

Curriculum Policy

For the purpose of this policy the curriculum describes everything taught at The Wensleydale School & Sixth Form. The term 'curriculum' includes the lessons we teach, and the schemes of work and curriculum outlines that these flow from. Furthermore, it includes the virtues we seek to establish in our pupils such as positivity, respect and hard work. These can be found in many aspects of pupils' experience when attending our school. These include our expectations of behaviour, peer relations, and the quality of homework. Decisions about our curriculum at The Wensleydale School & Sixth Form are made in the light of the three guiding principles below about young people and learning. These principles are woven into the fabric of our curriculum; they are reflected in what is included and the order in which it is structured.

The Three Key Principles

1. Powerful knowledge should be made known for all

All students, regardless of their background, educational ability or motivation, have an entitlement to powerful knowledge. Powerful knowledge is distinct from knowledge acquired through everyday experience because it is not limited by, or dependent on, context. The big ideas of each subject have rules and conventions that make it possible to form generalisations and make predictions beyond specific cases or contexts. This knowledge is empowering as well as valuable in itself.

2. Language unlocks the world

Students who are confident readers and writers are likely to have more choices open to them and make a positive contribution to society. A secure understanding of language enables individuals to understand their world and be in a better position to define their place within it. Those who read and have a wide vocabulary are part of a community of people who have ever thought, dreamt or written in the same language. In this way, language connects individuals to something large and meaningful outside of their lives.

3. Personal and collective responsibility is central

Students who recognise the impact of their actions on their own lives and on the lives of other people are more likely to develop meaningful relationships and to experience a sense of purpose. They understand the importance of kindness, integrity and compassion and try to embody these virtues through the things they do and the things they say. They thrive in a society built on mutual respect and tolerance. Personal responsibility includes looking after yourself, and being able to look after other people as part of a collective responsibility.

Our Curriculum Organisation

Key Stage Three (Years 7, 8 and 9)

We have designed a rigorous three year Key Stage 3 programme. This provides the foundations for future studies in that subject, and also important knowledge that helps our pupils understand the world around them better. The majority of our students follow a broad programme of fifteen subjects. Our students study English, mathematics, science, computing, French, history, geography, Life & Society (including PSHE and RSE), oracy, art, design technology, food technology (from year 9), music, drama and PE. The taught Key Stage 3 curriculum is supplemented by our tutor reading programme and our homework activities.

Key Stage Four (Years 10 and 11)

Since GCSE reforms were introduced in 2015, we have regularly reviewed the provision we make for our students, and considered the impact it has on their education and wellbeing. Each GCSE has been designed to be more challenging, with increased content, which is tested almost exclusively by end-of-course examinations in Year 11. At Key Stage 4 students are given a free choice of options from a wide array of subjects. Our option pathways ensure our students study an appropriate curriculum. All pathways prepare students to continue their study post-16, either at The Wensleydale School & Sixth Form or at alternative institutions. We offer a broad range of academic and vocational subjects.

Core qualification subjects: English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics

Core non-qualification subjects: Physical Education, Life & Society

Options subjects (students choose four): Art, Business, CCF, Computing, Drama, French, Geography, History, Hospitality & Catering, Music, P.E. (GCSE), Design & Technology and Sociology. A small group of students use one option choice to complete Functional English and Maths.

Key Stage Five (Years 12 and 13)

Our Sixth Form design responds to the needs of our students and their future careers within the business community both locally and nationally. In addition to the published courses listed below, every one of our sixth form students is given a mentor who is a business leader within the local community to help contextualise their learning. The students choose three subjects from Level 3 qualifications (equivalent to A levels) in Business, Sport, Travel & Tourism, Health & Social Care and Information Technology. Students may also choose to complete the Extended Project Qualification or Mathematical Studies as a fourth qualification. There is also a GCSE resit in English and/or Mathematics as needed.

Students in Key Stage 4 are provided with thorough CEIAG so that any choice they make for Post 16 study is fully informed. There is a wide range of other Post 16 providers locally to allow students to choose a setting and course to suit their need and ambition.