



Strathearn School

Curriculum Policy

Version History:

Date	Amendment
10/08/2020	Updated for 20/21
05/08/2021	Updated for 21/22
12/08/2022	Updated for 22/23
10/08/2023	Updated for 23/24
13/08/2024	Updated for 24/25
12/08/2025	Updated for 25/26

This Policy was written in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Department, Teachers in Charge, and the Curriculum Committee of the Board of Governors and will be reviewed annually.

Rationale

The School's Curriculum seeks to fulfil the School aims and the educational aims specified in the Education Order (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. In addition to the compulsory subjects specified for study at each Key Stage, it is the policy of the School to provide an enriched curriculum for all pupils, offering optional subjects as appropriate and making a wide choice of extra-curricular activities available to all age groups.

Organisation of the Curriculum

Outline Structure of a School Day

Registration	08.45 - 08.50
Assembly / Form time	08.55 - 09.05
Period 1	09.05 - 09.40
Period 2	09.40 - 10.15
Period 3	10.15 - 10.50
Break	10.50 - 11.05
Period 4	11.05 – 11.40
Period 5	11.40 - 12.15
Period 6	12.15 – 12.50
Lunch	12.50 -1.45
Period 7	1.45 – 2.20
Period 8	2.20 – 2.55
Period 9	2.55 – 3.30

Hence, in one week there are 45 teaching periods lasting 35 minutes each.

Organisation of pupils

Pupils entering the School in Form 1 are placed in one of five form classes of approximately 24. These form classes are not streamed. At Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form, groups for optional subjects are determined largely by individual subject choices.

Assembly

Each year group will have assembly once per week: Forms 1-3 will normally have assembly on Tuesday mornings, Forms 4-5 on Wednesday and 6th Form on Thursday. Monday and Friday slots will be used as required for house assemblies, year assemblies and other exceptional assemblies.

Content of Curriculum

Key Stage 3

At Key Stage 3 (Forms 1-3) the School provides a broad and balanced curriculum and has implemented in full the Northern Ireland Curriculum as required by the Education Order 2006 (see Table 1 below). This includes a Learning for Life and Work (LLW)¹ Programme (incorporating Home Economics, Personal Development, Local and Global Citizenship and Education for Employability), Skills and Capabilities (incorporating Communication, Using Mathematics, ICT, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities) and the General learning areas.

Table 1

Learning Area	Subject	Number of periods per week		
		Form 1	Form 2	Form 3
Language & Literacy	English Incorporating Drama	6	5	5
Mathematics & Numeracy	Maths	6	5	5
Modern Languages	French German or Spanish	5	4	3
			3	4
The Arts	Art Music	2	3	2
		2	2	2
Environment & Society	Geography History	3	3	3
		3	3	3
Science & Technology	Science Technology	5	5	6
		2	2	2
Physical Education	PE	3	3	3
Learning for Life and Work	Home Economics LLW	3	3	3
		2	1	1
Religious Studies	RS	2	2	2
ICT	ICT	1	1	1
Total		45	45	45

Note

Learning for Life and Work is led by Form Teachers and gives pupils an opportunity to investigate a range of themes from the LLW Programme, including a careers module.

In relation to the listed contributory subjects, the School curriculum will adhere to the statutory requirements that the Department of Education considers appropriate.

In exceptional circumstances a pupil may be allowed to follow a reduced KS3 curriculum. In such cases parents should make contact with the Vice Principal (Teaching and Learning) and will be asked to provide supporting evidence, where relevant, before any such tailored curriculum would be confirmed.

¹ Outside Agencies are invited into the school to deliver selected aspects of the LLW programme.

Key Stage 4

At Key Stage 4 (Forms 4 and 5) the School provides 23 courses (15 General and 8 Applied). Pupils are given the opportunity to study 9 or 9.5 GCSE's.²

Most single award GCSE subjects have five periods allocated for teaching time. Pupils choose GCSE subjects within a framework of a 'broad and balanced curriculum'. We aim to give each pupil:

- a meaningful learning experience; and
- a basis for choosing A level subjects suited to her capabilities and aspirations.

The compulsory subjects at Key Stage 4 are:

- GCSE Mathematics, GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature;
- Religious Studies Full Course GCSE **or** Short Course GCSE (*half a GCSE*);
- Learning for Life & Work (*non-certificated - no examination*); and
- Physical Education (*non-certificated*, except those who opt for it as a full GCSE).

Pupils choose **ONE** subject from Group 1 and **ONE** from Group two, **THREE** subjects from Group 3, unless they choose Double Science in Group 1, in which case, they choose **TWO** subjects from Group 3.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Biology	French	Art
Chemistry	German	Biology
Physics	Spanish	Business Studies
Science (Double Award)		Chemistry
		Drama
		French
		Geography
		German
		History
		Home Economics
		ICT
		Music
		Physical Education
		Physics
		Spanish
		Technology and Design

Pupils choose **ONE** subject from Group 4. A Group 4 subject is delivered in just two periods per week.

² Note: 0.5 GCSE refers to Religious Studies (Short Course) which is delivered in two periods per week. This is equivalent to one half of a standard GCSE course in terms of the value of the award.

Group 4
Further Mathematics
Religious Studies (Selection of this course will lead to a full GCSE)

It may not be possible for the School to provide every subject combination, as some may lead to classes which are too small. If pupils choose such a combination, they will be advised of this and given an alternative choice.

In exceptional circumstances a pupil may be allowed to follow a reduced GCSE curriculum. In such cases parents should make contact with the Vice Principal (Teaching and Learning) and will be asked to provide supporting evidence, where relevant, before any such tailored curriculum would be confirmed.

The examination board for all GCSE subjects is CCEA (Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment).

Post 16

The majority of pupils return to Strathearn after GCSE to complete their Sixth Form studies. While maintaining the principles of breadth and balance, which underpin the curriculum from Form 1 to Form 5, the Sixth Form curriculum is based on AS level study for Lower Sixth followed by A2 level study in Upper Sixth. Eight periods are allocated to the teaching of most subjects. Most pupils begin Lower Sixth taking four subjects and continue with three of these in Upper Sixth. We offer 25 courses of which 18 are General and 7 are Applied. We work with our partner Schools (Ashfield Boys, Bloomfield Collegiate and Campbell College) to provide a curriculum in line with the Entitlement Framework. The AS/A2 subjects we currently offer are:

General Subjects	Applied Subjects
➤ Art and Design ➤ Biology ➤ Business Studies ➤ Chemistry ➤ Drama & Theatre Studies ➤ English Literature ➤ <i>French</i> ^(a) ➤ Further Mathematics ➤ Geography ➤ <i>German</i> ^(b) ➤ Government & Politics ➤ History ➤ Mathematics ➤ Nutrition and Food ➤ <i>Psychology</i> ^(c) ➤ Physics ➤ Religious Studies ➤ Spanish	➤ Health and Social Care ➤ Digital Technology ➤ <i>Media Studies</i> ^(d) ➤ <i>Moving Image Arts</i> ^(e) ➤ Music ➤ <i>Physical Education (BTEC)</i> ^(f) ➤ Technology and Design

Subjects offered in Collaboration

- (a) Hosted by Strathearn School
- (b) Hosted by Campbell College
- (c) Hosted by Bloomfield Collegiate
- (d) Hosted by Strathearn School
- (e) Hosted by Ashfield Boys' High School
- (f) Hosted by Bloomfield Collegiate

The examination board for the majority of A level subjects is CCEA. Media Studies is examined by AQA and Drama is examined by Edexcel. A small number of our pupils may study subjects, offered at Strathearn, in one of our partner schools due to timetable clashes with their choice of subjects. This may mean they are following a specification under a different examining board from that offered in Strathearn.

Each pupil in Lower Sixth also has one period per week of Tutorial and Careers. In Upper Sixth the pupils have one period per week of Careers³.

In addition to the formal curriculum, the School facilitates a range of opportunities for individual pupils to gain voluntary experience in the Lower Sixth year. Such opportunities are co-ordinated by the School and are designed to inform and support the pupils as they prepare for matriculation and the world of work.

Constraints on choice of optional subjects

In all cases where pupils are invited to choose from a range of subjects, the following criteria will be considered:

- (a) the pupil's proven aptitude for this subject or area of study;
- (b) the need for the pupil to study a particular subject in order to proceed towards a definite career goal which is within her capabilities;
- (c) the pupil's personal preference; and/or
- (d) timetable constraints.

If a particular course is over-subscribed, the School reserves the right to allocate the available places in line with the criteria listed above. The School's assessment of the pupil's ability provides the basis for advising a pupil (and her parent/guardian) in relation to a subject choice. In the event of a difference of opinion between staff and the parent/guardian in the matter of subject choice, the School's decision will prevail.

The viability of a course will be considered when deciding whether or not to offer it in a particular year.

³ The Sixth Form Programme for Careers is outlined in the Careers Handbook

Homework

Homework is essential for all pupils as a very important way of reinforcing the work done in class. Each pupil is required to complete homework and the time requirement increases as she proceeds through the school. As her school career progresses each individual is expected to take more responsibility for managing the time spent on homework. This is an integral part of encouraging pupils to become increasingly self-reliant learners.

Assessment & Reporting

The School's procedures for assessment and reporting are explained in its Assessment and Reporting Policy. The policy outlines the purpose, principles and methods of assessment as well as recording progress and achievement.

All year groups receive one full report annually as well as a Pupil Progress Update.

November 2025	Forms 1, 2, 5, L6 & U6	Pupil Progress Update
December 2025	Form 4	Pupil Progress Update
January 2026	Form 3	Full Report
February 2026	Forms 5, L6 & U6	Full Report
June 2026	Forms 1, 2, 4	Full Report
June 2026	Form 3	Pupil Progress Update

Special Educational Needs

All pupils, including those with special educational needs, will be given access to the full statutory curriculum and to the full range of extra-curricular activities. A risk assessment will be undertaken, where deemed necessary, to ensure pupil safety. The need for reasonable adjustments will be assessed and implemented in accordance with SEND legislation. Full details are available in the School's Special Educational Needs Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors is responsible for making sure the School provides a good quality of education for its pupils. They must ensure that all statutory guidance is adhered to and that the curriculum is delivered in a manner to allow pupils to achieve success at School commensurate with their full potential.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible, through the Board of Governors, for curriculum provision at Strathearn School. The Principal must ensure that all statutory guidance is adhered to and that the curriculum is delivered in a manner to allow pupils to achieve success at School. The Principal reports regularly to the Curriculum Committee of the Board of Governors.

Vice Principal (Teaching and Learning)

The Vice Principal (Teaching and Learning) is responsible, through the Principal, to the Board of Governors for the curriculum provision at Strathearn School and for the 'Teaching and Learning Provision and Outcomes' section of the School Development Plan.

Heads of Department / Teachers in Charge

Heads of Department / Teachers in Charge submit annual Departmental Development Plans and Action Plans (in line with the School Development Plan) to the Vice Principal (Teaching and Learning). These are reviewed at the end of each academic year. Heads of Department / Teachers in Charge ensure that appropriate Schemes of Work are in place and are implemented by all teaching staff.

Subject Teachers

Under the direction of their Heads of Department / Teachers in Charge, subject teachers deliver the appropriate Schemes of Work ensuring pupils are given the opportunity to gain the best possible experience and outcomes.

Heads of Year / Form Teachers

Heads of Year / Form Teachers monitor their pupils' academic progress, behaviour and well-being and hold relevant discussions with pupils, as appropriate, throughout the year.

Liaison with External Agencies

The School avails itself of opportunities provided for Teacher Professional Development and Curriculum Support provided by DE, EA, CCEA (and other relevant examination boards) and a range of other curriculum providers.

Review of the Curriculum Policy

This policy is reviewed by the Vice Principal (Teaching and Learning) in consultation with the SLT, Heads of Department and Teachers in Charge and updated in line with external guidance and the changing needs of the School.

The Board of Governors will annually review the policy through the Curriculum Committee of the Board of Governors.

Curriculum Complaints

Any person who may have a complaint about curriculum provision is asked to contact the Vice Principal (Teaching and Learning), who has responsibility for curriculum development. The Principal or Chair of the Board of Governors may also be contacted through School Reception.

Chair of the Board of Governors:	Mrs R Bailie
Principal:	Mrs N Connery
Vice Principal (Teaching and Learning):	Mr A Anderson