



King Edward's School

Curriculum Policy

Committee	Independent Schools' Governing Body
Policy Type	School
Policy Owner	Deputy Head Academic
Statutory	Yes
Published on website	Yes
Last review date	September 2023
Next review date	September 2024
Review Cycle	Annual
Expiry date	October 2024
Version	1.0

King Edward's School, Birmingham

Curriculum Policy

1. The school's aim and the school's curriculum

The school's overarching aim is *'to educate and inspire pupils to take on the challenges of the world and lead lives of significant contribution and fulfilment'*.

The school's curriculum is constructed to address the aims of richness and diversity whilst at the same time preparing pupils for the life beyond school. The following are key principles:

- **Breadth:** pupils will have the opportunity to experience linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. Thereby they will have the chance to acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. This is particularly significant in a school with pupils with very different experiences of English.
- **Balance:** the school wants every pupil to have the chance to experience as wide a range of opportunities as possible, both academic and non- academic. To that extent, the curriculum is designed to ensure that a pupil can pursue academic and exam success whilst maintaining a balanced experience in the school.
- **Development, progress, challenge and excitement:** the school will provide pupils with a curriculum that reflects their needs at different stages and ages, including those pupils with an EHC plan or IEP. In particular, the school will ensure that pupils with specific needs and difficulties are properly supported. Field trips, tests beyond exams, Olympiads, overseas trips etc. as well as opportunities for individual learning and a flexibility of approach with differentiated learning all allow for the full and personal academic development of the pupils.
- **Personal Development:** Personal, Social Health and Economic Education at King Edward's School reflects the school's aims and ethos and seeks to identify issues and problems that individuals and society in general might face and, through a structured programme, aims to enable pupils to make considered choices when faced with problems and dilemmas, thus developing their self-confidence and enabling them to grow into responsible adults. It encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equalities Act (2010). At the heart of this lies the establishment and understanding of fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The developing programme of PSHE covers a wide variety of topics from such practical help as to how to settle into school to issues of deep principle such as attitudes to human rights. Sex and Relationships Education, Drugs Education, Health Education and education against bullying are integral parts of the programme.

In the first two years, PSHE is delivered in Form Meetings and as part of the Friday Afternoon Programme. Thereafter, there are timetabled PSHE lessons for the UMs, Fourth, Fifth and Division Years.

As a general principle, the more sensitive issues of PSHE are covered in the timetable lessons by staff who are confident in dealing with such matters. The topics covered by Form Tutors are normally more practical, for example, time-management and study skills. There is training for all staff who take part in PSHE or who wish to do so.

- **Preparation for life after school:** the way in which the curriculum provides for this takes many forms: for example, the PSHE programme, advice about university and career choices, the broad range of activities and opportunities available inside and outside the timetable. Careers guidance is presented in an impartial manner and aims to enable pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of career options encouraging them to fulfil their potential.

These principles are enacted through some fundamental elements in the curriculum:

- In the first three years the pupils are given the opportunity to study a very wide range of subjects, not just the core subjects, but also Music, Drama Art, Design & Technology, at least one modern language, Latin and, as an option, Classical Greek. That diversity of choice remains very wide at GCSE.
- The school believes that 10 GCSEs, with six compulsory subjects and four options, is the right number so that the pursuit of exams does not encroach too far into a pupil's wider education. Nor has the school been in favour of acceleration of pupils to early examinations.
- All pupils in the lower five years therefore follow a programme of activities and lessons which is appropriate to their education needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development as well as communication and language skills.
- In the Upper School all pupils study for the IB Diploma. The reason for this is to pursue an education of greater breadth and challenge which we believe will be a much better preparation for university entry, university study and adult life. We also believe that the nature of the diploma, with its core of Theory of Knowledge and Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) will develop further the pupils' range of thought and experience.
- Every pupil, from the Shells to the Upper Sixth, has in his timetable at least one Games afternoon and from Shells to Divisions they also have at least one PE period, and the school has worked hard to extend the range of options open to pupils.
- Friday afternoon is set aside specifically for non-academic activities. In the early years, those activities might range from PSHE/SMSC to games to preparation for summer camps. From the Fourth Form onwards there is a wide range of options including the CCF, the school's own Leadership option, and Personal Service.
- The school encourages trips and expeditions within the curriculum. That ranges from activity weeks for the Shells and Removes to field trips for Geography and Biology, to Art trips to Venice and Madrid.
- The academic curriculum operates alongside a remarkably extensive co-curricular provision and strong pastoral support.

Subjects offered are outlined in the attached grid.

***This policy is kept under review by the Deputy Head Academic
Next policy review is due: September 2024***

THE CURRICULUM AT KES – 2023-2024

	Years 7 and 8	Year 9	Years 10 and 11	Years 12 and 13
Group 1	English Language and Literature	English Language and Literature	English Language and Literature	English Literature or Literature & Performance
Group 2	French and Latin	French and Latin	A modern foreign language	Latin, Ancient Greek at HL/ SL
		and ONE from: Spanish, German or Ancient Greek	and then a possible additional one or two from: French or German or Spanish or Latin or Ancient Greek	French, Spanish and German at HL/SL/ ab initio
Group 3	Geography, History and School for Thought	Geography, History and School for Thought	Choice of none/one/two from: Geography and History	Business and Management, Economics, Geography, History, Philosophy at HL/SL
Group 4	Year 7: Science/ Year 8: Biology, Chemistry, Physics	Biology, Chemistry, Physics	Either: Two or Three Single Science subjects from Biology, Chemistry and Physics	Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Design Technology, Sports Science at HL/SL; Environmental Systems and Society at SL
Group 5	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics (For the top sets there is also the option for Yr11 of taking a Further Maths Qualification)	Maths Analysis (HL) or Maths Apps (SL/HL)
Group 6	Music, Art, DT, Drama	Choice of two from: Music, Art, Drama, DT	Choice of none/one/two/three from: Music, Art, Drama, DT	Music, Theatre, Visual Art HL/ SL or elective from Groups 2-5
Additional	PE, Games, IT	PE, Games, PSHE	PSHE, PE, Games	TOK, Games, PE, PSHE for Yr 12
	Friday Afternoon activities (inc PSHE/ SMSC)	Friday Afternoon activities (inc SMSC and Citizenship)	Friday Afternoon activities	Friday Afternoon activities

THE CURRICULUM AT KES – 2022-23

IB Subject Choices (See Appendix 1 for detail of IBDP)

Pupils choose 6 subjects, 3 at HL and 3 at SL. One each from groups 1-5 and then one from Group 6 or an additional one from Groups 2-5.

GCSE Subject Choices

<i>Compulsory English (Language and Literature), Maths and a modern foreign language with one of two options:</i>
Option System 1
Single Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics leading to three GCSEs) with three from: Art*; DT*; Drama*; French; Geography; Greek; German; Spanish; History; Latin; Music*;
Option System 2
Two Single Sciences from Biology, Chemistry, Physics leading to two GCSEs with four from: Art*; DT*; Drama*; French; Geography; Greek; German; Spanish; History; Latin; Music*;

*A maximum of two of these subjects is usually permitted

The IB at King Edward's

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) is a prestigious pre-university qualification which is recognised by universities and governments throughout the world. It has been in existence for nearly fifty years and is now offered in more than 3,000 schools in 136 countries, taken by over 150,000 pupils worldwide. The Diploma represents **a cohesive approach to post-16 education**, bringing together the requisite depth of subject specific knowledge for university entry with the skills pupils will need to thrive in the future. We introduced the IB Diploma in September 2010 and since the first IB examination session in 2012 we have produced consistently excellent outcomes. In the subsequent years we have seen great successes:

- **89.8%** of all Higher Level exams were awarded grade 7-5 (A*/A/B equivalent in 2023);
- In 2022 the mean points score was **39.6**, in 2023 this was **35.9** compared to a global average of 30.2;

The Diploma programme requires all pupils to take six subjects at either Higher or Standard Level, allowing for a broad and connected curriculum as well as the depth of knowledge and understanding required for university entry. Pupils take subjects in a range of disciplines: a literature-based course in their own language (English at KES); a modern or classical language; a science course; a mathematics course; a humanities course and an arts course. All these courses are available at various levels and a wide choice of subjects and combinations is offered, so as to cater to the needs and interests of as diverse a range of individuals as possible. Pupils can specialise by taking an additional science, language or humanity course in Group 6. In addition, all pupils complete a research paper on a topic of their choice (Extended Essay), take a course in critical thinking (Theory of Knowledge) and complete a programme of creativity, activity and service (CAS). The award of the diploma is recognition that pupils have completed all parts of the programme and marks a high level of achievement.

What is the Diploma?

The IB Diploma is a two-year programme of study; courses are taught concurrently and assessed throughout the two-years of the programme, with final examinations taking place in May of year 2.

What do I have to take in order to qualify for the Diploma?

- 3 Higher Level subjects
- 3 Standard Level subjects
- Theory of Knowledge (TOK)
- Extended Essay (EE)
- Creativity Action and Service (CAS)

How is it assessed?

- All subjects are graded out of 7 points:
7 (highest) to 1 (lowest) = 42 points
- 3 additional points available for TOK and EE
- Total possible = 45 points

The model below provides a visual guide to the programme. TOK, EE and CAS are in the centre as they form the “core” of the programme. All pupils take TOK, EE and CAS, and these are explained in more detail below. Subject choices are arranged into groups, under the headings: **Studies in Language and Literature** (Group 1); **Language Acquisition** (Group 2); **Individuals and Societies** (Group 3); **Sciences** (Group 4); **Mathematics** (Group 5); **The Arts and Electives** (Group 6). Pupils select one subject from each of the groups. However, pupils may opt to study an additional elective subject from groups 2 – 5 in place of an arts subject.



What subject choices I can make?

Pupils select one subject from each of the following groups:

- **Group 1: English**
- **Group 2: another modern or classical language** (some at three different levels)
- **Group 3: a humanities** subject
- **Group 4: a science**
- **Group 5: a mathematics** course (there are four different courses)
- **Group 6: an arts** course

If pupils choose not to take an arts course, they may select one additional subject from groups 2-5. This allows pupils who require two sciences, two languages, two humanities or double maths for university entry to specialise in their area of interest, while maintaining enough breadth of skill and knowledge in other key areas.

The diploma is therefore flexible enough to meet the requirements for those wishing to study a wide and exciting range of university courses including medicine, languages, engineering etc.

Below is a list of subjects that are being offered as of September 2023 and the levels at which they are available. All pupils must take 3HL and 3SL subjects. At least one subject must be chosen from groups 1 to 5. The SL Literature & performance course was introduced in 2021, and the SL Astronomy course was introduced in 2022.

GROUP	SUBJECT	HL	SL
Group 1	English literature	✓	✓
	Literature & performance		✓
Group 2	French	✓	✓
	German	✓	✓
	Spanish	✓	✓
	French ab initio*		✓
	German ab initio*		✓
	Spanish ab initio*		✓
	Latin	✓	✓
	Greek	✓	✓
Group 3	Business and Management	✓	
	Economics	✓	✓
	Geography	✓	✓
	History	✓	✓
	Philosophy	✓	✓
	ESS****		✓
Group 3/4 (Interdisciplinary)****	ESS****		✓
Group 4	Biology	✓	✓
	Chemistry	✓	✓
	Design and Technology	✓	✓
	Physics	✓	
	Astronomy		✓
	Sports, Exercise and Health Science	✓	✓
	ESS****		✓
Group 5	Mathematics: applications and interpretations	✓	✓
	Mathematics: analysis and approaches	✓	
Group 6**	Music	✓	✓
	Theatre	✓	✓
	Visual Arts	✓	✓

* ab initio –from the start, no prior knowledge of the language

** Instead of a group 6 subject, one additional subject is allowed from groups 2-5 (2 languages, 2 humanities, 2 sciences)

**** Interdisciplinary Subject (may be taken as either a Group 3 subject, or a Group 4 subject but can also fulfil the requirements for both Group 3 and Group 4 at once, thus allowing pupils to take an additional subject from groups 2 – 6)

The Core

1. *Theory of Knowledge (TOK)*

TOK is central to the philosophy and teaching of the Diploma. It encourages you to appreciate other cultural perspectives, to reflect on how you learn - both inside and outside school - and to make links between the academic disciplines and your thoughts, feelings and actions. The course asks you to think critically about knowledge, to be aware of yourself as a thinker and to recognise the need to act responsibly in an increasingly interconnected world. The course is delivered through a range of interactive activities in lessons and lectures and involves discussion of questions, both timeless and new. Examples of these questions are:

- How is knowledge gained and from what sources?
- To what extent do personal experience and ideology influence our knowledge claims?
- What is the difference between 'I am certain' and 'It is certain'?
- Can we think without language?
- Can feelings have a rational basis?
- Does living a moral life matter?

The TOK course runs in specific lessons for four terms. It is assessed by one essay of 1200-1600 words on a title prescribed by the IB and one 10-minute presentation to the class.

2. *Extended Essay (EE)*

The Extended Essay (EE) provides an opportunity for you to independently explore a topic of personal academic interest. The EE is popular with universities as it introduces you to the skills necessary for independent research. The choice of topic must be connected to one of the subjects that you are studying for the Diploma; most pupils use the EE to explore a topic that is related in some way to what they want to study at university. You are assigned a supervisor, with whom you work closely to establish the parameters of your research and develop your ideas. You investigate your research question using a range of sources, usually both primary and secondary, and you write up your research in a 4000 word research paper.

3. *Creativity Action Service (CAS)*

CAS is at the heart of the IB diploma programme and provides an opportunity for you to enhance and reflect on your personal character development. You initiate and take part in CAS experiences that develop skills such as self-determination, collaboration, and adaptability. In the 21st Century, critical and inventive thinking are key to success and through CAS you will use your energy and talents in real life experiences, to stretch and challenge your thinking in a variety of ways. The emphasis is on providing service to others by recognising how global issues affect your community and developing projects to help meet those needs. You have timetabled CAS lessons where you reflect on your experiences and you are assigned a CAS adviser to help guide you through the CAS programme.