

CURRICULUM POLICY

Introduction

The RGS offers a full-time education for students of compulsory school age (constructed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996). It aims to provide an excellent education for its students, enabling them all to meet their academic potential and supporting them in their passage to adulthood by developing character, intellect and physique within a scholarly community.

The RGS Curriculum

The curriculum at the RGS is broad and balanced, designed to be accessible to all students who enter the School. The curriculum provides access to the aesthetic, human and social, linguistic, mathematical, creative and literary, scientific and technological, physical, moral and spiritual 'areas of learning' throughout their compulsory school years. Each subject that is taught is designed to offer continuity and progression of each student's learning.

The School's independence enables it to offer a broadly National Curriculum provision whilst, at the same time, offering subjects outside of the National Curriculum which we regard as valuable.

Curriculum Aims

The RGS curriculum aims to:

- Enable students to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills.
- Encourage the development of a questioning, energetic, imaginative, logical and informed mind;
- Help students use language effectively and creatively;
- Provide the mathematical, scientific and technical knowledge and skills which are considered necessary in a fast-changing world;
- Foster an appreciation of human aspirations and achievements;
- Promote an informed awareness, both of moral values and of the spiritual dimension of life;
- Provide a programme of social, health and economics education which reflects the School's aim and ethos and which encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act, 2010.
- Actively promote the fundamental British values of Democracy, the Rule of Law, Individual Liberty and Respect and Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Encourage self-expression and to provide opportunities to engage in an aesthetic experience;
- Enable students to play a full part in the community through the acquisition of a range of social skills;
- Develop a good level of physical and manipulative competence linked with a healthy understanding of the human body.

- Provide access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that:
 - Is presented in an impartial manner
 - Enables students to make informed choices about a broad range of careers options
 - Helps them to fulfil their potential.

Lesson Times

The School operates on a weekly timetable of 40 periods. This is separated into eight periods per day.

Registration	08.30 – 08.50
Assembly/Tutor Time	08.50 – 09.15
Period 1	09.15 – 09.50
Period 2	09.50 – 10.30
Break	10.30 – 10.50
Period 3	10.50 – 11.25
Period 4	11.25 – 12.05
Period 5	12.05 – 12.45
Lunch	12.45 – 13.55
Period 6 (inc. Registration)	13.55 – 14.40
Period 7	14.40 – 15.20
Period 8	15.20 – 16.00

First Form students take lunch at 12.05 with Period 5 running from 12.30 – 13.10. This is then followed by a further break until Period 6.

First and Second Form

The Lower School curriculum is intentionally broad, with students studying a wide range of subjects.

Students select between French and Spanish as their core language (plus German, from September 2026). In addition, students have the opportunity to study Arabic, Chinese, Japanese or Russian via additional extra-curricular classes at lunchtime.

Science is taught as an integrated subject in First Form, before separating into three distinct subject strands in Second Form.

In the First Form, Digital Literacy is delivered in carousel with a second period of Music. The tutor group is split with students spending half a year following a course in Digital Literacy and the other half of the year studying additional Music.

In the Second Form, students have two periods of History and two periods of Geography each week. A third period is shared on alternate weeks.

The Tutor Period (with supporting PSHME programme) embraces study skills, personal well-being and health, library skills, digital skills enhancement and an introduction to Careers.

There is no streaming or setting in these two year groups.

First Form period allocation

Subject	Period allocation	Subject	Period allocation
English	4	Latin	3
Mathematics	4	Geography	3
Core Language	3	History	3
Science	6	Religious Education	2
Games	3	Art	2
PE	1	Technology	2
Tutor Period	1	Drama	1
Digital Literacy	0.5	Music	1.5

Second Form period allocation

Subject	Period allocation	Subject	Period allocation
English	4	Latin	4
Mathematics	4	Geography	2.5
Core Language	4	History	2.5
Biology	2	Religious Education	2
Chemistry	2	Art	2
Physics	2	Technology	2
Games	3	Drama	1
PE	1	Music	1
Tutor Period	1		

Third Form

Students in their final year of the Lower School continue to study a wide range of subjects. In addition to a series of Core and Compulsory subjects (which all students study), students in the Third Form choose to study a number of optional subjects. These subjects are chosen from two pools, ensuring that students learn not only essential knowledge, but also develop practical skills that will support their learning through the RGS and beyond.

This option structure allows students to study fewer subjects in more depth, preparing them for their GCSE options (where the choice of subjects narrows further).

Third Form period allocation

Core and Additional subjects

Core subjects	Period allocation	Compulsory subjects	Period allocation
English	4	Games	3
Mathematics	4	PE	1
Biology	2	Tutor Periods	2
Chemistry	2	Computational Thinking	1
Physics	2	ExAd	1
Core Language (continued from prior years)	3		

Optional subjects (all students choose six of these)

Pool A (minimum 2)	Period allocation	Pool B (minimum 3)	Period allocation
Art	2.5	Geography	2.5
Drama	2.5	History	2.5
Music	2.5	Religious Education	2.5
Technology	2.5	Latin	2.5
		Greek or French or Spanish or German	2.5

In order to accommodate the option period structure, the Third Form operates to a two-week timetable, with each subject alternating between two periods in one week followed by three periods in the next.

The tutor periods are designed to support students' personal development and a key part of the school's commitment to the Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural development of our students. The emphasis is on students engaging with important factual material in order to build the personal skills, competencies and worldview needed for a productive and rewarding future.

Fourth and Fifth Form (Middle School)

The Key Stage 4 Curriculum is designed to ensure that breadth as well as balance is maintained until the end of the compulsory school leaving age. Students take a minimum of ten GCSE subjects. The core curriculum has been designed to ensure that there are no decisions made at the beginning of Key Stage 4 that will restrict university and/or career opportunities. However, there is still flexibility within this framework to allow for a certain amount of specialisation regarding the particular interests and expertise of individual students.

Individual curriculum specifications are chosen at the discretion of Heads of Department.

The Core curriculum, followed by all students, consists of:

Examined	Period Allocation	Non-examined	Period Allocation
English Language and English Literature	4	Games	3
Mathematics	4	Physical Education	1
Biology	3	Monday Period 8	1
Chemistry	3	Tutor Period	1
Physics	3	Religious Education	1
Core Language (French, German or Spanish)	4		

Students select a further three subjects to study to GCSE level, following the criteria below:

1. All students must select one from History, Geography or Religious Studies.
2. Students select a further two subjects from Art, Computer Science, Drama, Design Technology, French, Geography, German, Greek, History, Latin, Music, PE, Religious Studies and Spanish.

Each option subject is allocated four periods per week.

In the Fourth Form, students are divided into sets for Mathematics. The top sets in each half (accounting for approximately two thirds of all students) take both GCSE Mathematics and an AQA Additional Mathematics Qualification.

Provision is made to support students who wish to study extra-curricular additional languages. They opt to study Arabic, Chinese, Japanese or Russian.

The tutor period programme continues to deliver a structured programme of PSHME.

The Sixth Form (Upper School)

For those students who are already students at the School, there is no formal academic standard that must be achieved in order for them to continue their education in the Sixth Form. Where there are reservations about whether a student is able to cope with the pace of academic life in the Sixth Form, these will be raised with parents during the Fifth Form.

For students wishing to join the Sixth Form offers of places are conditional upon specified grades being achieved at GCSE.

The following subjects are available at A Level:

Ancient History	Economics	Latin
Art	Electronics	Mathematics
Biology	English Literature	Further Mathematics
Business	French	Music
Chemistry	Geography	Physical Education
Computer Science	German	Physics
Design Technology	Greek	Politics
Drama	History	Religious Studies
		Spanish

In the Lower Sixth Form all students begin by studying four subjects. It is expected that students should achieve at least a grade 7 at GCSE Level (where the subject has been available) before they embark upon an A Level course. In instances where this is not the case, individual discussions will take place with the student to ascertain whether it is appropriate for the student to continue with that subject. Details of subject syllabuses can be found in the Sixth Form Curriculum Guide. All subjects are taught on eight periods per week, usually by two teachers.

By the end of the Michaelmas Term, students will start to make decisions about which subjects they intend to take through to formal examination at the end of the Upper Sixth. For those not studying Further Mathematics, the majority will choose to take three subjects at the end of the Upper Sixth although the option remains for them to continue with all four subjects. For those students studying Mathematics and Further Mathematics, the expectation is that they will continue with all four chosen subjects through to A Level at the end of the Upper Sixth.

During the Trinity Term in the Lower Sixth, those students who are targeting aspiring universities (required) and those students who are managing the rigours of A Level studies (encouraged), enter the Independent Learning Assignment (ILA) programme. Students undertake a piece of extended independent research, often linked to their university degree plans. The ILA seeks to inculcate the skills promoted by the Extended Project Qualification and is overseen by the Head of Scholarship. Students may opt to complete CREST Gold Awards, Headstart Courses or MOOCS as an alternative way of satisfying this expectation.

All students in the Sixth Form follow a programme of non-examined General Studies (2 periods per week). The programme is co-ordinated by the Head of General Studies and consists of a combination of lectures and short-course options. Details of the range of lectures and courses can be found in the General Studies handbook. The short-course options are delivered in conjunction with Guildford High School

All students in the Sixth Form continue to participate in games (3 periods per week) and in the Monday Period 8 programme. Opportunities in the latter are increased to also include music and art appreciation, contemporary music, set design, archives, hiking, community service, drama and sports officiating.

Private Study

Private Study is an invaluable opportunity for students to develop the skills of independent learning and to undertake further background reading. In the Lower Sixth Form two periods are initially available for Private Study, increasing to ten periods if/when the fourth A Level is dropped.

In the Upper Sixth Form a student may have between two and ten periods of Private Study periods depending upon whether or not they are studying for three or four A Level subjects. It is left to the individual discretion of students to decide whether they wish to use this time for recreation or study, so allowing them some opportunity to manage their own time and workload effectively as a preparation for life at university.

In circumstances where there are concerns relating to academic progress, Sixth Form students may be placed in supervised private study. The names of these students will be agreed by the Head of Year / Head of Section, in collaboration with the Assistant Head (Curriculum).

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development and Fundamental British Values

Central to the RGS is the belief that the education provided is not only about the gaining of knowledge and the acquiring of essential skills, important though they are, but that it is also about the personal development of each student. This includes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of each of our students.

The School ensures that an adequate foundation of experience and knowledge, with opportunities for discussion, reflection and evaluation, is provided, so that students can be given maximum scope to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions and the promotion of fundamental British values in an environment free of political bias. Details of the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Schemes of work can be found with the relevant policy document.

Following the Department for Education's 2014 [guidance](#) on promoting British values in schools, the RGS ensures that its duty to actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect.

Co-curricular opportunities

As part of its commitment to educating the whole person, RGS encourages a wide range of clubs, societies and wider co-curricular activities which enhance the prescribed academic curriculum. Some of these are run by academic departments and will have direct relevance to academic subjects (e.g. the Classics Society). Others may be supervised by teachers but have more general interest (e.g. Model United Nations). Many clubs and societies are organised by senior students with the help of supervisory teachers. Such curricular activities represent a vital aspect of the cultural and sporting life of the school, and encourage students to be involved in their own education in the widest sense of the word. RGS also encourages visitors from outside the school to share their expertise or interests with students. These visitors often address assemblies, give general studies lectures and speak to smaller groups of students.

Reviewed by: Assistant Head (Curriculum)

Date of last review: May 2025

Date of next review: Trinity 2026