

# Curriculum Policy

## Whitworth Community High School



**Approved by:** G Middlemas / A Watson

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## 1. School Vision & Curriculum Aims

- To promote the highest aspirations amongst students: to have dreams for the future and to work towards them in the present
- To develop resilience, self-belief and self-motivation
- To enable every student to reach their full academic potential
- To promote the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of every student and to develop British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- To create a safe and secure, disciplined and happy learning environment

Our curriculum aims to:

- *Provide a broad and balanced education for all students at WCHS which builds on prior knowledge and skills*
- *Engage students in learning which is enjoyable, stimulating and relevant to students now and for the future*
- *Provide a cohesive, progressive curriculum where explicit links between subjects and across key stages are forged*
- *Enable students to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations and to instil an aspirational mindset*
- *Support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to enable them to become responsible, respectful members of the local and wider community*
- *Support students' physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active*
- *Promote a positive attitude towards learning; pride in their own progress and achievement; and a strong work ethic; through providing a curriculum which offers opportunity to celebrate and share success; valuing attainment, progress and effort equally*
- *Ensure equal access to learning, with high expectations for every student and appropriate levels of challenge and support*
- *Provide subject choices that support students' learning and progression, and enable them to work towards achieving their goals*
- *Ensure that as many students as possible leave our school equipped with a strong set of GCSE results*
- *Develop students' independent learning skills and resilience, as well as their communication and numeracy skills, to equip them for post 16 education further/higher education and employment and to become lifelong learners.*

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements of the [National Curriculum programmes of study](#), which all maintained schools in England must teach.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's [Governance Handbook](#).

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing body

The governing body of WCHS will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing body will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- Enough teaching time is provided for students to cover the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements
- Proper provision is made for students with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEND)
- All courses provided for students below the age of 17 that lead to qualifications, such as GCSEs are approved by the secretary of state
- WCHS implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- It fulfils its role in processes to disapply students from all or part of the National Curriculum, where appropriate, and in any subsequent appeals
- students from Year 8 onwards are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced

### 3.2 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of WCHS and indicate how the needs of individual students will be met
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board
- Where appropriate, the individual needs of some students are met by permanent or temporary disapplication from all or part of the National Curriculum
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The governing body is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The governing body is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for students with different abilities and needs, including children with SEND

### 3.3 Other staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy:

- Senior leaders will support the headteacher in all of the responsibilities set out above

- Directors of learning and subject leaders will have responsibility for selecting and adapting curriculum plans within in their faculties to ensure that the aims set out in this policy are achieved throughout the school
- Progress leaders will take a balanced overview of student progress and use this information to inform any decisions in respect of modifying individual students' curriculum provision

## 4. Organisation and Planning

Students at WCHS study a curriculum that meets National Curriculum requirements but which has evolved around the need to provide a learning experience that prepares students for opportunities, challenges and responsibilities of adult life.

This is aimed to provide a firm foundation for students to succeed in either GCSE, or other qualifications (where appropriate) in order to best prepare students for future studies in their chosen post-16 pathway.

The changing nature of work means that life-long learning and the emotional resilience that goes with it, have become necessities rather than luxuries. The development of the correct attributes, habits of mind and thinking skills are central to the evolving curriculum. There are a number of alternative level 2 qualifications e.g. Vcert and BTEC (NQF) which better match the learning styles of some students and allow them to succeed.

We work with employers and businesses locally, so that students and staff are aware of qualifications, skills, habits and attributes are needed in a place of work. Thus ensuring that students are aware of and develop a suitable mindset for the world of work.

There are several opportunities for extended learning experiences to be created where students of all abilities and year groups can use and develop wider life skills, for example:-

Educational visits (all years)

Careers fair (all years)

Form and year leadership roles (all years)

School council roles (all years)

Prefect and student senior leadership team (year 9, 10 and 11)

Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (Bronze, Silver and Gold) (Years 9 to 11)

Employability champions scheme (all years)

Residential Visits, including trips abroad (all years)

Information, Advice and Guidance session, including guest speakers (all years)

ASDAN

Business and Enterprise (year 8)

Curriculum time in years 7, 9 10 and 11 for PSHE, incorporating:

- *Sex and relationship education (if applicable)*
- *Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development*
- *British values*

### THE CURRICULUM IN KEY STAGE 3 (YEARS 7 and 8)

Students study English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science, Art, Design and Technology, Computing, History, Geography, Religious Education, Spanish, Music, Drama, Performing Arts and Physical Education and PSHCE.

Most teaching takes place in groups based on attainment/ability in that specific subject. The timetable is arranged in such a way that students who are "strong" in a subject may be in "higher" groups while being in slightly smaller groups for subjects where they are not yet as secure e.g. English, maths and science. There is also considerable scope for students to move between groups in each subject as their progress demands.

## THE CURRICULUM IN KEY STAGE 4 (from Year 9 and into Years 10 and 11)

Our first aim is to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for students but it is acknowledged that there is an increased content and demand on students in the new GCSE courses. Therefore, the year 9 curriculum is designed to be a transitional pathway which allows students to maintain an element of choice but also embark on GCSE course content to facilitate better outcomes for students at the end of year 11 e.g. all students study geography and history in Year 9 to help strengthen progress in bucket 2 qualifications. In Year 10, students then make a choice between these subjects.

We constantly review the options available to our students. All courses in Key Stage 4 lead to GCSE or equivalent approved qualifications such as Vcert or BTEC (NQF).

All students study:

English Language GCSE

English Literature GCSE

Mathematics GCSE

Science (3 separate GCSEs or trilogy) GCSE

History or Geography GCSE

Core PE

Religious Studies GCSE

A choice of additional GCSE/BTEC/Vcert subjects are available. Popular option subjects such as fine art appear in both option blocks to allow as many students as possible to follow their preferred option choices.

Fine Art, Drama, Performing Arts, Music, Spanish, Business Studies, Technology, Health & Social Care, Computing, PE and Sociology

While the availability of courses varies from year to year, the emphasis is on ensuring a wide choice, with flexibility to help meet individual needs. The school has deliberately chosen to retain a personalised, flexible curriculum, rather than following a more rigid curriculum with a greater number of compulsory subjects.

### **KS4 Options**

The move into Key Stage 4 is as important as that from Primary School to High School, and is taken just as seriously, thus the transitional strategy in year 9, as described above.

From the beginning of Year 8, students begin to receive specific Careers Education and Guidance through the Careers Adviser.

Part way through year 8 they then receive detailed information prepared by Directors of Learning and Subject leaders about the nature and demands of option subjects and qualifications. This is followed by a special Parents' Evening, to explain and discuss the options available to each student.

At WCHS, the pattern of options choices is designed to ensure that all students follow a broad and balanced curriculum while still enabling a wide choice of subjects to study.

Once preferences have been expressed, detailed consideration of the breadth and balance of students' choices is made, and further discussions with students and parents may follow until we are satisfied that we have achieved the best possible "fit" for every student.

## **5. Inclusion**

Teachers set high expectations for all students. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able students
- students with low prior attainment

- students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- students with SEN
- students with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that students with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every student achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of students whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help students to develop their English, and to support students to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report.

## 6. Monitoring arrangements

Governors and senior staff monitor coverage of National Curriculum subjects and compliance with other statutory requirements through:

- *collaboration with other local schools (district 14 network meetings), seeking up to date guidance from the DfE web site and other online resources available online through The Key or ASCL.*
- *ELTSA meeting opportunities for staff training and collaboration on projects.*

Directors of Learning and Subject Leaders monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school by:

- *undertaking SOL reviews, book looks, formal lesson observations, learning walks, work scrutinies, and student voice activities.*

Directors of Learning and Subject Leaders also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources to support the curriculum are stored and managed.

This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis by G Middlemas, A Watson.

## 7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Assessment policy
- Non-examination assessment policy
- SEN policy and information report
- Equality information and objectives