

# Open Academy

# Curriculum Policy

<b>Policy Type:</b>	<b>Academy Policy</b>
<b>Approved By:</b>	<b>Local Governing Body</b>
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<b>Person Responsible:</b>	<b>Principal</b>

## Summary of Changes

The policy has been amended as follows.

<b>Page Ref.</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Date of Change</b>

## **General Policy Roles and Accountabilities**

The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT) is accountable for all policies across its Academies. All policies, whether relating to an individual Academy or the whole Trust, will be written and implemented in line with our ethos and values as articulated in our prospectus. We are committed to the provision of high-quality education in the context of the Christian values of service, thankfulness and humility where individuals are valued, aspirations are high, hope is nurtured, and talents released.

A Scheme of Delegation for each Academy sets out the responsibilities of the Local Governing Body and Principal. The Principal of each Academy is responsible for the implementation of all policies of the Academy Trust.

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

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### 1. Aim

*'Our aim is to develop a curriculum that is imaginative, inclusive and innovative. We want it to be supported and developed by the best in Information Technology and to enable the best possible outcomes for our students.'* (Education Brief S41)

### 2. Context

Whilst adhering to statutory and advisory guidance on the curriculum which apply 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 which 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.

### 3. Curriculum Organisation

The numbering of Year Groups is in accordance with the National Curriculum. Students begin their Academy 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 (Year 12 & 13)

The Academy timetable operates on a 50 period fortnight. There are 5 periods per day: 3 in the morning, 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 additional to this teaching time.

At Key Stage 3, there are typically 27 students in each class. Where 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.

On their arrival in Year 7, students are tested to establish their literacy levels, and numeracy levels.

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, in order to target work more precisely. The subject areas that this applies to is Mathematics. From Year 10, all students are grouped by ability in mathematics and science only. In Year 11 some exceptional students are being given the opportunity to follow more challenging texts. This has the effect of creating a top stream in English Literature.

Progress Mentors provide additional help to SEN students through one to one, and small group withdrawal in The Stand. 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 A\* Centre 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, Film
- Faculty of Mathematics: Mathematics
- Faculty of Science & Specialism: Science
- Faculty of Academic Learning: Art, Geography, History, RS, MFL, Music, Photography
- Faculty of Applied Learning: DT, ICT (Computer Science/ Creative imedia) , PE, Business, Health and Social Care / Performing Arts

#### 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 (French/ Spanish)
- Geography
- History
- Music
- Drama
- Computer Science
- PSHCEE (Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship and Economic Education)

##### Key stage 3 Curriculum Model

Y7, 8, 9

CORE/ FOUNDATION	HOURS per fortnight	FOUNDATION	HOURS per fortnight
ENGLISH/ RD	7/2 7/1 8	HISTORY	3
MATHS	8/8/8	GEOGRAPHY	3
SCIENCE	6/6/7	DT	3

PE	4	DRAMA	2
RS	2	ART	2
CS	2	MUSIC	2
MFL	3/4/4	PSHCEE	1/1/1

### Notes

- Year 7 classes have Guided Reading for two-hours per fortnight, and in Year 8 once per fortnight.
- Years 7 – 9 students study German, Spanish or French to ensure **consistency** across Key Stages in one language. At Key Stage 4 a second language is offered.
- The academy is looking at introducing Latin.
- A programme of extra-curricular activities run at lunchtime and after school. Students have a free choice of activity 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	Pathway	Hours per fortnight
ENGLISH	8	A	5
MATHS	8	B	5
SCIENCE	8	C	5
PSHCEE/RS	2	D	5
PE	4		<b>TOTAL =50</b>

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

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 (French and Spanish)
- Music
- Performing Arts

- Photography
- Sport (additional to Core PE)
- Information Technology
- Creative iMedia
- Biology / Physics / Chemistry

## **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 complimented 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**

PSHCEE is part of the National Curriculum and is taught to all students from Year 7 to 11. In order to equip students with the life skills, knowledge and understanding to become rounded individuals our programme 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 PSHCEE and through drop down sessions and assemblies. In Years 7 – 9, students are taught to recognise different adult roles within the home and the community, how labour 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 centred on self-awareness, careers and economical 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 PSHCEE programme 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 programme 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 programme.

### **Key Stage 5**

Students who stay at the Academy after Year 11 have the opportunity to join the Open Academy Sixth Form (OA6) and study AS level and then the opportunity to complete 'A' level courses, as well as BTEC courses.

## **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 recording it in their planner. Homework is also available through parent portal and app.

### **Students in Need of Support**

It is very important that all students are 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 annual prize presentation where awards are made for achievement and for effort. Every student in the Academy has the opportunity to gain an award.

### **Governor Links**

A number of 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 faculties; 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. Health and Social Care 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 1988 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 in relation to 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.