

Curriculum; Teaching & Learning; Academic Progress; Assessment & Reporting

Academus Independent Curriculum Policy

It is the policy of the school to give its students experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human, social, moral and personal education. We aim to provide subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those with a statement; and where a pupil has a statement, we aim to provide an education which fulfils its requirements. We ensure that all pupils acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy as well as giving pupils personal, social and health education which reflects the school's aims and ethos.

We endeavour to give appropriate careers advice for our pupils and, for those above the compulsory school age, we provide a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs. Overall, our policy is to allow all pupils to have the opportunity to learn and make progress and to provide an effective preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

We believe that all our students have a right to a broad, balanced and relevant education which provides continuity and progression and takes individual abilities and differences into account. In curriculum design, we are guided by our belief in the integrity of traditional academic subjects and in their value in providing the best framework for young people as they develop a full appreciation of the breadth of human knowledge. Equally, we regard physical and creative experience as being vital in the full development of our students and we strongly encourage parents to pursue these activities outside the time spent with the virtual school.

We keep the Academus Independent curriculum under regular review, as we seek new and original methods to support the acquisition of knowledge and skill, in order to help students to develop not only intellectually but also socially, personally and emotionally as they prepare to take their places in the world. The school is currently piloting a number of enrichment initiatives which extend our already broad curriculum and are aiming to provide an even more intellectually demanding and exciting academic experience at Academus Independent.

The academic curriculum at Academus Independent follows the customary pattern of providing a wide range of subjects in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, subsequently narrowing to provide specialised study in the Sixth Form. It is designed at all stages to enhance a pupil's academic experience and his or her appreciation of the breadth of knowledge. The academic curriculum is supported by a timetabled programme of PSHE, in coordination with the school's extensive pastoral system. Although a degree of narrowing is inevitable at GCSE and at AS/A level, it is school policy to offer pupils the widest possible choice in their combinations of subjects, trying to keep it as unrestricted by the constraints of an imposed 'blocking' system. We aim to ensure that a student has the greatest possible opportunities for individual choice and specialization.

In Years 7 and 8 pupils follow a common curriculum founded upon the best features of the National Curriculum, but extending beyond the National Curriculum's restrictions to provide a wide variety of additional work. Pupils are not required to sit national tests at Key Stage Three, but they are expected comfortably to meet and to exceed their demands.

In Year 9 this broad curriculum expands further to provide pupils with the option of studying further subjects.

For their GCSE programme, all pupils study Mathematics, English Language, English Literature, at least one science, and a further five subjects.

In the Sixth Form, students usually study four subjects to AS level. Students may choose to continue with all four subjects to A-level in the Sixth Form or to narrow down to three subjects. There are opportunities for students to take an additional AS subject if they drop one of their A2 subjects.

Access to the Curriculum

The school believes in ensuring that all students have full access to the Academus Independent curriculum, regardless of their learning needs. The only situation where a student might suffer any restriction would be where access might have implications for the health or safety of a student.

[Policy reviewed and updated 3rd September 2012]