

# Curriculum Policy

## 2024 - 2025

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## **Abbreviations**

<b>EAL:</b>	English as an Additional Language
<b>GCSE:</b>	General Certificate of Secondary Education
<b>PDE:</b>	Personal, Development Education
<b>ICDL:</b>	International Computing Driving License

## 1. Introduction

*This policy sets out the main features of the School's curriculum and is supported by the School's various plans and schemes of work. The policy is available to parents, prospective parents and others through the School website and is available in hard copy upon request to the School Office. In addition, the policy may be inspected at any point in the School day in the School Office.*

Abbot's Hill School aims to provide excellence in education and to support all of its pupils in the passage from childhood towards adulthood. At the same time, it seeks to develop in every pupil self-discipline, responsibility, spiritual and moral values, leading to the highest possible standards of behaviour, consideration for others, pride in oneself and in one's achievements. The academic curriculum provided by the School plays a key role in helping us to meet these aims, and we seek to offer a broad, flexible and forward-looking curriculum which encourages among pupils intellectual curiosity, sound learning and a spirit of enquiry in the pursuit of academic excellence.

The overall aims of the curriculum are to:

- provide a challenging, academically rigorous, and inspiring education which promotes a love of learning
- promote the pursuit of excellence and learning of the highest quality
- give pupils a broad and balanced experience of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education which broadens horizons and promotes high aspiration
- enable pupils to acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy
- provide for pupils above compulsory school age provide a programme of activities which offers a wide range and which is appropriate to pupils' needs
- ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to make good progress, relative to their own starting point
- provide for any pupils who may attend the School who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a learning difficulty or disability education which meets their requirements
- provide an age-appropriate programme of personal, social and health education which continues throughout a pupil's school career and which reflects the School's aims and ethos and which includes adequate preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, according to the themes of:
  - health and wellbeing
  - relationships
  - living in the wider world (including economic wellbeing and careers education)
  - respect, tolerance and an understanding of protected characteristics
- uphold and promote fundamental British Values, and to value diversity and global perspectives, through the academic curriculum, the PDE programme and the programme for tutor periods, religious services and assemblies
- provide supportive and impartial guidance and information for pupils on their futures, including; subject choices, further education and careers

## 2. Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

The School is committed to allowing equality of access and opportunity to all pupils, regardless of their

background, ability and any particular individual difficulties or disabilities which they may experience. The Learning Support Department plays a key role in this work, seeking to identify, through screening and ongoing monitoring, the particular needs of individual pupils and putting in place strategies (and, where necessary, additional assistance) designed to help them fulfil their potential.

Pupils who have an EHCP or a special educational need or disability may have their curriculum modified to take account of their particular needs, as appropriate. Such decisions are made by the Assistant Head (Academic) in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents/guardian and Head of Year and on the advice of the SENDCo. Where a pupil has an EHCP, the requirements of the plan are closely followed to ensure that the School provides an effective and accessible educational experience. For pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability an individual Pupil Passport is made available to assist with provision inside and outside the classroom. The progress of all pupils on the School's Learning Support Register is regularly reviewed and support is amended as appropriate.

### **3. Personal, Development Education (PDE)**

The School runs a PDE programme, under the leadership of the Head of PDE who reports to the Assistant Head (Academic), which is designed to complement the academic curriculum, underpinning attitudes and values of Abbot's Hill School whilst preparing the pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, according to the themes of:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships and Sex Education
- Living in the wider world (including economic wellbeing, digital literacy and careers education)
- Respect, tolerance and an understanding of diversity and equality

The PDE programme of lessons runs throughout the academic year. Year 11 are supported in their transition to 6<sup>th</sup> form through PDE, specific events and assemblies.

### **4. Subject Advice**

Through the tutor system, presentations, taster sessions and information evenings, pupils are helped to make the best possible choices of GCSE. Guidance is given appropriately and impartially to whole cohorts and their parents in such presentations, and to individual pupils and their parents by Heads of Year, Head of Pathways, subject teachers, Heads of Department and senior academic staff.

### **5. Careers Guidance**

The School has an active Careers & Pathways Department which provides appropriate impartial information and advice on possible future career paths. The Head of Pathways is based within the Rochester Library. A wide range of careers-related information and guidance is available including the resources available through the School's subscription to the Unifrog platform. Careers Education is also included each year within the School's PDE and tutor programme. An annual careers-focused drop-down day (Summer Term) provides information and inspiration to students about possible careers.

*For more information see the Careers Policy.*

## **6. Further Education**

In Years 10 and 11 pupils are encouraged to think carefully about their education beyond Abbot's Hill. At the School's annual Pathways Fair early in the Autumn term, an impressive number of post-16 educational providers engage with our students about the different further-education options available to them. Year 11 pupils receive individual, tailored support to support them to make the choices that are right for them. Unifrog's sixth form / college search tool is promoted to students and they are also signposted to the [informedchoices.ac.uk](http://informedchoices.ac.uk) website, which helps them to understand how their Level 3 (i.e. A Level and equivalent) choices can affect their options at university and their future careers.

## **7. English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

An EAL Register is held for all Prep and Senior Pupils. Students are graded on their fluency using the English Proficiency table provided by the Department for Education, 2020. EAL students are assessed across several areas including reading, writing and spoken language, a 'best fit' judgement is then matched to the English Proficiency table. This document informs what support that student will require on a graded approach. Support for EAL students could range from in class adaptations to specific interventions.

Where possible, students will be encouraged to sit a public examination (GCSE) in their home language.

Full details can be found in the Mill Hill Education Group EAL Policy.

## **8. Organisation of the Senior School Curriculum**

The curriculum is managed by the Assistant Head, Academic. The Heads of Department (HoDs) meet regularly to discuss the quality of delivery of the curriculum.

All pupils can study a range of academic subjects and develop in performing and creative arts.

The curriculum in Year 7-9 has three principal aims. The first is to provide a seamless transition between Year 6 and Year 7, building on the prior experience gained as part of an effectively sequenced knowledge-rich curriculum. The School recognises that pupils join the School from a variety of educational backgrounds and has modelled its curriculum to build on the key skills and knowledge pupils should have acquired during primary/prep schooling. This is to ensure that all pupils are at or above a common standard across all of their subjects, in preparation for the formal start of their GCSE courses in the summer term of Year 9. The second is to enable pupils to experience breadth and balance in their curriculum, so that they are exposed to an enriching and generative body of knowledge to deepen their learning and experience and are able to make informed choices for their GCSE option subjects. The third is to provide progression, stretch, and challenge to inspire, empower and challenge pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding as they prepare for the formal start of their GCSE courses.

<b>In Year 7 &amp; 8 Pupils study:</b>		
<b>Compulsory:</b>		
English	Mathematics	Physical Science
Natural Science	A Modern Language	History
Geography	Philosophy, Ethics and Religion	Art
Computing	Dance	Drama
Food	Music	Product Design
PDE	Physical Education	Games

Mathematics:	Set by ability from September of Year 7
English	Set by ability from September of Year 8
Humanities	Set by ability from September of Year 8 according to English sets
Sciences	Set by ability from September of Year 8
Languages:	Pupils study half a year of both French and Spanish, in year 7, before choosing which to continue with. In year 8 they are set by ability.

For the Autumn Term, Year 7 also have a weekly Choir session.

In the Spring and Summer Term, Year 7 complete the IPQ (Independent Project Qualification)

<b>In Year 9 pupils study:</b>		
<b>Core:</b>		
English	Mathematics	Biology
Chemistry	Physics	French
Spanish	History	Geography
PER	PDE	Physical Education
Games		
<i>A choice of 4 electives from:</i>		
Art	Computing	Dance
Drama	Food	Music
Product Design		
<i>A choice of 3 InspirED courses from:</i>		
Current Affairs	Child Development	Sports Psychology
Volunteering	Presentation Skills	Ballroom Dancing
First Aid	Coaching	Kitchen Garden
Healthy Lifestyles	Money Matters	Sports Leaders

## GCSE Option Choices

Year 9 begin the process of choosing their GCSE options during the Autumn term and it is completed by the end of the Spring term. Students begin their GCSE courses in the Summer term of Year 9.

Further information on GCSE Options is given in the Options Guide which is provided at the start of the Options process and is available on the School Website

The School reserves the right to review the numbers of pupils requesting to access each available option subject and may choose to remove the subject from the option list if numbers are too low to make its provision viable.

The curriculum in KS4 ensures that all pupils follow a common core whilst allowing them to make choices about a number of the non-core subjects they study, to reflect their individual interests and aptitudes. When choosing their GCSE option subjects pupils are encouraged to select a combination of subjects which maintain a sensible breadth of study where that is appropriate for them. This advice is balanced with each pupil's relative strengths in her subjects. It will be easier for a pupil who is strong across a wide range of subjects to achieve breadth and balance in their subject choices than a pupil whose abilities are focused on fewer subjects. Ultimately, it is more important for each pupil to take option subjects which they enjoy and in which they are likely to do well, than for them simply to choose a broad spread of subjects.

<b>In Year 10 &amp; 11 pupils study:</b>		
<i>Core</i>		
English Language	English Literature	Mathematics
Biology	Chemistry	Physics
PDE	Physical Education	Games
InspirED (Y10)		
<i>A choice of 4 Options:</i>		
Art & Design	Computing	Dance
Drama	French	Food & Nutrition
Geography	History	
Music	Photography	Physical Education
Religious Studies	Spanish	Art & Design (Product Design Route)

Pupils are set according to ability in English, Maths, Languages and Science. All other subjects are taught in mixed ability groups.

Pupils also have the choice to take Independent Study in place of a GCSE option subject.

Pupils in Year 11 have the choice to participate in *Leisure Options* (with external providers) during their Games lessons or take independent study for 1 hour per week.

In Science most pupils prepare for the Double Science Award resulting in 2 GCSEs but the Triple Award resulting in 3 GCSEs is offered to the most able scientists.

## **ICDL – International Computing Driving License**

The ICDL level 1 will be studied during Year 7 from September 2024. Students in Years 8-10 in September 2024 will continue to complete the course in Year 10.

## **Personal Development Education (PDE) (including RSE) which reflects the school's aims and ethos**

See **RSE Policy**.

Students have weekly lessons with form tutors (Prep) and specialist teachers in Years 7 to 11.

PDE is an essential part of the education of all pupils. It is, by its very nature, developmental, and is concerned with a pupil's knowledge, understanding, intentions, attitudes and behaviour.

PDE is delivered by an increasingly specialised team of staff. This team comprises of teachers from different disciplines, with additional support from the Head of PDE, the School Nurse and outside professionals.

PDE specifically aims to raise awareness of inclusion, specifically in terms of disability, age, race, religion, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and maternity.

PDE lessons:

- Give pupils the basic skills, experience, knowledge and attitudes that are required for work and leisure in a rapidly developing society
- Enable pupils to become progressively responsible for their own personal, social, health and citizenship education through a programme of study that considers information gained through PDE, other subjects and within their own homes
- Provide a safe and relaxed environment where everyone is respected and each protected characteristic is recognised and included and in which pupils feel free to



discuss and explore their ideas, opinions and concerns

Each year group can study a variety of topics which provide opportunities for individual, paired and group work. Discussion is a key component of the PDE lessons, with pupils encouraged to express their opinions, and listen to others'. External speakers are invited to speak to pupils as appropriate.

The PDE programme develops pupils' sense of belonging, both with Abbot's Hill School and into the local community and wider world.

## **PE & Games Programmes**

All pupils are expected to take part in the school's Physical Education Programme and Games Programme.

Pupils may only be excused from PE and Games lessons for medical reasons; requests should be made by parents via the absence reporting system on MSP, or other reasons agreed with the school.

## **The Co-Curriculum**

The school has an extensive and ever-evolving programme of trips, residential visits and activities that take place outside the formal curriculum and all pupils are encouraged to take advantage of the programme which includes the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the Sports Leader's Award and opportunities for service in the community.

This, alongside the learning provision in the classroom, develops a range of character attributes, such as resilience and determination, which underpin success in education and employment.

## **Assemblies and curriculum enrichment**

Assemblies provide valuable opportunities for SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) development. School assemblies address spiritual and social issues of the day and also reflect the school's aims and ethos.

This Review: November 2024

Next Review: June 2025

This policy has been approved by the Executive Team on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025.