

Curriculum Policy (Senior School)

This document should be read in conjunction with the following complementary documents:

- Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy (Senior School)
- Homework Policy (Senior School)
- Special Educational Needs (SEND) and Inclusion Policy
- Trips and Visits Policy

Aims

At Silcoates, we believe it is important that all our pupils have the opportunity to experience a broad and balanced curriculum that is enjoyable, challenging and an effective preparation for further study. Our vision is that our pupils should grow up to be independent learners, who are able to explore their thinking within a curriculum which is relevant, engaging and scholarly.

We aim for our pupils to develop and perfect key intellectual skills in a broad cultural and historical context, so that they can make sense of their learning as a coherent whole. While we want pupils to know things, we also encourage them to weigh the evidence and to be critical of what they hear, see and read. We take account of the ability of every pupil and ensure that each is challenged and her or his talents fostered.

When pupils leave Silcoates, we want them to have the skills for university and the work-place; but we also want them to be knowledgeable and informed young people who have the skills to sustain a life-long love of learning.

Written Policies and Plans

Full details of the academic programmes of study are included in the individual schemes of work produced by Faculty Leaders and coordinated and stored by the Assistant Head (Curriculum). Through supervision of the department handbooks, and regular meetings with Faculty Leaders, including the annual target reviews, she ensures that these do not undermine British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We currently have a small number of pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan. The needs of such pupils are coordinated by the Head of Learning Support (who is the SENCO), who ensures that statutory requirements and individual needs are met. The policy is laid out in full in the separate SEND and Inclusion policy.



The Curriculum in Outline

All pupils of compulsory school age attend school full-time (27.5 hours of timetabled lessons per week in Years 7-11; up to 24.75 hours in Year 12; 19.25 hours when a pupil takes three A Levels in Year 13) and are given experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education.

By maintaining a broad range of subjects until Year 10, and having a policy of pupils studying at least eight subjects to (I)GCSE, the breadth of the educational experience is maintained for as long as possible. To foster linguistic skills, all pupils take IGCSE English Language and many also take a modern language. All pupils take IGCSE Mathematics and at least one Science GCSE. All pupils have weekly Games lessons.

Pupils are supervised in all classes in Years 7 to 11. There are no free periods in these year groups. However, occasionally and under special circumstances, following consultation with parents, it may be deemed prudent for a pupil to discontinue a subject. When a pupil has a 'free' block of time (e.g., a pupil is no longer studying a subject in Year 11), the pupil goes to the Learning Resource Hub or Study Centre and is supervised and registered there. Pupils unable to participate in Games are also able to work in the Learning Resource Hub/Study Centre and are supervised by a member of staff there.

Details of the Curriculum by Year

Year 7 and 8 sets down a broad and general foundation in English, Mathematics, Science, French, German, History, Geography, Religious Studies, Art, Music, Design Technology (DT), ICT and Physical Education (PE). Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) and Games (Rugby, Football, Hockey, Netball, Cricket and Athletics).

Year 9 retains the broad approach, but with separate teaching of Biology, Chemistry, Physics.

Years 10 and 11 retain the core subjects of English and Maths and Science, with Biology, Chemistry and Physics taught separately. Apart from English and Maths, all other subjects fall into six option blocks. The blocks are constructed through pupil choice and to ensure reasonable balance and the avoidance of premature specialisation. All courses lead to a full GCSE or IGCSE. This programme is supported by Games and Assemblies.

The Sixth Form consists of three A Level subjects from blocks devised according to student choice. All Year 12 pupils (except those studying 4 A Levels) undertake an enrichment programme which allows them to choose from the Extended Project Qualification or HSLA. The pupils attend weekly timetabled lessons and complete their qualification in the summer term of their Year 12 (with the exception of EPQ, which is Autumn Term Year 13).



Speaking, Listening, Literacy, Numeracy and ICT Skills

Pupils acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. Attention is paid to these skills across the curriculum and not just in Mathematics, Science, English, MFL and Latin. Pupils are assessed in literacy and numeracy by appropriate work set in each year and by formal examinations and tests. Pupil participation in class at every level ensures that high standards of speaking and listening are maintained, the latter also tested by written work and formal examinations. Questioning and collaborative learning are at the heart of our academic aims and methods, as described in the Teaching and Learning policy.

The use of ICT is encouraged in order to fulfil our strategic aim to develop responsible, digital citizens. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 are provided with Chromebooks. Classes may also be moved to be taught in one of the ICT classrooms. Use of technology is often encouraged for homework assignments.

Lessons are conducted in English; where English is not the pupils' first language, we are satisfied at the point of entry that the pupil is able to cope with the teaching provided. A more detailed explanation of the School's approach is provided in our SEND & Inclusion Policy.

PSHEE

Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) within Silcoates reflects the School's aims and ethos and underlines the respect for all in the community, in line with the Equalities Act 2010. It comprises a wide range of topics delivered throughout the year and to all year groups. Topics include safeguarding and understanding the risk from others, keeping safe online and building resilience to the risk of radicalisation and extremism.

It is delivered in the following ways:

- i. Specific PSHEE issues are covered in PSHEE lessons in Years 7 to 10; students in the Sixth Form have Enrichment lessons once a fortnight. The programme of study for each year group is devised and revised by the Deputy Head (Pastoral), (see the separate PSHEE policy). This ensures that all aspects of the PSHEE curriculum are covered, such as relationships, emotional and physical well-being, financial well-being and citizenship. Pupils are taught to respect other people and their lifestyles within a broad culture of tolerance and diversity, in accordance with the Equal Opportunities Policy. Pupils' attention is drawn to protected characteristics of the 2010 Act at regular intervals throughout the course.
- ii. Particular PSHEE topics form part of the Assembly programme each term and are addressed by members of the SLT; those leading the weekly Spiritual Assemblies also frequently deal with relevant topics.
- iii. Teachers are encouraged to deal with such issues in academic subjects as they arise and are highlighted in schemes of work (e.g. emotional responses discussed in the study of English Literature; social issues in Geography and Science, for example).
- iv. Religious Studies, which is compulsory in Years 7 to 9, plays a crucial role in exploring PSHEE topics.



Careers Guidance

All pupils are given advice on their GCSE and post-16 options in an impartial way which allows them to make informed choices. The creation of option blocks, at GCSE and A Level, follows the collation of preliminary pupil choices. The option columns and school timetable are then designed to maximise this choice for those pupils.

Guidance is available from tutors, subject teachers, Faculty Leaders, the Head of Key Stage 3 and Head of Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form, and the Deputy Head (Academic). At the beginning of each round in the choices season, the Deputy Head (Academic) reminds teachers of the need to present details of their subject and its possible career paths in a dispassionate way.

Specific advice about GCSE options is given at the Year 9 Parents' Evening in the Spring Term. Post-16 advice is given in Year 10 through Careers lessons. There is also a Year 10 focus on Careers in Activities Week at the end of June. In Year 11 pupils attend a Sixth Form Information Afternoon for parents and pupils. They also complete a week's work experience after their GCSE examinations.

Post-A Level guidance is given through the Sixth Form Enrichment programme, visits to Apprenticeship Fairs and Higher Education Conferences. Year 12 students also complete a week of work experience in June which is followed up with feedback, mock interviews and higher education preparation during the final week of term. Specific advice on careers and the completion of UCAS/apprenticeship/school leavers' programme applications is given by a specialist Sixth Form tutor team which is led by the Head of Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form.

Consideration of the skills key to employability are addressed in PSHEE time from Y7. Pupils are provided with access to independent and impartial careers guidance and advice and are encouraged to use online programs, such as KUDOS, which endeavours to match interests and skills to potential career ideas. The aim is to enable pupils to gain sufficient information about courses, training, education and occupations beyond school so that they can make well-informed decisions about their subject choices and career pathways.

Progress

Silcoates is committed to ensuring that the necessary provision is made for every pupil in the school community, to ensure we are giving all our pupils every opportunity to achieve their academic potential. All pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress. The academic programme is open to all pupils. We aim to create a safe environment where all are stimulated to learn and to pursue both a full general programme of education and their own specific interests. There are no barriers to any pupil taking any subject, other than when professional advice suggests that a particular GCSE or A Level would be inappropriate for a particular pupil's ability.

At Silcoates, baseline testing takes place in Year 7(MidYIS), Year 9 (Yellis) and Year 12 (ALIS) from which minimum target grades are produced. Regular assessment, parents evenings and reports ensure that attitude to learning is tracked.



There are internal examinations in the Summer Term for Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12. Year 10 also have an internal examination period in January and Year 12 in February. Mock examinations are held for Years 11 and 13 in January and February respectively. Results from these examinations help us to track progress. Progress is also tracked through the internal assessment points and is fed back to parents via regular reports and parents' evenings.

Teachers take into account the needs of pupils, as a class and as individuals, when preparing lessons. In some subjects (e.g. English and Mathematics), we set pupils to enable them to make progress at an appropriate level and speed.

Our school is passionate about inclusive education for all and aims to identify Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) swiftly in order to overcome barriers to learning so that all pupils make good progress: in so doing, we help to nurture their sense of dignity and self-worth in accordance with the school's ethos. We respect the unique contribution that every individual can make to our school community.

Silcoates accepts pupils with learning difficulties, including those with a SEND or an EHC plan and has a specialist Learning Support department. The procedure for identifying pupils with special needs and methods of supporting and evaluating them are contained within the SEND and Inclusion Policy which complies with the Equality Act 2010, the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEN and Disability Code of Practice, 0 to 25 years 2015. Teachers pay heed to the Independent Education Plans drawn up for pupils with learning difficulties or with an EHC plan, and provision is made by the Head of Learning Support when she deems a pupil needs extra assistance when their first language is not English.

Silcoates responds to individual needs by modifying the curriculum programme to allow pupils with individual strengths to emphasize a particular curriculum area or to allow a pupil making significantly less progress than their peers to consolidate their understanding.

Pupils recognised as Able, Gifted and Talented are identified on a school wide level using a range of data. Those with a baseline score of 126 (top 5% nationally) or over are identified on SIMS for tracking purposes. Latin is offered to pupils in the top stream and Additional Mathematics at GCSE for the Set 1 mathematicians. Further details can be found in the Able, Gifted and Talented Policy.

Activities and the Co-Curricular Programme

Silcoates offers a broad programme of activities, which aid the pupils' personal, social, emotional and physical development and their communication and language skills.

All year groups have a weekly Games afternoon. A rich variety of sports are on offer; those naturally interested in sport are encouraged to foster and develop their talents to a high level. On the other hand, it is recognised that not all are natural sportsmen/women and that indeed some pupils have an aversion to sport. We are committed to encouraging physical fitness and



provide a full range of activities, so that each pupil at every level can find something to his/her liking and so develop physical fitness and the ability to be part of a team and to work together.

A wide range of co-curricular activities is on offer. The specific provision of these is tailored to the age of the pupils concerned and, throughout the School, care is taken to ensure that there are activities to suit both boys and girls. There are opportunities to perform in musical concerts throughout the year and events such as 'Silcoates Does' and the Jazz Café. There is a big musical production and a House Drama Competition every two years, as well as smaller dramatic performances.

There are also many department/subject-based societies, as well as many other societies begun and run by pupils which are open to all members of the School. All pupils are encouraged to attend these and to take part in them. Some activities have an academic base, some are more practical and artistic. At every level, we encourage pupils to take up a musical instrument and to take part in choirs and ensembles.

Teaching British Values

Silcoates encourages its pupils to make a positive contribution to society and seeks to foster respect for the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of difference faiths and beliefs through a range of activities (e.g. mock elections, numerous charity events, our Thursday assembly programme, and volunteering).

The breadth of the curriculum provides pupils with the experience of many issues which they will face in life in British society. The PSHEE programme at all levels explicitly encourages pupils to think about human relationships in an age-appropriate way; while such issues are regularly discussed in Religious Studies lessons and through the medium of English Literature. Classroom teachers promote collaboration and reflection through their normal classroom teaching to promote adult skills. Good behaviour and courtesy is promoted at all times.

Citizenship and economic well-being lessons form part of the PSHEE programme. Teachers also take every opportunity to take advantage of topics or approaches to learning that have potential for promoting pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural awareness (SMSC) and other aspects of citizenship are supported in the co-curricular programme.

Many of the timetabled lunch and after-school activities e.g. paired reading, peer mentoring and maths helpers, alongside endeavours such as voluntary service, promote responsibility and active citizenship. Games and PE also contribute to physical well-being and provide opportunities for responsibility. The House and tutor system foster responsibility and wider citizenship and are used to promote SMSC.

Numerous educational visits contribute further to this broader education, as do trips undertaken in the holidays, such as the biennial expedition to Tanzania.



The School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the School's Equal Opportunity Policy document.

Reviewed by:	Mr Bright – Assistant Head (Curriculum)		
Date of last review:	November 2024	Date of next review:	June 2025

