PRIOR'S FIELD
SCHOOL

# CURRICULUM POLICY

## 1. Introduction

a. At Prior's Field, the curriculum comprises all that contributes to the successful learning of the individual, including both formal academic opportunities and those offered through subject-related co-curricular activities.

b. The curriculum gives students experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. Students are required to follow the set curriculum throughout Lower School (see 1.c) unless their SEND profile and supporting documentation indicates a clear reason otherwise. In addition, it is designed to enable the development of personal and social skills, competence in communication, literacy, ICT and numeracy through all areas and across the whole school.

c. Our aims are underpinned by, and reflected in, a curriculum that is based on equality of opportunity, where everyone is valued and where enthusiasm for learning is encouraged so that all students make progress and gain a sense of achievement from the learning process. The curriculum also includes activities to promote the social, moral, spiritual, cultural [SMSC] development of all its students and to support the aims of the PSHE programme.

d. We aim to deliver our curriculum in a stimulating and challenging way that teaches self-discipline and a sense of responsibility, and which promotes independent learning and the value of collaboration and teamwork. Links with the local community and beyond are fostered to widen horizons and demonstrate the relevance of the curriculum to everyday life.

e. Religious Studies is available to all students. It is taught as a compulsory subject for the first three years and then offered as an option from 14+. Prior's Field is non-denominational and the diversity of students and staff of all beliefs or none, is respected and celebrated through assemblies and cultural events.

f. At Prior's Field, all students are entitled to a curriculum.

## 2. Breadth

a. We are a softly selective school based on an entrance examination, school report and reference. Though we are selective, we are willing to accept any student who we feel would thrive in our environment both academically and personally, and all students are encouraged to be aspirational.

b. Our curriculum incorporates and enriches the National Curriculum KS3 to KS4. It is flexible, and we respond to changes in Government Policy related to curriculum issues. There are opportunities to study two Modern Foreign Languages, engage in a wide range of sporting, artistic, creative and performative activities, and to learn musical instruments. ICT is taught discretely and used extensively throughout the

curriculum both by teaching staff and through the school's device strategy, which embeds IT use into lessons where beneficial to learning.

c. From First to Third Form, all students follow a broad programme of study: English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Languages (French and Spanish), History, Geography, Religious Studies, Physical Education, Drama, Art, Music, Design Technology, Textiles, Food Technology and Information Technology are taught in every year. Students in First and Second Form have a weekly library lesson to enhance their literacy and develop their love of reading. In addition, all students have Careers education as part of a wider PSHE provision.

d. At KS4, in addition to core subjects (English Language, English Literature, Mathematics and Dual Science), a wide range of optional subjects are also available, in addition to individual and group learning support lessons. Students submit 4 free choices (plus one reserve choice) to the school each year from which option blocks are created annually. Reserve choices are important for the small number of cases where first choice options cannot be accommodated. In addition, a short course option (and reserve) may be selected. Adjustments to this curriculum may be made to meet individual learning needs and to support Tennis Academy students. Optional GCSE subjects include Fine Art, Business, Computer Science, Design & Technology, Drama, Food & Nutrition, French, Geography, History, Music, Photography, Physical Education, Religious Studies, Spanish, Textiles and Triple Science. Short course options vary year to year and will be advertised in the options process. Subjects in which the uptake at GCSE is very low may not run. English and Maths run on 4 periods per week; dual science runs on 6 periods (2 per subject); main block options run on 3 periods per week; and short course options run on 2 periods per week.

e. The post-16 Programme of Study includes a core curriculum of Careers education, Learning for Life, a programme of academic lectures and workshops and citizenship/leadership/community service opportunities. Students submit preferences for A level/BTEC/Diploma subjects which are used to generate five option blocks from which students confirm their choices. Most students study 3 subjects and an EPQ, but decisions are made according to individual needs and abilities. Sixth Form subjects on offer include Fine Art, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Computer Science, Criminology, Drama, English Literature, Food Science & Nutrition, French, Geography, History, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Music, Music Technology, Photography, Physical Education, Physics, Psychology, Religious Studies, Spanish and Textiles.

**3. Balance**

a. It is the policy of Prior's Field to offer equality of access to all subjects. We aim to present a curriculum which incorporates the development of knowledge; the understanding of concepts; the acquisition of skills; and the ability to apply these in a variety of circumstances, through the exercise of independent thought and by framing opinions based on evidence and sound judgement.

b. Students have an open choice from a wide range of subjects in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. Each student is advised when making these choices, ensuring a balanced programme of study suited to their needs, strengths and future aspirations. The

timetable is built around their choices to ensure that each student can pursue her preferences and develop her aptitudes.

c. The commitment of the school to offering a tailored approach is demonstrated in the generous staffing allocated to run courses for small numbers of students, though occasionally courses may not run if impractical or unfeasible.
d. In addition to Careers education, students and parents are invited to Third Year Options Evenings and Sixth Form Open Evenings. Detailed option information booklets are provided for each student and her parents and information evenings for girls and parents are held at the beginning of KS4 and the Lower Sixth.
e. We also aim for balance across curricular and co-curricular provision, identifying opportunities for students to understand the relevance of their learning through clubs, activities, day trips, residential trips and competitions. The co-curricular provision is just as important to students' personal and academic development and in fulfilling future aspirations as their curriculum lessons.

**4. Relevance**

a. We take account of the previous learning of students and their readiness for new experiences. As a school, we also ensure that the curriculum plays a significant role in preparing the students for the next stage in their education and for life beyond school as students, employees and citizens. As such, subject provision is regularly reviewed to ensure students receive an education appropriate for 21st Century citizens.

5. **Challenge**

a. We stimulate and encourage wide-ranging and independent learning to provide a framework of skills for future progress. Use is made of prior achievement, 'value-added' data and professional judgement to ensure that individual needs are met, appropriate challenge provided, and progress tracked.
b. The school MIS (iSAMS) is the repository for the overview of students' progress. Each department retains more detailed records relevant to their specific departments. CAT4 assessments are sat when students arrive, as part of the GCSE options process and at the start of the Lower Sixth.

**6. Differentiation**

a. Differentiation at Prior's Field focuses on providing adapted levels of support for students to have the same opportunities for success as their peers. Setting is used in some subjects to further facilitate this and where setting has proven beneficial to the success of students, as appropriate to the subject and needs of individual year groups. These are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate.
b. The diversity of learning needs is acknowledged in departmental schemes of work. These are created to present the curriculum through a variety of teaching methods and using a range of resources.
c. Student Learning Passports are produced by the Learning Pathways Department. Regular reviews of the schemes of work are carried out to introduce fresh approaches to assessment techniques and to ensure the pursuit of excellence in the delivery of the curriculum, which is reflected in departmental handbooks.

d. Staff training is also conducted to ensure skills and pedagogy remains current with a focus on practical implementation in classrooms.

**7. Individual Learning Needs**

a. The school has a policy of recognising and catering for individual educational needs. It sets out for parents what help the school can offer in addition to the taught curriculum. The Director of Studies and EA Coordinator help to ensure that all teachers are supported in making provision for any exceptionally able students. Those attending Prior's Field on academic scholarships are overseen by academic staff and relevant Subject Leads/ Heads of Faculty.

b. In line with the Children and Families Act 2014 and current SEN legislation, including the 2014 Code of Practice, the needs of any students with special educational needs, including any with Education, Health and Care plans [EHC plans], are co-ordinated by the Director of Pastoral Care and Learning Pathways. Teaching staff are expected to make special provision for these students in their lesson planning and to address their needs by using appropriate resources. Detailed records of students with special learning difficulties and disabilities are kept and made available centrally to all staff across the school both on the MIS and via the IEPs.

c. Prior's Field also provides individual and group support for those for whom English is an additional language. All students receiving additional leaning support or EAL tuition have individual educational plans [IEPs, called Passports] which are monitored and evaluated regularly by the Director of Pastoral Care and Learning Pathways in conjunction with the students themselves, their parents and teachers. (See also, policies on Learning Support, EAL and Equal Opportunities.)

d. A detailed programme of academic intervention is in place to ensure support outside the classroom for those who need it, some informal through drop-in sessions and some formal with logged academic support, 1:1 sessions and a Planned Academic Support (PAS) system for those in exam classes which ensures clear target setting, tracking of progress against these targets and parent communication and liaison.

8. **Continuity**

a. Effective continuity between phases of the school is a vital element in curriculum management. Regular consultation between teachers in various key stages and the exchange of up-to-date data ensure that, as they move through the school, students meet fresh challenges as they build on their prior attainment and achievements.

b. There is also a detailed handover between Tutors and Heads of Year.

c. Whilst reinforcement is embedded in the schemes of work, unnecessary repetition is avoided through close collaboration and consultation.

d. Teachers are also encouraged to teach classes across the key stages to ensure detailed understanding of all parts of students' learning journeys.

**9. Homework**

a. Heads of Faculties, Subject Leads, Form Tutors and Heads of Year monitor homework to ensure that appropriate work is set and marked (where beneficial) to support and reinforce work covered in class, and aid retention. It also provides an opportunity for the development of research and independent learning skills.

b. There is an expectation that this work is completed in full and on time. Parents can become involved in managing their daughter's progress by overseeing this work and by communicating any difficulties to their daughter's Form Tutor by email. A variety of assessment methods are regularly used, and a homework timetable for students in Lower School and Upper School is published.
c. (See also the school's policy on Assessment, Reporting and Marking.)

**10. Careers**

a. The Careers programme includes opportunities for work-related learning and Careers education is featured, as appropriate, within the PSHEE programme. Individual student support and guidance is also provided through national schemes, the Careers Adviser and through Tutors. The aim is to prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life through education and the broadening of horizons. It is also to ensure that those moving on to Further and Higher Education courses are well informed and well prepared for the next stage.
b. The Careers Adviser plays a key role in advising students on option choices, working closely with them, Tutors and Heads of Year, in particular the Head of Sixth Form on university applications.

**11. Teaching and Learning**

a. Prior's Field places emphasis on the notion that teaching and learning processes are as significant as curriculum content in determining student progress and achievement. The school aims to:
    i. promote the view that learning should be experienced as something that is enjoyable, engaging and rewarding;
    ii. prepare students for the next stages: further education and future careers;
    iii. regard monitoring and assessment as an integral and valuable part of the learning process, to diagnose difficulties, chart progress and encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and progress. (See also the Assessment Policy.)
b. All staff share responsibility for delivering the curriculum. It is the responsibility of each Head of Faculty/Subject Leads to ensure that programmes of study and schemes of work are produced and regularly updated.

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| **Reviewed by:** | **Director of Studies** |
| **Date of next review:** | **1st April 2027** |
| **Governors review:** | **E&W Summer 2025** |
| **Location:** | **Website/ISI/portal** |