



Purpose of this document

This overview is designed to help parents and carers, especially those new to the UK education system, understand how **secondary education in England** works, with particular reference to **Gordano School**. It also explains key terms commonly used in school communications.

The British Secondary School System (England)

Secondary school in England usually covers **ages 11–18**, organised into **year groups**:

- **Key Stage 3 (KS3):** Year 7–9 (ages 11–14)
- **Key Stage 4 (KS4):** Year 10–11 (ages 14–16)
- **Post-16 / Sixth Form:** Year 12–13 (ages 16–18)

Gordano School follows this structure and educates students from **Year 7 to Year 13**.

Curriculum and Qualifications

National Curriculum

A government-set framework that outlines what subjects and content must be taught in state schools in England, particularly at **Key Stages 3 and 4**. Core subjects include **English, mathematics, science**, and others such as history, geography, and languages.

GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education)

National examinations taken in **Year 11**. Students usually study **8–10 subjects** over two years (Years 10–11). GCSE grades are awarded on a **9–1 scale** (9 is the highest).

A Levels

Advanced academic qualifications studied in **sixth form** (Years 12–13). Students usually take **3 subjects** in depth. A Levels are commonly required for **university entry**.



Sixth Form

The final two years of secondary education (Years 12–13). At Gordano, the sixth form offers A Levels and prepares students for university, apprenticeships, or employment.

Pastoral Care and Student Support

Pastoral

Refers to the care, wellbeing, behaviour, and personal development of students. Pastoral support helps ensure students feel safe, supported, and ready to learn.

Year Group

All students of the same age, e.g. **Year 8**. Each year group has a dedicated pastoral structure.

House System

Gordano operates a **house system**, where students are assigned to a house when they join the school. Houses promote belonging, teamwork, and healthy competition through events and activities.

Head of House

A senior member of staff responsible for the **pastoral care, behaviour, and progress** of students in a particular house. They are a key contact for families when concerns arise.

Other Useful Terms

- **Tutor / Form Tutor:** A teacher who meets a small group of students daily and is the first point of contact for routine matters.
- **Form / Tutor Group:** A small group within a year group that students belong to for registration and pastoral support.
- **Behaviour Policy:** The school's rules and expectations for conduct.
- **Safeguarding:** Measures taken to keep students safe from harm.