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## Curriculum Policy

### Stoke College's Curriculum Aims and Intentions

Stoke College offers a broad curriculum to students across the whole age range from Reception to Sixth Form. We retain a strong focus on the core subjects of English, Maths and the Sciences, while also placing an emphasis on the wider curriculum, including languages, humanities and the arts. We believe that this broad and balanced curriculum enables each child to find **their** own strengths and to develop them in a safe and nurturing environment. We aim to ensure equal access to learning, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support.

Our aims underpin all that we teach. We aim to produce young people who:

- are well-mannered and respectful of others, tolerant, and understanding of differences
- have a strong desire to learn, and an ability to learn independently
- are good communicators with anyone, regardless of background
- are ready to accept responsibility
- have a positive self-image and an ability to accept constructive criticism
- have the necessary skills for a fast-changing world

The aims and values of the school are reinforced through our assemblies, which are underpinned by Christian values and are tolerant and inclusive in tone, in line with our non-denominational ethos.

Our curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, their physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enables them to be active.

In addition to the explicit subject teaching outlined further in this document, the curriculum is also designed to develop students' 'soft skills' and personal characteristics, including but not limited to independence, initiative, decision-making, collaboration and communication, study skills and resilience. It is the aim of the Stoke College curriculum that these skills and characteristics are taught both implicitly and explicitly in lessons across the whole curriculum and extra-curricular range. Through these skills and through further enrichment experiences it is the College's aim to enhance the employability of every student.

The curriculum aims to promote equality and diversity in all areas as part of the College's commitment to promoting British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The students that we teach are digital natives and we use IT within timetabled lessons and through out-of-class learning to ensure our pupils and students are equipped to learn, socialise and eventually work in the digital environment.

The College tracks the progress of children at regular points each year and shares progress information with parents (see separate Assessment and Reporting Policy).

In addition to timetabled lessons, the College offers a rich variety of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities. These cover activities in sports and the arts, studying for additional academic qualifications, and visits and trips that support academic and personal development. Programmes for extra-curricular clubs and activities are published termly and visits and trips appear on the school calendar.

## Legislation

The Stoke College curriculum reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#).

## EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage)

In the Early Years and Foundation Stage we follow the EYFS Curriculum. The four themes are: A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, Learning and Development. We complete curriculum planning each week by referring to weekly observations that we record in their learning journeys. In this way we can ensure that we are building on the children's previous learning and their interests.

Throughout each session the children participate in a variety of activities to enable them to work towards the Early Learning Goals in the following seven areas: the three prime areas of communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development; and the four specific areas of literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design. These are achieved by taking part in structured free-play and adult focused activities. Children are active learners and need first-hand experience, so play is an essential part of learning. Each child is unique and will reach the goals at different points, depending on their age and stage of development.

In addition, this policy acknowledges the requirements for promoting the learning and development of children set out in the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#).

## Prep School (Years 1-6)

The curriculum provision in Stoke College Prep enables pupils to acquire core skills in Speaking, Listening, Literacy, Numeracy and Scientific learning through a strong emphasis on Mathematics, English and Science.

Humanities are taught through a topic-based approach that helps the children to become engaged with their learning, to make connections across subjects and reinforces skills in Literacy and Numeracy.

The curriculum is broad to encourage the development of practical, technological, linguistic, artistic and physical abilities through the delivery of Food and Nutrition, Computer Science, French and Chinese, Art, Music, Performing Arts and Physical Education, including Games and Swimming. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) is taught on a weekly basis to all classes.

The curriculum outline for PSHEE is drawn up with regard to the aims and ethos of the school. As part of the PSHEE programme, students consider the roles played in society by different careers. Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) is covered within this programme.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered through explicit teaching in Religious Education (RE) and PSHEE lessons, in our assemblies and through our enrichment opportunities.

Teaching and Learning occurs through a variety of whole class, group, paired and individual methodologies, utilising a wide range of approaches from didactic teaching through to independent learning, incorporating technology and outdoor education.

Pupils also benefit from regular enrichment opportunities such as specially themed-days, trips, visits, performances and courses. One of our unique enrichment opportunities is provided by our 26 acres of beautiful parkland, including wooded areas ideal for our Forest School. The philosophy of the Forest School is to encourage and inspire our pupils through positive experiences and activities in a woodland environment. All children in the Prep School have a fortnightly Forest School session.

The curriculum enables all pupils to have the opportunity to learn and make progress, including those pupils with special educational needs or learning difficulties or disabilities, those for whom English is a Foreign Language and the most able. For children whose home language is not English, the school takes reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop their learning. The LDU provides support for children with special educational needs.

The younger children in the school will spend most of their time with their class teachers with specialist lessons in Chinese, Music and PE. As the children grow older, they benefit from more specialist input from Senior School staff in Food Technology and Modern Foreign Languages.

In the early years of the Prep School, children have a school reading book to share with their family each day. They are also given other resources that support their development in literacy and numeracy dependent upon the individual need of each child. As they progress through the Prep School, homework becomes more formal. Tasks become more specific and routine. The class teacher determines at the beginning of the year the pattern of homework to be completed and **a half-termly homework list and parent newsletter** are shared with parents. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are issued with homework diaries to begin to take more responsibility for their home learning. Pupils and parents are encouraged to use the online service 'Show My Homework' in addition to the homework diary as a means of accessing and monitoring homework set and completed.

## Senior School (Years 7-11)

In Years 7 to 9 students are taught most of their lessons in their tutor groups. Tutor groups are usually capped at 15, ensuring small class sizes and plenty of individual attention for each learner. Students are set in Maths, English and Science according to their ability in each subject.

Students in the higher Maths set will follow a pathway to the Higher Tier GCSE qualification (offering access to grades 4-9) while those in the lower Maths set follow a pathway to the Foundation Tier GCSE (offering access to grades 1-5). Students may move between sets throughout their time in the Senior School under the direction of the Head of Maths. Students will always be placed in the set that we believe gives them the best chance of success relative to their ability and performance in Maths lessons and assessments.

Students in Years 7-9 follow a broad curriculum:

Core Subjects	Humanities	Languages	Arts	Technologies	Other
English	Geography	French	Art	Design and Technology	PSHEE (including careers)
Maths	History	Spanish	Music	Food and Nutrition	Enrichment
Science	RE	Chinese	Drama (within English)	Computer Science	PE
			Choir (Years 7 and 8)		Games

Students may opt to withdraw from some languages lessons in order to attend the Learning Development Unit (LDU) for additional lessons in literacy and numeracy. Spanish and Chinese were added to the curriculum in September 2017. These subjects will be available as GCSE options from September 2019 onwards.

Students whose first language is not English may be withdrawn from some lessons to attend individual or small group English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lessons, according to their learning needs.

Individual instrumental music lessons are taught by peripatetic teachers. Pupils will be withdrawn from a lesson to attend. This is rotated to minimise the impact on any one subject.

Students select their Key Stage Four options during the Spring Term of Year 9. Most students follow GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11, though some subjects offer BTEC alternatives. The exact

programme of the subjects and courses is different each academic year so as to best meet the needs of our students.

In Years 10 and 11 students are taught in small classes according to their options choices. Students are set in Maths, following either the Higher or Foundation GCSE course; in English, most students follow both English Language and English Literature courses though some will sit IGCSE in English as a First or a Second Language depending on their ability; in Science students will choose to study separate or combined sciences (achieving either three or two GCSE grades) with support and guidance from the Science department staff and close consultation with parents.

Key Stage Four options blocks are created each year to best match the preferences of Year 9 students. All students follow the core curriculum and select three or four GCSE/BTEC options:

Core Subjects	GCSE/BTEC Options			Other
English	French	Art	Design and Technology	PSHEE (including careers)
Maths	Geography	Music	Food and Nutrition	Games
Science	History	Drama	Computer Science	Chinese
	Business Studies	Spanish	Physical Education	
	Statistics			

The taught curriculum relies on the regular completion of homework to research, apply or consolidate classroom learning. All students in the Senior School are set homework according to a fortnightly timetable issued in September of each year. Homework is set on Show My Homework, where students can access their homework tasks and manage their workload.

## Sixth Form

Curriculum outlines in the Sixth Form are directed by qualification specifications. Students **normally** choose **either** four A Level/BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate subjects, **or** two BTEC Level 3 National Diplomas (each equivalent in time and UCAS points to 2 A Levels) **or** one BTEC National Diploma and two A Level/BTEC Extended Certificate subjects. Students will enter linear A Level qualifications (they will not sit standalone AS qualifications in Year 12, allowing more time for teaching and learning).

The choice of courses on offer each year can be found in the school's annual Sixth Form Options booklet. The selection of courses on offer is tailored each year to meet the needs and interests of current Year 11 students and prospective external applicants for entry into Year 12.

An open choice of courses is initially offered until an early application deadline mid-Spring term. After this, based on early applications, the courses running in Year 12 the following year are finalised and timetable option blocks, from which later applicants must choose their subjects, are established.

Students and their parents/guardians are provided with support in choosing an appropriate combination of Sixth Form courses through the Year 10 and 11 PSHEE and careers programme, Sixth Form information and options evening events in the Autumn and Spring terms of Year 11, written guidance in the Sixth Form Options handbook and the opportunity to participate in Sixth Form taster lessons during the Autumn term of Year 11.

Students will normally drop one of their A Level or BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate subjects during Year 12 and replace it with the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). We expect students to begin the equivalent of four A Level courses and only drop down to three later in the term to ensure that their final choice is truly well-informed and to avoid disruptive courses changes in the first term.

The EPQ qualification carries UCAS points equivalent to half an A Level and is highly valued by Universities because of the independent research, academic motivation and project management skills it requires. It is delivered through a discrete programme of small group tutorial style lessons developing the necessary skills and one-to-one mentoring with a member of staff to support students' individual work on their projects.

Students whose first language is not English also attend individual or small group English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lessons, according to their learning needs, noting that it is a requirement of UK universities that these students have achieved IELTS examination scores of at least 6.0 and often 6.5 or 7.0 to be admitted. Every effort is made to schedule these EFL lessons during students' private study periods rather than withdrawing them from taught lessons in their other chosen courses.

Students may opt to attend the Learning Development Unit (LDU) for additional lessons to support their independent study and develop their exam technique, revision strategies and exam literacy.

The Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) programme continues in the Sixth Form. It includes development of skills for effective independent study, supporting their Sixth Form courses and preparing them for higher education, and for independent living, looking ahead to higher education and employment. Careers guidance and individually tailored support with applications to higher education (including UCAS for British Universities), apprenticeships or direct employment is provided. The whole programme is enriched by regular exposure to visitors or external speakers in a variety of different fields, helping to broaden students' horizons and encourage them to think more widely and deeply about their future paths.

Sixth Form students are also timetabled into Games together with the upper Senior School and given opportunities to represent the school in sport. During the extended school day, the Activities programme is available to Sixth Form students; they are strongly encouraged to take part in Activities regularly and to seek further valuable opportunities for leadership and volunteering.

In the Sixth Form there is an expectation that students will work on homework and wider reading in each subject every day. As a guide, students should receive around four hours of formal homework per week for each subject in Year 12 and six hours in Year 13. All homework is recorded on *Show My Homework*, a website and app where students, parents and Boarding staff can access the tasks set.

Students are expected to take responsibility for their own homework and manage their time to complete a good proportion of it during study periods within the school day and therefore meet deadlines consistently. We expect students to complete approximately an hour's independent study for every hour they spend in lessons; accordingly they should always have work to complete, and are given at least two nights to complete all but the very shortest tasks (those tasks expected to take only twenty minutes or less).

## **SEN and EFL Curriculum**

Students with statements of special educational needs will be found in mainstream classes, but for meeting their precise needs please see the SEN policy published by the Learning Development Unit (LDU) and Individual Education Plans, which support EHC Plans where applicable.

Students in the College whose first language is not English will have individual provision designed in response to their needs. This provision will be coordinated and monitored by the Assistant Heads for each curriculum stage.

The College will make reasonable adjustments to allow students with a physical disability to access the curriculum through appropriately adapting classroom and outdoor activities to the student's needs, adapting or re-allocating classrooms where feasible and by accommodating the use of specialist equipment. Adjustments are constrained by the historic nature of some of buildings of the College. A copy of the College's Equal Opportunities Policy is available with further information.

## **Monitoring arrangements**

The quality of curriculum planning and delivery is monitored by the Assistant Heads for each stage of the school. Monitoring procedures include but are not limited to scrutiny of plans; scrutiny of student work; review of academic performance; lesson observation; staff performance management process; student evaluations.

## **Links with other policies**

Assessment and Reporting Policy  
SEN Policy  
Behaviour Policy