



## CURRICULUM POLICY

**This policy applies to all pupils, including EYFS.**

The school aims to provide an excellent education for all its pupils, facilitating their success through a broad curriculum within a positive, supportive environment.

The curriculum is all planned activities that we organise in order to promote learning and personal development. This includes not only the formal requirements placed on all schools, including Early Years Foundation Stage, but also the extracurricular activities which enrich the pupils' learning experiences. Our curriculum is characterised by breadth and rigour at all levels with increased specialisation in the later years.

We want all girls to be extraordinary and to grow into happy, confident, resilient and compassionate leaders of the future. In an environment free from stereotypes, we provide cutting edge teaching and learning.

### **Aims of the curriculum**

The overall aim of our curriculum is to ensure the intellectual and personal growth of each student to allow her to make the most of the opportunities she finds, in keeping with the Every Child Matters philosophy:

- Be healthy.
- Stay safe.
- Enjoy learning and a sense of achievement through their school experience.
- Be able to make positive contributions to school life.
- Develop the skills that will support them emotionally, academically, economically and socially for the future.

To do this we aim to:

- provide a broad and balanced range of opportunities to enable all pupils to discover specific areas of strength or interest.
- provide pupils with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary for them to move on successfully to the next phase of their lives.
- develop the skills needed to work effectively independently and with others.
- ensure regular and robust self-evaluation and collective review of the curriculum to ensure NGHS lead the way in girls' education.
- provide excellent learning opportunities which are stimulating and challenging and reflect best practice in teaching and learning.
- develop an enjoyment of education and engender a lifelong interest in learning.
- encourage all pupils to reflect on the development of their intellectual, moral, physical, social, spiritual and creative capacities.

- promote an ethos of continual improvement – staff continue to develop in their roles. through high quality support, guidance and on-going training through the CPD opportunities on offer.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

Alongside the academic curriculum, the co-curriculum offers a wide range of enriching, enjoyable and challenging activities, which stimulate and develop the interests of each child and promote a healthy lifestyle. These activities reflect the interests of the pupils, the staff and the wider community.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Issues of learning and teaching are high on the professional agenda of the school and staff are regularly involved in discussions about such issues - on curriculum development, assessment, homework and the provision for individual needs - through whole school, academic board and departmental meetings and through working parties. We aim to use a wide range of teaching styles in response to the different learning styles of individuals. Heads of Department and Phase Leaders take responsibility for the management and monitoring of learning and teaching in their areas and members of the SLT take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating learning and teaching overall and the curriculum through the line management system.

Learning and teaching is supported by a well-resourced Library in the Main School, Junior School, and Independent Learning Centre in the Sixth Form Centre and a well-qualified Librarian.

The development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is included within the curriculum at all key stages. All staff are asked to consider how pupils' learning in their subject area builds confidence and increases self-esteem. The SMSC dimension is particularly extended in PSHCE, and RS and multicultural themes are explored in many subject areas. A mapping exercise is carried out at intervals across the curriculum. Assemblies are twice a week (one year group assembly and one SLT led assembly in Senior School) and these provide further opportunities to explore spiritual and moral issues. Charitable work features highly in the work of the school; pupils are encouraged to support local and national charities through voluntary work and fund-raising.

### **British values**

NGHS aims to prepare its pupils fully for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society. In doing this, we fulfil our statutory duty to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all our pupils, and to 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.

These values are promoted through the curriculum, through extra-curricular activities, and through the routine behaviour expected of pupils and staff. They are embedded in the ethos of the school.

Full details can be found in the British Values and Prevent Policy, and the [British Values Curriculum Map](#).

## **Junior school (including EYFS) curriculum**

Our aim is that learning should be fun; girls are encouraged to be curious and to have inquiring minds. The curriculum is planned to equip girls with the skills, knowledge, resilience and understanding to become lifelong learners who are well-prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. We strive to develop a love of learning both within and beyond the classroom environment to enable all pupils to reach their potential.

Girls acquire strong key skills in Literacy and Mathematics which are utilised across other curriculum areas. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum through integrated cross-curricular themes covering Science, History, Geography, RE, Computing, PSHCE, French or Spanish, Art and Design Technology. Form teachers deliver English, Maths, PSHCE and some other subjects although there is an increasing emphasis on subject specialist teaching from Year 3 to Year 6. This ensures a smooth transition to our senior school and an effective whole school teaching and learning ethos.

The curriculum is enhanced and brought to life with high quality, practical workshops, visits and residential trips linked to pupil's learning.

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

The educational programmes for all pupils in EYFS are based on the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' DfE. This document specifies the requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding pupils and promoting their welfare.

The learning and development requirements cover:

- The areas of learning and development which must shape educational programmes for pupils in EYFS settings;
- The early learning goals that staff must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding pupils should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five); and
- Assessment arrangements for measuring progress and requirements for reporting to parents.

Our practice in EYFS is guided by the following principles:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
- Children learn well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between staff and parents; and
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

## **The areas of learning and development:**

The three prime areas are:

1. Communication and language;
2. Physical development; and
3. Personal, social and emotional development.

In addition the EYFS team supports pupils in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

1. Literacy;
2. Mathematics;
3. Understanding the world; and
4. Expressive arts and design.

### Senior School

The curriculum provides access to a broad range of subjects at an appropriate level, and offers the opportunity for pupils to specialise in areas of strength. All subject matter is appropriately differentiated for the age and abilities of the pupils in each school year including any pupils with educational support needs.

### KEY STAGE 3

At KS3, the curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils study a range of subjects including a core of English, Mathematics, sciences taught as three separate subjects. In addition, Geography, History and Religious Studies are taught as separate humanities. All study French and Latin in Year 7 and students choose German or Spanish to add in Year 8. In Year 9 the girls choose two languages from French, German, Spanish and Latin. All pupils are taught a variety of creative and practical subjects: Art, Computing, Drama, Music, Design Technology (including Food, Textiles and Resistant Materials) and Physical Education. PSHE lessons are compulsory for all pupils. Year 9 students begin their iGCSE courses in all Sciences and Mathematics.

### Timetabling:

The majority of lessons are taught in mixed ability form groups. The timetable follows a 5 x 1 hour period day, 25 periods per week, Week A and B timetable, and the curriculum structure at Key Stage 3 is as follows:

SUBJECT	HRS PER WEEK YR 7	HRS PER WEEK YR 8	HRS PER WEEK YR 9
English	3	3	3
Mathematics	3	3	3
Sciences (Ch Bi Ph)	1/1/1 = 3	1/1/1 = 3	1.5/1.5/1.5 = 4.5
History/Geography/ Religious Studies	1.5/1.5/1.5 = 4.5	1/1/1 = 3	1/1/1 = 3
Languages	2.5 French 1 Latin = 3.5	2 French 2 German or Spanish 1 Latin = 5	Choose 2 from French, German, Spanish and Latin. 2 hours of each = 4
Music/Drama/Art	1/1/1 = 3	1/1/1 = 3	1/1/1 = 3
Computing	1	1	0.5
PE	2	2	2
DT	1	1	1
PHSE	1	1	1

## **KEYSTAGE 4**

In Years 10 and 11, all pupils study a core of Mathematics, English, English Literature, Biology, Chemistry and Physics. In addition, girls must take at least one modern language (from French, German, and Spanish). Pupils are also expected to take at least one Humanities subject (from Geography, History and Religious Studies). Pupils may choose a further two subjects, which could be Art, Computer Science, Drama, Economics, Food, Latin, Music, PE, Product Design, another language or another humanity depending on their individual strengths and interests. They continue to have PSHCE lessons for one hour a week. Careers guidance is provided to all pupils to help ensure that they make informed decisions at each stage of their education.

Student choice is a priority and the timetable is drawn up to try and accommodate as many of the girls' first choices of subjects as possible.

Physical Education remains an important part of the curriculum (two hours per week in Y10 and Y11).

### **Timetabling:**

- Full course GCSE subjects at Key Stage 4 have a timetable allocation of 2.5 x 1 hour lessons per subject with the exception of Mathematics (3 hours in Y10 and 3 hours per week in Y11) Science (two hours per subject – Biology, Chemistry, Physics) and English (3 hours in Y10 and Y11). The average GCSE teaching group size is 20.
- Recommendations for entry to a lower tier at GCSE may be made on the basis of a girl's mock examination results. The student will be advised of these recommendations and parental agreement sought.
- If it is felt appropriate a pupil may study a reduced number of GCSE subjects and have supported study time in the library.

## **KEYSTAGE 5**

Most of our Y11 students continue into the Sixth Form at NGHS and we are pleased to welcome a number of new girls into our Sixth Form from other schools. The majority of students sit 3 A Levels at the end of Y13, however some will sit 4 (particularly those who study Further Maths). Girls do not sit AS Levels, however there is an option to start 4 subjects in Y12, and drop down to 3 when a final decision has been made. There is a rigorous examination period at the end of Y12 to assess progress and to help set UCAS predicted grades.

Our approach at Sixth Form is one of flexibility; we don't believe one size fits all and girls can create an individual timetable based on their interests and future career choices. There is also an opportunity to do the AQA Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) in Y12, with the aim of stretching the most able and to broadening their awareness of topic areas beyond the syllabus requirements.

Year 12 and 13 are strongly encouraged to take part in a multi-discipline leadership and enrichment programme from which they independently choose opportunities to suit their own needs, develop their individual skills and awareness of their personal qualities. Opportunities such as volunteering, work experience and networking events alongside conferences, guest speakers and responsibilities across the school enable our Sixth Form students to be confident in their approach to life, university and their careers beyond.

Post 16, a range of subjects is available including:

- Art and Design
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- Classical Civilisation
- Computer Science
- Drama
- Economics
- English Language
- English Literature
- English Language and Literature
- French
- Geography
- German
- Government and Politics
- History
- Latin
- Mathematics
- Further Mathematics
- Music
- PE
- Physics
- Product Design
- Psychology
- Religious Studies
- Spanish

Careers guidance is provided by the Head of Careers through formal careers education within the PSHCE programme, individual interviews at critical periods of choice, along with a programme of careers talks and optional work experience. PE is compulsory in Year 12 from a range of activities aiming to promote enjoyment as well as exercise.

There are entry requirements for the Sixth Form: a basic requirement of an average of grade B or above across eight subjects at GCSE, including English and Mathematics, but also normally grade A or higher in the subjects to be studied at AS.

#### **Timetabling:**

- As at KS5, student choice is a priority and the timetable is drawn up to try and accommodate as many of the students' first choices of subjects as possible.
- The average size of teaching groups is 12 at AS level and 8 at A level.
- Subjects have a 5.0 x 1 hour lesson allocation per week for both Y12 and Y13.

#### **Options Advice**

Students are asked to make choices about their GCSE, AS and A2 subjects. Guidance is provided:

<b>CHOICE</b>	<b>GUIDANCE</b>	<b>TIMING</b>
GCSE options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual careers meeting</li> <li>• Discussion in PSHCE lessons</li> <li>• Assemblies</li> <li>• Options booklet and information evening</li> </ul>	Spring Term of Y9
A Level options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual careers meeting</li> <li>• Sixth form options booklet</li> <li>• Step up to Sixth Form evening</li> <li>• Sixth Form Experience Day</li> <li>• One-to-ones with SLT</li> <li>• One-to-ones with Form Tutor</li> <li>• Post GCSE results interviews</li> </ul>	Autumn Term of Y11  Termly starting in Y10 On-going throughout the year August

Subject staff offer advice about how well a student is likely to cope with their subject and specialist advice about combinations of subjects is available from the Head of Careers. Girls in Years 9 – 13 may refer themselves to the Heads of Careers at any point for individual Information Advice and guidance resulting in agreement of a structured Careers Action Plan to support their decision making. The school will counsel a girl if, for example, her preferred combination seems too restrictive.

The school may need to remove a subject from the list of option choices if the numbers opting for the subject are considered not viable or not sufficient to provide a suitable educational experience. The school is committed to making every effort to accommodate each girl's preferred combination of subjects but should this not be possible advice on alternatives will be offered.

### **Changes to Options**

If students wish to change their options they need to discuss the matter with the Assistant Head (Assessment and Curriculum). It is not always possible to transfer a student to another group and the student must continue to attend all lessons in the originally agreed courses until such a time as the Assistant Head (Curriculum and Assessment) has ascertained that a move is desirable and possible and parents have been consulted.

Likewise if students wish to drop a subject they need to discuss the matter with the Deputy Head (for Key Stages 3 and 4) or the Assistant Head (Curriculum and Assessment) for A Level subjects. Sixth Form students will also be referred to the Head of Careers as career and higher education opportunities could be severely reduced. Parents will be consulted and their agreement sought before any final decision is reached.

### **Digital Technologies**

The delivery of the curriculum is supported by the use of digital technologies, including providing all students with iPads for girls in Years 7 – 13.

All students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning and can access a plethora of materials for each of their subjects through the school portal and by using the excellent FireFly Virtual Learning Environment. A separate detailed policy on e-safety and ICT acceptable use is available.

### **Monitoring, evaluation and curriculum review**

- The curriculum is kept under review to ensure that pupils have the widest range of opportunities available to them.
- When reviewing the curriculum, the school aims to consult parents and pupils
- PHSE curriculum is taught in tutor groups as a timetabled discrete subject, monitored by Heads of PSHCE.
- The Key Stage Phase Co-ordinators in the Juniors and Heads of Department in the Seniors are responsible for overseeing the delivery of the curriculum through:
  - \* Regular formal and informal discussions with staff.
  - \* Carrying out work scrutiny.
  - \* Observing lessons to ensure that appropriate progress is being made.

- \* Regular reviews of the curriculum through open dialogue, making changes where necessary.
- \* Conversations with pupils about their learning.
- \* Close liaison with SLT.
- \* Phase Leaders also take a lead role in a subject area of their strength along with a departmental development plan to move the subject provision forward.

## **Careers**

The school is committed to providing a planned programme of careers education, advice and guidance for all girls in Years 9-13 in addition to the PSHCE learning provision which is given across all years. The programme helps pupils become more self-aware and opportunity aware enabling them to leave school with personal skills and academic achievements to help them achieve their aspirations and make a successful transition into higher education and/or career. The national framework for careers guidance is followed as far as possible.

By the end of the following Key stages all pupils will:

### **KS3**

- Have a greater awareness of themselves.
- Have a basic understanding of how to make informed decisions.
- Know where the careers information is to be found in school and online.
- Be aware of its implications towards GCSE options.
- Know who the Head of Careers is and how to contact and self-refer for support.

### **KS4**

- Choose an appropriate route and acted to secure this option/s by researching the necessary information, and sought appropriate advice and guidance.
- Be aware of their post-16 options and which might be best for them.
- Have participated in or planned work experience or some work related learning.
- Know where the careers room is located and how to use effectively. Completed a CV and actively encouraged to use to seek part time paid/ volunteering opportunities.
- Know who the Head of Careers is and how to contact her.

### **KS5**

- Have gained increased awareness of their options post18 both in education and employment and matched these to their personal ambitions and achievements.
- Have a realistic and informed plan for successful transition to education or employment.
- Have an increased awareness of their personal attributes and skills and have further developed a CV and action plan.
- Be aware of the benefits of the GDST Alumnae network.
- Know who to ask for help regarding careers advice and higher education.
- Continue with work experience where appropriate.



## **Parental involvement**

The school will actively seek to involve parents in their daughter's learning by:

- Giving information about the curriculum through options booklets, curriculum guides, newsletters, letters, school website and school comms.
- Ensuring parents receive information about children's progress at least twice a year through consultation evenings and full reports.
- Providing Progress and Attitude to Learning (PAL) grade sheets (in the Senior School) covering every subject at the end of each half term.
- Providing curriculum evenings to explain different aspects of education such as GCSE and A Level changes.
- Responding positively and promptly to concerns.

**Policy last revised:** October 2016

**Next review:** October 2017