

Altrincham College

Curriculum Policy 2020

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Contents

1. Intent	2
2. Implementation.....	2/3
3. Impact.....	3
4. Legislation and guidance	3
5. Roles and responsibilities	3/4
6. Organisation and planning	4/8
7. Inclusion.....	8
8. Monitoring arrangements	8/9
9. Links with other policies	9

Introduction

“Our vision is to nurture well-rounded citizens of the future who are knowledgeable, happy and resilient so that they make a valuable contribution to the world in which they live, and are empowered to make informed and positive life choices.”

In line with this vision, students at Altrincham College are provided with an ambitious and rigorous curriculum which aims to develop the whole person so that at the end of their school lives they are fully equipped intellectually, physically and morally for the next stage in their education and life beyond.

Principles

The Social Mobility Commission’s “State of the Nation” report (April 2019) reveals that social mobility has been stagnant for the past four years. Extensive analysis of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) data shows the wide gap in school attainment and income between the rich and the poor has barely shifted. Being born privileged still means you usually remain privileged. The better off are nearly 80% more likely to end up in professional jobs than those from a working-class background. Even when people from disadvantaged backgrounds secure a professional job, they earn 17% less than their privileged colleagues.

Our school comprises of young people from a diverse range of backgrounds. The social deprivation factor for the area is band 10. However, students on roll living within a 1-mile radius, account for only 10% of our intake and the rest predominantly reside on two small social housing estates; both have high levels of social deprivation: band 2. In addition, of the 94 students who live within 1 mile, 48 of them are ‘disadvantaged’. The remaining 90% of our intake live in different areas of Trafford and Greater Manchester and significant numbers of students reside on two large estates (Broadheath and Sale Moor) that have a high social deprivation factor: band 2.

Therefore, at Altrincham College we strive to boost social mobility and provide equality of opportunity through our curriculum first and foremost. We pride ourselves on providing all of our students with a curriculum which is broad, balanced and relevant to each of our learners' needs and ambitions. We aim to ensure our curricular offer is aspirational, challenging and engaging. At Key Stage 3, it is robust enough to allow students to acquire sound knowledge, understanding and skills which set them up for following their own bespoke programmes of study at KS4 and KS5, preparing them for further study, apprenticeships or the world of work but also engaging their interests and enabling them to be 'in their element'.

Our curriculum is enhanced by an extra-curricular offer that is available to all students and which supplements the main timetabled curriculum at Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. The 'curriculum' encompasses everything our students experience, in every aspect of school life. This includes form time, a wide variety of clubs, activities and visits off-site, including residential visits. We are proud of the whole host of opportunities offered by staff and the high levels of participation by students.

1. Intent

We aim to provide an outstanding education to all our students through a curriculum which promotes high aspiration, enables academic success and excellence and supports personal growth, preparing and equipping students for success in all aspects of their adult life. Academic excellence is pursued through a stretching and challenging curriculum for all. However, in order for students to thrive and enjoy the challenge, personal growth assumes equal importance and therefore Personal, Social, Health, Religious and Citizenship education, strong pastoral support and the pursuit of wider interests are central to the curriculum in encouraging the growth of our global citizens of the future.

Our curriculum is designed to enable students to acquire and retain the knowledge and skills that they require in each subject discipline in order to be successful in education, and transfer them to later life and further learning. It is equally important that, through quality first teaching, knowledge is developed, extended upon, contextualised and applied in order to provide a rich curriculum that engages students, consolidates learning, provides a scaffold for future advanced learning and encourages transferable skills. We develop students' independent learning skills and resilience, and our provision mapping ensures smooth and seamless transition through each key stage.

2. Implementation

Curriculum provision is broken down into three key stages that flow together to create a 5 or 7-year journey for each individual student. Each year, teachers, subject leaders and SLT review the current curriculum offer and a full consultation process is facilitated to map the most appropriate model for the next academic year. A key feature of our curriculum planning is creating a model that keeps the balance between the school maintaining high 'bench marking' standards against the needs of individual students and the ever-changing landscape of employment.

Students are entitled to, and experience, a broad and challenging curriculum with high expectations for every student in Key Stage 3, which meets national curriculum requirements and leads to a minimum of 9 subjects studied at GCSE in KS4. Our curriculum also recognises and acknowledges that students have different learning styles, talents and interests, and therefore we cater for this through the creative, technical courses and small number of vocational courses available at KS4. We monitor student progress through the curriculum, looking at how well they are mastering all they need to know and be able to do in order to move on to the next stage.

Reading, writing and numeracy skills are critical in enabling all students to access the curriculum (i.e. learn what they are expected to learn in the appropriate year group), and early catch up is essential. We therefore swiftly identify students in Year 7 and provide additional literacy and numeracy support where required, to enable a secure grasp of the core skills and access to the full curriculum offer. Subjects work together, wherever possible, to identify knowledge, concepts, themes and skill-based links between subject

disciplines. Joint planning and sequencing of teaching helps students to make connections that support and boost learning, supporting them to understand the world around them and their place in it.

Success in individual subjects is closely linked to students' retention and understanding of subject specific language and terminology, and therefore teachers will provide regular challenges that check knowledge is committed to long term memory.

Formative assessments are used frequently in lesson time to support students by checking that prior learning has been consolidated and remembered, before moving on to new learning. Teachers will use many forms of assessment, including the frequent use of questioning. This informs planning, the timing and sequencing of new learning. At KS3 summative assessments are used each term to check learning has been embedded and we use this information, alongside continuous assessment, to report to parents/carers whether students are making the good progress expected of them. At KS4 and KS5, summative assessments are supported by mock examinations to check students are on target to meet challenging expectations at GCSE, A-level and Vocational level and, therefore, progress is reported as a predicted grade, alongside an Attitude to Learning commentary.

3. Impact

"Our vision is to nurture well-rounded citizens of the future who are knowledgeable, happy and resilient so that they make a valuable contribution to the world in which they live, and are empowered to make informed and positive life choices."

We aim to realise this vision by providing a well-rounded education for all our students via the academic curriculum and via our extra-curricular offer which further supports Character Education and boosts Cultural Capital. In so doing, we will embed a lifelong love of learning in all its forms, providing progression routes for each stage of their education and securing meaningful destinations for all who leave us at KS4 or KS5.

4. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements for academies to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the Academies Act 2010, and the National Curriculum programmes of study which the school has chosen to follow.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 and Equality Act 2010, and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's Governance Handbook.

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This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

a) The Governing Board

The Governing Board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation. They will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets.

- The school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes English, maths, and science, and enough teaching time is provided for students to cover the requirements of the funding agreement.
- Proper provision is made for students with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN).
- All courses provided for students below the age of 19 that lead to qualifications, such as GCSEs, A-levels and BTEC, are approved by the Secretary of State.
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements.
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- Students in all year groups are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced.

b) The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- Teacher Standards are met by all teaching staff
- Support staff work closely with teaching staff to ensure targeted support
- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual students will be met.
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the Local Governing Board.
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate.
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements.
- The Local Governing Board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- The Local Governing Board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions.
- Proper provision is in place for students with different abilities and needs, including children with SEND or more able students.

c) Other staff

The Senior Leadership Team have scheduled meetings with each Head of Subject/Department to ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

6. Organisation and Planning

The curriculum is organised into a two-week timetable of 50 x one-hour lessons. We also ensure the following statutory requirements:

- **Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship Religious Education (PSHCRE):** a robust PSHCRE curriculum is in place which is reviewed and updated every year to ensure schemes of work address 'local' need. The curriculum is interwoven with RE (as well as RE being taught discretely) at KS3 to ensure students see the cross-over between subject areas; this continues into KS4 with additional 'drop-down days' identified for more in-depth learning. At KS5 we incorporate PSHCE themes into the Enrichment Programme.
- **Relationships and Sex Education:** The RSE curriculum at Altrincham College is designed as an integral part of a child's education and is in line with the Department for Education 2020 framework. The curriculum is designed to educate and allow students to make informed decisions whilst drawing upon their resilience in order to ensure that they are aware and comfortable with any decisions that they may face with regards to emotional and physical relationships. Students are provided with an age-appropriate, student-informed curriculum which supports them in being safe, happy and healthy.
- **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development:** Altrincham College regards the development and nurturing of each individual student as its duty, where they are provided

with a safe space to explore and realise their potential in both an academic and non-academic capacity. The promotion of SMSC within the curriculum allows for this; SMSC is an implicit aspect of all PSHE lessons and is also endorsed by collective reflection, form time themes, guest speakers or 'drop down' days and many extra-curricular opportunities offered by the school.

- **British Values:** The Department for Education states that there is a need "to create and enforce a clear and rigorous expectation on all schools to 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." The Government set out its definition of British Values in the 2011 Prevent Strategy and these values were reiterated by the Prime Minister in 2014. The approach of Altrincham College is such that the ethos and climate promotes these values on a day to day basis. Lessons at Altrincham College refer explicitly and discretely to the British Values whilst making them relevant to our everyday lives, enabling students to cultivate their self-awareness and self-esteem whilst accepting responsibility for their own behaviours and decisions; tolerance and respect are inherent to our school philosophy. The promotion of British Values allows for students to be fully prepared for life beyond the classroom.

Careers Education within our Curriculum

The careers programme at Altrincham College follows guidance within the Gatsby benchmarks. The eight benchmarks are implemented into our careers strategy and into the delivery of our Careers Education programme:

1. A stable careers programme	Every school should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by students, parents, teachers, governors and employers.
2. Learning from career and labour market information	Every student, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.
3. Addressing the needs of each student	Students have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each student. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers	All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.
5. Encounters with employers and employees	Every student should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities, including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.
6. Experiences of workplaces	Every student should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities and to expand their networks.
7. Encounters with further and higher education	All students should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.
8. Personal guidance	Every student should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a Careers Adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made.

The three key aims of Careers Education are for students to understand themselves and the influences on them (Self-development), investigate opportunities in learning and work (Career exploration), make and adjust plans to manage change and transition (Career management). These are further broken down into:

1. Empowers young people to plan and manage their own futures
2. Responds to the needs of each learner
3. Provides comprehensive information and advice
4. Raises aspirations
5. Actively promotes equality of opportunity and challenges stereotypes
6. Helps young people to progress

Careers education at our school operates via the timetabled curriculum in subject areas, incorporating employer encounters wherever possible; also in a wider capacity via form period where resources are utilised which relate to Labour Market information and money management. PSHCRE lessons enhance and

extend work around the Gatsby benchmarks in KS3 and KS4, whilst at KS5 extensive work is done through our rigorous enrichment programme together with the support of an LRC Manager on a day-to-day basis. The Connexions Adviser works on site and meets with all students during their time at our school, more regularly at KS4 and 5.

The Aspire Programme, via the Salford Foundation, is working with small cohorts of Year 8 and 9 students with different employers, with the aim of developing the students' employability skills and providing them with a workplace visit. Year 10 and 12 students are given the opportunity to take part in a work experience placement.

All sixth form students have intensive support for future planning through University Open Days, Personal Statement support, and visits to University and Apprenticeship fairs. Students in Year 12 can choose to join the Young Enterprise Programme, which gives them a valuable insight into the world of work. Enterprise activities and other events are advertised to all main school students for them to become involved with the aim to develop their employability skills.

Key Stage 3 Curriculum Overview

Year 7

Subject	Eng	Maths	Sci	PE	MFL	Geog	Hist	PSHCRE	RE	Tech	ICT	Art	Dra	Mus	Total
Periods	7	7	5	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	50

Year 8

Subject	Eng	Maths	Sci	PE	MFL	Geog	Hist	PSHCRE	RE	Tech	ICT	Art	Dra	Mus	Total
Periods	7	7	5	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	50

Year 9

Subject	Eng	Maths	Sci	PE	MFL	Geog	Hist	PSHCRE	RE	Tech	ICT	Art	Dra	Mus	Total
Periods	7	7	9	3	3	4	4	1	1	3	2	2	2	2	50

KS4 Curriculum Overview

The curriculum is organised into a two-week timetable of 50, one hour lessons.

At Key Stage 4 students choose to follow one of 3 curriculum pathways with support and guidance from their Head of Learning, subject teachers and Connexions Adviser. For each pathway, they follow both a core compulsory curriculum, as well as selecting 3 options from a wide range of subjects:

PATHWAY 1	An academic GCSE route leading to the English Baccalaureate
PATHWAY 2	An academic GCSE route where the English Baccalaureate is optional
PATHWAY 3	Combines academic GCSEs with a limited number of vocational courses. Students can still follow the English Baccalaureate

All pathways are designed to enable students to achieve 9 or more at grades 9-1 GCSE passes or equivalent. Students have the opportunity to select courses directly suited to their interests and aspirations which, in turn, promotes high standards of achievement.

Key Stage 4 Compulsory Curriculum:

English	English Literature	Maths	Science
PE/Sport	PSHE/Careers/RE		

Key Stage 4 option subjects include:

GCSE Art & Design	OCR Creative I Media	GCSE Art Textiles
GCSE Business Studies	BTEC Music Technology	Vocational Award in Hospitality & Catering
GCSE Computer Science	GCSE Drama	GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition
GCSE French/Spanish	GCSE Further Additional Science	GCSE Geography
GCSE History	NCFE Business & Enterprise	BTEC Creative Digital Media
GCSE Music	GCSE PE	Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award
GCSE RE	GCSE Citizenship	

Subject Timetable - Allocations:

Key Stage 4 Subjects	Periods
English	8
Maths	7
Science	9
Sport	2
PSHCRE	1
Options	23
Total	50

Key Stage 5 Curriculum Overview

The curriculum offer is bespoke and designed around individual student skills, interests and progression routes. Creative planning, by experienced Senior Leaders responsible for designing the timetable, enables the majority of students to study all of their chosen subjects. The programme of study is very unique to Altrincham College and offers students different pathways:

Pathway 1	Pathway 2	Pathway 3
3 A Levels	BTEC Level 3 (Equivalent of 3 A levels)	Combination of A levels & BTEC Vocational courses

Each A Level or single BTEC qualification has a time allocation of ten hours over a two-week timetable.

A Level	Vocational Courses
Maths	Media Studies (1 A level equivalent)
English Language	Media Studies (3 A level equivalent)
English Literature	Art & Design (1 A level equivalent)
Music	Fashion & Clothing (2 A level equivalent)
Chemistry	Sport (1 A level equivalent)
Physics	Sport (2 A level equivalent)
Biology	Business Studies
Business Studies	

Law	
Sociology	
Psychology	
French or Spanish	
History	
Geography	
Theatre Studies	
Core Maths is offered in addition to the above course and is equivalent to 1 AS Level.	

Underpinning the academic learning is a structured enrichment programme of study that covers a wide variety of topics relevant to a students' current studies and to preparing them for university or employment.

7. Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all students. They use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups. They plan lessons so that students with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject and ensure that there are no barriers to achievement. More able students are stretched and challenged as much as other students and in line with their individual learning needs. Teachers also take account of the needs of students whose first language is not English. Lessons are planned so that teaching opportunities help students to develop their English and support students to take part in all subjects.

8. Monitoring arrangements

Governors monitor whether the school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes the required subjects but also adds a unique dimension to study at our school. They are ambitious for the school and hold senior leaders to account over all aspects of provision.

- Each department has a link governor who has an open invitation to visit either during the school day or during our open evenings
- The Headteacher, SLT and designated Senior Teachers report to governors any significant changes to the curriculum and this is then followed up with 'Impact' review sessions that are included in the minutes of the Local Governor meetings.
- Governors play an active part in the recruitment process and offer advice and guidance which has a direct impact on subject specific curricula.

A robust Quality Assurance system is in place which aims to ensure the best provision for our students at all times. Activities are calendared to assist with staff well-being, planning and preparation. We expect:

- All teachers to meet the Teacher Standards
- Middle Leader: SLT link meetings every two weeks
- Lesson observations every term
- Regular work scrutinies
- Learning walks every term
- Analysis of end of unit tests and exams
- CPD Programme and sharing of practice sessions meet the needs of our staff/students at our school

Heads of department/subject leaders/ senior leadership also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed. Integrity checks take place with the Finance Manager to discuss departmental capitation and appropriate guidance is given to ensure value for money.

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Deputy Headteacher responsible for Curriculum. At every review, the policy will be shared with and ratified by, the Local Governing Board.

9. Links with other school policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Marking, Feedback and Assessment Policy
- Pupil Premium Strategy
- SEND Policy
- RSE Policy