

## Curriculum Policy and Practice

### Our Values

Our school is characterised by a distinctive ethos of inclusion, achievement, learning together, mutual respect and enjoyment. We are proud of our reputation for high standards in academic work, personal achievement and conduct.

We recognise young people have many abilities, talents and personalities and learn in many different ways, and are committed to enabling all of our students to achieve their full academic and personal potential. We aspire to enable all students to make the best possible progress regardless of previous achievement or additional learning needs.

We are committed to developing resilient, adaptable and resourceful learners. We aim to develop ability, raise expectations and provide the support necessary for life-long success by offering a wide range of enriching experiences both in and beyond the classroom.

We have a broad, challenging and inclusive curriculum shaped according to the key knowledge, skills and competencies students need to know, understand and do in order to thrive for the rest of their lives.

Students will understand their role and responsibilities in a dynamic, diverse and multi-cultural society: they will be equipped with the skills necessary to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century world.

### Our Policy:

Our curriculum has a strong academic core rooted in high expectations whilst offering flexibility to cater for individual needs. Students at Gillingham School have equal access to a curriculum which is rich, ambitious and well-sequenced, designed to offer breadth, balance and relevance. We think and plan in terms of a 'five-year curriculum' (with Year 9 being a transition year between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4) and individual subject curricula reflect this. In Years 7 and 8 students study all National Curriculum subjects, whilst in Year 9 students study five option subjects alongside their Core subjects and Religious Studies. The aim is to offer some element of choice whilst maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum for each student, leading to informed choices for Years 10 and 11. The element of choice for Year 9 gives subjects the opportunity to go deeper into content and plan broader learning than just exam specifications and spend longer developing the knowledge and skills needed to be successful at KS4 and beyond. Alongside the core subjects, there are a wide range of traditional GCSEs, a variety of BTEC qualifications and we are able to offer the students the opportunity to study new subjects such as Business Studies and Psychology. We are committed to the principles behind the EBacc and when making option choices, most students are expected to choose at least one Modern Foreign Language (French, German or Spanish), as well as Geography or History (or both) unless we feel it is in their best interests not to do so. In addition, processes are in place to ensure that each student's option choices are approved as broad, balanced and in their best interests.

All subjects have a clear 'curriculum intent' (including 'vision statements' <https://www.gillingham-dorset.co.uk/learning-enrichment-support/curriculum/curriculum-overview>) and carefully design and sequence their five-year curriculum so that new knowledge and skills build on previous learning and build towards clearly defined end points. This includes frequent opportunities for spaced learning and recall practice to embed knowledge and skills into long-term memory. We believe that the additional opportunities for this afforded by starting to study GCSE/BTEC courses in Year 9 has a positive impact on students' mental health, particularly in the period approaching the final examinations in Year 11.

Equality of access does not mean that all students follow the same programme of study; Students progress at the speed and depth that most suits them. The objective is to personalise learning to individual students, as well as to classes and groups. When appropriate for the individual, we are committed to offering our students access to alternative provision, either school based (for example Art Therapy, Ceramics, Climbing, Gardening, Mountain Biking) or from external providers (for example: Rylands Farm, AugustaWestland (Leonardos), Yeovil College, local work experience). These opportunities can form part of a bespoke curriculum for individual students as appropriate.

Careers provision is delivered as a planned aspect of subject curricula and via a whole-school careers programme.

The large number of trips, clubs and extra-curricular opportunities available is a feature of our school, and we believe that this is particularly important in a rural area. It is also important that students are given opportunities to contribute to the wider community, for example by participating in the National Citizen Service (NCS), Duke of Edinburgh Award and charity work / fundraising.

A Curriculum Review takes place annually in the autumn – the school curriculum within each Key Stage, and as a whole, is reviewed and evolves to take account of changing and developing circumstances, the needs of our students and other developments both locally and nationally. Through our regular quality assurance processes, we will continue to evaluate the intent (planning knowledge and skills), implementation (teaching, learning and assessment) and impact (outcomes) of our curriculum.

Grouping & Setting of Students: Year 7 teaching groups are organised on a mixed ability basis (with the exception of Mathematics, which groups pupils within 2 broad ability bands). The groups also reflect the varied educational background of pupils who arrive from primary schools of different organisation, approach and size. From Years 8 to 11, subject departments use the teaching group structure that they find most successful – ability sets, broad ability bands or mixed ability. The school policy is to encourage departments to use whichever they prefer, provided that they produce good outcomes and a positive attitude to learning.

Our Practice:

**The Year 7 & 8 Curriculum**

Students study the subjects listed below, thus ensuring each student follows a broad and balanced curriculum, and to enable the students to make informed, appropriate and varied choices in the options processes in Year 9, 10 and 12. Each subject area meets the minimum requirements of the National Curriculum at KS3. A second language has recently been introduced into Year 8.

	Art	Computer Science	Design Technology	Drama	English	Food & Nutrition	French	Geography	German or Spanish	History	Mathematics	Music/Music Tech.	PE	PSHE	Science	TOTAL
Year 7	2	2	2	2	7	2	6	3		3	7	2	4	2	6	= 50
Year 8	2	2	2	2	7	2	4	3	2	3	7	2	4	2	6	= 50

**The Year 9 Curriculum**

Year 9 is the transition year between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, during which students study five option subjects alongside their Core subjects including Religious Studies. The aim is to offer some element of choice whilst maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum for each student, leading to informed choices for Years 10 and 11.

	English	Mathematics	Triple Science	PE (Practical)	PSHE/RE	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E	TOTAL
Year 9	8	8	8	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	= 50

Core Subjects:

All students in Year 9 will study the following Core subjects:

English Language
English Literature
Mathematics
Science (Triple Science)*
Physical Education practical lessons.
PSHE / Religious Studies

\*Note that all students initially begin a Triple Science course i.e. separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics, with the opportunity to move to a 'Combined Science' course (Two GCSEs) during Years 10/11.

Option Subjects:

In addition, Year 9 students will be able to choose five option subjects to study from the extensive list below.

Art	French
Business Studies (BTEC or GCSE)	Geography
Computer Science	German
Design Technology: Electronics	History
Design Technology: Paper & Boards	Media Studies
Design Technology: Resistant Materials	Music / Music Technology
Design Technology: Textiles	Photography
Digital Applications	Physical Education (BTEC or GCSE)
Drama	Psychology
Food and Nutrition	Spanish

Almost all students are expected to choose at least one Modern Foreign Language (French, German or Spanish), as well as Geography or History (or both) unless we feel it is in their best interests not to do so.

The Head of Department, Tutor, Head of Year and senior staff consider teacher recommendations as well as pupil preferences when deciding each student's course of study. We will ensure that each student maintains a broad and balanced curriculum and there will be some restrictions on course combinations; for example, students will NOT be able to choose:

- All three Languages
- Art and Photography together
- More than one Design Technology subject (but this could be chosen alongside Food and Nutrition).

## The Year 10 & 11 Curriculum

	English	Mathematics	Science	PE (Practical)	PSHE/RE	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	TOTAL
<b>Year 10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>= 50</b>
<b>Year 11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>= 50</b>

Core Subjects: All students in Years 10/11 will study the following Core subjects:

English Language
English Literature
Mathematics
Science (Triple Science or Combined Science)
Physical Education practical lessons.
PSHE / Religious Studies

Option Subjects:

Towards the end of Year 9 students will decide which four of their current option subjects they wish to continue into Years 10/11 (this may include full course GCSE Religious Studies). In exceptional circumstances, and when we feel it is the student's best interests, it may be possible to start a new option subject at the start of Year 10.

Art	Geography
Business Studies (BTEC or GCSE)	German
Computer Science	History
Design Technology: Electronics	Media Studies
Design Technology: Graphic Products	Music
Design Technology: Resistant Materials	Music Technology
Design Technology: Textiles	Photography
Digital Applications	Physical Education (BTEC or GCSE)
Drama	Psychology
Food and Nutrition	Religious Studies
French	Spanish

Almost all students are expected to continue with at least one Modern Foreign Language (French, German or Spanish), as well as Geography or History (or both) unless we feel it is in their best interests not to do so.

The Head of Department, Tutor, Head of Year and senior staff consider teacher recommendations as well as pupil preferences when deciding each student's course of study.

Choices will be guided by conversations with teachers and parents/carers taking into consideration individual progress during Year 9.

There will be a wide range of information, advice and guidance to support students and parents with the options process from Year 9 into Year 10.

As part of the core curriculum all students are required to study the Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme. If a student decides not to follow the full Religious Studies GCSE in Years 10/11, they will still be required to study (non-examined) Religious Studies as part of this statutory provision.

## The Key Stage 5 (Sixth Form) Curriculum

**Two year Advanced level and BTEC (Level 3) courses** are offered in both traditional and new subjects.

### List of A Level/Level 3 courses:

Art: (Fine Art)	History
Art: (Photography)	ICT (BTEC)
Biology	Law
Business Studies (A-Level & BTEC)	Mathematics
Chemistry	Mathematics with Further Mathematics
Computer Science (BTEC)	Media Studies
Design & Technology: Product Design	Music
Design and Technology: Textiles	Music Technology
Economics	Performing Arts (BTEC)
English Language	Philosophy and Ethics
English Literature	Physical Education (A-Level and BTEC)
Food and Nutrition	Physics
French	Psychology
Geography	Science (Applied: BTEC)
German	Spanish
Government & Politics	Theatre Studies

Note that all courses offered are subject to change and are regularly reviewed based on factors such as demand, funding and staffing. However, whenever possible we are committed to supporting small classes in order to maintain the breadth of subjects offered to students in this rural area.

**Additional Sixth Form studies:**

EPQ (Level 3) & HPQ (Level 2)	Compulsory work experience
PE/Games	Community Work
Classroom Assisting	Student Mentoring
Tutorial Programme (All students)	Independent Study (All students).

There will be a wide range of information, advice and guidance to support students and parents/carers with the options process from Year 11 into Year 12.

A minimum of six GCSE grades 4 or above is required to follow three or more A-Levels. Some subjects have additional requirements (see Prospectus for details), whilst others can be chosen without prior GCSE level study.

Most students will study 3 subjects at A-Level. However, an average GCSE point score of 7.0 or above provides the opportunity to study 4 subjects, and some students will be allowed to study 2 subjects alongside some Level 2 courses

Students who have not achieved the entry requirements for A levels can plan a three-year route, by following Level 2 (GCSE/BTEC or equivalent) courses in the first year through our partnership with Yeovil College.

Many Year 13 students also opt to complete an EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) which is equivalent to an AS level.

Alongside these courses, it is compulsory that all students continue to study English and/or Maths GCSE if they have achieved below a grade 4 in Year 11 & 12

Independent study sessions in the Sixth Form Learning and Study Centres are an essential part of Sixth Form study.

**Post-16 Level 1 & 2 courses** are also offered via our partnership with Yeovil College. A range of vocational courses allow students to explore possible future career paths whilst developing skills and improving qualifications. The courses are varied and flexible, allowing the individual to follow the programme best suited to their needs and interests. There are specific GCSE entry requirements for these courses and guidance will be given as to the most suitable options. All students undertaking the Level 1 & 2 programme are expected to take GCSEs in English and Maths in school on Fridays (if they have not yet achieved a grade 4) and the rest of their curriculum at Yeovil College, alongside one day per week of work experience. Students who successfully complete these can then re-apply to the Sixth Form to study A-Levels for a further two years.