




ST JAMES

Senior Boys' School

Curriculum Policy

2025-26

Version Control

Date of adoption of this policy	01.09.2024
Date of last review of this policy	31.12.2025
Date for next annual review of this policy	31 st August 2026
Policy owner (SMT)	Deputy Head Teacher
Policy owner (Proprietor)	Board of Trustees
	
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Authorised by the Chair of Governors, Ashford	

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1 Aims

- To set out the specific nature of the curriculum offered at St James, along with the pedagogical and educational justification for that curriculum
- To detail how the statutory requirements of the curriculum are met at St James

2 Summary of the St. James curriculum

The St James Senior Boys' School curriculum is designed to provide a holistic education for the pupils focused on their physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development. The school day begins at 8:20am and finishes at 4pm and within that time pupils have a programme that addresses all aspects of their education. The whole of the curriculum is underpinned by our philosophical approach and the importance of stillness. Each lesson begins and ends with a short period of silence (called "the pause") and a dedication. All pupils also have periods of Quiet Time each day, where they can choose to meditate, pray or just sit and be still. Teaching this discipline develops pupils' higher powers of concentration as well as the ability to use reason over reacting to impulse.

The pupils are provided with a balanced curriculum. The physical is addressed by regular PE lessons, extra-curricular activities, and for older pupils the extensive Friday Options programme, where pupils have a wide array of sports to choose from. Intellectually, a wide range of subjects are designed to cater for the strengths and interests of different pupils:

- Pupils can take Design Technology, Art, Music and Drama
- All three Sciences are taught separately from Year 7
- The Classical Languages: Sanskrit and Latin
- Modern Foreign Languages: Spanish and French
- The Humanities of Geography, History and Classical Civilisation are on offer throughout the school.
- The Humanities such as Media Studies and Business Studies are offered from Y9 onwards.
- ICT and Computing are offered to all pupils and embedded throughout the curriculum to develop digital literacy.
- PSHE is taught within the curriculum through discrete lessons across Year 7 to 11. These lessons are taught by a specialist teacher.
- English and Mathematics are prioritized within the structure of the KS3 and KS4 curriculum in terms of time allocation.

The emotional and spiritual aspects of a pupil's education are catered for in regular Philosophy lessons, Form Periods, and PSHE sessions (for example; on drugs, sex and alcohol). There are also Assemblies with a common theme and special events (like 6th Form formal dinners with guest speakers) and the yearly Activities Week where pupils from Years 7-10 travel to various locations around the world for cultural experiences.

The aim of our curriculum is to help form young men who:

- Have the ability to reason, be intellectually curious and be good problem solvers
- Enjoy leading their peers, but who can also listen carefully and work with others
- Want to serve their community and society
- Are philosophically and spiritually curious, knowledgeable and sensitive to the needs of others
- Are disciplined, determined, courageous and hard working
- Are prepared for life (in beyond) after school through their knowledge, experiences and skills

3 Key Points

There are a number of key differences between the curriculum at St James and many other mainstream schools.

- Our focus on stillness, silence and meditation (see Aims and Ethos Policy)
- Science taught separately from Year 7: with all Science lessons delivered in laboratories and most including a practical element
- Extensive PE programme
- Focus on the Classical Languages, with Sanskrit and Latin taught from Year 7
- Friday Options Programme for Year 9 and above offering an extensive range of different sports, both on and off site
- Clubs' Period offering a diverse choice of clubs for all pupils (see Clubs' activity list)
- Activities' Week, where Years 7-10 travel overseas for one week a year in March for cultural and natural experiences
- GCSE Options chosen through the 'Stepping into Adulthood' programme at the end of Year 8, increasing focus and purpose in Year 9

4 British Values

St James has been teaching 'British Values' implicitly within the academic curriculum and explicitly for many years. The Philosophy curriculum is organised around core themes that relate directly to human values such as justice, honesty, service and both an understanding and celebration of other cultures and religions. 'Citizenship' lessons are also embedded into the Year 10 Philosophy curriculum, where pupils are told about the workings of British democratic and justice systems. St James also is involved in discussing every significant British political decision: holding debates on the general election, Scotland leaving the UK and most recently whether or not to remain in the EU. These debates are led by members of the 6th form but are held in front of the whole school and everyone is encouraged to actively participate. At staff INSET sessions we also discuss how the St James Ethos can be

embedded into the academic curriculum. Assembly themes for each term are publicised and staff are encouraged to plan lessons that refer to these themes.

5 Lower School Curriculum

At Year 7 and 8, St. James Senior Boys' School aims to provide pupils with a broad curriculum, helping them to explore different subjects and areas of interest. The aim is to inspire pupils and light the fire of interest in particular fields of study.

At Year 7 and 8, most lessons are taught in Forms, allowing pupils to forge relationships and work effectively in mixed ability groups. Mathematics is set by ability.

5.1 Year 7 Curriculum

Academic Subjects (examined)		Non-academic subjects
English 3.5 lessons per week	Biology 1 lesson per week. Chemistry 1 lesson per week. Physics 1 lesson per week.	Drama 1 lesson per week.
Maths sets 3.5 lessons per week.	ICT 1 lesson per week.	Philosophy 0.5 lessons per week
History 1.5 lessons per week.	Geography 1.5 lessons per week.	PSHE 0.5 lessons per week for the year.
Sanskrit (one class, made up of pupils from the Junior School who have previously studied the subject, and high achieving new pupils) 1 lessons per week.	Art & Design and Technology 2 lessons per week.	Music & Singing 1 lesson per week.
	French 2.5 lessons per week.	Physical Education 5 lessons per week. Includes lessons on core sport (rugby/cricket) and cross country running (focus on fitness)

5.2 Year 8 Curriculum

Academic Subjects (examined)		Non-academic subjects
English 3.5 lessons per week.	Biology, Chemistry and Physics 1 lesson per week in each subject	Drama 1 lesson per week.
Maths 3.5 lessons per week.	French & Spanish 2.5 lessons per week French	Philosophy 0.5 lesson per week for half of the year. This is taught in carousel with PSHE and Sanskrit.
	History 1.5 lessons per week.	PSHE Year Group 1.5 lesson per week for half of the year. This is taught in carousel with Philosophy
Art & Design and Technology 2 lessons per week.	ICT and Computing 1 lesson per week.	Physical Education 5 lessons per week. Includes lessons on core sport (rugby/cricket) and cross country running (focus on fitness)
Geography 1.5 lessons per week.	Music 0.5 lesson per week.	Form Period 1 lesson per week.
Sanskrit (one class, made up of pupils from the Junior School who have previously studied the subject, and high achieving new pupils) 1 lesson per week. Those pupils not doing Sanskrit are doing community outreach.		

6 Upper School Curriculum (Years 9 -11)

At the end of Year 8, pupils choose their GCSE subjects from a broad range of options. At St. James our academic aim is to enable a pupil to develop his powers of reasoning and each subject provides a unique discipline as well as helping develop these skills in different ways. Therefore, the balance of subjects is important as well as responding to the needs and talents of the young man.

All pupils take the following academic subjects:

English Language	English Literature	Mathematics
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Pupils are given free choice of other subjects to choose, constrained only by the matrix below in which they choose one subject from each band. The bandings are reviewed each year to enable maximum subject choice for pupils. Pupils will study eight subjects leading to 9 GCSEs (with English counting twice for literature and language). To enable a well-rounded education, pupils are encouraged to take:

- at least one Language
- at least one Humanity
- at least one Science

Pupils discuss their choices with the Deputy Head Academic and the Head of Lower School, Hods, and subject teachers to ensure a balanced curriculum.

A matrix is created after the Year 8 pupils have made their GCSE choices in the Summer term. This is to enable the pupils to have the best possible choice of subjects and play at their strengths, preferences and possibly learning needs.

Pupils can pick from:

GCSE Subjects offered	
Chemistry	Latin
Geography	Spanish
Physics	P.E.
Biology	History
Sanskrit	French
Art and Design	Drama
Music	Computing
Business Studies	Design and Technolgy
Art and Design	Media Studies
Sanskrit	

A pupil does one subject from each column for 2.5 lessons per week in Year 9 and 2.5 lessons per week in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum is organised over a 2-week timetable.

6.1 Non-examined Subjects

All pupils will take the following non-examinable subjects: Philosophy, Careers Education (in Year 9 delivered during Form Periods), PSHE.

6.2 Physical Education (non-Examined)

All pupils in Years 9-11 have 4 periods of PE. Furthermore, they have 75 minutes of the Friday Options programme where several Physical Activities are available (over 15 per term), which include: kayaking, squash, judo, cross country running, sailing, golf, and cricket. This totals 355 minutes per week of Sports' Activities.

In Years 12-13, pupils have 2 lessons of PE per week and the opportunity to take a third if required for a fixture. They also take part in the Friday Options physical programme.

6.3 6th Form Curriculum

In the 6th Form, St James offers a wide range of A Level subjects. Pupils choose a minimum of three A Level subjects to follow for two years. In exceptional circumstances some pupils will take a fourth subject, often Further Mathematics. Our curriculum matrix ensures that we provide a mixture of subjects suitable for the ability range across our cohort and aims to provide combinations of subjects conducive to successful entry to higher education in STEM subjects, humanities, vocational subjects and languages. Each A Level subject receives five lessons per week. A minimum grade requirement is set for each subject to ensure that pupils choose to study areas in which they will make the most progress and stand the best chance of securing the grades needed to begin higher education.

A Levels Subjects offered	
Chemistry	Politics
Geography	Spanish
Physics	P.E.
Biology	History
Mathematics	Greek
Further Mathematics	Latin
Economics	Media Studies
English Literature	French
Art and Design	Drama
Business Studies	Computing
Music	Design & Technology

Listed below are the options for A Level with the recommended minimum grade requirement at GCSE to study this subject. The minimum grades are a general guideline. However, in some circumstances admission can be made subjects with a lower grade with the consent of both the Head of Department and Head of Sixth Form.

Chemistry 7 in GCSE Chemistry & 7 in GCSE Maths.	Physics 7 in GCSE Physics & 7 in GCSE Maths also needed. Pupils must also be studying A Level Maths	Economics 6 in GCSE Maths and 6 in GCSE English Language	Biology 7 in GCSE Biology & 6 in GCSE Maths	Maths 7 in GCSE Maths	Music GCSE music and Grade 5 instrument / voice or Grade 5 theory and Grade 5 instrument / voice
French 6 in GCSE French	History 6 in GCSE History or 7 in GCSE English Language & Literature	Philosophy 6 in GCSE English Literature & Language	Psychology 6 in GCSE English Language & English Literature & 6 in GCSE Maths	Further Maths 8 in GCSE Maths	
Design and Technology 6 in Design & Technology	Spanish 6 in GCSE Spanish	Computer Science 6 in GCSE Maths and 6 in GCSE Computer Science	Further Maths 8 in GCSE Maths Geography 6 in GCSE Geography & 6 in GCSE Maths	Classical Civilisation 6 in Classical Civilisation or a Humanities - based	
Politics 6 in a Humanities-based subject	Physical Education 6 in GCSE P.E or 6 in any GCSE Science	Latin 6 in GCSE Latin	Art 6 in GCSE Art		
English Literature 7 in both GCSE English Language &	Business Studies	Drama 6 in any Humanities	Photography 6 in GCSE photography	Media Studies Five 5s or equivalent in any subject	

English Literature	Five 5s or equivalent in any subject	based subject		(Single Award)	
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The entry requirements and the subject matrix has changed for 2025/26 where entry requirements are higher.

The super curriculum is also covered in the 6th Form through special events, programmed courses and the form tutors. They are taught financial skills and also have an extensive UCAS programme preparing their University applications and also preparing them for University life. Philosophy and mindfulness courses run during the first two terms and at 6th Form dinners and pupils also attend Model United Nations, Debating and Specialised Lectures with the St James Senior Girls School. The 6th Form also take part in school wide events such as the speech and music competitions, the Christmas Service and the Summer Concert.

7 Assemblies

All pupils in the school regularly attend whole school and Year Group Assemblies. PSHE is taught through Assemblies, including specific Assemblies on current issues, drugs, sex education, internet safety and study skills. An Anglican minister is also attached to the school and delivers Christian themed assemblies once every half term. Pupils are encouraged to take Assemblies themselves, as are all staff members, on issues that are important to them, academic interests and religious festivals. Assemblies are organised around a termly theme, although can be flexible so as to respond to important international events.

8 Careers and Work Experience

A Careers Programme exists for the whole school. It comprises a number of specific activities planned through all Year levels. They include: Business and Enterprise days (with the Girls' School); University visits; UCAS statement workshops; Work Experience Placements; Taught careers education in lessons and Form periods; Career Aptitude Testing; Library Resource Centre; Individual Meetings with career expert(s); Bi-annual Careers Fair (with the Girls School).

9 Special Events

An important part of the St James curriculum is the regular special events. The school calendar lists these and individual departments are responsible for organising them. They range from Year group trips to Art Galleries to Speech and Music Competitions; lectures and workshops by specialized experts, to role-playing Geography days. Events and trips are used to inspire and motivate the pupils.

10 Homework

Homework is seen as an essential part of the curriculum offered. Year 8 have a specific homework timetable, which they follow and they receive approximately 60 minutes of work per evening and on the weekend, set on a particular night and handed in the next day.

We would like our pupils to become more independent and learn how to organise their schoolwork from a younger age, so our Year 7 pupils (cohort starting Sept 2025) will have three nights to complete their homework of approx. 30 minutes per homework.

Year 9 to Y11 have to complete 45mins to an hour per homework which is spread over three nights.

Year 12 to 13 can get their homework at any time and are expected to do 5 hours per week of homework per subject; alongside any independent study they may need to do to further consolidate their learning.

11 Online Resources

St James operates the Firefly and OneNote system for online resources now we have introduced iPads in the classroom. All pupils and parents have access to the system and teachers regularly require pupils to use it to complete work and homework.

12 Learning Support

St James has a dedicated Learning Support Unit that offers one-to-one tutorials to pupils with Special Learning Needs as well as in-class support. The Learning Support team and the teaching staff assess pupils. Learner Profiles are created for pupils with additional learning needs and communicated to the teaching staff.