



# DEVONPORT HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

## CURRICULUM POLICY

Named person: A Thomas

Category: Statutory

Review: Annually

Date to be reviewed: Summer 2020

**This Policy has been reviewed with regard to the work/life balance of staff**

Adopted by the Governors' Policy Committee on: 08/07/19

Ratified at the Full Governors' meeting on: 08/07/19

## **Policy rationale**

The curriculum policy for Devonport High School for Girls relates directly to the school's mission statement and ethos as documented on the school's website. The curriculum must display breadth, balance, relevance, differentiation, progression and continuity. The school recognises that education is an on-going process and that the curriculum offered should aide progression into tertiary phases. We ensure we provide a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. In addition to all students studying English, Mathematics, Science and Religious Education we ensure that students have access to independent, impartial careers advice at all key stages in addition to relationship and sex education.

## **Main Aims**

To provide a curriculum structure that supports;

- the development of articulate, autonomous, collaborative learners with high meta-cognition (knowing themselves as learners) and resilience
- the further development of a genuine learning community by supporting learning conversations which are cumulative (teacher to teacher, teacher to student and student to student)
- opportunities to enrich the curriculum through engaging and challenging educational experiences leading to enhanced outcomes

## **Key Principles**

### **1 Breadth**

DHSG is committed to a broad and balanced curriculum which covers a wide range of disciplines. This enables us to develop knowledge and skills effectively amongst our students ensuring that they develop the flexibility to adapt successfully to a rapidly changing world. This can be seen in the extensive and diverse range of subjects studied at key stage 3, the large number and range of GCSE that all students prepare for which leads to all students studying at least three subjects at Advanced Level.

### **2 Depth**

To achieve and maintain the highest possible academic standards we believe that students immersing themselves thoroughly into a topic enables them to access important skills. We find opportunities in all subjects to teach beyond the specification through clubs, competitors, enterprise and STEM events and through visiting speakers and off-site trips.

### **3 Knowledge**

It is a great honour to impart knowledge to the next generation and we recognise the importance of knowledge accumulation to the development of skills. Assisting students in retaining knowledge by carefully considering medium and long term plans and interleaving the teaching of topics.

### **4 Choice**

Whilst maintaining breadth we give students many opportunities to choose their curriculum. Students can choose French or Spanish in year 7 and then a second language in year 8. Four different GCSE options accompany the compulsory GCSE subjects and students choose from over 20 Level 3 qualifications with many opting to take the Extended Project Qualification. Each year we carefully construct the timetable to maximise the number of students getting their first choice options.

## 5 Whole curriculum

Our curriculum design is evaluated each year to assess whether it reflects the needs of our cohorts and provides a meaningful and engaging experience for all learners. Our curriculum provides regular opportunities for the effective personal development of students. Through extra-curricular, sports, volunteering, work experience and other enrichment type activities students develop character, resilience, self-discipline and self-awareness. Our curriculum actively promotes British values and robustly prepares students for the next stage in their education or training and to be active global citizens.

### **Curriculum structure**

Students entering the school aged eleven are placed in one of four tutor groups. Devonport High School for Girls operates a 10 day timetable, with each day consisting of five one hour lessons. There are two lessons before morning break, two before lunch and one after lunch.

Our school is encouraging a robust approach to the development of independent learning skills in our students. We have introduced a learning skills model entitled 'Lifelong learning skills and habits' which we encourage all staff and students to include in the delivery of lessons. This model focuses on the main attributes of a good learner e.g. collaboration, questioning, interdependence, making links and persevering. We believe that the development of these vital skills will prepare our students for an ever-changing future.

Our curriculum offer comprises a two year KS3 and a three year KS4 programme for all students.

The majority of students go on to follow a two year key stage 5 programme. In collaboration with many other schools across the city we have maintained a common timetable to ensure we offer our students a broad and balanced KS5 curriculum.

### **Key Stage 3** *see Appendix A*

Changes to the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum requirements have allowed the school to condense the Key Stage 3 curriculum into two years. This allows us to set the right culture and build on achievements from primary school and give greater flexibility at Key Stage 4 ensuring that the rate of progress and level of challenge is maintained throughout. In Year 7, all students follow courses in Art, Biology, Chemistry, Citizenship, Computing, Drama, English, French or Spanish, Food Technology, Geography, History, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Physics, Religious Studies and Textiles. Our pastoral programme, delivered by our Form Tutors, covers the requirements of PSHEE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education). To ensure that all aspects are covered as rigorously as possible, we also invite expert speakers in to complement the programme offer. In Year 8, all students can choose to study a second language. The offer includes Chinese, French, German, Latin or Spanish. All students choose their options for GCSEs during the Spring Term in Year 8.

### **Key Stage 4** *see Appendix A*

Key Stage 4 will be delivered over three years, the aim is to extend the breadth and depth of study.

In light of qualification changes to the examination system at Key Stage 4, the school has made a number of changes to the Key Stage 4 programme to create more time for the delivery of English and Mathematics and other English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects. The KS4 programme is delivered over three years with all students having the opportunity of studying at least ten GCSEs. The core curriculum consists of English (Literature and Language), Mathematics, Combined or Separate Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics), a Foreign Language and a Humanities subject (Geography or History). Our students have the opportunity to choose four options (which must include a Humanities subject) from Art,

Business Studies, Computer Studies, Drama, History, Geography, Food Preparation and Nutrition, additional Languages (Chinese, French, German, Latin and Spanish), Music, Physical Education, Religious Studies and Textiles Design. Students are encouraged to ensure that their combination of subject choices provides a broad and balanced learning experience. All students choose a combination of subjects that fulfils the requirements of the EBacc.

Rigorous support is available for students, parents and carers, regarding the selection of options. Every effort is made to ensure that students can take the courses of their choice. In addition to GCSE subjects, all students follow a Physical Education course. Our Careers, Core Religious Studies, Citizenship, Work Related Learning, and PSHEE Programmes are all delivered through our well supported Pastoral Programme. In Year 10, all students take part in a week's work experience.

Extra support is available to students who find their academic programme too demanding. For a small number of students this support may extend to dropping a single subject and attending nurture group sessions with support from a learning mentor.

During Year 10, all students are encouraged to start to consider their options for Years 12 and 13 in our Sixth Form (Key Stage 5) or in further education/training elsewhere and spend a day visiting a local university. During Year 11 students attend information and guidance events and interviews to ensure the choices available are clear. Parents/carers are encouraged to become fully involved at this very important time. Extensive support is available to ensure that choices made are realistic and appropriate. This includes individual interviews with senior members of staff and at least one independent interview with a representative from Careers South West for all Year 11 students.

### **Sixth Form (Key Stage 5) see Appendix A**

Our school has a very good Sixth Form with excellent academic opportunities. We are a member of a consortium of schools, called The Link Partnership (TLP), which works together to offer a comprehensive range of subjects. The schools in the TLP are Devonport High School for Boys, Eggbuckland Community College, Notre Dame Roman Catholic School and St Boniface Roman Catholic College. Some of our students will find that they wish to study an A level in one of these other schools as it is a subject we are unable to offer. Transport costs for the movement between schools are met by the schools, not the students.

The new A and AS Level examinations have been decoupled; the AS Level will be a freestanding qualification which does not contribute to the A level grade. The majority of students choose four subjects at the start of Year 12, and will follow at least three of them through to the end of Year 13. Students will thus have the option of taking one of their four A Level subjects as an AS Level at the end of Year 12 in order to focus on their core three subjects in Year 13.

There is a comprehensive programme of careers advice which includes talks from visiting speakers. Sixth Form students engage in work experience, work place visits, voluntary work and social action to enrich their study programme. All Sixth Formers are also encouraged to choose an extra-curricular activity to which they devote at least an hour each week. A number of our students choose to follow the AQA Baccalaureate which is an additional qualification that accredits voluntary work undertaken alongside the A Level programme followed. Students also undertake the level 3 Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Universities are keen to accept this accreditation.

Sixth Formers are supported in their studies through tutorial advice, access to a well-stocked Library and extensive ICT facilities. A wide variety of study trips and visits provides help with Higher Education applications including mock interviews. A Student Executive of elected Sixth Formers chair a weekly meeting of student leaders to hear and promote students' views. It

also organises a number of events including the annual Charity Week. There are many opportunities to take on roles of responsibility and extracurricular activities within the school. For example, they can run clubs for younger students and be attached to Year 7 and 8 Forms as mentors. Sixth Form students have their own Sixth Form Centre which includes a study room equipped with networked computers and a separate social area as well as additional Sixth Form study rooms.

### **Extended curriculum**

There is an extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities that take place during the school day, evenings, weekends and during periods of holiday. There is a planned programme of extended curriculum days offering, enterprise, STEM events, team building activities and citizenship opportunities. An extensive programme enriches the learning of our Most Able and Talented students whilst all students have opportunities to experience other cultures.

### **Personalisation**

We see the planned curriculum structure as a vehicle to create pathways for the personalisation of student learning. We do not believe that the 'one size fits all' approach is one we can commit to. Our intention is to personalise the learning experience by supporting the following:

- targeted interventions based on rigorous use of data to support student progress
- the use of data to support examination module entries over KS4 that may differ from student to student.
- the offer of one fewer GCSE entries for a small group of students (as appropriate).
- individual learning programmes in the Sixth Form which reflect the academic ability, personal circumstances and career aspirations of each student.

### **SMSC and Fundamental British Values**

Through the school's provision for SMSC we actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Opportunities to teach these values are sought throughout the pastoral and academic curriculum and by all members of staff. Additional opportunities are provided through our citizenship and social studies programmes. We are mindful of all our safeguarding responsibilities for young people including the Prevent Duty.

### **Stakeholders**

We invite interest and feedback from parent/carers, students and governors when considering the curriculum structure. We offer an information, advice and guidance (IAG) event for parents/carers of year 7 and Year 8 to prepare them for their children choosing options later in year 8 and early in Year 11 prior to choosing A Level options. There is a planned programme of IAG events offered via the pastoral programme within each key stage.



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APPENDIX A

Key Stage 3, 4 and 5  
Curriculum Plan  
2019/20

*The Curriculum Plan for 2019/2020 will be attached  
before September 2019*