

Gordano Whole School Curriculum Rationale

Curriculum Aims

At Gordano school, we are ambitious for all students to experience, develop and secure the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will allow them to progress with curiosity and confidence through school and beyond. Our definition of the curriculum is '*the entire planned learning experience*'¹ Our aim therefore in planning and implementing both the taught and wider curriculum is to develop lifelong learners, with the agency and desire to positively contribute to the various communities to which they belong.

Curriculum Principles

We cannot predict the knowledge and skills that will be needed in the future. We can however equip students with essential, 'powerful' knowledge across a breadth of subject discipline, along with the skills, attitudes and dispositions that will enable them to apply, adapt and build on this knowledge in the future.

We have summarised key curriculum components into ten principles; seven academic and three personal, that together, inform the planning and delivery of the curriculum our students experience, within the classroom and beyond.

Academic Principles (1-7)

Each subject area has a unique role to play in moulding our young people; we celebrate and value the specific skills and traditions within each area of study. With the curriculum principles as a foundation, our subject specialists are trusted to decide on the curriculum 'entitlement' for every student within that subject, informed by but not limited to the National Curriculum and exam specifications. Subject teams consider carefully curriculum pacing and sequencing to ensure that the curriculum progressively builds in cognitive complexity across the years, whilst supporting knowledge understanding, retention and application. Curriculum review and development is ongoing, informed by learner needs, learner progress and in response to local, national and global circumstances.

The academic curriculum is delivered through [GORDANO LEARNING](#)

1. The core, foundation knowledge in each discipline				
2. Opportunities for reading and development of Tier 2/3 vocabulary, writing styles and text types				
3 The numerical concepts used within each discipline.	4 The practical and cognitive skills inherent to each discipline.	5 The key timelines, theories and figures within each discipline	6 Exposure to and consideration of diverse perspectives	7 Knowledge of how each discipline has impact on the modern and future world.

Foundation knowledge (1) accessed and explored through proficient reading, writing and a rich vocabulary (2) are of central importance, being a core entitlement for all learners. Across subjects, we build in opportunities for academic reading on a regular basis, as well as providing learners in Key Stage 3 time within the curriculum to develop their reading for pleasure. All teachers help students improve their written expression and accuracy. Secure numeracy (3) is essential for all students. Many subjects provide opportunities for students to be creative, ingenious and accurate with their practical work (4), and a variety of subjects explore and invite students to consider diverse cultures and perspectives (6). Finally, we consider it essential that our students are able to look both

¹ Mick Waters, 'Moving the Curriculum Forwards' (2017)

backwards and forwards - to consider subjects in the light of the history of thought and civilisation (5), and well as look forward to the opportunities and risks as we move further into the 21st century (7).

Each subject has articulated their rationale for learning in a statement, along with their intention for learners at each of the key stages. These can be found by clicking on the subject 'buttons' on the Curriculum section of the school website. As our curriculum is continually under review, this information is regularly edited and updated.

Main contribution to the academic principles from different subject disciplines

Curriculum principle	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
English	/	/			/	/	/
Maths	/	/	/	/			/
Science	/	/	/	/			/
History	/	/	/		/	/	
Geog	/	/	/			/	/
Ethics and Phil	/	/			/	/	/
PE	/	/	/	/			/
MFL	/	/				/	/
DT	/	/	/	/			/
Computing	/	/	/	/			/
Art	/	/		/	/	/	
Drama	/	/		/	/	/	
Music	/	/		/	/	/	
Dance	/	/		/	/	/	
Social Sciences	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
PSHE	/	/			/	/	/

Personal Curriculum Principles (8-10)

Our personal principles encompass the wider awareness, attitudes, habits and dispositions that will develop students' kindness, responsibility, ambition and their happiness. In other words, principles that will enable them to Dream big, Do your Best and Give Back.

8 Learning to be responsible for ourselves and our futures.	9 Learning to be responsible for our community.	10 Learning to consider our global and environmental responsibilities.
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Learning to take responsibility for our own lives and engage in experiences that develop aspiration (8) are a vital aspect of secondary schooling as the bridge into adulthood and the world of work. Learning to act in support of others in our community (9) and consideration of our global responsibilities (10) are fundamental responsibilities of society.

We take great pride in the range of curricular, extra-curricular, pastoral, social and developmental experiences that students are given throughout their time at school to foster these attributes. These are delivered in a range of ways - through the PSHE curriculum, through our tutor and assembly programme and as members of a tutor group and a House, through the 'Gordano Extra' and 'Gordano Aspire' programmes, through student leadership roles and forums, and through Activities Week, Performing, Visual Arts and Design events, through CEIAG and work experience and embedded into our academic curriculum. We are continually working to involve all students in the wider curriculum offer.

Learner entitlement: Key Stage 3

The phase of learning referred to as Key Stage 3 (KS3) relates to Years 7, 8 and 9, for students joining Gordano in September of 2023. In the words of Myatt/Tomsett: *'KS3 is the intellectual powerhouse of the school'*² The KS3 Curriculum is planned therefore to give students a strong grounding in a broad range of subjects, in line with our curriculum principles. This means equipping students not only with essential, 'powerful' knowledge and skills, but also inspiring curiosity, questioning, opinions, development of literacy and ensuring students have the attitudes, learning habits and interest in learning that sets them up for successful study into KS4 and beyond. Students may naturally prefer certain subjects over others depending on their personal interests and perceived ability: we want students to understand the value of all learning and how each subject has a crucial part to play in their outlook, understanding of the world and access to opportunity, regardless of whether they choose to pursue it in the future.

When students reach Year 9, they will build on learning from Years 7 and 8 with foundation knowledge and skills in preparation for KS4. This approach will prepare students for successful future study in any subject, regardless of the choices they go onto make.

Academic Curriculum in KS3:

- English, Maths and Science
- Humanities (Geography, History, Ethics & Philosophy)
- MFL (French or Spanish)
- Design Technology (including a Carousel of Product Design, Textiles and Food Technology*)
- Computing
- Creative Arts (Art, Music, Drama and Dance)
- PE
- PSHE / Citizenship (taught through Ethics curriculum by specialists and through Tutor programme)
- Reading: Weekly Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) and tutor time reading. Fortnightly library reading lessons (Years 7/8)

Academic Curriculum in KS4:

We ensure careful and appropriate subject choices are made at Key Stage 4 through a comprehensive Guided Choices Programme in the January of Year 9 (from 2026), including IAG, subject input, taster sessions, special assemblies, links to careers advice and careful matching of students to appropriately challenging Guided Choices pathways.

² Myatt/Tomsett: 'Huh': Curriculum Conversations between Subjects and Senior Leaders (2021)

Core Curriculum

- All students enter for GCSE **English** Language and Literature
- All students enter GCSE **Maths**
- All students enter GCSE Combined **Science** OR separate Sciences in Biology, Chemistry and Physics
- All students take part in Core PE
- All students continue with core Ethics lessons tailored specifically to the context of Gordano students and including key elements of PSHE alongside comprehensive preparation for their next steps.

Guided Choices Pathways and The 'Ebacc'

- We believe that an 'Ebacc pathway' is appropriate for the majority of our students. We also recognise that for some students, an alternative suite of subjects will better prepare them for the future.
- In particular we believe that studying a **Language** is a valuable part of a student's education. We live in an increasingly globalised world and we see it as our responsibility to prepare students for that in terms of the process of learning a language and developing an understanding of other cultures and values, especially in a community that is not as culturally diverse as many. We also value the benefits of language learning in relation to understanding of grammar and improved cognitive function, particularly in relation to memory and flexible/creative thinking. The vast majority of students therefore will study a language to GCSE level. For a very small number of students, a more bespoke pathway may be more suitable as determined by SEND needs or other external professional guidance, such as guidance from CAMHS. This will be discussed on an individual basis.
- We also encourage students to study a GCSE in **Humanities** (History or Geography) to maintain breadth and as a 'facilitating' subject.
- Computing is the other subject that is optional, but part of the Ebacc group. It is particularly suited to students who are mathematically minded.

Other Guided Choices Subjects at Key Stage 4

- **Creative Arts** (GCSE Art, GCSE Art Photography, GCSE Dance, GCSE Drama, GCSE Music)
- **Technology** (GCSE Design Technology (including Textiles option), GCSE Food and Nutrition, GCSE Computer Science, Cambridge National Creative iMedia, WJEC Construction (*under review*))
- **Social Science** (GCSE Business Studies, GCSE Psychology, BTEC Health & Social Care)
- **Physical Education** (GCSE PE, Cambridge National Sport Studies)
- **Aspire Pathway** (BTEC Public Services, Travel and Tourism, Core Support in English / Maths)
- **GCSE Religious Studies** is offered as a twilight course in Year 9 and 10.

Ultimately, we believe that students should be given opportunity to choose (under careful guidance) a combination of subjects at Key Stage 4 that suits their individual skills, interests and potential future pathways, whilst ensuring they are equipped with a suite of subjects that opens doors both academically and professionally.

The Academic Curriculum at Key Stage 5

The Key Stage 5 curriculum aims to build on the academic and wider experience developed at Key Stages 3 and 4, offering a broad range of academic pathways and a rich broader curriculum.

Most students study three subject options from a wide range of subject disciplines:

- English Faculty (A Levels in English Language, English Literature, Media Studies)
- Maths Faculty (A Levels in Maths, Further Maths and Level 3 Core Maths)
- Science Faculty (A Levels in Biology Chemistry, Physics)
- Humanities Faculty (A Levels in Geography, Government & Politics, History and Ethics and Philosophy)

- Languages Faculty (A Levels in French, Spanish)
- Technology Faculty (A Levels in Product Design, Textiles, Computing, Cambridge Technical in IT)
- Social Science Faculty (A Levels in Business Studies, Economics, Psychology, Sociology, Level 3 BTECs in Business Studies, Health & Social Care)
- Creative Arts Faculty (A Levels in Art, Music)
- Physical Education Faculty (A Level PE, Cambridge Technical in Sport Studies)

Most students study three Level 3 subjects, with the option (under careful guidance) for students to complete four.

We also seek to offer an opportunity for students to add further breadth to their academic profile and develop high level academic research skills through offering the Extended Project Qualification and Core Maths. This is encouraged for approximately the upper 40% of the Year 12 cohort.