **National Curriculum.** Ackworth School (the School) is mindful of the National Curriculum but seeks to provide more choice and opportunity. The curriculum is broadly in line with National Curriculum requirements.
6. **Coram House and EYFS.** Coram House has a separate, detailed Curriculum Policy.
7. **Physical Education and Games.** All pupils are expected to participate in both the PE & Games programmes. Games is a compulsory subject for all students up to and including the Sixth Form.
8. **PSHE.** Please also see the separate policy 'Relationships & Sex Education Policy'. PSHE is a discrete subject where pupils have one lesson per week throughout 1st – 5th form. This includes the new Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) which was statutory from Summer 2021 following a change to government guidance. Themes are also developed in a variety of ways, including Morning Readings, guidance from Advices and Queries, Active Tutor Time, additional presentations by outside speakers, and joining in with national awareness events. PSHE covers the following in appropriate year groups, including the Sixth Form: relationships and sex education with reference to the statutory guidance relating to this area; drugs awareness; substance abuse; democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual

respect and tolerance (referred to as “British values”); healthy lifestyle including physical and mental and social wellbeing and health; citizenship; curricular and vocational choices; online safety; stress and depression; study skills; personal organisation; preparation for adulthood and higher education; personal safety; driving safety. We aim to prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life.

Full details of the RSE programme as part of PSHE can be found in the appendix of our RSE policy.

9. Careers Provision. All pupils receive appropriate Careers Guidance, under the auspices of the Head of Careers. There is a curriculum evening each year for Third Form pupils to help them to decide on options choices for GCSE, following a week of taster lessons in each subject. All pupils receive independent careers guidance from an external, qualified careers advisor when in the Fourth and Fifth Forms. Vulnerable students are also identified from Third Form, and are directed to access independent careers advice, as required. Pupils receive one-to-one guidance from the Head of Careers regarding routes to further or higher education (both UK and overseas), apprenticeships or employment, in both the Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth Forms. Students are supported with all aspects of application processes. The School uses the Unifrog platform to support careers education and personal development. All departmental Schemes of Work include Careers as a key focus.

10. Entrance Policy. The School is non-selective from First Form to Fifth Form. Baseline testing takes place prior to entry into Senior School and during the first term to provide academic information to support individual pupil learning. Entry to Sixth Form is dependent on GCSE (or other international equivalent) results. The minimum requirement is five GCSE passes at Level 4 or above, including at least a Level 5 in the subjects to be studied to A Level.

11. Curriculum (See Summary Table of number of timetable periods allocated per subject in each year). Heads of Departments (HoDs) monitor the way their subject is taught in their departments and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used and teaching and learning resources are managed effectively. HoDs are responsible for ensuring that work is scaffolded and differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils including SEND and the most able. HoDs choose the most suitable specifications for delivery of the curriculum and are responsible for ensuring that schemes of work are produced which indicate what topics are to be taught each term and to which pupils. Schemes of work are reviewed on an annual basis. HoDs submit details of GCSE and A Level Courses for inclusion in the annual GCSE Courses Guide and A Level Courses Guide.

The curriculum is so designed to provide for all pupils to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. All pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress, gaining skills across the curriculum.

First Year Pupils study a broad range of compulsory subjects, taught in mixed ability groups. Second Year and Third Year Pupils take the same range of subjects. Mathematics is set by ability. Fourth/Fifth Years – the majority of pupils follow a core of 6 subjects: English, English Literature, mathematics, and either separate sciences (biology, chemistry and physics) or Combined Science. Pupils choose four options from: art, design and technology, food and nutrition, French, geography, history, music, physical education, religious studies, business studies, computer science, additional maths, drama and Spanish. Individual arrangements can be made to accommodate requests to study subjects such as Swahili, Russian etc. as required. Sixth Form – all pupils are expected to take three A Levels/BTECs. It is usually possible to study Further Maths as a fourth A Level. In addition to the subjects offered at GCSE, in the Sixth Form, pupils can also study psychology, economics, politics and EPQ.

12. Setting. We aim to achieve a balance between setting, in subjects where it is most beneficial, teaching in form groups and (at GCSE & A Level) in option groups. Setting allows pupils of similar abilities to be taught together enabling them to move at an appropriate pace. Teaching in form groups allows pupils to be part of a consistent social group, helping them to gain confidence. Pupils of differing abilities learn from and help each other. Teaching in option groups enables a wider range of pupil choice than would be possible if setting were more widely employed. Setting is used as follows:

2nd Year: Mathematics
3rd Year: Mathematics
4th Year: English, Mathematics, Science
5th Year: English, Mathematics, Science

Pupils are placed into sets by Heads of Department as a result of their performance in internal examinations and advice from classroom teachers.

13. Prep (Homework). Prep is an integral part of pupils' learning in all subjects and at all levels. It allows pupils to consolidate and practise what they have learned, and provides time for extension work and for independent learning. Considerable effort is given to appropriate setting and marking of prep and high standards are expected from pupils.

A Prep Timetable is produced for each class in Years 1 to 4, setting out the days on which Prep should be set in each subject. This timetable is distributed and explained to pupils by their Tutors at the start of the academic year. It is also posted on the Parent Portal. In the Sixth Form it is expected that departments will set L6th pupils up to four hours Prep per week and in the U6th up to five hours.

See also the Assessment/Marking/Reporting Policy 2022.

14. Pupils with Special Educational Needs. When a pupil has enrolled into Ackworth School, they have a right to be able to access the curriculum regardless of Special Educational Need (SEN), disability or medical need. As pupils progress through the school, some subjects and qualifications may be more challenging to access. However, through a supportive, pupil centred model of disability, we work collaboratively to enable the pupil to achieve to the best of their ability; their additional needs should not be a barrier to academic, and personal social achievement during their education.

Prior to starting at Ackworth School, a detailed conversation is required with parents/carers and the child so that all known challenges and differences are discussed, and ways forward agreed. At this stage, any formal diagnoses (e.g. a dyslexia assessment, an EHCP, an Autism assessment) should be shared so that Ackworth School can use their 'best endeavours' to secure the required support for the child. This picture of need will build during the learning journey through assessment exams, observation, and discussion.

Additional support for the pupil may be required during the learning journey. This may take the form of Quality First Teaching strategies to teaching staff to support the individual, in class support, adjusted/personalised timetables allowing for focused support lessons, and/or exam access arrangements (e.g. extra time). Any adjustments will be discussed, as above, prior to any changes being made and shared with relevant parties to ensure needs are being met. They will be reviewed termly either with the SEND or pastoral/academic teams.

If a child has an EHCP (except for the Autism Resource), the School will work with the pupil, the family and the Local Authority to meet the outlined provision. As an independent school, if your child has an EHCP, you must discuss this prior to applying to the school so that we can work with the relevant local authority prior to placement.

An adapted curriculum may be possible where a pupil has significant difficulty and challenge around specific subjects (e.g. GCSE English Literature). Alternative provision may be explored and offered, for example functional skills, a preparation for Adulthood programme. Such programmes are also available, along with other programmes, for pupils in the Autism Resource.

15. Gifted & Talented Pupils. As a Quaker School, we look for and nurture the individual gifts and talents of every child. Setting in some key subjects provides a basic framework allowing more able pupils to work at a faster pace and tackle more challenging material. We work to ensure that every child has the right opportunities to achieve the best they can. Stretch and challenge forms an integral part of our Quality First Teaching approach.

16. Pre-A Level Course:

A year's study is offered before A Levels. Pupils follow a range of subjects preliminary to progressing to A Level study, including EAL, mathematics, science, business studies, food and nutrition and design and technology. This will be under review in the academic year 2023/2024 to ensure pre-A Level students achieve meaningful qualifications in iGCSE mathematics and iGCSE EAL.

Summary Table of Allocated Periods – Senior School

	1st Form	2nd Form	3rd Form	4th/5th Forms	Pre A Level	L6th Forms	U6 Forms
Art	2	2	2				
Beyond the Classroom							1
Biology	2	2	2	3	4		
Business Studies					4		
Chemistry	2	2	2	3	4		
Drama	1	1	1				
English [/EAL]	5	4	4	5	5		
French	2	3	3				
Games	2	2	2	2/3	2	2	2
Geography	3	2	2				
History	2	2	2				
Computer Science	1	1	1				
Mathematics	5	5	5	5	5		
Music	2	2	2				
Option 1				4		9	8
Option 2				4		9	8
Option 3				4		9	8
Option 4				4			
PSHE	1	1	1	1			
PE	2	2	2	2/1			
Physics	2	2	2	3	4		
Religious Studies	2	2	2				
Spanish	2	3	3				
Technology (DT/Food)	3	2	2		4		
	40	40	40	40	32	29	27

Options available at GCSE Level: art, business studies, computer science, design & technology, drama, food & nutrition, French, geography, history, music, physical education, religious studies, Spanish.

Options available at A Level: art, biology, business studies, chemistry, computer science, design & technology, drama, economics, English Literature, French, geography, history, mathematics, further mathematics, music, physical education, physics, politics, psychology, religious studies, Spanish.