

Open Academy

Curriculum Policy

Policy Type:	Academy Policy
Approved By:	Local Governing Body
Date Approved by LGB:	July 2025
Review Date:	July 2026
Person Responsible:	Principal

Summary of Changes

The policy has been amended as follows.

Page Ref.	Section	Amendment	Date of Change
11-12		Addition of addendum	Feb 2021
6	KS3 Curriculum Model Y7	Additon of word 'consistency' in second bullet point	March 22
6	KS3 Curriculum	Revised model	March 23
9	KS4 Curriculum	Increase in participation in EBacc	March 23
	Appendix	Removal of adaptations made in COVID and lockdown appendix removed as not relevant now. Subjects make adaptations as required locally.	March 23
10	Curriculum organization	Added a sentence explaining how we use the CATs testing Added a a paragraph to outline our methods of differentiating	
11	Curriculum content	Changed the number of lessons allocated at KS3 and amended the lunchtime extra activities.	
12	Curriculum Deployment	Added additional information about rewards/awards process and amended the paragraph regarding homework	

General Policy Roles and Accountabilities

The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT) is responsible for all policies across its Academies. All policies, whether specific to an individual Academy or applicable to the entire Trust, will be developed and implemented in alignment with our values and ethos as described in our prospectus. We are dedicated to providing high-quality education grounded in the Christian values of service, thankfulness, and humility. In this environment, individuals are valued, aspirations are encouraged, hope is nurtured, and talents are developed.

Each Academy has a Scheme of Delegation that outlines the responsibilities of the Local Governing Body and the Principal. The Principal of each Academy is tasked with the implementation of all policies set forth by the Academy Trust.

All employees of the Academy Trust are required to adhere to the Trust's policies.

Curriculum Policy Contents

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1. Aim

We aim to develop a curriculum that is imaginative, inclusive and innovative—one that inspires curiosity, nurtures creativity, and equips all students with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to thrive in a changing world. We are committed to providing a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that reflects our diverse community, promotes equality, and fosters a love of learning. Through high-quality teaching and meaningful enrichment, we empower every student to achieve their potential and make a positive contribution to society.

2. Context

Whilst adhering to statutory and advisory guidance on the curriculum which applies to all maintained schools, the Academy has some flexibility to vary its curriculum beyond the constraints of the National Curriculum. This power gives the Open Academy greater discretion to devise an *'imaginative, inclusive and innovative'* curriculum than would be the case with a local authority school.

'Although academies and Free Schools are not required to follow the National Curriculum, they are required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that includes English, mathematics, science, and religious education. Beyond this, they have the freedom to design a curriculum which meets their pupils' needs, aspirations and interests.' (Department of Education website)

An effective curriculum should always be evolving to meet the needs of an ever-changing world, and so, as well as providing a snapshot of the current curriculum and its organisation, this policy also outlines the principles for curriculum development and review in the years ahead.

We are a knowledge-engaged academy. Knowledge underpins and enables the application of skills. Both are intertwined.

3. Curriculum Organisation

The numbering of Year Groups is by the National Curriculum. Students begin their academic education in Year 7 (having completed their primary school education in Year 6). We operate a three-year Key Stage 3, allowing students to deepen and broaden their experience before starting Key Stage 4. Hence, at the Open Academy:

Key Stage 3: Ages 11-13 (Years 7, 8 & 9)

Key Stage 4: Ages 13-16 (Years 10 & 11)

Key Stage 5: Ages 16-18 (Years 12 & 13)

The Academy timetable operates on a 50-period fortnight. There are 5 periods per day: 3 in the morning and 2 in the afternoon, each of which lasts for one hour. Fortnightly timetabling allows a greater range of subjects to be taught in sensible blocks of time. Assemblies and tutorial time are in addition to this teaching time.

At Key Stage 3, there are typically 30 students in each class. Where the setting exists, the norm is to create smaller groups for the least able students, so that more individual attention can be provided. At Key Stage 4, similar arrangements apply with class sizes in Core curriculum areas averaging 27 students. However, in specialist subject areas, it is more usual to find group sizes that vary according to popularity.

Students are placed in mixed-ability teaching groups. In most subjects, this is the normal pattern throughout. Some faculties, however, choose to place students into ability sets at some point during Years 7 - 9, to target work more precisely. The subject area that this applies to is Mathematics. From Year 10, all students are grouped by ability in Mathematics, English and Science only. -

Differentiated learning at the Academy refers to the various ways in which our teachers address the needs of each student in their day-to-day teaching. They monitor student progress, identify their specific learning needs, and adjust their teaching practices accordingly.

Our teachers will differentiate instruction, using three main instructional elements that they can adjust to meet the needs of their learners:

Content—the knowledge and skills students need to master.

Process—the activities students use to master the content.

Product—the method students use to demonstrate learning.

TAs provide additional help to SEN students through one to one, and small group withdrawal in the OLC. In Years 7, 8 and 9, a small number of students are withdrawn from normal lessons for additional literacy and numeracy tuition 'catch-up' sessions run by trained HLTAs or in the OLC with a qualified teacher. Students who use a language other than English may be supported in class or withdrawn for additional support by our EAL co-ordinator or associate staff

Subjects are clustered into the following areas, each led by a Head of Faculty:

- Faculty of English & Communication: English, Drama, Music, Film Studies
- Faculty of Mathematics: Mathematics, Computer Science
- Faculty of Science: Science, Psychology
- Faculty of Academic Learning: Art, Geography, History, RS, MFL,
- Faculty of Applied Learning: DT, Textiles, PE, Business, Health and Social Care, Food Tech, Photography and Travel and Tourism

4. Curriculum Content

Key Stage 3 – Years 7, 8 & 9

All students follow a common curriculum comprising:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Physical Education
- Religious Studies
- Art
- Design and Technology
- Modern Foreign Languages (German)
- Geography
- History
- Music
- Drama
- Computer Science
- PSHCEE (Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic Education) Skills for Life

Key stage 3 Curriculum Model Y7, 8, 9

CORE/ FOUNDATION	HOURS per fortnight	FOUNDATION	HOURS per fortnight
ENGLISH	8/8/8	HISTORY	4
MATHS	8/8/8	GEOGRAPHY	3
SCIENCE	8/8/8	DT	2
PE	4	DRAMA	1/1/1
RS	2	ART	2
CS	0/0/0	MUSIC	2/2/2
MFL	4/4/4	PSHCEE	1/1/1

Notes

- Year 7 classes have Guided Reading for one hour per fortnight.
- Years 7 – 9 students study Spanish, to ensure consistency across Key Stages in one language.
- A program of extra-curricular activities run after school. Students have a free choice of activities and are encouraged to choose different activities each term.

Key Stage 4

KS4 commences in Year 10 and students will follow four guided pathway subjects.

Y10/Y11 Curriculum Model

CORE	Hours per fortnight	Option	Hours per fortnight
ENGLISH	8	A	5
MATHS	8	B	5
SCIENCE	8	C	5
SKL/RS	2	D	5
PE	4		TOTAL =50

During the Autumn Term of Year 9, all students are given careful guidance to help them decide upon the four further subjects that they will study over the next two years. To assist with this, students are guided in their selection of subjects.

In Years 10 and 11, students study the Core subjects of English Language and Literature, Mathematics, Double Science, PE, and SKL. This Core curriculum occupies 30 hours of lessons per fortnight, with Pathway subjects filling the remaining 20 hours per fortnight.

Most students follow the EBacc curriculum.

Most pathway subjects lead to the GCSE Examination but there are BTEC and vocational courses available at a comparable level. Students are offered four subjects over the two-year KS4 period. The subjects offered are:

- Art
- Business Studies
- Design and Technology (Food Technology or Product Design)
- Film Studies
- Religious Studies
- Computer Science
- Geography
- Health and Social Care
- History
- Modern Foreign Languages (German)
- Music
- Performing Arts
- Photography
- Sport (in addition to Core PE)
- Biology / Physics / Chemistry
- Psychology

- Travel and Tourism

Amplification of Curriculum Content

Physical Education

All students receive 2-hours of taught PE per week. As well as sporting activities, health-related fitness is also an integral part of the curriculum. These activities are complemented by a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Religious Studies

Religious Studies is part of the National Curriculum and is taught to all students from Year 7 to 11. We follow the revised Norfolk Agreed Syllabus and students are taught to understand and respect each other's beliefs and values. This approach seeks to promote an understanding of the religions of the world but with greater emphasis on Christianity. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education either wholly or in part.

PSHCEE - we call it SKL

PSHCEE is part of the National Curriculum and is taught to all students from Years 7 to 11. To equip students with the life skills, knowledge, and understanding to become rounded individuals our program of study incorporates:

- Careers education
- Citizenship
- Community involvement
- Drugs, tobacco and alcohol
- Emotional health and well-being
- Healthy eating
- Sex and relationship education

Careers Education and Guidance

This is taught through SKL and drop-down sessions and assemblies. In Years 7 – 9, students are taught to recognize different adult roles within the home and the community, how labor is divided and tasks shared. They show an understanding of the nature of work and occupations and how they may affect different lives and attitudes socially and economically locally, nationally, and internationally. In Year 10, the modules are centered on self-awareness, careers, and economic and industrial understanding. At the end of Year 10, students undertake a one week work experience placement.

Sex Education

This is carried out principally within the SKL program and according to current legislation. Materials and speakers are carefully chosen, appropriate to the needs and ages of our students, and according to the National Curriculum. Sex education is taught within the context of relationships and family life. Parents are informed of the program and are welcome to view materials used in sex education or to discuss further with PSHCEE teachers. Parents are told of their right to withdraw their son or daughter from this program.

5. Curriculum Deployment

Staffing

Wherever possible, students are taught by specialist, qualified teachers with an appropriate first degree and a teaching qualification.

Heads of Faculty

Heads of Faculty are responsible for effective curriculum provision, including appropriate schemes of work, the necessary resources to support them, and the maintenance of appropriate standards. They are responsible for providing appropriate in-service training for staff to improve the quality of provision in the classroom. They are expected to monitor the quality of teaching in the faculty, and to take steps to improve weaknesses. They are also expected to monitor students' standards of achievement and develop strategies to improve them. Heads of Faculty and their deputies sample teachers' marking and reports to parents/carers. They are expected to ensure common standards and expectations and to lead the faculty's work in standardising assessments.

Course Leaders

Course Leaders are teachers designated by the Head of Faculty to:

- Act as the first point of contact for any queries relating to the day-to-day running of a course
- Produce suitable lessons and schemes of work for the elements of the course that they teach
- Complete examination entries
- Promote the course through the preparation of specific promotional materials

Examinations

It is expected that all students who embark on a course leading to a public examination are entered for that examination. Exemption to this rule will be granted only if the Head of Faculty, Senior Leadership Team Link and Principal agree that a child should be withdrawn.

Faculties are expected to identify, at an early stage, students who are in danger of failing to meet the requirements, so that they can be supported, guided and encouraged. Those who, despite the best efforts of staff, are not entered for the examination are nonetheless expected to complete the course of study, alongside other students.

The Academy pays for all examination entries for courses for which it has prepared students.

Homework

Homework is an essential part of a student's progress. It teaches and encourages organisational skills, personal development, independence and responsibility for learning.

At the Open Academy it is set in all years with each student having a record in Microsoft teams and staff grading the work via a rubric. Homework is also communicated to parents via email or Microsoft Teams.

Students in Need of Support

All students must be able to read and write well and be numerate at an early stage. This is a significant predictor of examination success and progress. Learning support is given as far as possible to those who need additional help. Counselling is available for students with challenging behaviour and, in particular cases, students may be withdrawn for a period from their normal class to prevent disrupting the learning of other students.

Celebrating Excellence

The Academy holds an in-depth program to celebrate excellence and reward our students who follow our core values. Reward activities are organized by the pastoral teams and the student leadership body. Examples include the free Lunch passport, beat the queue, and attendance cups. To celebrate high attendance and achievement points, students who meet the criteria are given a termly cinema experience. At the end of the academic year, an award trip is organized to either the Norfolk show or Pleasurewood Hills.

The Academy holds an annual prize presentation for both KS3, KS4, and KS5, where awards are given for achievement and effort in each subject field. Every student in the Academy has the opportunity to receive an award, and students are nominated for the Academy awards (e.g., Open Way, Frank Arms award, and Plattens Plate) by teachers and students.

Governor Links

Several governors are linked to faculties and other areas of the Academy's work. The purpose of these links is to become better informed about the successes and constraints experienced by faculty; to support and encourage, and where appropriate, to advise. The insight gained by governors in this process contributes to full and informed curriculum discussions at meetings of the governing body.

6. Curriculum Development

The Education Brief is very clear about the need to continually review and revise the curriculum:

'We will work hard to develop our curriculum to meet the demands of a changing world and to maximise the opportunities for our students. In doing so, it will be our aim to develop an innovative curriculum, recognising that innovation is grounded on secure practice underpinned by sound management and financial systems.' (Education Brief S91)

The key principles underlying our curriculum development process are:

- *Innovation and flexibility as key elements in improving education*
- *Enrichment and enhancement through the Science and Environment specialisms*
- *Responsiveness to our students as unique individuals within the school community*
- *Recognising the demands of the changing world into which the students will enter, particularly its digital technology challenges*
- *Developing a personalised curriculum – focusing responsibility for learning with the students, themselves* (Education Brief S92)

In line with this philosophy, the curriculum is reviewed annually to ensure it best meets the needs of each cohort of students e.g. Travel and Tourism added to pathway choice.

The Academy has to respond quickly and effectively to ensure that all students achieve their full potential.

7. Curriculum Complaints Procedure

The Education Reform Act requires the governing body to have in place procedures for the consideration of complaints that the Academy is failing to meet its statutory obligations about the National Curriculum and various other matters. Full details of the curriculum complaints procedure are obtainable from the Principal at the Academy.

In summary, parents/carers may make representations if they feel that either the Academy or the governing body are failing to:

- provide the National Curriculum in the Academy or for a particular child;
- follow the law on charging for Academy activities;
- provide religious education and collective worship;
- carry out any other statutory duty relating to the curriculum
- or, are acting unreasonably in any of the above cases.