



SAINT NICHOLAS SCHOOL

CURRICULUM POLICY



Approved by:	 Headmaster  Chair of Governors	Date: 08/11/2024
Last reviewed on:	November 2022 November 2024	
Next review by:	September 2026	

Note: This policy applies to all sections of the School including EYFS

This policy is written with due regard to the Equality Act (2010) and within the EYFS to both the Equality Act and the SEND Code (2015)

The curriculum at Saint Nicholas School aims to effectively prepare the pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

The curriculum promotes and does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

This policy takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils including pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and those with an EHC plan.

Introduction

This policy:

- Is non-contractual in nature;
- Applies to all members of staff except those who have not completed their probationary period;
- Can be adjusted by the School to suit specific circumstances;
- Can be varied unilaterally by the School.

Saint Nicholas is fully committed to supporting pupils and teachers in effective teaching and learning; to promoting the enjoyment of learning; to securing progress and high standards of attainment for all. The curriculum at Saint Nicholas includes a formal programme of lessons and a vast range of co-curricular activities, trips and visits which enhance the educational experience provided.

The curriculum gives pupils' experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. All pupils will have the opportunity to acquire and develop their speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Where a pupil's principal language of instruction is a language other than English, additional EAL support will be provided. Acquisition of a new language must go hand-in-hand with cognitive and academic development. Strategies we employ to meet the needs of a pupil with EAL may include tailoring the curriculum to suit the needs of the individual, adapting teaching methods, increasing the use of collaborative learning, moving from speech into writing, and auditing the language demands of the curriculum. This is important to ensure the pupil reaches their educational potential and plays a positive part in school life, the community and society as a whole.

The curriculum is appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of all pupils. Where a pupil has an EHCP, the curriculum will be tailored to fulfil the plan's requirements. Designated learning support staff work with children who are identified as having specific individual needs.

The use of specialist teachers throughout the primary age range enhances the pupils' experience.

The School is divided into 3 sections:

Lower School – Pre-School & Reception (EYFS), Years 1 to 5

Middle School - Years 6 to 8

Upper School - Years 9 to 11

1. EYFS

The curriculum is designed to meet the criteria outlined in the EYFS framework. Specific learning objectives are designed around three prime areas:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional development

and four specific areas:

Literacy
Maths
Understanding of the World
Expressive Arts and Design

Children work to objectives outlined in these areas of learning.

In Pre-School pupils are taught PE & Games by specialist teachers.

In Reception specialist teachers deliver the lessons in French or Spanish, music, drama and PE & Games.

1.1. Lower School

Key Stage 1 & 2 – Years 1 to 5

The curriculum broadly follows the statutory requirements outlined in the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1&2. This comprises English, mathematics, sciences, geography, history, religious studies, art & design, computing and PSHE. Pupils are also taught French or Spanish, music, drama and PE & Games by specialist teachers. All subjects have discrete teaching time with English and mathematics taught every day.

1.2 Middle School – Years 6 to 8

Key Stage 3

From Years 6 to 8 the curriculum follows the Framework for Key Stage 3. This comprises English, mathematics, separate sciences (biology, chemistry and physics), French, Spanish, geography, history, religious studies, art, music, design & technology, food technology, computing, PSHE, classics, drama, PE and Games.

Some subjects are taught in form groups which are mixed ability, while others are taught in ability sets. The exact pattern of the setting may vary from year to year depending on the ability spread of the year group.

1.3 Upper School – Years 9 to 11

Most pupils will follow a programme with nine or ten GCSEs made up of a curriculum of core and optional subjects.

Core Subjects

All pupils must study English Language, English Literature, mathematics and three sciences; biology, chemistry and physics. This examinable component of the core curriculum leads to the potential for pupils to gain five or six GCSEs, the exact number is dependent on whether pupils take separate science (3 GCSEs) or Core / Addition Science (2 GCSEs). As part of the core curriculum, pupils also have weekly lessons in Games, Physical Education and Personal, Social and Health Education, which includes Relationships and Sexual Education.

Optional Subjects

Pupils choose four options from; art, computer science, drama, food technology, French, German, geography, history, business Studies, music, photography, PE and 3D design. It is expected that pupils opt for at least one modern foreign language although in exceptional circumstances this requirement may be waived in consultation between the pupil, parents and the school.

Tier of Entry for GCSE Examination

Some GCSE subjects have different tiers of entry (foundation or higher). The subjects with tiers of entry are:

- maths
- combined science
- physics
- chemistry
- biology
- modern foreign languages

Where GCSEs are tiered, teachers will always ensure that students are entered appropriately to enable them to reach their full potential. Where subjects are tiered into Higher and Foundation the gradings are as follows:

- Foundation tier: 5 to 1 (5–5 to 1–1 in combined science)
- Higher tier: 9 to 4 (9–9 to 4–4 on combined science) with a narrow ‘safety net’ grade 3 (4–3 in combined science) for those students who just miss grade 4 (or 4–4); higher tier students who do not achieve enough marks for that safety net grade will receive an unclassified result (U)

A student who is expected to achieve a grade 4 or grade 5 will be entered for the foundation tier. Tier of entry is not listed on the GCSE certification unless there are extenuating circumstances.

2. PERSONAL, SOCIAL and HEALTH EDUCATION.

Personal, Social Health and Economic education (PSHE) is taught throughout the School and reflects the School’s aims and ethos. The PSHE curriculum enables children to become healthy, independent and responsible members of society. We encourage our pupils to play a positive role in contributing to the life of the school and the wider community. In so doing, we promote their personal and Social, Moral, Cultural and Spiritual development.

We teach our pupils how society is organised and governed, about their rights and responsibilities and what it means to be a positive member of a diverse, multicultural society. The PSHE programme encourages respect for all people including those with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, listed below:

- age
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Pupils are encouraged to think of others and to be aware of others’ needs by supporting various charities. Pupils learn about the safe use of the internet through PSHE and computing lessons and through targeted assemblies which raise the awareness of risk and best practice. Pupils have the opportunity to take on positions of responsibility throughout the School. Opportunities to further enhance pupils’ personal development are taken within regular assemblies and throughout the curriculum.

Careers guidance, within PSHE, aims to enable pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of options, including timely advice to help them choose GCSE courses and their destinations after leaving Saint Nicholas School. We provide independent career advice for pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 and support pupils in exploring the range of different routes into the various careers available to them after they leave the school. We provide opportunities for pupils to develop skills that will make them more employable and will benefit them in the workplace. Additionally, we facilitate pupil encounters with employees and employers, further education providers and higher education providers, to provide a range of impartial advice and support. We also help the pupils develop an understanding of themselves and how their particular attributes, aspirations and likes and dislikes may affect their choice of career. Our careers guidance follows the eight Gatsby benchmarks which are as follows:

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

For Years 9 to 11, the careers programme is designed to provide students with impartial information about the range of career options available to them, the recommended qualifications and further education pathways, as well as the likely salaries associated with different sectors. This aims to empower students to make informed choices about their futures.

At Saint Nicholas, PSHE is integrated across the curriculum and the whole school. From Year 1 to Year 11, students receive 60 minutes of PSHE lessons each week. The PSHE curriculum is provided by Jigsaw and is taught by qualified teachers. The PSHE programme encompasses essential life skills, careers, education, citizenship, enterprise, financial capability, outdoor learning, relationships and sexual education, and health and well-being.

We encourage all pupils to realise their potential, both holistically and academically. Additionally, students are given opportunities to develop leadership skills through the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme in Years 9 to 11, taking on responsibilities within their forms, participating in the school council, assuming prefect roles in Year 11, and engaging with the local community.

RSE is taught within the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum.

Biological aspects of RSE are taught within the science curriculum. The curriculum that is followed at Saint Nicholas is the programme of study for PSHE education published by the PSHE Association via Jigsaw and it takes into account the age, needs and feelings of pupils. If pupils ask questions outside the scope of this policy or the scheme of work, teachers will respond appropriately so pupils are fully informed and do not need to seek answers online.

Further detail is in the separate PSHE and RSE Policy.

3. LEARNING SUPPORT

Pupils who are identified as having a special educational need or disability are provided with a curriculum that is fully accessible and takes into consideration their cognitive, physical, mental and/or social needs. It is important to ensure each pupil reaches their educational potential and is able to access their education and full potential regardless of the barriers to learning. Strategies required to meet the needs of a pupil with a special need or disability may include tailoring the curriculum, adapting teaching methods, scaffolding resources, in-class support from a learning support assistant, and 1:1 or small group intervention.

Further details are in the separate Learning Support Policy.

4. PROMOTING BRITISH VALUES

We recognise not only the importance of allowing pupils to flourish academically but we also embrace our wider role in preparing them for their adult life beyond the formal examined curriculum. Part of our role in that preparation is ensuring that we promote and reinforce Fundamental British Values to our pupils.

The government set out its definition of Fundamental British Values in the 2011 Prevent Strategy and subsequently updated (most recently updated in January 2024). It considers Fundamental British Values to be democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. At Saint Nicholas School these values are reinforced in a pervasive manner and permeate the school community.

The examples that follow are an indication of some of the many ways we seek to embed Fundamental British values at Saint Nicholas School and should be seen as an indication of our approach rather than an exhaustive list.

4.1 Democracy

At Saint Nicholas School the principle of democracy is consistently reinforced, with the democratic process being employed for important decisions within the school community, for instance, elections of the School Council. The principle of democracy is further explored in English, history, geography and religious studies, as well as in tutor time and assemblies.

4.2 The rule of law

The importance of laws and respect for the law is appropriately reinforced within the school setting as a respect for school rules, via our rewards and sanctions policy. Within PSHE and within assemblies, pupils are taught the values and reasons behind laws, how they govern and protect us and the consequences when laws are broken. Visits from authorities such as the Police and Fire Service are annual events at the school and help reinforce this message.

4.3 Individual liberty

Within Saint Nicholas School, pupils are actively encouraged to make independent choices knowing that they are in a safe, secure and supportive environment. As a school, we educate and provide boundaries for pupils to make choices safely, through the provision of a safe environment and an empowering education. Pupils are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights, responsibilities and personal freedoms, and receive advice about how to exercise these safely, for example through our exploration of e-safety in computing and their tutor time activities.

4.4 Mutual respect

Respect is at the core of our School ethos and is modelled by pupils and staff alike. Mutual respect is embraced throughout the curriculum from the concept of 'fair play' in PE to House assemblies and competitions which promotes mutual respect and support between pupils across different year groups within the School.

4.5 Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

This is another value which is promoted throughout the Saint Nicholas School community. Tolerance for others is expected and promoted throughout the curriculum and explored within religious studies, history, English, PSHE and through assemblies. Additionally, pupils are actively encouraged to share their faith and beliefs within the School.