



<b>Prudhoe Community High School</b>	
Name of Policy	<b>Curriculum Policy</b>
Named Person	Headteacher/Deputy Head
Approved by:	S McArdle Chair's Action August 2023
Last review date	August 2023
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# Curriculum Policy ( updated August 2023)

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the curriculum at PCHS is broad and balanced and allows students wide access to further study, whilst also ensuring financial viability.

## Intent

At PCHS we believe that all students regardless of ability, individual needs or disadvantage should study a broad and balanced curriculum that equips them for further study and future employment whether it be in a traditional, service or emerging employment sectors. We want all our young people to have high aspirations for themselves at all times and have the confidence to follow these aspirations wherever they may take them as confident global citizens.

At PCHS we believe that all students regardless of ability, individual needs or disadvantage should study a curriculum that:

- Provides a broad and balanced education for all students that is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge for skills and future learning and employment
- Has opportunities for interleaving and retrieval to ensure students know and remember more
- Enables students to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations
- Support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Support students' physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active
- Promotes a positive attitude towards learning
- Ensures equal access to learning for all students, with high expectations for every student with appropriate levels of challenge and support
- Has a high academic/vocational/technical ambition for all pupils
- Equips students with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life
- Encourages students to have high aspirations for themselves at all times and have the confidence to follow these aspirations wherever they may take them as confident global citizens.
- Provides subject choices that supports students' learning and progression, and enable them to work towards achieving their goals
- Provides a broad curriculum prioritising a strong academic core of subjects, such as those offered in the EBacc
- Develops students' independent learning skills and resilience, to equip them for further/higher education and employment.

Year 9 is the last year of Key Stage 3 during which students study all subjects and are supported through a thorough options process for beginning Key Stage 4 in Year 10.

Our Year 9 curriculum:

- Fulfils the requirements of the [National Curriculum programmes of study](#)
- Is structured to build on the curriculum covered in the middle schools
- Ensures that students are ready for the next phase in their education by the end of the year

When options are chosen in Key Stage 4 and 5 all students have the opportunity to study subjects that engage and excite them whilst being supported with first class guidance when making choices. Our KS4 and 5 curricula are designed to ensure that students are able to progress into the next stage in their education, employment or training.

The curriculum offers young people not just a strong and successful education but also enhances their cultural capital. Cultural capital is the accumulation of knowledge, behaviours and skills that a student can draw upon and which demonstrates their cultural awareness, knowledge and competence; it is one of the key ingredients a student will draw upon to be successful in society, their career and the world of work. All departmental areas identify the ways in which cultural capital is embedded into the curriculum. Beyond the curriculum, we develop cultural capital further by:

- Theatre visits
- Strong links with local universities and businesses
- School shows and concerts
- Overseas trips
- Peripatetic music lessons
- DoE and NCS opportunities
- Student leadership
- A wide range of sport and coaching opportunities
- A Learning Resource Centre for students in and out of school to extend their studies
- STEM competitions
- Extra-curricular opportunities stretching beyond the classroom
- Strong links with local industry through work experience, curriculum input, training and CEIAG
- A wide vocational curriculum and A Level programme post 16.

## **Reading**

At PCHS we recognise that all teachers and support staff have a key role in developing students' reading through our [Reading curriculum](#). We recognise that reading development / improvement extends beyond the English department and all subject areas have a responsibility to develop reading and literacy. Literacy and specifically reading is key to learning

across all subjects in secondary school and a strong predictor of outcomes in later life. Disciplinary literacy makes clear that every teacher communicates their subject through academic language, and that reading, writing, speaking and listening are at the heart of knowing and doing Science, Art, History, and every other subject at PCHS.

Students take the NGRT at the end of Year 8 or start of Year 9 and staff and school leaders use this information in planning and implementing the curriculum. If students obtain a reading age below 10.8 Years they are offered the opportunity to become part of a Communications group in Year 9. This involves additional literacy sessions instead of studying French. This decision is made in collaboration with parents/carers and students. Students continue to study GCSE Spanish. To support students with low reading ages at KS4 students can select additional support which means that they study 3 GCSE options rather than 4, giving students the opportunity to develop literacy and study skills. This decision is made in collaboration with parents/carers and students.

All departmental areas have in place a reading curriculum and a curriculum which identifies tier 2 and 3 vocabulary.

### **Implementation**

We invest heavily in CPD for staff so that the curriculum can be delivered effectively with the greatest impact. Subject leaders ensure that all staff are able to implement the curriculum effectively, especially non-specialist teachers and ECTs.

Our timetable cycle spans ten days each consisting of five sixty minute lessons per day (apart from Wednesday on week 1 when each lesson is 55 minutes). Any reference to allocations for a subject are per cycle.

PCHS currently offer the following subjects:

### **Key Stage 3 (Year 9)**

Art including Textiles, Computing (ICT), Design and Technology (Food, Timbers & Engineering), Drama, English, French, Geography, History, Mathematics, Music, Philosophy and Ethics, Physical Education, Science, Spanish and Personal and Cultural Studies (PCS) – this includes RSE, PSHCE and Citizenship

### **Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11)**

**Core:** English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Triple Science, Physical Education and Personal and Cultural Studies (this includes RSE, PSHCE, Ethics and Citizenship).

**Options:** Art & Design, Art Textiles, Business Studies, Computer Science, Drama, Design and Technology – Food; Design and Technology – Timbers, BTEC Engineering, French, Geography, BTEC Health and Social Care, History, Music, Philosophy and Ethics, Physical Education, Spanish.

Year 9		Year 10		Year 11	
English	8	English	7	English	7
Maths	7	Maths	7	Maths	7
Science	6	Triple Science	12	Triple Science	12
ICT/ Computing	2	Core PE	4	Core PE	4
French	4	Option 1	4	Option 1	5
Spanish	4	Option 2	5	Option 2	5
DT Timbers	1	Option 3	5	Option 3	5
DT Food	1	Option 4	5	Option 4	5
DT Engineering	1				
Core PE	4				
Geography	2				
History	2				
Philosophy and Ethics	2				
Art	2				
Music	2				
Drama	2				

**EBacc:** At PCHS we offer **all** students the opportunity to choose an EBacc curriculum and provide advice regarding the importance placed on this through our 1:1 meetings as part of the options process. This approach has led to a significant percentage entering EBacc over a number of years, higher than both local and national statistics. This demonstrates that PCHS has an ambitious curriculum which is on offer to all students.

However, at PCHS we strongly value non EBacc subjects, including those which develop practical skills and the arts, and believe that these are just as important as EBacc subjects in providing students with skills and access to future study and careers.

## **Key Stage 5 (Years 12 & 13)**

**A Levels:** Art and Design, Art Textiles, Biology, Chemistry, Computing (from Sept 2022), Product Design, BTEC Engineering, English Language, English Literature, EPQ, French, Geography, History, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Core Mathematics, Music, Physics, Philosophy and Ethics, Psychology (new from Sept 2021), Sociology, Spanish, Sports Science.

**Applied General Courses:** CAMB TECH Business Studies, CAMB TECH Sport, CAMB TECH Digital Media, BTEC Engineering, BTEC Health and Social Care (single and double), BTEC ICT, CAMB TECH Performing Arts, Applied Science

Following our 1:1 meetings with students in Year 11 we have introduced new courses into the Sixth Form options to offer students as broad an offer as we are able to, and to ensure continuity of learning from GCSE for Computing. Due to smaller numbers within some subjects and in order to continue to offer these, we have combined groups of Year 12 and 13 for the following subject areas:

- Music
- Performing Arts
- Art and Design
- DT (Product Design)

## **Impact (See Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy)**

The values and ethos of PCHS where both staff and students strive for excellence in all we do are central to our Assessment, Recording and Reporting policy. This ensures that assessment focuses on the three key areas of Improving, Involving and Informing.

Our assessment of students aims to:

- give students a clear picture of what they have done, and what they need to do to make progress.
- enable teachers and leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching strategies and materials and adapt accordingly.

Assessment should give recognition and praise for achievement and help students become more effective learners. This will be achieved in a variety of ways:

- STAR marking (Strengths, Targets, Act Now and Reflect)
- Formal Assessments (including mock and formal examinations)
- Verbal feedback and targeted questioning
- Exemplar feedback/ 'peer' assessment, for example model answers together with a commentary highlighting particular points.

## **Class Sizes**

When building timetable blocks and creating sets we will aim to maintain an average Key Stage 3 group size of approximately 25; wherever possible this figure reduces to less than 25 in Key Stage 4. Apart from exceptional cases, maximum class size will be 32 students in non-practical subjects. In practical subjects the size of the room and availability of resources will determine the maximum class size.

## **Setting Policy**

Students generally work in mixed ability settings to allow for a smooth transition process both in terms of learning and pastoral care. Only Mathematics has any setting in Year 9 and this is limited. Groups are reviewed throughout the year and modified if necessary, for every year group, to ensure the best learning opportunities for every individual.

In Key Stage 4 students are grouped by ability in Mathematics and Science only, where subject leaders and the Headteacher believe that it is advantageous to the learning of all students. The responsibility for placing students into the correct sets lies with the Subject Leaders. On occasions, subjects are grouped together when we design the timetable, meaning they have to operate the same setting arrangements.

Where examinations offer different tiers of entry, decisions about which tier of entry is best for the student is made based on performance evidence across the course, not which teaching group they are in.

Parents/Carers wishing to appeal against the placement of their child into a particular set should do so in writing to the subject leader in the first instance.

## **Staffing**

PCHS employs the very highest quality teaching and classroom support staff. Teachers are experts in their subjects and are encouraged to continue to develop their own learning in order to support their role using the CPD offered by the CPD policy or using courses provided by others such as NPSML, NPQSL or Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses.

Wherever possible subject experts fulfil the requirements of the timetable, but on some occasions this is not possible. When this occurs structured support is put in place to support the member of staff teaching out of specialism including having a subject specialist mentor who they work closely with and access to CPD including departmental T&L CPD.

## **Key Pedagogical Methods**

Teachers ensure that they know their students. All teachers have a Class Context File that identifies the groups of students within their classes, their prior attainment, School Target Grade, Predicted End Grade, reading ages, SEND information through Learner Profiles and other relevant information. They will use this knowledge to plan for learning that meets the needs of all students. Teachers plan lessons that ensure all students are suitably challenged, supporting

and stretching all groups of students, including the most able, SEND and those students eligible for Pupil Premium. Teachers consider 'Seating For Learning', thinking carefully about how the arrangement of the class, paired and group work will support learning. Teachers plan lessons that have a logical sequence to the learning, ensuring time is used effectively including the First 15 minutes. They share the purpose of the learning focusing on how students will develop their knowledge, skills or literacy or link to the Big Picture of the learning.

Teachers use a range of relevant and appropriate learning activities and strategies to engage and enthuse students in their learning and also develop academic writing and effective reading strategies. They use a range of questioning techniques in order to encourage dialogue and enquiry and probe students' understanding, clearing up misconceptions, reviewing learning and reshaping tasks as a result.

Teachers also provide opportunities to recall and practise previously learned skills and knowledge and give clear and regular feedback, both verbally and written that is explicit, detailed and constructive and gives students the opportunity to Act Now and Reflect on their learning (see assessment policy).

Teachers set meaningful and regular homework. (see homework policy)

### **CPD programme**

We are committed to improving our own practice through peer observations, focused whole school and departmental CPD and classroom based practitioner enquiry. We work together to plan collaboratively and share good practice, ensuring we as teachers model the love of learning and embrace new ideas and innovation.

### **Supporting Subject Leaders**

Subject Leaders have regular meetings with their Line Manager (SLT link) which focuses on self evaluation and Subject Leaders are supported through regular training in calendar Team Leaders meetings. Curriculum leads are encouraged to be outward facing and network with other schools in particular lone person departments.

### **QA**

Subject Leaders and the senior leadership team work together to evaluate the intent and implementation of the curriculum. This is done each half term through lesson visits, student voice, book/wor/file reviews and data analysis. We call this picture building and is used to evaluate the curriculum across the school. This is used to inform the department and whole school self evaluation, subsequent development planning and whole school and department CPD.

***The responsibilities of differing stakeholders under this policy can be seen in Appendix 1.***



## Complaints Relating To The Curriculum

All complaints relating to the curriculum should be directed to the Deputy Headteacher in the first instance. If these are not dealt with to the satisfaction of a student's parents/carers then the PCHS 'Complaints procedure' can be brought into force. The Curriculum Policy will provide the main guidance document for Governors when dealing with complaints relating to the curriculum.

### Appendix 1 - Responsibilities

#### The Governing Body will

- Review regularly the school curriculum and make amendments which reflect students' needs.
- Have an overview of local and national developments which affect the curriculum.
- Understand the necessity for strong progression routes. This should include effective transition from middle school and progression within Key Stages 3 to 4 and Ks 4 to 5 and beyond.
- Have an understanding of the curriculum model and the impact this has on student progress and achievement, as well as staffing and the school budget.

#### The Headteacher and Leadership Team will

- Review the curriculum annually making changes in response to any local or national initiatives that will maximise student learning and achievement.
- Keep abreast of local and national changes and apply these judiciously.
- Ensure the curriculum allows clear progression through all key stages.
- Ensure the curriculum develops the whole student as a member of the world community including adequately preparing students for a life in modern Britain
- Monitor curriculum impact on achievement, learning and progress and adapt as necessary in order to maximise these.
- Have a broad understanding of the curriculum in the subjects they line manage.
- Ensure that the curriculum model leads to a timetable which supports learning.
- Carry out quality assurance of the curriculum (AHT T&L)

#### Subject Leaders will

- Monitor curriculum developments in their subject area and implement these in discussion with SLT line managers.
- Design and implement a curriculum that ensures students' progression within the subject and meets the principles set out in this policy.
- Monitor the impact of the curriculum on standards of student learning and progress.
- Ensure that the curriculum is structured and sequenced to ensure that students know

and remember more.

- Keep abreast of changes which impact on the curriculum at a local and national level.
- Support the devising of the timetable within their subject.
- Ensure that our Teaching and Learning Policy is adhered to in lessons e.g. STAR marking, Learning Behaviours, Context files.
- Carry out quality assurance (with the AHT) of the curriculum and use this information in evaluating the impact of the curriculum
- Ensure that all staff are appropriately supported to carry out their role, especially non-specialists and ECTs.

**Teaching Staff will:**

- Deliver the curriculum in line with the Teaching and Learning Policy
- Plan lessons that ensure all students are suitably challenged, supported and challenging all groups of students, including the most able, students with SEND and those eligible for Pupil Premium.
- Plan lessons which ensure students make at least expected progress.