

# LEICESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL TRUST

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### Curriculum Policy

*This is one of the policies concerned with the curriculum. It should be read in conjunction with the policies on Assessment, Marking & Homework; Examinations; Controlled Assessment; SEND; Safeguarding; and Relationships and Sex Education. It is also supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work. This policy is implemented by the School's HoDs and its implementation is checked and overseen by the Deputy Head (Academic) and the Director of Studies. The School is committed through the delivery of the curriculum (both within lessons and outside of class time), as in other ways, to upholding the national 'Prevent' strategy.*

#### **THE AIMS OF THE CURRICULUM POLICY**

The curriculum has been designed in order to reflect the aims of the School, as specified in the School's 'mission statement' and aims which can be found in the school prospectus and on the website:

The Leicester Grammar School Trust seeks to be an inspiring centre for co-educational excellence in academic and personal development, within a Christian ethos.

In order to fulfil this mission, the school aims to:

- Promote intellectual curiosity and academic excellence.
- Provide a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum.
- Offer a rich range of co-curricular opportunities which enhance pupils' physical, cultural and personal development.
- Equip pupils with the self-belief, consideration and skills required for a principled and fulfilling life.
- Create a happy and mutually-supportive community of learners and staff, in which each individual is encouraged and enabled to do and be their best.
- Care for the mental and emotional well-being of pupils, and be proactive in the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.
- Welcome pupils of diverse backgrounds and faiths, nurturing their social and spiritual development.
- Foster a generous contribution to charity, community service and society.

It should be stressed that academic and personal education are not separate, but that both are essential aspects of our teaching. While the curriculum is designed to fulfil the academic potential of each child, it is always remembered that the overall individual personal development of each pupil is paramount.

## THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CURRICULUM POLICY

*LGS aims to encourage both academic breadth and balance, and to produce pupils who embody and benefit from this guiding principle. It also aims to encourage and enable those who wish to study some subjects to a greater depth, by providing curriculum choice at some junctures.*

The School aims to provide:

- Breadth** achieved by offering a wide range of subjects across several faculties. This allows a range of learning experiences, knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes. Pupils are exposed to subjects covering the aesthetic, creative, human, social, linguistic and literary, mathematical and moral, physical, scientific, spiritual and technological. At each stage, the curriculum is planned as a whole, so that each subject can contribute to pupils' overall progress and achievement rather than appear discrete and unconnected.
- Balance** achieved by giving each area appropriate attention within the curriculum as a whole.
- Choice** offered at stages in pupils' routes through LGS, but is controlled at each stage so that the overall timetable of a pupil is appropriate. The School reserves the right, in individual cases, to add or remove subjects from an individual pupil's curriculum in the overall interest of said pupil. This is only done after consultation between parents, teachers, the Director of Studies, the Deputy Head (Academic) and the Headmaster.

## EVALUATION OF THE CURRICULUM

*It is recognised that the true value of the curriculum is difficult to establish. However, pass rates at GCSE and A-Level are a convenient and usually very satisfactory way of gauging the success of the curriculum policy, as is uptake of subjects (where subjects are optional). The School supplements the evaluation of its curriculum by carefully considering all feedback from pupils and parents.*

## HOW THE CURRICULUM IS DELIVERED

### **Responsibility**

The Headmaster controls overall policy. The Deputy Head (Academic) and the Director of Studies are responsible for the detail and delivery of the curriculum. The former is the permanent chair of the Heads of Department Committee, the latter of the Curriculum Committee. These two committees each meet on a termly basis to discuss academic matters. The Director of Studies administers the option schemes in Years 8 → 9 (two cycles), 9 → 10 and 11 → 12. He advises the Headmaster and Deputy Head (Academic) on national initiatives, curriculum development, and new qualifications and schemes of assessment.

### **Setting**

Most subjects are taught in forms or option blocks through which any required differentiation occurs within the teaching group. The permanent exceptions to this rule are Mathematics and Modern Languages, where setting is deemed more productive as a way of looking after the interests of individual pupils and is thus used to differentiate according to pupils' needs and so to maximise academic and personal progress. Other exceptions to this rule may occur

where timetabling constraints allow and at the discretion of the Head of Department, in consultation with the Director of Studies and Deputy Head (Academic). In both of these subject areas, much thought goes towards the setting of each individual and movement between sets is encouraged when appropriate. Whilst the decision ultimately lies with the Head of Department, it is clearly explained to pupils and any changes involve consultation with pupils and parents. On the rare occasions when there is parental concern at the decision, the matter will be referred to the Deputy Head (Academic) and/or the Headmaster.

### **Concern about Academic Progress**

Academic staff should be mindful of the impact of a pupil's wellbeing on their academic progress. Any concern over the academic progress of a pupil is dealt with, in the first instance, by the member of the academic staff who teaches the pupil in the relevant subject.

Where appropriate, this might then be referred on to:

- the form/personal tutors
- the Head of Department
- the Head of Year
- the Head of Learning Support
- an appropriate member of the Senior Management Team.

The aim is for staff to work with parents and pupils in order to give each child the greatest possible opportunity for academic and personal success.

Assessments and case conferences are used to monitor pupil progress and to provide evidence for feedback in regular written reports and at parents' evenings.

Members of the academic staff are encouraged to use the full range of rewards available to them, including (but not necessarily limited to):

- positive signatures in the student planner
- specific verbal praise
- notes of praise addressed to parents in the planner
- the use of the rewards system.

The Headmaster may see pupils at any time:

- to award praise (for example, cards are sent from the Headmaster to deserving pupils); or
- to discuss work which is giving cause for concern. This is done to encourage improvement and to attempt to generate an amended attitude rather than to condemn.

## **LEARNING SUPPORT**

*Including Early Years and Foundation Stage and English as an Additional Language*

Learning Support works across the three schools in the Trust to understand and support the development of mind, body and spirit within statutory frameworks for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Working with pupils, teachers and academic leaders, the outcomes are to ensure barriers for learning are removed and pupils are enabled to reach their potential.

The role of teachers is key to achieving this, and they are supported in:

- Promoting and supporting reflective practice, the development of learning skills and the use of appropriate adjustments
- Accessing appropriate and timely guidance and advice and support for the monitoring and evaluation of learning provision and outcomes
- Generating confidence in a pupil's own ability to work independently and feel valued as a learner, being unafraid to learn, interact and renew self, however unconventional their personal style
- Enabling pupils to recognise and derive strength from advocacy so that all challenge is an opportunity for choice and learning
- Receiving their entitlement to exam Access Arrangements and other screening or assessment in school, along with appropriate curriculums and pathways.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Leicester Grammar School Trust SEND Policy.

## THE CURRICULUM THROUGH THE SCHOOL

As stated in the original aims of the School, the curriculum is designed to provide breadth and balance, while encouraging and enabling those who wish to study a subject at a greater depth.

### ***Also see – Curriculum Policy Subjects Appendix***

#### **GCSE**

All pupils study a core of **three** examined subjects, consisting of English (Lang and Lit) and Mathematics. They then choose **seven** optional subjects from those available.

In general, students must include at least one Modern Foreign Language and at least two of Biology, Chemistry and Physics in their selection, unless prior permission to select otherwise is obtained from the School. All pupils also follow non-examined courses in PE, Games and PSD.

(Candidates study for Edexcel International GCSEs in Mathematics, English, English Literature, Biology, Physics and History; and Cambridge IGCSEs in Food Technology, Geography, Music and Physical Education.)

#### **Sixth Form**

In the Lower Sixth most pupils select three (or in some cases four) A level subjects. Our Sixth-Form Aspire programme also includes, timetable permitting, for the attendance of weekly 'Friday Lectures' as well as the study of Aspire Short Courses (one in the Advent term and one in the Lent term) and the Ivy House Leadership Award in the Lower Sixth. The Extended Project Qualification may be studied over the calendar year straddling the two Sixth Form years.

A small number of EAL students follow an English Language course in the Lower Sixth in place of Friday Lectures. Their English support continues into the Upper Sixth. Life skills (a non-examined course) is followed by the vast majority of Upper Sixth in a timetabled period per week; the Lower Sixth have PSD afternoons off-timetable on an approximately termly basis. Most sixth formers also follow a non-examined course in Games, though some opt for a Community Service option in lieu.

## THE WIDER CURRICULUM

#### **Careers**

From Year 7 to Year 11, Careers Education is delivered in an integrated manner through Life Choices/Tutorial. In the Lower Sixth and the Upper Sixth non-contact time is mainly used for provision. Student choices are supported by advice from tutors and Heads of Department and through impartial guidance from professional, qualified practitioners on the school staff. Independent and impartial guidance is available from external sources on occasion. The School offers an externally validated career aptitude service in Year 10 on an opt-in basis. All schemes take into account the age, aptitude and needs of all pupils, as well as including British Values.

#### **Life Choices**

The School is committed to delivering Life Choices to all pupils. In the Lower School, a programme is delivered through form tutors and specialist staff. In the GCSE years, it is taught to all pupils as a non-examined course within the curriculum. In the sixth form, a non-examined course is followed by the vast majority of

Upper Sixth in a timetabled period per week, whilst the Lower Sixth have afternoons off-timetable on an approximately termly basis. Topics covered at various times include: health, relationships, citizenship, careers and economic matters, as well as British Values.

*Life Choices was formerly known as Personal and Social Development ('PSD').*

## **Co-curricular Activities**

It is recognised that societies, activities and trips make a valuable contribution to the social, personal and academic progress of pupils, and that they add to the pupils' experience and enjoyment of Leicester Grammar School. Some activities are academic in nature and associated with areas of the curriculum, whilst others cross academic disciplines or place emphasis on fields not covered at all within the formal curriculum. It is acknowledged that there is much to be gained from all of these types of activities, including the interaction between pupils of different age groups (which benefits both the younger and older pupils in terms of the development of social skills and a whole school identity); the additional opportunities for social, moral, cultural and personal development; the chance for pupils to explore niche areas not found within the prescribed curriculum; and the extension of understanding and enjoyment of academic topics. Examples of the co-curricular offerings at LGS are Christian Union, participation in chapel services as sacristans or servers, Debating Society, Sixth Form attachment to junior forms, choirs and orchestras, drama groups, The Charity Committee, Young Enterprise, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and numerous house events. All of these, as well as the myriad others on offer, add to the academic development of the pupils, and it is therefore regarded as essential that as many pupils as possible participate in these activities. This is done through encouragement rather than compulsion.

The range of activities is provided during the lunch break and after school. It is intended that these activities reflect both the academic and the leisure interests of the pupils. Some of the activities are targeted towards a certain age range. The Sixth Form is encouraged to develop leadership skills by participating in the organisation of the societies and activities.

In the Sixth Form there is an extensive programme of events specifically linked to the pupils' wider academic development for the sixth form, including regular Friday Lectures for the majority of the Lower Sixth throughout the year and the increasingly popular and thought provoking annual "Question Time" evening (ensuring that sixth form pupils remain aware of current issues regarding politics, culture and citizenship); of course, many of the whole school activities are also enjoyed by members of the Sixth Form.

LGS also runs an extensive range of trips linked to the curriculum, both domestic and foreign, residential and nonresidential. These are organised and advertised to pupils and parents on a rolling three-year cycle; amongst the most notable are the biennial Classics Trip to Italy and History Trip to Germany; trips for all Year 9 pupils to one of Spain, France or Germany (depending on their first choice language option for the GCSE years); an Art Trip that varies its destination according to the galleries most relevant for the students' choice of topic; and Biology and Geography field courses. One of the chief considerations when approving all trips is their worth to the pupils' academic development.

Care is taken not to exclude pupils because of gender, academic ability or economic background.

## **The School Library**

It is the School's aim to encourage independent study and learning throughout the School by following the DfE recommendation regarding school libraries, and to this end The Cufflin Library has been developed as a research and resources centre, providing a welcoming environment conducive to study and research at the heart of the School. As well as the many books and periodicals contained therein, this area contains a suite of computers and an expansive

careers section with a reading room stocked with relevant materials forms part of the complex. The teaching of library skills forms part of the planned pastoral programme for Lower School forms. The bank of computers within the Library is available both to sixth form students wishing to undertake independent study and to members of the academic staff wishing to take a class to this area for their lessons.

### **SUBJECT POLICIES**

The curriculum at Leicester Grammar School is based on the ethos of the National Curriculum with the addition of the elements of a traditional grammar school education. All academic departments produce, retain and follow a detailed policy pertaining to their discrete subject area and including schemes-of-work and exam specifications. These are updated annually by the relevant HoD, and reviewed annually by the Deputy Head (Academic).