

# CURRICULUM POLICY

This policy was approved by the Local Advisory Board on:	4 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
The policy owner is:	Acle Academy
This policy will be reviewed by the Local Advisory Board in: (unless earlier review is recommended by the Trust)	March 2023
Policy Version/date:	March 2021
Signed by the Chair of the Local Advisory Board:	Matthew Arrowsmith-Brown
Ratified by the Board of Trustees	
Signed by the Chair of Trustee Board	

## **Introduction:**

The curriculum is the formal means by which the school translates its aims and values into practice. It comprises all the planned activities and experiences that the school provides to help students learn.

## **Principles:**

The aims of our curriculum are to:

- Provide equal opportunities for all students regardless of gender, aptitude or cultural, ethnic or religious background;
- Offer a broad and balanced entitlement to all students;
- Prepare students for further study, the world of work and to become active citizens;
- Develop positive personal and social values;
- Provide a variety of activities which bring about effective learning, provide appropriate challenges for all students and lead to achievement for all students;
- Provide continuity and progression from the point of transfer to the time of leaving school.
- Develop empathy, resilience and wider cultural understanding

## **Curriculum Intent:**

*“Education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world”* - Nelson Mandela

At Acle Academy, we offer an engaging, broad and balanced curriculum, which prepares students not just for examinations, but also for lifelong learning.

The core purpose of our curriculum is to equip our young people for life afterschool; helping them to build up the mental, emotional, social and strategic resources to enjoy challenge and cope well with the uncertainty and complexity of an ever-changing world.

Our curriculum recognises and values our local cultural heritage but also seizes on opportunities to broaden horizons for the young people in our community. Our curriculum is driven by a moral imperative to develop responsible, ethical and global citizens of the future. We promote opportunities to link knowledge and concepts to real life examples that can be found in the workplace and life beyond the classroom.

At Acle Academy, we understand the students learn best when they can relate new knowledge to existing knowledge. Our curriculum is focused on interconnectivity. We aim to place all learning in context ensuring that students understand the social, cultural, historical or future context of what they are learning and can make links between key concepts, ideas and skills. Transferable skills are developed throughout our curriculum to enable all students to apply their knowledge and understanding in a variety of unfamiliar contexts, strengthening their resilience and developing their curiosity to learn more.

## **Rationale**

Our curriculum content, its sequencing, and delivery aim to develop students who are knowledge-rich in each subject. We recognise that retrieval and spacing of this knowledge is key.

Each subject will have a clear curriculum rationale for Key Stage 3 and 4, closely aligned to the secondary national curriculum, progressing knowledge and understanding from Key Stage 2 and grounded in evidence-based practice. This will be; outlined in subjects' curriculum statements, detailed in their curriculum journeys and scheme of learning overviews<sup>1</sup> and reflected in their assessment methods.

Assessment methods will vary across subjects, but will be richly used and have a clear rationale and purpose. Strategies will range from low-stakes knowledge tests to more formal summative assessments. Feedback from assessments will support students' learning and prepare them for success in their final examinations.

Literacy conventions will be embedded within subject specialisms, where a uniform approach to the introduction of explicitly identified tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary<sup>2</sup> will be evident. To further stretch and challenge our students a 'scholarly reading list' of texts, articles and journals is provided with each scheme of learning overview. These will enrich and contextualise units of study and provide opportunities for independent learning. Home learning opportunities will complement units of study, supporting knowledge and understanding and helping to foster independence.

<sup>1</sup> *Timeline for subjects Schemes of Learning as follows: Year 7 Autumn 2019, Year 8 Autumn 2020, Year 9 Autumn 2021.*

<sup>2</sup> *Tier 2 vocabulary are high frequency words used in mature language and written texts. Tier 3 vocabulary is subject specific, academic language.*

## **Curriculum Structure:**

The curriculum is planned in a coherent manner ensuring it meets legal requirements and embraces cross-curricular themes (including careers education and guidance, citizenship, economic and industrial understanding, environmental, health and sex & relationship education) and cross-curricular skills, in particular those of literacy, numeracy and ICT.

The development of students' personal and social skills and their spiritual and cultural development are addressed specifically through the character and culture lessons, school assemblies as well as permeating all subjects across the curriculum.

### **Key Stage 3 Curriculum**

The key stage 3 curriculum is delivered to students in Year 7, 8 and 9 and comprises of the core and foundation subjects;

**Core subjects:** English, Maths and Science

**Foundation subjects:** Art & Design, Computing, Design & Technology, Drama, Character and Culture (including Religious Education and PSHE), French, Geography, German, History, Music, Physical Education

### Key Stage 3 Curriculum Hours:

Subject	No. of periods per 2 week timetable cycle	% of curriculum time
Art & Design	2	4%
Computing	1	2%
Design & Technology	3	6%
Drama	1	2%
English	8	16%
Character & Culture	3	6%
French / German	4	8%
Geography	4	8%
History	4	8%
Maths	8	16%
Music	1	2%
Physical Education	4	8%
Science	7	14%

### Key Stage 4 Curriculum

The key stage 4 curriculum is delivered to students in Year 10 and 11 and comprises of the core and option subjects;

**Core subjects:** English Language, English Literature, Maths and Science, Character & Culture (including Religious Education, PSHE and Personal Finance), Physical Education

**Option subjects:** Art & Design, Computing, Drama, Design and Technology, French, Geography, German, History, Hospitality & Catering, ICT, Music, Physical Education, Textiles and Triple Science.

### Key Stage 4 Curriculum Hours:

Subject	No. of periods per 2 week timetable cycle	% of curriculum time
English Language / Literature	8	16%
Maths	8	16%
Science	10	20%
Character & Culture	1	2%
Physical Education	3	6%
Option subjects x4	5	40%

- PSHE is recognised as an essential element of a student's education and provision is made for this to be a taught component for each year group through the timetabled subject "Character and Culture". Citizenship will be covered within this subject but also finds relevance and opportunity in a wide range of subjects.
- The school operates an "options" system for students in this key stage. The subjects will be varied both in subject content, delivery style and assessment methodology. The school will innovate in curriculum design and it is the clear intention of the school to provide each and

every student with a coherent programme of learning. This will be broad, balanced and relevant and allow for areas of special interest or talent to be pursued and recognised. The curriculum will be redeveloped each year to match these needs and aspirations. Whilst this ideal will always be pursued, the school acknowledges that there will be times when free choice will need to be balanced by the capacity of the school to deliver the curriculum in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

- We recognise that full time education in school is very difficult for some students and the school will, where appropriate, and at its discretion, work closely with other providers to generate an alternative curriculum for individual students that allows for a work placement together with the continuation of core subjects.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

Students will be encouraged to reflect upon their own attitudes and values, in both character and culture and other lessons. In many lessons, weekly themes and assemblies there will be the opportunity for students to reflect upon their inner feelings and to ask questions about spirituality, traditions and beliefs as they address moral, ethical, environmental and social issues.

Students will have many opportunities to work together and to develop as young leaders. Their social development will be encouraged through positions of responsibility such as House MPs, peer supporting and the student service areas. They will be encouraged to raise funds for charities, to assist with parents' evenings, performances, events and new appointments to the school.

The cultural life of school is vital and students will be able to take part in a wide variety of curricular and extra-curricular activities including sport and the arts. Learners may take part in a range of trips and visits to museums, galleries, theatres and participate in foreign visits and exchanges.

### **Sex and Relationships Education**

The school is fully committed to delivering this aspect of the curriculum. We acknowledge that effective SRE can make a significant contribution to the development of the personal skills needed by students if they are to establish and maintain relationships and make responsible and informed decisions about their health and well-being. Further details are contained within the SRE policy document.

### **The Extended Curriculum**

The school will make provision for students to extend their learning beyond the formal taught curriculum and encourage as many students as possible to take part. Examples of this ever-expanding component of school life include instrumental lessons, sports leadership awards and basic food hygiene certification. The curriculum of the school will be further supported by a wide range of activities and classes that reflect the interests and aspirations of our students and their families. We are committed to providing learning opportunities to families and other adults in our community through our extended schools programme.

### **Most Able**

Many students display special talents, skills, expertise and understanding in particular areas. These include high levels of ability in the taught subjects, activities in the wider curriculum and outside of school. The school will seek to identify such students, to encourage their interests and to make appropriate provision. This provision will include challenging extension activities in the classroom

and additional experiences through, for example, clubs, conferences and competitions and mentoring and academic reading.

### **Support**

Our SEND department will provide a range of diagnostic tests to accurately identify students who need additional help. An individual programme of support will be provided to ensure that each student has the best possible access to the rest of the curriculum through improved literacy and numeracy, specialised equipment or modified teaching methods.

### **Induction**

The school acknowledges the importance of the first few days when a child joins the school. We will ensure a programme of induction events takes place each year that informs, reassures and introduces each student to life at a high school. These events will take place before and after the admission date where a student is joining us from a feeder school in September (where individual students join us mid-year, the school will make provision for the student to be greeted on arrival and introductions made to a suitable student "buddy").

### **A Curriculum for Staff**

The school is committed to providing the very best teachers for our students and acknowledges that staff need ongoing training. To this end, the school will provide a comprehensive choice of training opportunities for all staff that can be selected in addition to a series of compulsory sessions.

### **Timetable and Setting**

The timetable for the school will be constructed each year with the best arrangement of lessons possible within the staffing and physical constraints of the school. The setting of students into teaching groups varies across subjects and across year groups. In all cases, the heads of department and SLT will work together to determine the best arrangement to ensure progress whilst working within the curriculum and timetable structures in place.

### **Setting Arrangements**

Note that these arrangements are reviewed each year and adjusted to suit the characteristics of particular cohorts. By establishing the teaching classes as outlined below, the school is able to give heads of department in the core subjects considerable flexibility in selecting teaching groups that optimise the teaching and learning within their department. For the teaching year 2020 / 2021 the following arrangements apply:

#### **Year 7**

Students are grouped into teaching groups by broad ability. These are based on KS2 information and supported by baseline test scores. Year 7 are set across 4 classes with English and Mathematics departments playing a key role in determining the setting of students, the setting of students in other subjects is largely determined by decisions made by these core subjects due to timetable constraints.

#### **Year 8**

The timetable in Year 8 is arranged so that students are set across 4 classes with the English and Mathematics departments again initially determining the setting of students. Setting of students in other subjects is mostly determined by decisions made by these core subjects due to timetable constraints.

## **Year 9**

Decisions around student's classes are largely grouped by English and Mathematics with the exception of Science, Physical Education and Technology who can set independently of these subjects.

## **Year 10 and Year 11**

English sets are used as teaching groups for Character and Culture. Science and mathematics have their own ability sets. Core PE and optional subjects are generally mixed ability groups.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The curriculum is under constant review by heads of department, subject leaders and senior staff. The curriculum will feature strongly in the School Development Plan and the SEF (Self-Evaluation Framework) both of which are reviewed annually.

## **Equal Opportunities**

We are committed to the principle that all students, regardless of ability, race, cultural background, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation, have the right to the highest quality of education we can provide. We will work to ensure:

- a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for all
- appropriate levels of expectation and challenge
- relevance, continuity and progression in learning
- an inclusive curriculum
- access to well-qualified teachers and excellent resources
- fair access to trips, visits and other activities

## **Complaints**

The school acknowledges that parents have a right to complain if they believe that the school is failing to meet its statutory obligation in relation to the curriculum. In the first instance, parents/carers are asked to make representations to the Principal if they feel the school is failing to:

- provide an appropriate curriculum in the school or for a particular child
- follow the law on charging (see also 'Charging Policy')
- offer only approved qualifications and syllabuses
- provide religious education

## **Equalities**

Acle Academy provides education for all, acknowledging that the society within which we live is enriched by diversity. As stated in our *Equality Policy*, we strive to ensure that the culture and ethos of our school reflects the diversity of all members of the school community, where everyone is equally valued and treats one another with respect and fairness. Students are provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.