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# **CURRICULUM POLICY**

## **THE CURRICULUM AT THE ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

### **Introduction**

The RGS is a selective boys' day school. The School provides full-time education for students of compulsory school age (constructed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996) and gives students experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. The aim of the RGS is to provide an excellent education for its students which will enable them to access the six values of the School, namely:

### **Inclusivity**

We inherently believe in widening access and in educating local boys in a welcoming, tolerant community where each individual is valued and enjoys a deep sense of belonging.

### **Scholarship**

We encourage the growth of intellectual curiosity, independence, creativity, innovation and habits of learning within a scholarly community through inspirational subject specialists who provoke and stretch the students' minds and inculcate a lifelong love of learning.

### **Integrity**

We promote the development of self-discipline and responsibility, spirituality and a personal moral code, and cultivate an ethos where individuals approach life with humour and perspective in a community where traditional qualities of decency, politeness and humility are celebrated.

### **Respect**

We nurture an atmosphere of mutual respect between all members of our community, and foster self-respect and self-esteem in terms of physical health, emotional maturity and personal well-being, while establishing lasting friendships in a positive, happy environment.

### **Courage**

We develop leadership, teamwork, resilience and life skills through a diverse range of activities where all boys, regardless of their talents and attributes, are encouraged to challenge themselves, take appropriate risks and work hard to fulfil their potential.

## Collaboration

We work closely with others for mutual enrichment, and encourage a spirit of generosity and service, a sense of perspective, and a firm belief that we can work in partnership with others, locally and internationally, to make a difference and have a positive impact on society.

## The purpose of the RGS

The RGS aims to provide an excellent education for its students, supporting them in their passage to adulthood by developing character, intellect and physique within a scholarly community in which each individual is cared for and valued equally by:

- Providing a staff of varied talents, high qualifications and strong commitment, who will enable the students to enjoy education and see it as a life-long experience;
- Pursuing an active and open collaboration with parents;
- Encouraging the development in every student of self-discipline, responsibility, spiritual values and a personal moral code, leading to the highest possible standards of behaviour, consideration for others and a pride in himself and the School;
- Encouraging the growth of intellectual curiosity, creativity and habits of learning, including the preparation of each student for the best possible examination results, through a broadly based, coherent and balanced curriculum;
- Offering a wide range of extra-curricular activities through which students can develop their social, sporting and cultural abilities;
- Promoting an understanding of higher education and career possibilities, an awareness of the world outside the School, and a sense of service to the local and wider community.

## Learning Habits

The School has identified a set of learning habits that it seeks to promote through both its academic curriculum and co-curricular opportunities. It is felt that Heads of Department are best placed to decide how to encourage and develop these learning skills in their subject.

<b><i>RGS Learning Habit</i></b>	<b><i>As an RGS Learner...</i></b>
Organisation	...I am punctual and well prepared so that I can make the most out of every opportunity. I manage time effectively and meet deadlines. My work is clearly and systematically ordered.
Engagement	...I work in partnership with others, test their ideas, demonstrate empathy and look towards their well-being. I am an active listener who is well engaged in learning; I notice and learn from what others do well. I fulfil my role within a team or group to the best of my ability.
Imagination	...I combine my existing knowledge and skills with intellectual curiosity and creativity to successfully plan and achieve things in unfamiliar situations, of which I am proud.
Perseverance	...I am tenacious when facing adversity or suffering setbacks. I will understand and learn from both my mistakes and those of others, and resolve to try again.

Aspiration	...I aim to go beyond my current successes. I enjoy making the most of the opportunities presented to me, both inside and outside of the classroom, irrespective of the outcome.
Reflection	...I recognise and celebrate my achievements and those of others. I look back at the progress I have made and seek feedback so that I can refine and improve targets for my future development. I have a sense of perspective, rationally test claims of truth and take responsibility for my own well-being.

### **Aims and Structure of the RGS Curriculum**

The broad and balanced curriculum offered here is designed to be accessible to all students who enter the School. The School offers a full-time programme of study for all its students. The curriculum offers access to all the aesthetic, human and social, linguistic, mathematical, creative and literary, scientific and technological, physical and moral and spiritual 'areas of learning' throughout their compulsory school years. Each subject within these areas is designed to offer continuity and progression of each student's learning.

The aims of the RGS curriculum are in harmony with those of the National Curriculum. 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. Our overriding aim is to maintain a high standard of teaching and learning for all students at the RGS.

### **Curriculum Aims**

The curriculum at the RGS has the following aims to:

- To enable students to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills through a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Develop 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;
- Ensures that all Students have the opportunity to learn and to make progress
- Foster an appreciation of human aspirations and achievements;
- Promote an informed awareness, both of moral values and of the spiritual dimension of life;
- Provides 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. The characteristics are identified as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.
- Actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

- Encourage self-expression and to provide opportunities for active responses to 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.
- To 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.

### **Putting aims into practice:**

#### **Learning Support**

The RGS is committed to assisting all our students in accessing the curriculum, from admissions to A Level and beyond. Our Learning Support Policy sets out the rationale and procedures via which we identify and assist those with Learning Support or Special Educational Needs, which includes those with an education, health and care plan (EHC).

#### **English as an Additional Language**

The School identifies and assists where necessary the small number of students for whom English is not their first language. Bespoke support is offered by the Head of Learning Support.

The School's EAL Policy provides additional detail and clarification.

#### **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 which is then followed by a further break until Period 6 / Registration at 13.55.

## Curricula

### First and Second Form

The Junior School Curriculum is broad and all students study a wide range of subjects that enables them to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum is also designed to promote, as well as the intellectual, the spiritual, moral and physical development of each student.

Students select between French and Spanish as their core language. In addition, students have the opportunity to study Arabic, Chinese, Japanese or Russian via additional voluntary 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, ICT 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 ICT 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, ICT enhancement and an introduction to Careers

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

### First Form period allocation

English	4 periods
Mathematics	4 periods
Core Language (French or Spanish)	3 periods
Latin	3 periods
Integrated Science	6 periods
History	3 periods
Geography	3 periods
Religious Education	2 periods
Art	2 periods
Technology	2 periods
Music	1.5 periods
Drama	1 period
ICT	0.5 periods
Physical Education	1 period

Tutor Period	1 period
Games	3 periods

#### Second Form period allocation

English	4 periods
Mathematics	4 periods
Core Language (French or Spanish)	4 periods
Latin	4 periods
Biology	2 periods
Chemistry	2 periods
Physics	2 periods
History	2.5 periods
Geography	2.5 periods
Religious Education	2 periods
Technology	2 periods
Art	2 periods
Music	1 period
Drama	1 period
Physical Education	1 period
Tutor Period	1 period
Games	3 periods

#### Third Form

Students continue to study a wide range of subjects that enables them to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills.

In addition to a series of core 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.

The option structure also allows students to begin 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

English	4 periods
Mathematics	4 periods
Core Language (French or Spanish)	3 periods
Biology	2 periods
Chemistry	2 periods
Physics	2 periods

## Optional subjects (Six chosen)

Pool A (minimum of 2)	
Art	2.5 periods
Drama	2.5 periods
Music	2.5 periods
Technology	2.5 periods
Pool B (minimum of 3)	
Latin	2.5 periods
Greek or French or German or Spanish	2.5 periods
Geography	2.5 periods
History	2.5 periods
Religious Education	2.5 periods
<b>Additional subjects</b>	
Physical Education	1 period
Tutor Periods	2 periods
Games	3 periods
Computational Thinking	1 period
ExAd	1 period

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. These lessons are taught through a combination of the students' Form tutors (PSHME) and members of the Religion & Philosophy Department (Spirituality & Morality).

All students study one period a week of Computational Thinking. This involves developing problem-solving skills and techniques that software engineers use to write programs and apps. As part of the course students learn the foundations of Microsoft application as well as developing skills for cryptography and game-design using Python 3.

All students in the Third Form and above take part in the ExAd programme, an outdoor and expedition training programme which takes place in a single period each week. The training covers a variety of practical skills and provide the opportunity to gain numerous accredited awards. It will also cover the requirements of the expedition section of the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award.

The focus of the Careers programme in The Third Form is to ensure that informed GCSE option choices are made that support each individual student's ambition and potential and to provide students with a broad insight into potential career pathways. From the Third Form, students and their parents are sent a fortnightly Careers and Higher Education bulletin which provides information on:

- Upcoming events at the RGS
- Details of courses and conferences
- Details of other events and competitions
- General University and Careers News and Guidance

#### **Fourth and Fifth Form**

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. All students will take 10 GCSE subjects. The core curriculum broadly follows the programme prescribed by the EBacc and Progress 8 directives and 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 and include both GCSE and IGCSE examinations.

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

English Language and English Literature	4 periods
Mathematics	4 periods
Core Language ( <i>French, Spanish or German</i> )	4 periods
Biology	3 periods
Chemistry	3 periods
Physics	3 periods
Religious Education (non-examined)	1 period
Tutor Period	1 period
Monday Period 8	1 period
Physical Education	1 period
Games	3 periods

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

All students must select one from History, Geography or Religious Studies.

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 four sets in half year groups for Mathematics. The top two sets in each half (accounting for approximately two thirds of all students) take both IGCSE Mathematics and an AQA Additional Mathematics Qualification.

Provision is made to support students who wish to study additional languages beyond the formal curriculum. They opt to study Arabic, Chinese, Japanese or Russian.



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

The School believes that work experience is an important and integral part of a student's education and for this reason all students in the Fifth Form are strongly encouraged to undertake a week of work experience following the completion of their GCSE examinations. The School also organises an Annual Careers Convention which provides students with the opportunity to explore career plans with advisors drawn from a wide range of vocations and industries.

### **The Sixth Form**

For those students who are already students at the School, there is no formal academic hurdle 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. However, if a parent wishes their child to continue at the School then this will be granted. For students wishing to join the Sixth Form, offers of places are conditional upon specified grades to be achieved at GCSE. Candidates are expected to gain a strong list of GCSE passes including English and Mathematics, with at least six grades 7 – 9.

In addition to the subjects already listed the following subjects are also available at A Level:

- Ancient History
- Economics
- Electronics
- Further Mathematics
- Government and Politics

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 Mathematics and Further Mathematics, the majority will choose to take three subjects at the end of the Upper Sixth although the option does remain for them to continue with all four subjects. For those students studying both 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 except where special dispensation is granted by the Assistant Head (Curriculum), in conjunction with the Head of Year / Head of Section and Head of Mathematics.

Internal examinations are taken in the Trinity Term. Boys who are already certain about the subject they will not continue to study may elect to drop that subject before the end of the Lent Term and not sit the internal examination.

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. This is an opportunity for students to undertake a piece of extended independent research and many students choose to link this with 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 (6 x 6 week blocks; three in the Lower Sixth and three in the Upper Sixth). 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 only 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, in its fullest sense. That fullest sense is one which includes the 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural development' of each of our students. The thread which an RGS education can offer consists of two closely interwoven strands.

The first strand consists of personal relationships where adults and young people alike aim to set, and are entitled to expect from others, good standards of behaviour, marked by respect and responsibility.

The second, closely related, strand in the thread is the School's curriculum, and all the ways in which this is presented to the students and received by them. The teaching of the curriculum aims to ensure that what is taught and how it is taught are contributing as fully as possible, and in a positive way, to all aspects of students' personal development.

It is the task of the School to ensure 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 policy document.

In its provision for the Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development of its students the School provides students with the tools (both in knowledge and skills) to make their own informed decisions about the answers to the questions that arise in these areas. The expectation and requirement is that boys must understand and engage rationally with the social, political, religious, ethical and moral norms of society and recognise the reasons for their existence. This means that such provision – whether in lessons, society meetings, assemblies or other school activities – will not be values free, as it demands a response to both the material and non-material implications of individual choices personally, familiarly, societally and globally. However, in none of these contexts will the School promote, or allow the promotion of, the specific attitudes, values and beliefs of any group or individual without also ensuring that there is opportunity for critical discussion and/or the presentation of counter-view. Such opportunity for balance may or may not be at the same time and event as the initial presentation.

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.

Full details of how the School delivers its SMSC programme can be found within the associated policy document.

### **Co-curricular opportunities**

As part of its commitment to educating the whole person, RGS encourages a wide range of clubs, societies and wider cross-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.

### **Disruptions to Learning**

Should a situation arise where learning in the school buildings is disrupted during the school day, pupils and staff may be sent home and no further learning provision will be offered on that day. However, for each subsequent day that the buildings are inaccessible, remote learning provision following the usual school timetable should be made with as much as possible delivered live via Microsoft Teams.

In the event of snow closure, the first day of closure will not see work set, but on the second and subsequent days, remote learning provision following the usual school timetable should be made with as much as possible delivered live via Microsoft Teams. Discretion may be applied to exams classes.

Should a member of staff be unable to deliver live remote learning, they should contact their Head of Department as soon as possible and discuss options.

### **COVID-19**

In line with government guidance, we aim to deliver a full curricular offering to all pupils. Maintaining this provision has been a priority in our planning. However, we recognise that circumstances beyond our control may force us to modify our curricular provision as short notice. In such circumstances we will endeavour to provide as broad and balanced a curriculum as we can, in line with guidance at the time. Details of any changes will be published to staff and pupils.

When the school buildings are closed due to relevant legislation or Public Health England Guidance, we will continue to deliver the core academic curriculum remotely. When the school is in session but pupils are compelled to self-isolate in line with COVID-19 guidance, they will be able to access 'Blended Learning'. Pupils who are absent due to other (non-COVID) illness will not be permitted access to 'Blended Learning'.

**Reviewed by:**            **Assistant Head (Curriculum)**

**Date of last review:**   **30 June 2023**

**Date of next review:**   **Trinity 2024**