

**St Alban's Catholic High School**

**Curriculum Policy**  
***including Alternative Curriculum***



**Approved by Chair of Governors on: 13 07 2023**

**To be confirmed at LGB in September 2023**

**Recommission Date: June 2024**

## Section 1 OVERVIEW

- 1.1 St Alban's Catholic High School's curriculum offer ensures that a broad and balanced curriculum is available to all students, incorporating English, Maths and Science qualifications along with Religious Education teaching and a large variety of GCSEs and other qualifications. Religious Education teaching is at the heart of the school to ensure the Catholic ethos of the school to remain a central and constant theme throughout a student's school life.
- 1.2 The school aims to continue to provide this broad and balanced approach at Key Stage 5. The introduction of additional subjects enables the school to create an attractive offer to both students who have studied in Year 11 at St Alban's, and to external students. The aim is focussed on allowing students, where possible, to study the A Level courses they choose within the Catholic education system. In addition to this, they will study a programme of additional lessons that will focus on our core Catholic ethos to encourage young people to consider their faith in Christ and to develop a mature understanding of the Catholic Faith whilst preparing them for the challenges and demands of further education and the world of work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
- 1.3 Curriculum delivery at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 largely follows the National Curriculum. In addition, at Key Stage 4 students are encouraged to study a broad and balanced curriculum that will benefit them in their adult lives and keep their options for further education open. The school will respond to government directives regarding the need to cover EBacc requirements as necessary, but our key aim is to provide the curriculum most appropriate to the needs of each individual student through our revised Pathways programme. Further information is available on the school website:

[St Alban's Catholic High School – Pathways \(st-albans.suffolk.sch.uk\)](http://st-albans.suffolk.sch.uk)

## Section 2 Curriculum Objectives

- 2.1 Objectives relating to the curriculum aims of St Alban's Catholic High School are:
  - That students should become aware of their abilities and in so doing develop to their maximum potential;
  - That students should be aware of the needs of the community and be prepared to contribute fully to the life of our Catholic community;
  - That all students should be offered a curriculum that has both breadth and depth. It should be tailored to each student's needs based on their requirements and provide an individual Pathway through KS3 and KS4;
  - That we recognise every member of the school as of equal worth and importance in the eyes of God, irrespective of his/her faith, culture, class, race, gender, sexuality and/or disability. Our curriculum aims to provide every student with the opportunity to study the range of subjects that will best prepare them for their future and be as flexible as possible so that students may change Pathway where necessary/appropriate;
  - That when students leave St Alban's they should be articulate, literate and numerate, and have lively, enquiring, independent minds and are aware of how faith guides their decision making.

2.2 In addition students who leave St Alban's should:

- be confident in their dealings with adults and peers;
- be able to develop good working relationships with others;
- have knowledge of a wide range of cultures and through this come to respect the rights and needs of others;
- be able to make good moral judgements;
- have developed a love of learning that will last for the rest of their lives;
- be adaptable enough to react to the needs of a fast changing world;
- have an understanding of British society and values;
- have well developed skills to show empathy for others.

2.3 The school aims to deliver all this in, and through, the classroom structures of lesson delivery and through extracurricular activities. Teaching will aim to ensure that students leave with the best set of qualifications that can be achieved. This will mean different things for different students. However, irrespective of the type and number of grades attained, progression and development remain the key themes to measuring success.

2.4 In addition to the curriculum plan outlined below all students across the Key Stages experience the Preparing for your future (PYF) programme, our equivalent of PSHEE, this is delivered in a programme of off-timetable lessons and off-timetable days throughout the academic year.

### Section 3 Curriculum Plan

#### 3.1 Years 7 & 8

The curriculum for Years 7 & 8 are as follows. This is based on a 40 lessons per fortnight.

Subject	Year 7	Year 8
RE	4	4
English	5	5
Mathematics	5	5
Science	5	5
MFL (French/Spanish)	4	4
Geography	2	2
History	2	2
Computing	2	2
Art	2	2
Drama	2	2
Music	2	2
Core PE	2	2
Design & Technology	3	3

### 3.2 Year 9

Subject	Year 9	Subject Rotation
RE	4	
English	6	
Mathematics	6	
Science	6	
Core PE	2	
Group A	4	French (2), Spanish (2)
Group B	4	Geography (2), History (2)
Group C	4	Art (1), Music (1), Drama (1), Computing (1)
Group D	4	Technology (3), Financial Studies (1)

- For the first 28 weeks of the year students will study all of the subjects in Groups A to D above. This will be on a rotation basis to ensure that all students have access to all subjects and to continue the standard rotation within Technology.
- The only exception to this will be those students who have not studied a language in years 7 & 8 and will instead study ASDAN for at least some of the time.
- As part of this, all students will have one lesson a fortnight of personal finances to ensure that they have a good understand of how to manage their money in future. This is a new item for 2023/24.
- For the final 10 weeks of the year, students will choose one subject to study in each block. There will be an opportunity to change subject part way through and at the end of the 10 weeks so that students will be able to make an informed choice of which subjects to take at Key Stage 4.
- Students will make their choice of three Pathway subjects at the end of year 9, of which at least one must be an eBacc subject, except under exceptional circumstances.

### 3.3 Years 10 & 11 to 11

Subject	Year 10	Year 11
RE	4	4
English	7	7
Mathematics	6	6
Science	9	9
Core PE	2	2
Pathway Block A	4	4
Pathway Block B	4	4
Pathway Block C	4	4

#### Notes:

- Science GCSE entries may be 2 or 3 GCSEs; either combined science or three separate sciences;
- Pathway Subjects currently offered are: Art & Design, Business Studies, Computing, Creative iMedia, Design and Technology, Drama, Food Preparation and Nutrition, French, German, Geography, History, Music, Sport & Coaching Principles, Spanish, Textile Design;
- An Alternative Curriculum option is currently available in block B. The school is constantly reviewing and developing its alternative curriculum offer. See section 4 for details;
- Please note that the school is compliant with Section 48 requirement for Religious Education at Key Stages 3 & 4.

## Key Stage 5

Subject	Year 12	Year 13
Option Block A	7	7
Option Block B	7	7
Option Block C	7	7
Option Block D	7	7
Society & Faith	2	2
Enrichment	4	4
EPQ	-	1

### Notes:

- The standard starting point in Year 12 is to begin three subjects at A Level, although many start with four subjects and reduce to three in year 13;
- The Enrichment block will contain Mathematical Studies (see below). It also contains other non- A level qualifications such as Law, Resit Maths and English and extra time for those taking Further Maths A level;
- Society & Faith contains elements of Religious Education teaching for the Sixth Form;
- The Extended Project Qualification is introduced at the end of Year 12 and taught elements are covered in Year 13 as part of our extended studies offer;
- In addition those students who do not study A Level mathematics but who are taking A levels that contain a significant mathematical element, will also be offered Level 3 Mathematical Studies (Core Maths) to support the application of mathematical skills in other A Level subjects. This will be studied in Year 12 and will lead to a qualification equivalent to an AS Level;
- Sixth Form option subjects currently offered are: Art, Biology, Economics, Chemistry, Computing, Drama, English Language, English Literature, Financial Studies, French, Further Maths, Geography, Graphics, Health & Social Care, History, Law (BTEC), Maths, Music, Photography, Physics, Politics, Product Design, Psychology, Philosophy and Ethics, Sociology, Sport & Physical Education, Textiles;
- Subjects offered are reviewed annually;
- Some subjects are taught jointly with Year 12 & 13 due to lower numbers of students. Currently this includes Computing, Music Philosophy and Ethics and Politics,;
- Please note that the school is compliant with Section 48 requirement for Religious Education at Key Stage 5.
- Not all subjects will necessarily run, depending on student demand.

## Section 4     Alternative Curriculum

### 4.1    Overview

At St Alban's Catholic High School, we want all our students to maximize their human potential and to both be good, and do good, in authentic freedom. In order to do this, some of our students need to be able to access the best courses to support their academic journey through our school.

We recognise the uniqueness of the individual and therefore for some of our students, for instance those with a diagnosed Special Educational Need, sitting a full range of GCSE subjects is not appropriate and that with the right support, all students can achieve positive outcomes for their future. As a Catholic school, we are committed to shaping our students and preparing them for a world beyond the realms of St Alban's but ready to meet the challenges in the world of work.

*".....a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole person, since the school is the centre in which a specific concept of the world, of the human person, and of history is developed and conveyed."*

(The Catholic School, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977/8)

### 4.2    Alternative Curriculum Provision within the Pathways process

- The majority of students will undertake English Language & Literature, Mathematics, RE (please note that in a Catholic school RE is an essential element of a student's education, under directive of the Bishop), and Science GCSEs plus three option subjects of their choice. For students who have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) or diagnosed SEND, this may not be the best provision for them if sustained and substantial evidence shows that they are very unlikely to achieve a GCSE grade for these subjects.
- Students will choose their Pathways to GCSE subjects toward the end of Year 9 (Please see section 3.2). Students who are advised by the SENCO to follow the alternative curriculum route will have the opportunity to study 3 GCSE options plus an alternative provision in Year 9 called Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), short course qualifications or BTECs. We are keen to develop our Alternative Curriculum offer and hope to offer other options in future years. This will be reviewed, involving the student and parent/carer at the end of Year 9 on a student by student basis to determine the best next steps for the student, including which subjects to continue into Year 10. Where a student has an EHCP or has a need identified by professionals, the student may (where appropriate) be offered the opportunity to work with external alternative providers such as the Suffolk New Skills Centre to cater their curriculum appropriately for the individual, the Deputy Head teacher will oversee this provision.
- Students who are studying a number of option subjects and present sustained and substantial evidence from their subject teachers that they are not making the relative progress expected, may be advised to remain in the subject lessons for enrichment purposes (for example, learning life skills in technology subjects) and not be entered for the GCSE examination in Year 11. Where appropriate, such students may undertake an alternative qualification such as a short course or foundation paper where such qualifications exist and are appropriate to deliver. The withdrawal of any student from a GCSE examination is at the discretion of the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher and will only be done in exceptional circumstances.

## **Section 5      Future Curriculum Planning**

5.1 Our Pathways programme was introduced a few years ago and has already developed further in subsequent years. Following a review of Pathways we are trialling a new version of the Year 9 curriculum which extends the full Key Stage 3 curriculum while keeping the key elements of Pathways in Year 9. This will reviewed at the end of the next academic year and adapted as appropriate. We are also hoping to further broaden the subjects on offer at KS5.

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Signed by P Dance, Chair of Governors:

Date: 13 07 2023