

Austin Friars

Senior School Curriculum Policy 2018/19

Austin Friars exists for the provision of education

Austin Friars

Registered Charity Number: 516289

CURRICULUM POLICY – SENIOR SCHOOL

The curriculum at Austin Friars is underpinned by the School's mission and vision statements.

All pupils of compulsory school age receive a full-time supervised education. The curriculum at Austin Friars is broad and balanced. It gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative aspects. Pupils will acquire speaking, listening, literacy, and numeracy skills. The contribution of each curriculum area to these educational aspects is outlined in detail in the subject specific documentation.

In keeping with the School's philosophy to provide an all-round education, pupils have the opportunity to pursue a range of subject disciplines in the Lower School which steadily narrows in the GCSE years before choosing 3 subjects at A' Level. High standards are expected and achieved through careful monitoring of pupils' progress, and dedicated teaching.

The Deputy Head (Academic) is responsible to the Headmaster for the oversight of the academic life of the School working closely with Heads of Department.

In accord with statutory requirements, the School seeks to make the curriculum accessible to each pupil as far as is reasonably practicable. The curriculum will not undermine fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. The school will provide personal, social, health and economic education which reflects the school's aims and ethos and encourages respect for other people paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equalities Act. Careers guidance will be broadly in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks and will be accurate and up-to-date. It will be (i) presented impartially, (ii) enabling pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of career options and (iii) help them fulfil their potential. There will be effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

Access to the various programmes of study is based on academic suitability and appropriateness, regardless of sex, race, disability, religion or belief. The curriculum will take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with an EHC plan.

(1) Timetable

There are 9 periods per day of 35 minutes each within the Monday – Friday working week.

(2) Lower School Curriculum (1st – 3rd Forms)

The curriculum covering the first three years gives the essential and thorough grounding needed for later study. Pupils follow traditional courses in a broad mix of subject disciplines. They are set by ability for English, mathematics, science (taught separately as physics, chemistry and biology); modern languages and Latin/classics, and are taught in mixed ability groups for the remainder of subjects. These groups are alphabetically selected in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Forms. All pupils take part in the Enrichment Programme, PE and games.

SUBJECT	1st Form	2nd Form	3rd Form
Mathematics	5	4	5
English	5	4	5
Science	6	6	6
French	3	3	3
Spanish	0	3	3
Latin/Classics	3	2	2
History	3	3	2
Geography	3	3	2
RE	2	2	3
ICT	2	2	2
Design technology	2	2	2
Art	2	2	2
Enrichment programme	1	1	1
Music/Drama	2	2	2
PE	2	2	2
Games	4	4	3

There is an Augustinian Focus week in the first term of the 1st Form in which all subject areas address issues of an Augustinian nature related to their discipline.

(3) Middle School Curriculum (4th and 5th Forms)

The standard programme of study sees pupils normally taking courses leading to GCSE/IGCSE examination entry in 10/11 subjects. The curriculum for the 4th and 5th Form is divided into a compulsory core which is common to all pupils and the options where there is a wide element of choice. All pupils continue to take the Enrichment Programme, PE and Games. Full details of the courses and their specific requirements are given in the GCSE Prospectus.

SUBJECT	PERIODS
Mathematics	5
English	5
RS	4
French/Spanish	4
Sciences	9
Option block 1	4
Option block 2	4
Option block 3	4
Enrichment programme	1
PE	2
Games	3

Core subjects

All pupils follow courses in the core subjects of English Language and Literature (IGCSEs), Mathematics (IGCSE), Religious Studies, Science (IGCSE's) and either French or Spanish which are arranged in sets based on ability. All pupils continue to participate in PE and games and in the enrichment (PSHE) programme. The enrichment programme is delivered by a small team of senior teachers, each delivering all the lessons for one year group.

After their 5th Form mock examinations, pupils will be selected to either study all three sciences separately as Triple Award Science leading to three IGCSE passes in Physics, Chemistry and Biology or to follow the Dual Award Science course leading to two IGCSE passes, or to follow the single Science course leading to one GCSE pass.

All pupils keep up with their study of at least one modern language by the continued study of either French or Spanish, unless advised otherwise by the Learning Support department. Pupils who wish to continue their study of both French and Spanish choose French from the core and Spanish from the options list. Specialist Learning Support tuition is usually timetabled as an option to the continued study of a modern foreign language.

Option subjects

The option subjects are as follows: Art and Design, Classical Civilisation, Design Technology, Drama, Spanish, Geography, History (IGCSE), ICT (IGCSE), Latin, Music and Physical Education. The study of Latin is sometimes taken as an off-timetable option. If any option does not attract significant numbers then there is a possibility that the option may not be viable and will therefore not run. Pupils choose one subject from each of the three blocks. Unlike many schools, the School does not operate a 'fixed block' system but rather a 'best fit' arrangement where we try to match our pupils' preferred choices in putting the blocks together.

(4) VI Form Curriculum

The bulk of VI Formers' time is occupied with specialist A' Level studies. It is usually expected that VI Form pupils study 3 subjects. Pupils sit examinations in these A' Level subjects in the summer term of their U6th.

The choice of subjects can be difficult. There is sometimes a conflict between what a pupil likes, what a pupil is good at, what is required for a particular career and what was a pupil's best subject at GCSE. Careful consideration must be given and subject teachers, Heads of Department, Deputy Head (Academic), Head of VI Form and tutors are available to be consulted. Full details of the courses and their specific requirements are available in the VI Form prospectus.

SUBJECT	PERIODS	
	L6th	U6th
Option block 1	10	10

Option block 2	10	10
Option block 3	10	10
Option block 4	10	10
VI Form Enrichment Programme	2	2
Games	3	3

Option subjects

The following subjects are available at A' Level: Art, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Classical Civilisation, Design Technology, Economics, English, French, Further Mathematics, Geography, History, ICT, Mathematics, Music, PE, Photography, Physics, Psychology, Religious Studies, Spanish, Drama & Theatre Studies.

Unlike many schools, the School does not have 'fixed' option blocks. The VI Form option blocks are constructed on the basis of the information provided by pupils during the course of the Fifth Form. The School endeavours to fit the curriculum to the needs of the individual as far as is possible given the constraints of the timetable. Although final VI Form subject choices are not required until GCSE results are known, pupils will be asked to indicate their most likely choices so that the five VI Form option blocks can be finalised, usually by the end of the Spring term in the 5th Form.

In consultation with their tutor, the Head of VI Form and the Deputy Head (Academic), it is possible for a pupil to revise their subject choices after a short period of study at the start of the Lower Sixth year. The choice of A' Level subjects is an important step and the School recognises that pupils may need this period at the start of the LVI year to finally settle on their choices. A flexible approach is applied, for example allowing pupils to sample subjects in the first few weeks before finally deciding. During this period, changes to subject choices, within the limitations of the option blocks, are also accommodated.

Austin Friars Internship (AFI)

The AFI programme is available to pupils for whom the traditional academic curriculum might not be wholly appropriate. It comprises of an opportunity for the pupil to spend some of the normal curriculum time gaining experience in the workplace. This is used to provide the stimulus material for an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Normally a pupil will follow a reduced A' Level curriculum to create the necessary time for the internship.

VI Form Enrichment

Alongside the study of courses leading to A' Level qualifications, the VI Form also provides for a wider, all round education.

In the LVI and UVI Form, the Enrichment Programme comprises four, 6 and 5 week modules respectively, run in rotation. The programme in summary is shown below:

LVI (Michaelmas, Lent and Summer Terms)				UVI (Michaelmas and Lent Terms)			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Leadership Skills	Project Management	PPE (Philosophy, and personal ethics)	Critical Thinking and Study Skills	Personal Finance	Personal Nutrition (Cooking)	Mindfulness	Presentation and Interview Skills

In addition, all VI Form pupils participate in:

- **Games**

During the first two terms of the year, Wednesday afternoon team games for the VI Form include rugby, football, hockey, netball, and cross-country running. Options in the summer term include cricket, athletics, rounders and tennis. Members of teams are expected to attend team practices and play for the School in representative fixtures.

VI Formers who are not participating in team games are given the option of rowing at Talkin Tarn or taking part in an activity programme which currently includes climbing, spinning, badminton, squash, golf, 'body pump', trampolining and pilates. Broader recreational facilities are available too with pupils encouraged to continue participating at gold level in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, rock climbing and other activities within the extra-curricular programme.

- **Private study**

It is expected that pupils should work independently, without the close supervision needed in earlier years as preparation for university. Pupils should learn to strike a balance between an appropriate amount of individual study, and recreation periods in the VI Form Centre. Pupils are encouraged to read broadly and find sources of their own to complement course materials. Some pupils might also use non-contact periods for enrichment activities within the School community.

(5) Learning Support

The School has a Learning Support department which is responsible for screening all pupils in Junior 1 and the First Form for special educational needs which is complemented by INCAS screening data from the Junior School. Parents of pupils identified as having a possible special educational need/difficulty are then informed and can arrange additional support by private agreement. Teachers are cognisant of pupils with special needs and the strategies that can be employed to assist these pupils. However the additional support may involve withdrawal from appropriate classes for specialist assistance in the Learning Support base, in class support by a Learning Support Assistant or may involve the use of drop in sessions at times outside lessons. The appropriate information is passed to tutors, Heads of School and subject teachers. Subject teachers are expected to be aware of any learning difficulties of their pupils, to differentiate work accordingly when possible and to apply appropriate strategies indicated by the IAP. Set lists for staff are also automatically tagged with the appropriate link to these IAPs. Individual Action Plans (IAPs) are entered into the Learning Support database which is accessible to all subject teachers. The Learning Support department may also carry out assessments as appropriate for pupils where concerns have been raised or where examination concessions are sought. Parents are contacted where such additional assessments are being considered especially when there is a cost implication. Concerns can be raised by any member of staff through a Learning Referral on the intranet pupil tracking system.

(6) Scholarship Programme

The scheme seeks to recognise and reward the contribution to school life by remarkable individuals. Scholarships may be awarded in the following areas:

Academic

All candidates take standardised assessment papers. New 1st Form pupils who demonstrate superior academic ability in the entrance assessment are invited to attend an interview. All candidates in other year grounds will attend an interview automatically. Candidates will be asked to make a 5 minute unscripted presentation to the selection panel on an interest/hobby and should be prepared to take questions on their presentation from the panel. Candidates are encouraged to bring a related object

to support their presentation. Candidates will also be set and asked to discuss a problem solving exercise.

Academic scholars will be expected to utilise their academic abilities to the full in their studies maintaining a good to excellent standard of effort throughout their time as an Academic scholar at the school.

Art

Candidates should have a record of commitment to art in a variety of media which could include painting, drawing, photography, ceramics or some other medium. Candidates will present their portfolio of work in a variety of media, complete an unseen task and have an interview with the Head of Art.

Art scholars would be expected to contribute fully to the artistic life of the school throughout their time as an Art scholar at the school.

Music

Candidates should have a record of commitment to music making in their school or another setting (eg local or county orchestra, choir etc). Candidates for 11+ entry would normally be expected to be performing at the equivalent of grade 3 or better and candidates for 16+ entry would normally be expected to be performing at the equivalent of grade 6 or better. Candidates will present a prepared piece, be given some sight reading at the appropriate level and answer some aural tests; they will also be interviewed by the Head of Music.

Music scholars will be expected to demonstrate a high level of musical ability contributing fully to the musical life of the school throughout their time as a Music scholar, performing both individually and participating in musical groups and their performances on a regular basis.

Sport

Candidates must demonstrate outstanding sporting ability, potential, determination and enthusiasm. Successful candidates are likely to be of county standard or above. They will also respond well to guidance, work well in a team, and demonstrate good leadership skills, whether by example or captancy. Sport scholars should have exceptional talent in one or more sports, normally at least two. Preference will normally be given to those involved in the school's major sports – rugby for boys, hockey for girls. However exceptional performance (e.g. national level) in other disciplines may be eligible for an award. Assessment will be based on the candidate's sporting Curriculum Vitae, observed performance in exercises and their chosen sport and an interview with the Director of Sport.

Sport scholars will be expected to regularly represent the school in sports fixtures throughout their time as a Sport scholar at the school. They would be expected to show commitment and a consistently high level of sportsmanlike behaviour.

Theatre

Candidates will have a record of commitment to drama in their school or in another setting (e.g. a dramatic society). Candidates would normally have taken a major role in at least one production. Candidates should provide a portfolio of their achievements on assessment day. The assessment will also include an interview with the Head of Drama, a performance of a prepared piece and an unseen exercise.

Theatre scholars will be expected to contribute regularly to the performance life of the school, participating fully in school productions throughout their time as a Theatre scholar at the school.

All-Rounder

Candidates will have demonstrated a high level of achievement in the entrance assessment papers and also in at least one other area ie Art, Music, Sport or Theatre.

Assessments normally occur in the Lent term. Scholarships are awarded as percentages of the published fees. A scholarship may be worth up to 50% of the published fees. Awards may be augmented, in cases of financial need, by the granting of a bursary subject to completion of a bursary application form. Bursary awards are subject to annual review.

Candidates should have reached their tenth birthday for 11+ entry or their fifteenth birthday for 16+ entry on 1st September preceding the year of proposed entry.

Applications for a scholarship are made in co-operation with the candidate's school. The Head Teacher should be consulted before the application is submitted. The Headmaster reserves the right not to award all the scholarships offered if candidates do not reach a sufficiently high standard. Parents are asked to notify acceptance of a scholarship in writing.

Normally scholarships are tenable for the whole of a pupil's school career, but all scholarships are reviewed annually and their continuance is dependent upon satisfactory conduct, attitude, participation and progress. As part of the annual review by the Scholarship Co-ordinator, holders of awards are expected to assess their own contribution and to set challenging targets for themselves each year. Set lists for staff are also automatically tagged with the appropriate scholarship where one has been awarded.

(7) Careers guidance and UCAS

Careers guidance is coordinated by the Careers Leader who is also the Enrichment Programme Coordinator. Support is provided by a Careers Section in the Library which is available to all pupils, by web based applications (Fast Tomato, Morrisby, Unifrog), by the Enrichment (PSHE) programme and by the relevant Head of School who provides support and advice as well as arranging additional visits by external speakers and interviews for pupils with advisors.

The GCSE/IGCSE options process sees pupils receiving guidance from the Head of Lower School, Tutors, Heads of Department and the Deputy Head (Academic). A GCSE/IGCSE prospectus is provided and there is a round-robin morning when pupils are addressed by each Head of Department followed up by a parents' evening shortly thereafter.

The Head of VI Form oversees the process of guidance for university entrance, apprenticeships and other pathways beyond Austin Friars advising on applications, visits to university departments and preparing for interviews where these are required. External agencies are used to provide practice interviews and also web based applications such as Morrisby and Unifrog are used.

Individual careers guidance is available through the VI Form tutor team and experienced subject specialists. The School library is well-resourced with a wide range of reference books, prospectuses and directories, supplemented by a range of books and videos.

Pupils are encouraged to find their own work experience placements during holiday periods. This is essential for some careers and but also helps pupils identify relevant university courses if they are unsure about progression.

The university entrance process is set out in detail in the VI Form Prospectus and VI Form UCAS booklet.

(8) The Wider Curriculum

An extensive programme of residential visits both in the UK and overseas, coupled with shorter day trips run by the academic departments, form an integral part of the education which the School provides, and pupils are encouraged to make use of the opportunities available to them.

Taking place during the lunch period, and at the end of the school day, some 40 different extra-curricular activities (ECA) are available to pupils. Sport, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (3rd Form upwards), music, drama and art provide the bedrock of our diverse activity programme. The programme's breadth is ensured with other opportunities, for example, from computer games design to gardening club, philosophy to chess, and technology to cookery. The ECA programme is published to parents each term.

In the VI Form especially, pupils are provided with opportunities to develop leadership skills. During the VI Form induction programme, pupils spend time preparing for the VI Form routine and develop a 'team spirit' by taking part in a number of leadership challenges at a local venue. L6th pupils will have the opportunity to complete the NCS award. As pupils take up L6th duties, further training and support is provided with skills such as mentoring. All U6th pupils are given the opportunity to apply for leadership roles through their appointment as School prefects and take part in a training programme which includes a residential course in the Lake District.

Sporting fixtures are most often played on Wednesdays or Saturdays. Boys and girls picked for School sports teams are expected to turn out and represent the School.

Deputy Head (Academic)

July 2018