

Senior School Curriculum Policy for 2020-2021

The curriculum at NHSG has been carefully designed so that it offers all girls, in each year group, a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to their age and ability in the context of our academically selective School. The school's curriculum follows statutory requirements and many aspects of the National Curriculum. In line with our Mission Statement we aim to provide a curriculum that will enable each girl to achieve her full potential, with enthusiasm and enjoyment, whilst becoming a skilled and independent learner with an intellectual curiosity that equips her for future life. We aim to foster independence of thought and a willingness to question and to respectfully challenge perceived wisdom, not just to accept information given at face value. Our focus on Emotional Wellbeing and pastoral support recognises that if pupils are happy and secure within their learning environment, it is more likely that productive and meaningful learning is taking place.

The curriculum is designed to be inclusive, to allow for different learning styles and prior learning experiences, including, if applicable, those with special educational needs. Schemes of work include differentiated activities and girls are taught in ability sets in Mathematics (Years 7 – 11); pupils are also given additional individual support by subject teachers, mentors, Heads of Year and the SENCO as and when this is required.

In summary, it is our aim that all girls have the opportunity to learn, develop and make progress through access to:

- a broad and balanced curriculum;
- access to all curriculum areas regardless of ability, with support where appropriate;
- an approach to teaching and learning that has as its heart a desire for each girl to fulfil the highest possible expectations of herself, and which encourages independent thinking and deep learning;
- flexibility of approach, both within the classroom and through support available to allow for different learning needs;
- support from the SENCO in order to assess individual learning needs and offer any specific support or access requirements required at any stage of their school career;
- regular, formative feedback on progress to girls and their parents with a clear system of target setting to allow for improvement;
- a whole-school programme of personal, social, health and economic education which reflects the School's aims and ethos and encourages respect for self and for others, paying particular attention to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act;
- an extensive programme of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, to allow girls to be creative and to develop self-esteem, team work, responsibility and respect for self and others;
- opportunities for cross-curricular study to encourage teamwork as well as independent thinking and learning, as evidenced in the Deep Learning afternoons;

- accurate, up to date and impartial higher education and careers advice, which enables pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of study and career options, and offers opportunities for work-related learning, helping to encourage pupils to fulfil their potential.

In their delivery of curricular and extra-curricular activities, staff are encouraged to promote the School's aims and core values alongside the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance. This is done through offering a balanced presentation of opposing views when political issues arise, having clear expectations of behaviour, treating girls equally, listening to their opinions and encouraging them to work collaboratively. Staff are expected to be a role model at all times and to embody the values we hope to instil in our girls. We aim to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress and, through our curriculum delivery and range of extra-curricular activities and experiences, to ensure that they are well prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

Individual subjects have their own tailored schemes of work. Overall, girls experience linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education through a range of subjects and curricular-enhancing activities. Throughout, girls acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. The curriculum gives all girls the opportunity to learn and make progress and it prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The curriculum caters for girls of all aptitudes and abilities, including those with special educational needs. There is a carefully structured and well thought out PSHE curriculum, across all year groups, which reflects the school's aims and ethos. Through PSHE lessons and focussed contact with the School's Careers Advisor, often on a one-to-one basis, girls receive appropriate Careers Guidance throughout their time at NHSG.

There is a strong emphasis on enrichment both through the curriculum offer and the extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, for example the many educational visits, both day and residential, links with the community, the Transcript of Achievement and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

Central to our aim is the provision of a curriculum which is broad and balanced. At GCSE and A level, student choice is a priority in our aim of providing education for each individual: in addition to the core curriculum offer, girls are given a free choice from a wide range of subjects, and the option blocks are drawn up to accommodate as many of these as possible within the resources available. Guidance is given by the Deputy Head Academic and Head of Year with regard to option choices, in liaison with subject staff and parents where appropriate.

Currently, in the Sixth Form most students start 3 A Level courses, with the exception of pupils who wish to study Further Mathematics as a fourth subject alongside their 3 chosen A level subjects. Emphasis is placed on individual guidance when girls are making this decision. In addition, an extensive programme of Sixth Form enrichment is provided, including EPQ or the Gold Arts Award, Enrichment study, Games and Young Language Leader Award.

Issues of teaching and learning are high on the professional agenda of the school, and staff are regularly involved in discussions about such issues through a range of settings including: SLT meetings, Head of Department meetings, Subject meetings, Pastoral Team meetings, whole school INSET and working parties. VESPA strategies are embedded across Senior School to support learning and to help girls identify and remove barriers to success. The school recruits well-qualified subject specialists to allow each area of the curriculum to be taught by those with a high level of subject expertise.

Heads of Department take responsibility for the development and monitoring of teaching and learning in their subjects. They prepare schemes of work which ensure that the curriculum is delivered effectively with regard to differentiation, the needs of individual girls from all ethnic and social groups, the most able and those who are experiencing learning difficulties. Study support is offered through a programme of sessions coordinated by the SENCO in conjunction with Heads of Department, to girls who are identified as having particular learning needs. The progress of all girls who have been identified as having individual learning needs, both in terms of SEND and pupils identified as not making expected progress, will be monitored by Heads of Department and SENCO, overseen by the Deputy Head Academic.

The Deputy Head Academic, in conjunction with SLT, takes responsibility for monitoring the curriculum overall. We aim to use a wide range of teaching styles in response to the needs of individuals with a wide range of learning styles. Regular training and professional development opportunities are provided for all staff to enhance the delivery of the curriculum and to keep teachers informed of current initiatives and developments relating to their subject areas. The PDP scheme identifies training needs which benefit the delivery of the curriculum.

Continuity and progression are considered important to learning, and we use assessment as a formative mechanism to ensure progression, with careful and constant monitoring and tracking of each pupil taking place throughout the year. Where there is likely to be movement of a pupil from one teaching group to another, care is taken to ensure continuity.

Careers guidance is available to pupils via timetabled lessons as part of the PSHE curriculum in Year 9; individual tutorials; Higher Education Conferences; work experience and seminars. Individual profiling is available through the use of Morrisby Testing and Unifrog. Advice is provided to help pupils choose GCSE and post-16 courses. Pupils are encouraged to 'know themselves' and to know how their strengths, weaknesses and interests relate to the world of work; to learn about different careers and opportunities; to obtain individual guidance; to have some work experience; and to gain information about training, education and occupations beyond school.

It is School policy to review the curriculum regularly to ensure that it meets the needs and aspirations of pupils, allowing them to reach their full academic potential, whilst also enabling them to acquire up to date knowledge and skills which equip them for adult life and employment in our rapidly changing world.

What follows is a summary of particular aspects of the curriculum offer for the 2020-2021 Academic Year, in addition to a summary of the curriculum offer at each key stage:

English

English is part of the Core Curriculum for Years 7 to 11. Girls are taught in mixed ability form groups to the end of Year 8 and then in mixed ability English groups from Year 9. Progress is constantly monitored and individual support is put in place where the need is identified. English Literature is available at A Level. Pupils in Year 7 – 9 have 6 hours of English a fortnight. Pupils in Y10 – 11 have 7 hours a fortnight.

Mathematics

Mathematics is part of the Core Curriculum for Years 7 to 11. Girls are set by ability in Mathematics in Year 7, based on MidYis data, and are then taught in ability sets up to the end of GCSE studies. Girls are constantly monitored and intervention takes place when a girl is not making the expected progress. Mathematics and Further Mathematics are both available at A Level and Core Mathematics is also available at Sixth Form for those girls not choosing to study A level Maths. Pupils in Year 7 have 7 hours of Mathematics a fortnight. In Years 8 – 9 and Year 11 pupils have 6 hours each fortnight. Pupils in Year 10 have 7 hours per fortnight.

Science

In Years 7, 8 and 9, all girls have two hours of Biology, Chemistry and Physics each fortnight, taught by Science specialists. They are taught in mixed ability form groups. In Years 10 and 11 Science is a Core Subject and all girls in Year 10 study either Dual Award Science or Triple Science, depending upon their option choices. Biology, Chemistry and Physics are available at A Level. In Year 10, all pupils have 13 hours of science across the fortnight. In Year 11, all pupils have 14 hours of science across the fortnight.

Information and Communications Technology and Computing

Computing is a core subject in Key Stage 3 and compulsory in Years 7 to 9. At the end of Year 9 girls can choose ICT as a GCSE option. ICT is also available at A Level. In Y7 – 9 pupils have 2 hours a fortnight of computing.

Religious Studies

Religious Studies is a core subject in Key Stage 3 and compulsory in Years 7 to 9, although parents may withdraw their daughter on the basis of religious faith. Currently no girls are withdrawn from Religious Studies on this basis. At the end of Year 9 girls can choose Religious Studies as a GCSE option. Religious Studies and Philosophy are both offered as A Level options. In Year 7 - 8 pupils have 3 hours a fortnight of Religious Studies. In Year 9 pupils have 2 hours each fortnight.

History

History is a core subject in Key Stage 3 and is compulsory in Years 7 – 9. Pupils in Year 7 have 2 hours a fortnight of History, which increases to 3 hours each fortnight in Years 8 – 9. History is offered as a GCSE option in Year 10 – 11 and is available as an A level option at Sixth Form.

Geography

Geography is a core subject in Key Stage 3 and is compulsory in Years 7 – 9. Pupils in Year 7 have 2 hours a fortnight of Geography, which increases to 3 hours each fortnight in Years 8 – 9. Geography is offered as a GCSE option in Year 10 – 11 and is available as an A level option at Sixth Form.

Modern Foreign Languages

In Year 7 Spanish is the core language studied. Girls are taught in form groups and have two hours each fortnight of Spanish. Pupils in Year 7 also have two hours a fortnight for their second language. They can opt from French, German or Mandarin. In Year 8, pupils continue with their chosen additional language, which they study for two years alongside compulsory Spanish. Pupils in Year 8 – 9 have 3 hours a fortnight of Spanish, and 4 hours of either French or German (For Year 8 this will be French or Mandarin in September 2021). French, German and Spanish are offered as options at GCSE. Girls opting for dual science do not have to study a language at GCSE, although all other girls must select at least one language. Latin can be chosen rather than a modern foreign Language. In addition, fast track language study is available outside the timetable for native speakers or exceptional linguists and early entry GCSE is available where deemed appropriate. Additional Languages, for example Japanese, Persian and Mandarin Chinese are available at both GCSE and A Level for native speakers, with the support of Languages staff in liaison with external tutors. French, German and Spanish are offered at A Level. As we develop Mandarin across Senior School, it will become part of the core curriculum offer and will eventually be an option for GCSE and A Level.

Classical Languages

Latin is studied for 3 hours a fortnight in Year 7. In Years 8 and 9 girls may be directed to continue with Latin, or to study Classical Civilisation. Year 8 have 2 hours of Latin or Classical Civilisation each fortnight and Year 9 have 3 hours each fortnight. Latin and Classical Civilisation are offered as options at both GCSE and A Level.

PSHE

All year groups have a 30 minute PSHE lesson every Tuesday morning, during extended Form Time. PSHE is delivered by Form Tutors, supported by the appropriate Head of Year. In Year 7, 8 and 9, there is also one additional hour per fortnight of PSHE, delivered by the School Nurse in year 7 and the Head of Year in Year 8 and 9. PSHE across the curriculum is coordinated by an nominated PSHE coordinator, in conjunction with the Deputy Head Pastoral.

PE and Games

PE and Games are compulsory throughout Years 7 to 11 and form part of the Core Curriculum. In Year 7 all girls go swimming as part of the PE curriculum. In Year 7 – 9, pupils have 2 hours of Games and 2 hours of PE each fortnight, with an addition 1 hour of Fitness and Well-being in Year 9. In Years 10 and 11 PE is also a compulsory core subject for all girls. In Year 10 and 11, all girls have 2 hours a fortnight of Games and 1 hour of PE. Girls may opt to study GCSE and A level PE, in addition to their core PE/Games lessons. Sixth Form Games also features in the Sixth Form enrichment programme, with one hour a fortnight timetabled and the fitness suite available during study periods.

Art

Art is a compulsory subject in Year 7 – 9. Girls in Year 7 have 2 hours a fortnight of Art, which increases to 3 hours a fortnight in Year 8. Girls in Year 9 have 2 hours a fortnight. GCSE Art is offered in Year 10 -11 as an option subject and in Sixth Form pupils can opt to study an A level in Fine Art, Graphic Design or Textiles.

Dance

Dance is taught as a discreet subject across Years 7 to 9 and is not integrated into the PE Curriculum. There are 2 hours of Dance per fortnight in Year 7 and 1 hour a fortnight in Year 8 – 9. Dance is a GCSE option in Years 10 and 11. Dance is also available as an A Level option.

Drama

Drama is taught as a discreet subject across Years 7 to 9. Year 7 have 2 hours of Drama per fortnight, Year 8 have 1 hour each fortnight and Year 9 have 2 hours per fortnight. Drama is a GCSE Option in Years 10 and 11, and is offered as an A Level option in Sixth Form.

Music

Music is a compulsory subject in Key Stage 3. Pupils in Years 7 – 9 have 2 hours a fortnight of Music lessons. Music is available as a GCSE option in Year 10 -11 and as an A Level option subject in Sixth Form.

Enquiry Based Learning

In KS3 pupils have the opportunity to develop their academic skills through Deep Learning afternoons. These enquiry based sessions are designed to encourage subject collaboration and to develop transferable high level thinking skills which support all of their subjects and which inspire in pupils an intellectual curiosity, independence and love of learning. In Year 7, pupils have a 2 hour Deep Learning afternoon once a fortnight, with an afternoon of Humanities Enquiry. In Year 9, pupils have a 1 hour Fitness and Wellbeing session once a fortnight, developing the skills and understanding necessary for leading a healthy life beyond school.

The tables below summarise the curriculum studied in each year group at each Key Stage.

Key Stage 3

✓ indicates compulsory subjects which form the Core Curriculum

○ indicates subjects where an element of choice is possible

Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Art	✓	✓	✓
Biology	✓	✓	✓
Chemistry	✓	✓	✓
French	○	○	○
German	○		○
Spanish	✓	✓	✓
Deep Learning	✓		✓
Dance	✓	✓	✓
Drama	✓	✓	✓
English	✓	✓	✓
Geography	✓	✓	✓
History	✓	✓	✓
ICT	✓	✓	✓
Latin	✓	○	○
Classical Civilisation		○	○
Mandarin	○	○	
Mathematics	✓	✓	✓
Music	✓	✓	✓
Physical Education	✓	✓	✓
Physics	✓	✓	✓
Personal Social Health Education	✓	✓	✓
Religious Studies and Philosophy	✓	✓	✓

Key Stage 4

✓ indicates compulsory subjects which form the Core Curriculum

○ indicates optional GCSE subjects

Subject	Year 10	Year 11
Art and Design	○	○

Classical Civilisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Core Modern Foreign Language: French, German or Spanish	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drama	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
English Language	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
English Literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
French	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
German	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Geography	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
History	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Home Economics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ICT	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Latin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mathematics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Music	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical Education (non-GCSE)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Physical Education – GCSE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal Social Health Education (non-GCSE)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Religious Studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science - Dual Award or Biology, Chemistry, Physics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Spanish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In Year 10 and 11, three option subjects are chosen to complement the core curriculum. Option subjects have 5 hours per fortnight across Year 10 and 11.

Sixth Form

Subjects offered in the Sixth Form are:

Subject	Year 12	Year 13
Biology	✓	✓
Business Studies	✓	✓
Chemistry	✓	✓
Classical Civilisation	✓	✓
Dance	✓	✓
Economics	✓	✓
English Literature	✓	✓
Enrichment Studies	✓	✓
EPQ	✓	
Fine Art	✓	✓
French	✓	✓
Further Mathematics	✓	✓
Geography	✓	✓
German	✓	✓
Government & Politics	✓	✓
Graphic Communication	✓	✓
History	✓	✓
ICT	✓	✓
Latin	✓	✓
Mathematics	✓	✓
Music	✓	✓
Philosophy	✓	✓
Physical Education	✓	✓
Physics	✓	✓
Psychology	✓	✓
Religious Studies	✓	✓
Spanish	✓	✓
Textiles	✓	✓
Theatre Studies	✓	✓

At A level, 10 hours per fortnight is the standard teaching allocation per subject, although this may decrease to between 9 and 7 hours for small classes, taking into account the nature of the subject.

Reviewed August 2021
Next review August 2022