



# **Curriculum Policy (Whole School including EYFS)**

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## **Independent Day School**

### **Our Lady of Sion School**

Last Reviewed: February 2025

Frequency of Review: 3 years

Next Review Due: February 2028

## Curriculum

Students are given experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education, ensuring the acquisition of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills as appropriate to their age and ability.

This Curriculum Policy is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work. It takes into account the ages, aptitudes and unique needs of each pupil. In particular we recognize that children with special educational needs, long term medical conditions, disabilities and protected characteristics under the Equality Act, child protection issues or other challenging circumstances (eg, young carers) are likely to require additional support to help them achieve their full potential. We are committed to working closely with parents and other agencies where appropriate to achieve this and will take all reasonably practical measures to fulfil the requirements of any pupils SEN or support guidelines, including pupils with a statement or Educational, Health and Care plan / EHC in line with its obligations in regard to the SEND code of Practice.

This policy provides continuity and progression in the acquisition of knowledge, development of skills and development of attitudes and values for each student, prepares students for the appropriate public examinations and provides the broad range of knowledge and skills that students need for university and beyond.

This Policy does not undermine 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 School operates a policy of non-discrimination in line with Part 6 of the Equality Act (2010).

The School provides 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 Equality Act 2010.

Our Careers guidance is accurate, up-to-date and impartial and enables students to make informed choices about a broad range of career options, helping them to fulfil their potential (see Careers Policy).

The EYFS provides, for pupils below compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills.

The School provides students above compulsory school age with a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs.

The School ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress and prepares them effectively for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society. Students are taught to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England. They acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England and develop respect for the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

## Teaching

Teaching does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. It precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school.

The School enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught and foster self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability of students to think and learn for themselves. Lessons are well-planned and employ effective teaching methods. Activities and classroom resources are of a good quality, quantity and range.

The School's Assessment Policy, incorporating our Marking Policy, demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly. The information from that assessment is used to plan teaching so that pupils can progress. Teaching shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of all pupils.

Our Lady of Sion School has a framework for overall pupil performance to be evaluated by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms (see also Assessment Policy)

Students are encouraged to accept responsibility for their behaviour, to show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively, not only within lessons but to the lives of those living and working in the local community and to society more widely.

This policy supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum and ensures that principles are actively promoted which enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.

We ensure that ICT is used wherever appropriate to enhance learning (see our Online Safety policy).

Our Learning Support Department staff ensure that students on the SEN and Gifted and Talented Register are catered for appropriately.

In accordance with our Mission Statement, we further tolerance and harmony by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, lifestyles and abilities, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

## EYFS

**The Foundation Stage Curriculum** – for Nursery and Reception - is organised into seven areas of learning:

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| • Communication and Language                 | • Literacy                   |
| • Physical Development                       | • Mathematics                |
| • Personal, Social and Emotional development | • Understanding the World    |
|  | • Expressive Arts and Design |

**Communication and language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

**Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

**Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

**Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

**Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

**Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

**Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

## **JUNIOR SCHOOL**

### **Curriculum Overview**

The curriculum meets the Regulations for Independent schools and covers all the required areas of learning. Long term and Medium-term plans are located on the staff shared drive.

Most of our work is taken from National Curriculum subject guidance which we adapt to suit our particular children. The Junior school (years 1-6) build on the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum and support and further the skills children learn in these early years.

English and Mathematics skills are developed through the School, with increased opportunities to use and apply skills in a purposeful way. Children are encouraged to embrace challenges that are posed for them and begin to seek further challenge for themselves. These core subjects are predominately taught in the morning sessions.

We also provide additional subjects which enrich and supplement the curriculum, such as: Swimming, Games, French, Music and Drama.

We expect many of our children to exceed expected standards and we provide work that challenges and inspires them.

We welcome parents' contribution to their children's education, for example, through parents visiting, support for Prep (homework), assemblies and extra-curricular and enrichment events.

### **The curriculum consists of:**

Core subjects:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science

Non-core subjects:

- Music\*
- Physical Education (PE)\*
- Swimming\*
- Religious Studies (RS) / Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education and Relationships and Sex Education (PSHE + RSE)
- History and Geography/topic
- Computing
- Art/Design and Technology
- Drama
- Languages from Year 4

*(Subjects marked \* are taught by Junior School and/or Senior School subject specialists)*

In Years 1 and 2, History and Geography are taught through creative topics that combine both subjects, and often include others such as Art, DT and Computing.

In Years 3-6, some areas of the curriculum continue to be taught through topics to promote relevance and interest to learning.

When children enter Year 6 they are further helped and prepared by staff for life in Senior School. They are encouraged to become more independent as they move to other learning areas of the school such as Science laboratories.

The personal development of each child is very important to us and opportunities to help our children in this are threaded through our entire school programme. PSHEE is separately timetabled and supported by assemblies, whole-school activities, the School House system, and the ethos and everyday work of the school including: Christmas and Harvest celebrations, community fundraising, school plays and concerts, and the involvement of parents and the local community in the school.

As well as Music being specialist taught from Reception, our students are able to receive individual music lessons from peripatetic staff in school. Concerts, parent assemblies and biannual musical shows are performed for family and friends to attend.

There are a large number of extra-curricular activities to choose from, including Drama, Art Club, STEM and a wide variety of sports clubs and music clubs. We also run a Morning Club and an Afternoon Club. All these pursuits enhance our curriculum.

Carefully planned school trips and visiting speakers also reinforce curriculum themes.

We integrate outdoor learning into our Junior School curriculum through engaging and enriching activities. Our Beach and Forest School programs are key components of this approach, offering students hands-on experiences that foster a deep appreciation for the natural environment while building essential skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and resilience.

In addition, we have added a partnership with a local Equine Centre. This collaboration provides our students with unique opportunities to connect with horses, promoting confidence, empathy, and a sense of responsibility. Through these experiences, children gain insights into animal care, equestrian skills, and the therapeutic benefits of working closely with animals.

These programs are designed to complement our broader curriculum by encouraging our young people to explore the outdoors, develop new interests, and form meaningful connections with the natural world. We believe these experiences play a vital role in nurturing well-rounded, curious, and environmentally conscious individuals.

## **Class structure**

Class teachers liaise to ensure that the curriculum helps children to build up their skills, knowledge and understanding progressively during their time with us.

EYFS classes are supported by Teaching Assistants. Years 1-6 classes have Teaching Assistant support for SEND provision where appropriate. This is regularly reviewed by the Class Teachers, SENCO and Deputy Head.

The school has a strong family atmosphere which helps the children to feel safe and secure. For most subjects, children are taught by their Class Teacher, however, they happily accept specialist teaching and join in confidently with whole-school activities.

**FACULTY SYSTEM (Senior School)**

Faculty	Subjects Included
Humanities	History Geography Religious Studies/Philosophy Psychology
World Languages	French Spanish International School's Liaison
Performing Arts	Music Drama PE/Dance
Science	Biology Physics Chemistry
Maths	Maths Further Maths Statistics Business Studies
English	English English Literature Resource Centre
Technology, Art and Design	Design and Technology Art Food Technology and Nutrition Computing
What Matters?	PSHEE RSE What Matters?

Subject areas in the Senior School are currently organised into seven Faculties, as shown below:

**English**

Pupils' communication and language skills, increasing their command of language through listening, speaking, reading and writing, are primarily developed through the English curriculum. Accuracy of punctuation and spelling is encouraged by careful marking. A range of poetry, novels and plays are studied in an age-appropriate programme to give insight into literary styles across time. Creative writing is a strength and students are encouraged to enter competitions and to have their work displayed in the local area. The English department also run the very successful debating club. The expectation is for all students to take both English Language and Literature in Year 11; a very small number are advised to focus only on Language if this is in their best interest. English Literature is offered at A level.

**Mathematics**

The Mathematics curriculum develops pupils' numeracy skills and their abilities to make calculations, to understand and appreciate relationships and patterns in number and space and to develop their capacity to

think logically and express themselves clearly. Their knowledge and understanding of Mathematics is developed in a variety of ways, including practical activity, exploration and discussion. The Maths department ensures that all Senior School students participate in the annual Maths Challenge and other applicable competitions / summer schools and organises trips to University seminars for interested students. All students take iGCSE Mathematics; the most able can choose to take Statistics and Further Maths GCSE as an option.

## Science

The Science curriculum increases pupils' knowledge and understanding of nature, materials and forces and develops the skills associated with Science as a process of enquiry: for example, observing, forming hypotheses, conducting experiments and recording their findings. The Curriculum leads to a minimum of two GCSEs in Science (Combined Science), with separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics being a popular option choice. Similarly, these subjects are consistently attractive to our Sixth Form (VISION) students. The Science team numbers four full-time and three part-time teachers, supported by two Lab assistants.

## World Languages

The MFL Department covers French and Spanish from Year 7 to A Level throughout the Senior School. At the end of Year 7 students select two languages of their choice for further study.

Implementation of the MFL curriculum:

Year	Language(s) compulsory	Language(s) option
7	French & Spanish	
8	French & Spanish	
9	French & Spanish	
10/11	Students can choose to study one or two languages MFL is no longer a compulsory option	French/Spanish
12/13	n/a	French/Spanish

The study of foreign languages strongly supports the ethos of our School by promoting better understanding of other countries and cultures, thus encouraging the development of tolerance, empathy and consideration for others. The Department is made up of a team of three MFL teachers. The team is committed to widening students' horizons by sharing their enthusiasm for foreign languages, countries and cultures within the context of high expectations and standards. Exchanges take place when possible.

## Performing Arts

The Physical Education programme is compulsory throughout the school and develops pupils' physical control and co-ordination as well as their tactical skills and imaginative responses and helps them to evaluate and improve their performance. Pupils also acquire knowledge and understanding of the basic principles of fitness and health. A variety of activities is offered to pupils in order to ensure their physical development needs are fully met.

The pupils' experience of the processes of making, composing, performing and inventing are primarily developed through Music, because they call for personal, imaginative, creative and often practical responses. A number of students study aspects of the creative and expressive curriculum through private tuition and

their achievements are celebrated through opportunities to display their work in concerts, services, competitions, public forums and Open Evenings.

### **Humanities**

Geography and History lessons and Topic lessons with the younger pupils ensure that pupils are taught about people and their environment and how human action, now and in the past, has influenced events and conditions.

Due to the School's ethos, history and continuing influence of the Congregation of Sion, RS has a fundamental role within the curriculum.

The Humanities Curriculum is further enriched by the inclusion of Psychology and Philosophy as A level options in the Sixth Form.

### **Technology Art and Design**

Technological skills are developed through ICT, Computer Science, Food & Nutrition (F&N), and Design Technology (DT), with DT and F&N offered as GCSE options. Art is also a key part of our curriculum, fostering creativity, technical skills, and visual communication. Together, these subjects encourage students to combine creativity with technology, preparing them for success in an evolving world.

### **What Matters - Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education and Relationships and Sex Education**

What Matters is Sion School's bespoke PSHE + RSE programme. It is designed to reflect the school's aims and ethos. This is not necessarily constrained to just timetabled lessons but will frequently also feature in tutor time and at other times in the academic year. Our What Matters curricula encourage respect for others and pay particular regard, at age-appropriate stages, to the protected characteristics as listed in the 2010 Act. Students are also prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life with regular references to Fundamental British Values and Prevent for Schools. There is also a programme of regular thematic Assemblies, visiting speakers, workshops and tutor time activities. (See PSHE + RSE handbooks and schemes of work). All pupils are able to access the Learning Platform, both in school and remotely, and can message about any matter using the anonymous What Matters button which automatically alerts a member of SLT to the message sent. Students also take part in half-termly year group Student Voice discussions with staff.

### **Careers Education**

Appropriate careers guidance in line with the 2021 CGE D of E guidance is provided through the What Matters programme. The Careers Co-ordinator meets with all senior school students in years 9 -11 and VISion pupils to discuss their GCSE, A level and University option choices. Careers advice is delivered in an objective and impartial manner enabling pupils to make informed choices and fulfil their potential.

A programme of activities, appropriate to the needs of the pupils, including a programme of visiting speakers, virtual and live careers fairs and work experience opportunities from a variety of careers, Bright MED and University Entrance guidance, is delivered through the Careers programme. All students have a Morrisby account and profile that is started in year 7 and updated throughout their time in the senior school and beyond.

### **Students' Learning and Progress**

The Curriculum and associated policies are designed so that all students (including those with special educational needs (with ILPs or EHCPs) or learning difficulties, those for whom English is an additional language and the most able) have equal opportunity to learn and make progress.



Learning and progress are monitored and recorded regularly through the School's reporting and assessment procedures (see the separate Assessment Policy).

We aim to help our students to build on prior learning and achievements, providing a love of learning that will stay with them through their lives

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

We aspire to reflect the School's comprehensive aims, ethos and Mission Statement in all aspects of the Curriculum. To achieve this, we endeavour to:

- support the development of each student's self-knowledge, self-confidence and self-belief;
- 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;
- encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the schools is situated and to society more widely;
- enable pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England;
- further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;
- encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 .

### **Homework**

Homework provides students with further opportunities to acquire knowledge and extend their understanding of what they have learned in school, as well as helping to develop the important skills of independent study and research. Homework also teaches pupils that school is not the only place for learning and that home and parents can play an active part in the process. Meaningful tasks are set according to age and ability and should be carefully monitored by the teacher. All homework is set on the Learning Platform and is fully accessible to both students and parents.

The range of tasks may include:-

- continuation of class work (including extension work);
- preparation for future work / flipped learning tasks;
- learning new vocabulary, spellings, tables, facts or information;
- a research task using a variety of sources including media;
- regular reading – fiction and non-fiction;
- drafting and redrafting work;
- writing up work, including extended writing;
- revising for exams;
- making a model recording, videoing or interviewing;
- sketching or designing;

- practising or composing music.

### **Related Policies and documentation**

(Available on the School website or on request):

School Aims and Ethos

Mission Statement

Assessment Policy incorporating Marking and Feedback Policy

Careers Policy and Strategy

SEND Policy

Acceptable Use Policy

Options Booklets

Departmental Handbooks

Schemes of Work

## APPENDIX A

### TIME ALLOCATION AND TIMETABLING

#### JUNIOR SCHOOL

Timings of the school day depend on the year group a child is in (see below).

##### Reception Year 1-3

Period 1	Period 2	Break	Period 3	Period 4	Lunch	Period 5	Period 6	Break	Period 7	Period 8
9.00-9.40	9.40-10.20	10.20-10.40	10.40-11.20	11.20-12.00	12.00-1.00	1.00-1.30	1.30-2.15	2.15-2.30	2.30-3.00	3.00-3.30

Reception and Year 1 finish afternoon school at 3.30

##### Year 4

Period 1	Period 2	Break	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Lunch	Period 6	Period 7	Period 8
9.00-9.40	9.40-10.20	10.20-10.40	10.40-11.20	11.20-12.00	12.00-12.40	12.40-1.50	1.50-2.30	2.30-3.00	3.00-3.40

In the Autumn Term Year 3 have an afternoon break at the same time as Years 1/2 and Reception

##### Year 5/6

Period 1	Period 2	Break	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Lunch	Period 6	Period 7	Period 8
9.00-9.40	9.40-10.20	10.20-10.40	10.40-11.20	11.20-12.00	12.00-12.40	12.40-1.50	1.40-2.20	2.20 3.00	3.00-3.40

### TIME ALLOCATION

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Hours per week</b>
English	5 including Library
Mathematics	5
Science	1-2
Geography/History	1½-2
RE	2 x 30/40 minutes
Computing	30-45 minutes
Art	One afternoon

**Specialist Subjects****Hours per week**

Science	Year 6:	2 x 40 mins
French and Spanish	Year 4/5/6:	2 x 40 mins
Music	Reception:	2 x 40 mins
	Year 1:	2 x 40 mins
	Year 2/3:	2 x 40 mins
	Year 4/5/6:	2 x 40 mins
PE	Reception:	4 x 30/40 mins
	Year 1:	4 x 30/40 mins
	Year 2/3:	4 x 30/40 mins
	Year 4/5/6:	4 x 30/40 mins

Reception and Years 1 - 4 have two lessons taught by a specialist PE teacher  
 Year 3 – Year 6 have one term of swimming and Year 2 has two terms.

Science, History and Geography are cross-curricular at Years 1 and 2 but are taught as discrete subjects at Years 3-6.

**SENIOR SCHOOL**

The timetable is built on a weekly 40-lesson cycle, each lesson being 40 minutes in length. The timing of the 8 lessons on each day is given below:

Period 1	Period 2	Break	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Lunch	Period 6	Period 7	Period 8
9.00-9.40	9.40-10.20	10.20-10.40	10.40-11.20	11.20-12.00	12.00-12.40	12.40-1.40	1.40-2.20	2.20-3.00	3.00-3.40

At KS3, with the exception of some Science and Arts subjects, most lessons are taught as single periods, whereas at KS4 & KS5 most lessons are taught as doubles. Due to the pattern of the school day, some double periods are inevitably taught across lunch but teachers are able to accommodate this in their planning. In the case of the Sixth Form, lessons may continue through the lunch hour, with students postponing their break until P6.

This system recognises the greater concentration ability of older students. Although it has been considered, changing to a one-hour lesson pattern would make this differentiation impossible.

The timetable is set in June and distributed to staff during the summer term, although small adjustments may be made at the beginning of the academic year if circumstances make this unavoidable.

### Key Stage 3

Time allocation for each subject at KS3 within the curriculum is set out in the table below. This shows the average number of periods per week allocated to the subject.

Note that:

- a) subjects which are on a cycle are given a letter in italics with the number of groups in the cycle following (eg, A4 means cycle A has 4 groups)
- b) subjects which are taught in sets are indicated by an asterisk

Subject		Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English		5	5 *	5 *
Maths		5*	5*	5 *
Performing Arts	PE & Games	4	4	4
	Music	1	2	2
	Drama			
Humanities	History			
	Geography	2	2	2
	RS	2	2	2
World Languages	French	2 *	3 *	3 *
	Spanish	2	3 (option)*	3 (option)*
Personal Development	PSHE/RSE	1	1	1
Technology, Art and Design	Computing	2	2	2
	DT			
	Art			
	F + N			
Science	Science (combined)	5	4	-
	Biology	-	-	2
	Chemistry	-	-	2
	Physics	-	-	2

## Key Stage 4

At KS4, the curriculum is divided into compulsory and optional subjects.

Compulsory subjects are currently English, Mathematics, Science and Games.

All optional subjects are run in 4 option blocks, from which the students make their choices. In addition, a programme of What Matters is undertaken outside of the timetable. In Year 10 and Year 11 this is one period a week.

The KS3 SOW for IT provides students with a firm background in Computer studies and we offer GCSE Computing as an option.

The time allocation for this is as follows:

	<b>Year 10</b>	<b>Year 11</b>
English	7 *	6 *
Mathematics	5 *	6 *
Science	8 *	8 *
Games	3 (triple)	3 (triple)
Each Option Group	4	4

The Head of Timetabling ensures that the maximum number of students achieve their desired option choices by not fixing the blocks until their option forms have been received. Therefore, blocks may change annually. Representative blocks are shown below:

<b>Block A</b>	<b>Block B</b>	<b>Block C</b>	<b>Block D</b>
French	Business	Art	French
Spanish	Geography	Computing	Design Technology
Geography	Drama	History	Business Studies
Triple Science	Physical Education	Geography	Food & Nutrition
			Triple Science

## **Key Stage 5**

### **Advanced Level (A/S and A2)**

Currently the following subjects are offered to A level and run provided sufficient students opt for the course:

Biology, Economics, Environmental Science, Business Studies, Chemistry, English Literature, Geography, History, Law, Mathematics, Physics and Psychology

Each subject is allocated six periods a week in Year 12 and seven in Year 13.

In addition, students are encouraged to complete an EPQ to gain UCAS points and skills.

One period of Careers is taught throughout the Sixth Form.

Occasionally, a subject which has been selected by fewer than the required number of students is permitted to run with a reduced allocation of periods.

**Approved by Chair of Governors February 2025**