



Merchant Taylors' Schools, Crosby

Curriculum Policy

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1. Aims

This policy sets out how Merchant Taylors' School meets the curriculum requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The School provides a written curriculum policy, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which is implemented effectively.

The curriculum is designed to be broad, balanced and ambitious. It gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education; develops pupils' speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills; provides personal, social, health and economic education that 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; secures access to accurate, up-to-date and impartial careers guidance for pupils receiving secondary education; and, where applicable, provides programmes appropriate to the needs of pupils in EYFS and in the Sixth Form.

The curriculum is also designed to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress and are prepared effectively for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Policy, SEND Policy, Assessment, Feedback and Reporting Policy, PSHE Policy, RSE Policy, Careers Policy and Remote Learning Policy.

2. Curriculum design

The curriculum at Merchant Taylors' School is designed to develop the knowledge, skills, qualities and dispositions embodied in Ambition, Character and Excellence, while providing pupils with an ambitious academic and personal education appropriate to their age, aptitude and stage of development.

The curriculum is planned progressively from EYFS to Sixth Form and is intended to provide breadth, challenge, coherence and appropriate choice. It promotes speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy; secures pupils' access to a wide range of subject disciplines and enrichment opportunities; and supports pupils in moving successfully to the next stage of education, training or employment.

Curriculum planning takes account of the needs of all pupils, including the most able, pupils with SEND, pupils with EAL and those requiring additional support or adjustment. The School's curriculum is designed not only to secure academic progress, but also to prepare pupils for active participation in life in British society.

3. Academic curriculum

The academic curriculum is organised across EYFS, Prep, Senior School and Sixth Form. In each phase, the School provides a planned programme of study appropriate to pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs, supported by departmental schemes of work, curriculum maps and timetabled provision. The

curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure breadth, progression, challenge, accessibility and regulatory compliance.

Early Years Foundation Stage:

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) covers the development of children from birth to the end of their Reception Year. It sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe, promoting teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS is about what children learn, as well as how they learn. It recognises how effective practice is a mix of different approaches, and how children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through adult-guided learning.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- **Quality and consistency** in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through planning for the learning and development of each individual child and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

We follow the EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-based Providers and the four overarching principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- 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 and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See "the characteristics of effective teaching and learning" at paragraph 1.18). The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The setting is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The unit is set up to help the children to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It presents the children with opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

Through play our children develop and explore a develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children fitting in with their

plans and ideas. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through effort and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practice and build up ideas learning how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own.

Children learn skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate their understanding through the seven areas of learning and development.

The *prime* areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The *specific* areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world and
- Expressive arts and design

The prime areas are those most essential for a child's healthy development and future learning. As they grow, these skills will support the child as they extend their development in the specific areas. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.

Practitioners should be ambitious for all children, considering the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care. They must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development. Practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to ensure a strong foundation for children's development in the three prime areas. The specific areas of learning provide children with a broad curriculum and with

opportunities to strengthen and apply the prime areas of learning. This is particularly important in developing language and extending vocabulary.

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are already implicitly embedded in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We promote these values through our school mission statement, aims and values, our curriculum and enrichment activities.

Prep School:

In the Prep School, pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 receive a broad curriculum, including lessons in English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Religious Education, Art, PSHE, Physical Education, Music, Modern Foreign Languages and Computing. Most subjects are delivered by primary specialist class teachers although Music, Physical Education, Modern Foreign Languages and Computing are all delivered by subject specialist teachers.

The specific subject curricula are set and maintained by individual subject leads which ensure that the National Curriculum for each subject is covered although there is no formal alignment. Subject leads liaise with Heads of Department at the Senior School to ensure that there is consistency with the curriculum being taught, especially covering the transition between KS2 and KS3.

PSHE at the Prep School is delivered in three distinct ways as part of the normal curriculum:

- A bespoke PSHE curriculum that covers all of the expectations set by the Department for Education, including Relationships and Sex Education
- My Happy Mind – an NHS backed programme that supports pupils in developing positive behaviours that strengthen pupil mental health, resilience, and wellbeing
- Character Education – a programme devised by the University of Birmingham's Jubilee Centre that helps young people to develop positive personal strengths

Modern Foreign Languages is taught to all pupils at the Prep School. Pupils learn either Spanish, French or German with the aim to provide them the opportunity to experience multiple foreign languages whilst developing the basic skills required to learn a language. The specific languages are taught as follows:

- KS1 – Spanish
- Lower KS2 – French
- Upper KS2 – German

When pupils reach Year 6, Art is replaced by Design and Technology which is delivered by specialist DT teachers from the Senior School using a bespoke curriculum that teaches them the fundamental skills and safety procedures in preparation for continuing with the subject in Year 7.

The introduction of the Lego Education programme has started this September and is in the initial phase of both staff and pupil familiarity. Teachers have the flexibility to choose areas that they feel would best suit their classes' interests and needs. Over the year this will be reviewed with a more formal curriculum to be implemented next academic year.

Senior School:

In the Lower School, Pupils study a full range of subjects, including Mathematics, English, Modern and Classical Languages, Science, History, Geography, Religion, Philosophy and Ethics, Computer Science, Music, Art, Design, Drama and Physical Education. As part of the academic curriculum, Ambition, Character and Excellence are taught alongside subject content. The individual subject curricula are set by departments and, whilst there are broad similarities between these and the National Curriculum, there is no formal alignment. However, the curricula must tie in with Middle School work and GCSE specifications.

Year 7 have specific lessons about learning skills and follow a curriculum to teach them and give them opportunities to develop the following skills: Notetaking, highlighting, summarising, mind mapping, research skills, metacognition, memory, retrieval practice, presentation skills, interleaving, dual coding. Along with planning and organising their learning. In Years 8 and 9 they have a learning skills lesson once every two weeks where they are developing project based learning skills. In Year 8 they complete two group projects and in Year 9 they complete the Crest award. Once these are complete they review the learning skills taught in Year 7 in preparation for their end of year assessments.

In Year 7 pupils study two Modern Foreign Languages (French and Spanish) and a Classical Language (Latin) in Year 7. Pupils can then choose which two MFLs they take in Year 8: two from French, German, Spanish and Mandarin. Pupils continue to study Latin in Year 8. The aim is to provide pupils with a strong understanding and competency in written and oral literacy, which will serve as a foundation for their future studies in all subject areas.

At the end of Year 8, pupils can shape their academic programme through the selection of three options choices that sit alongside a core curriculum of Mathematics, English, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Geography and a Language. These subject choices prepare pupils to take responsibility for their academic decision making, and act as a precursor to the GCSE choices pupils make in Year 9 as they prepare to enter the Middle School.

The Middle School curriculum is designed to be broad and balanced, and to widen pupils' knowledge, understanding and experiences. It develops their academic skills and allows them to explore their own specific interests and strengths and provides a sound basis from which pupils will be able to choose their courses in the Sixth Form and beyond.

The core academic curriculum at GCSE consists of English Literature, English Language, Mathematics, and Science. Pupils make a choice of which Science route to follow:

- all three separate sciences (awarded three GCSEs)
- OR combined science (awarded two GCSEs)

Pupils then have several option subjects to select. The exact number of options depends on the choice of science route:

- if separate sciences, there are three options available
- if combined science, there are four options available

These are all open choice where we strongly recommend that one of the choices be a language. The options are Art, Business, Classical Civilisation, Computer Science, Design and Technology, Drama, French, Geography, German, Gratin (Latin + Greek), History, Latin, Mandarin, Music, Physical Education, Psychology, Religion Philosophy and Ethics, Spanish.

The most able mathematicians have the opportunity to take a Further Mathematics GCSE in addition to their Mathematics GCSE. This course teaches proof-based mathematics and is an excellent stepping stone to quantitative A Level courses.

Across Year 7 to 11 there is the option for a flexible curriculum where pupils for a variety of reasons not take the full amount of subjects for that given year group. In this case those pupils will attend timetable learning support lessons that will be small group lessons focusing on specific areas of need.

In the Sixth Form, pupils may choose from a selection of A Level courses and AAQ/BTECs; the range of subject choices offered far exceeds that required by universities. The options available are reviewed annually to ensure that this remains the case. Most pupils choose three A Levels; some take four A Levels, typically where Further Mathematics is part of the selection. The provision of academic enhancement activities – such as the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) or elective courses - will also be reviewed regularly. These courses run alongside taught A Level courses, often as part of the Tendo programme. The EPQ consists of a taught programme of academic research and enquiry skills, and access to an individual mentor. Pupils typically commence the EPQ in their Lower Sixth year, submitting the project in the summer of Lower Sixth or autumn of Upper Sixth. Academic elective courses that sit as part of Tendo have included Languages for Business qualifications, the CISI Securities and Investment award and the Sports Leadership award.

Academic departments, through the Head of Department, or his/her nominated Oxbridge mentor, coordinate provision for elite pupils aiming for Oxbridge or other very competitive institutions or courses. This is overseen by the Head of Oxbridge.

Detailed curricula for all academic courses, are the responsibility of the relevant Head of Department. Schemes of work should reference differentiation strategies for pupils of different abilities.

4. Setting

Prep School:

In the Prep School, pupils in KS1 are set for lessons focusing on the delivery of phonics to assist with differentiating between learners.

Once pupils reach Year 4, setting based on ability and progress begins in Mathematics and continues throughout Year 5 and 6. Typically, pupils will be divided into two or three sets depending on the cohort size and number of forms.

Senior School:

Except in Mathematics, where setting begins in Year 8, we tend not to set by ability, although there is currently some setting of English in the Lower and Middle School. Departments for whom all teaching sets of a specific year group sit within the same timetable block may, on occasion, stream where appropriate. Merchant Taylors' typically draws from the top 40% nationally. Although this still requires us to differentiate between able and extremely gifted learners, given the range of pupils' ability is narrower than for most other schools nationally, we feel the benefits of mixed ability teaching outweigh the potential pitfalls.

5. Catering for the needs of all pupils

The curriculum is designed so that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress. This includes pupils of high prior attainment, pupils with SEND, pupils with EAL, and pupils whose circumstances or prior learning mean that they require additional support, adaptation or intervention.

Teachers and departments use assessment information, curriculum planning and appropriate differentiation to provide challenge, support and progression. Where a pupil's progress gives cause for concern, intervention is put in place through subject teaching, departmental support, academic clinics, learning support and, where appropriate, adapted pathways or additional provision. The School also provides opportunities to extend and enrich the learning of the most able pupils.

6. SEND

Provision for pupils with SEND and for pupils requiring learning support or EAL support is set out in the SEND Policy. The School seeks to ensure that such pupils can access the curriculum and participate fully in school life through appropriate teaching strategies, differentiation, reasonable adjustments, targeted support and, where needed, timetabled learning support.

Curriculum pathways are planned so that pupils' needs can be met without unnecessary narrowing of opportunity, while ensuring that provision remains appropriate to the pupil's age, aptitude and stage of development.

7. PSHE

The School's PSHE provision reflects its aims and ethos and is planned as an age-appropriate, carefully sequenced programme. It is designed to encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, and to support pupils' personal development, safety, wellbeing and readiness for life beyond school.

In the Prep School, pupils receive Relationships Education. In the Senior School, pupils receive Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in accordance with the statutory guidance applicable to independent schools. The School's separate PSHE and RSE policies set out the subject content, delivery model, staffing, monitoring and review arrangements, publication arrangements, and parental rights to request withdrawal from sex education elements of RSE only.

Where external visitors contribute to this area of the curriculum, their input is used to enhance rather than replace teaching by school staff, and is planned and supervised in line with the School's safeguarding procedures.

8. Values

The curriculum and wider life of the School prepare pupils effectively for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society. Through subject teaching, PSHE, co-curricular provision, pupil leadership, educational visits, service and enrichment, pupils are supported to develop self-knowledge, self-confidence, responsibility and respect for others.

The School actively promotes respect for democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths, beliefs and backgrounds. Pupils are helped to develop a broad general knowledge of, and respect for, public institutions and services in England, and to understand how they can contribute positively to society at local and national level.

9. Careers

For pupils receiving secondary education, the School provides access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance presented in an impartial manner. This provision enables pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of education, training and employment pathways and helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.

The careers programme is described in more detail in the Careers Policy. It includes information, advice, guidance, encounters and experiences designed to broaden horizons, challenge stereotyping and support informed decision-making. In developing its provision, the School has regard to current DfE guidance and the Gatsby Benchmarks adopted by the School.

10. Games and physical literacy

MTS' sporting philosophy is to ensure a safe, inclusive environment that promotes both participation across a wide number of sports as well as giving pupils the platform to excel individually and as part of a team.

Merchants has a proud history of sporting success and are well respected in the locality for the importance that the School gives to sport. Pupils are given the opportunity to try a range of different sports in lessons and during extra-curricular time with the great majority representing the School.

Pupils are involved in over four hours' worth of sporting activities during timetabled periods, as well as additional training sessions, clubs and fixtures that enhance the pupils' sporting experience.

At MTS, we are excited about giving our pupils the platform to develop physically so that they have the confidence to apply their motor skills to a range of sports. The sports staff at the school actively encourage the boys to look upon themselves as young athletes and not pigeonhole themselves within a specific sport at an early age. By focusing on the individual's physical literacy, we believe that pupils will be equipped with the skills required to excel in a range of sports and ultimately maximise their potential. Additionally, by focusing on physical literacy, it allows pupils to develop at their own speed and become more comfortable in a sporting environment.

The School's physical education and games provision is designed to promote participation, enjoyment, inclusion, physical competence and personal challenge in a safe and supportive environment. Pupils

are encouraged to develop physical literacy and confidence through a broad range of activities, lessons, training opportunities and fixtures.

Activities are planned and supervised by appropriately trained staff. Equipment, facilities, staffing ratios and control measures are kept under review and risk is managed in a sensible and proportionate way so that pupils can participate fully and safely. Detailed operational arrangements are set out in relevant departmental procedures, risk assessments and health and safety documentation.

11. Tendo – explore, enrich, extend

Merchant Taylors' School aims to develop well-educated, well-rounded and caring young people who will make a constructive contribution to society. We seek to cultivate individuals who are thoughtful, principled and confident; who work effectively as members of a team; who demonstrate leadership when appropriate; and who act as a positive influence in the communities they join. While our pupils are academically able, we also aim to nurture in them a spirit of enquiry, intellectual curiosity and a willingness to engage with new experiences.

The Tendo co-curricular programme forms an integral part of the school's curriculum and is central to achieving these aims. It extends learning beyond the formal GCSE and A Level courses, enriching pupils' intellectual, physical, creative and emotional development. Activities are delivered by MTS staff and, where appropriate, supported by specialist instructors and external organisations.

The programme provides structured opportunities for pupils to develop new skills, broaden their interests and form meaningful social connections across year groups. Through shared experiences, pupils learn to collaborate, communicate and support one another. Tendo also offers a safe and supportive environment in which pupils can take appropriate risks, encounter challenge and learn constructively from setbacks. This contributes positively to their resilience, confidence and mental wellbeing during what can be a demanding period of adolescence. Enjoyment, personal fulfilment and a sense of belonging are central to the programme's purpose.

Structure of the Programme

- **Year 9**

All pupils participate in a rotation of activities centred on leadership, teamwork and the Bronze level of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. This includes the physical, skills and volunteering sections, as well as participation in outdoor expeditions. These experiences provide a strong foundation in self-management, community engagement and personal responsibility. Pupils receive two periods of Duke of Edinburgh activity and education per fortnight.

- **Year 10 to Upper Sixth**

Pupils select a Tendo activity and work in vertical groups, enabling collaboration between younger and older pupils and fostering peer leadership and mentoring. Activities span academic, cultural, community-based and physical domains. Some run for a single term, while others extend across the full academic year.

A number of these courses also contribute towards certification or qualifications recognised by universities and employers, thereby supporting pupils' future pathways and enhancing

their personal profiles. Pupils receive two periods of TENDO Co-Curricular activity per fortnight, timetabled to take place during the same period for all year 10 to 13 pupils.

Purpose and Intended Outcomes

Through participation in the Tendo programme, pupils are expected to:

- engage with and find enjoyment in a broad range of meaningful experiences
- develop strong learning attributes, including curiosity, independence, perseverance and adaptability
- reflect purposefully on their experiences, identifying strengths and areas for personal development
- set goals, develop strategies and take action to improve their skills and understanding
- explore new possibilities, embrace challenge and adapt to unfamiliar roles or situations
- participate actively in planned, sustained and collaborative projects
- build positive relationships and a sense of belonging within the school community
- understand their responsibilities as members of local and global communities
- consider the ethical implications of choices and actions
- develop resilience by encountering setbacks and learning constructively from them
- benefit from improved wellbeing through purposeful activity, social connection and personal achievement

The Tendo programme complements the academic curriculum while broadening pupils' horizons and supporting their personal development. It encourages pupils to discover interests that may become lifelong passions and equips them with the character, confidence and social awareness required to thrive beyond school.

12. Remote Learning

The School maintains the capacity to deliver remote or hybrid education where this is required by exceptional circumstances, individual pupil need, or temporary disruption to normal site operations. Remote learning is delivered through the School's agreed digital platforms and is designed, so far as reasonably practicable, to preserve continuity of education, support pupil progress and maintain communication with pupils and families.

When remote provision is used, the School takes account of safeguarding, attendance and engagement, accessibility, SEND and the need for age-appropriate pastoral support. Detailed operational arrangements are set out in the Remote Learning Policy and related contingency procedures.

13. Future curriculum development

The curriculum is reviewed regularly at whole-school, phase and departmental level to ensure that it remains ambitious, inclusive, relevant and compliant. Review is informed by assessment information, pupil progress, destination data, pupil voice, staff evaluation, external developments, regulatory requirements and the School's strategic priorities.

14. Curriculum Map

EYFS

Year Group	Reception
Phonics	5
Literacy	4
Maths	4
Enquiry Based Learning	4
Understanding The World: MfL, Spanish	1
Expressive Arts and Design: Music	1
Computing	1
Physical Development: PE	4
My Happy Mind	1

Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development feature in everything we do in Reception. This is a rough guide representing the number of whole class teaching inputs delivered and potentially several areas could be covered in one input. Children may work on any / all of these skills at any point during focused teaching / directed learning and their child-initiated activities.

Prep School

KS1 and KS2

Year Group	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Maths	10	10	10	10	10	10
English	10	10	10	10	10	10
Phonics	4	4	-	-	-	-
Science	2	2	3	3	3	3
Humanities (Geog/Hist)	3	3	3	3	3	3
Mfl KS1 – Spanish, KS2 French / German	1	1	1	1	1	1
Music	1	1	2	2	2	2
Art/DT	2	2	2	2	2	2
RE	1	1	1	1	1	1
PSHE/CE/MHM	1	1	2	2	2	2
Computing	1	1	2	2	2	2
PE	3	3	1	1	1	1
Games			2	2	2	2
Reward/ Golden Time	1	1	1	1	1	1

Senior School

In the senior school lessons are split into 65-minute lessons. The table below shows the allocation of lessons for each year group.

Year Group	7	8	9	10	11
English	6	6	6	7	6
Maths	6	6	6	6	7
Science	5	5	NA	10	10
Biology	NA	NA	3	5	5
Chemistry	NA	NA	3	5	5
Physics	NA	NA	3	5	5
French	3	3	3	3	3
Spanish	3	3	3	3	3
Mandarin	0	3	3	3	3
German	0	3	3	3	3
Geography	3	3	3	5	5
History	3	3	3	5	5
RPE	2	2	3	5	5
Art	2	2	3	5	5
DT	2	2	3	5	5
Music	2	2	3	5	5
CSC	2	2	3	5	5
Classics	0	0	3	5	5
Latin	2	2	3	5	5
Drama	2	2	3	5	5
Psychology	0	0	0	5	5
PE Academic	0	0	3	5	5
Business	0	0	0	5	5
Games/PE	5	5	4	4	4
PSHE	1	1	1	1	1
Learning Skills	1	1	1	0	0
Tendo	0	0	2	2	2