

Curriculum Statement

September 2021



Curriculum Statement

1. The curriculum at St Albans Girls' School is broad and balanced and designed to fulfil the school's aim of enabling all students to achieve their potential. The intent of the curriculum is designed, through relevant, engaging and enjoyable activity, to encourage each student to develop their intellectual, physical and personal qualities to the fullest. The curriculum enables each student to appreciate cultural heritage and the needs and opportunities of the modern world. Schemes of Learning and teaching activities are designed to have the following impact:
 - Promote Outstanding teaching
 - Have high expectations of all students in all areas of school life in line with individual progress journeys
 - Encourage students' confidence, self-esteem and sense of individual purpose
 - Value all students as individuals so that they can achieve their full academic and personal potential
 - Provide an environment to allow students to develop moral and spiritual values
 - Assist students to develop critical abilities, independence of thought and a lifelong enthusiasm for learning
 - Establish mutual respect between all members of the school community
 - Provide a broad curriculum which values the strengths of each subject/student equally
 - Create a positive, secure and purposeful atmosphere
 - Recognise that mistakes provide a learning opportunity
 - Foster links with parents/carers and the wider community
 - Encourage excellence in every area of school life

It is our mission to empower our young people to take charge of all aspects of their lives in a changing, competitive and volatile world according to their individual talents, interests and aspirations. We will enable students to leave the school with the qualifications, skills and knowledge necessary for the business world. This will make them independent and resourceful young people who will be highly equipped to take advantage of their future studies and to become leaders within their chosen field of work.

2. Schemes of Learning are carefully planned to ensure that there is progression and sequencing between year groups, key stages and phases in addition to an emphasis on impact. We continue to deliver the National Curriculum to all students and this is enhanced by additional activities at the school. All students follow a course in Religion, Ethics and Philosophy (REP) unless parents/carers exercise their legal right to withdraw them on religious grounds by contacting the Head Teacher in writing. Additional activities include extra-curricular Sport, Music, Drama, active Citizenship and Business and Enterprise experiences. The House System fosters competition and co-operation and provides opportunities to develop personal organisation, self-confidence and leadership skills. Pedagogical research and strategy underpin Curriculum Leaders' oversight of learning in all areas.
3. Throughout the curriculum, opportunities to develop student's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Culture awareness have been carefully planned and identified in schemes of learning. This is consistently integrated across all subject areas and includes promoting British Values in students. Emphasis is given to the development of the key skills of communication, numeracy and the integration and development of Computing expertise.

Across our broad curriculum we see clear and deep progress in learning in every subject, which is checked at key assessment points during the academic year, with any concerns swiftly acted upon to remedy any potential decline in performance. This is exemplified in the core lessons in English, Mathematics and Science.

In addition, throughout the delivery of the whole curriculum, the skills of communication, literacy including writing, reading and oracy, numeracy, problem solving, working with others, and independent learning are fully developed. These key skills along with the ability to effectively use information technology underpin success in all other areas of the curriculum. These essential skills in addition to other employability skills (e.g. social skills) are further developed in a cross curricular context.

At all Key Stages, students are encouraged to become independent learners and to take personal responsibility for their progress by using the Library Resource Centre and many ICT facilities and mobile devices, available throughout the school. Year 7 and 8 students have devices to support their learning as part of our blended learning strategy across the curriculum for these two year groups which will extend across Key Stages 3 & 4 in forthcoming academic years.

4. At **Key Stage 3** (Years 7, 8 and 9) all students follow the same subject based curriculum:

Lessons are provided in the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science. Separate Biology, Chemistry and Physics modules are taught to enable students to appreciate the distinctive nature of the different sciences. Discrete literacy and additional numeracy lessons support the curriculum in Year 7 and enhance learning opportunities to deepen understanding of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

Students are encouraged to appreciate the contributions which all subjects make to a balanced education and the major curriculum areas are all equally valued.

Creative subjects studied are Art, Music, Drama and Physical Education. In Humanities, students have separate lessons in History, Geography and Religion, Ethics and Philosophy (REP). Most students study two Modern Foreign Languages; French and Spanish. All students who are able to benefit from the study of two Modern Foreign Languages are given the opportunity to do so. Design and Technology includes distinct modules in the use of Food, Textiles and Product Design. Computing is taught in timetabled lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9.

A large number of topics are studied in outline to give students the subject appreciation necessary for future course choices, while other topics are studied in depth to ensure academic rigour.

Students in each year are taught Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). This includes delivery of Relationship and Sex Education, a statutory requirement, as well as Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance.

There are a very small number of students for whom the broad curriculum outlined above is not appropriate. For these students, a more personalised approach is taken.

5. At **Key Stage 4** (Years 10 and 11) students study for their GCSE examinations and are able to exercise some choice over the subjects which they follow.

The core GCSE Curriculum consists of English Language and English Literature, Maths, and Science. All students study Combined Science with some studying Biology, Chemistry and Physics as separate science subjects.



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In order to maintain breadth and balance in the curriculum and to enable students to develop their individual strengths, everyone is expected to study a range of subjects. Most study History or Geography and a Modern Foreign Language (French and/or Spanish) to enable students the opportunity to achieve the English Baccalaureate. In addition, our flexible options programme encourages students to follow courses from a wide range of different curriculum areas: Art, Business, Computing, Dance, Drama, Food Preparation & Nutrition, IT, Media Studies, Music, PE, Product Design, Philosophy and Ethics, and Sociology.

At Key Stage 4 students are taught Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). This continues from the course followed at Key Stage 3 and includes Relationship and Sex Education and Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance.

All students follow a Physical Education programme and PSHE which includes Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance and fulfils the National Curriculum requirements for Citizenship education.

Religion, Ethics and Philosophy (REP) is compulsory for all students and follows the Hertfordshire approved SACRE curriculum, developing Philosophy and Ethics.

6. At **Key Stage 5** (Years 12 and 13) a large proportion of our students remain at STAGS to continue their education and follow an individual programme of study tailored to meet her/his needs. The Advanced Level programme offers a very wide range of A level courses: Art, Art Textiles, Business, Classical Civilisation, Computer Science, Drama, Economics, English Literature, Film Studies, French, Spanish, Geography, History, Mathematics and Further Maths, Music, Politics, Religion, Philosophy & Ethics, Photography, Psychology, PE, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Sociology. Opportunities also exist to study other subjects at local schools. All students study three A Level subjects, with some students taking Further Maths as a fourth option.

There are additional opportunities such as the Sports Leadership qualification, Creative Arts Award, as well as the Extended Project Qualification (the equivalent of half an A level in UCAS points), which promote independent learning. All Year 12 students also follow a Progression Programme which includes sessions on careers guidance, financial understanding, UCAS guidance, issues affecting teenagers and study skills. Lessons on Relationship and Sex Education are also delivered to extend students' prior knowledge from Key Stages 3 and 4.

Students are also required to undertake lessons in Religion, Philosophy and Ethics as a statutory requirement. They study topics on, amongst others, Bereavement, Animal Rights and Holocaust Studies.

The curriculum is enhanced at Post 16 with a wide variety of Super Curricular opportunities, which include amongst others an Arts Award, Debating, Food Skills, Musical Futures, Sixth Formers into Teaching Programme, Sports Leadership, ICT Enrichment, one-to-one tutoring, the Engineering Education Scheme and Language Leaders that students can pursue.

Membership of the Post 16 Learning Community provides many opportunities. Students develop a range of skills to equip them for success in Higher Education, and employment such as communication, numeracy and the use of ICT. Emphasis is placed on preparation for life beyond school.

Sixth formers also develop their personal skills by undertaking responsibilities and acting as leaders within the school and wider community. All are required to attend assemblies and tutorial sessions in which they take part in Careers guidance, Religion, Ethics and Philosophy (REP) and PSHE activities.



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