



**SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON  
ACADEMY**

**CURRICULUM POLICY**

**January 2017**

Sir William Robertson Academy's aim is to "Aspire" to be the best that we can and this core value drives our vision for curriculum provision and delivery. Our broad and balanced curriculum is designed to respond to the local and national agenda both intelligently and creatively in order to ensure all our students receive a high quality learning experience at all times.

### **Our curriculum:**

- Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our students.
- Promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of their life long journey.

As an Academy we are able to ensure that the needs of our students drive our curriculum provision at all times. Whilst confirming our commitment to the broad and balanced principles of the national curriculum, we also celebrate and use our expertise to drive excellence and innovation. The legal scope for our curriculum is set out as per the Funding Agreement available on our website.

We consider it critical that "equal opportunities" are promoted and realised at all levels of curriculum provision and that this is integral to outstanding practice. Whilst we provide extensive individual and small group withdrawal support where necessary (see below), our curriculum is one which celebrates inclusion at all times and we firmly believe that our diversity as an academy ultimately enriches and enhances our curriculum for the benefit of all.

### **Organisation:**

The academy operates a flexible 11-18 curriculum which allows students to "**develop and enhance**" their basic skills whilst "**deepening their learning**" across a range of academic and applied subjects and courses. Attached to this policy are the current time allocations for each subject in each national curriculum year (Annex 1).

### **Literacy & Numeracy:**

We believe whole heartedly that in order to access a broad and balanced curriculum, all students need to be confident and proficient in the basic skills of reading, writing, communication and mathematics and these are given the highest priority at all times. Literacy and numeracy form the cornerstones for successful learning and we ensure all students are given the best chances to continually improve in these areas.

Proficiency in literacy and numeracy is mainly developed in English and mathematics but also in other subjects where opportunities will be provided across the curriculum for students to increase confidence and competence with numbers, mathematical techniques, reading and writing.

### **Options**

We begin our options process in year 9 where students are guided carefully onto a range of courses in which they show both interest and aptitude. Our comprehensive KS4 provision offer is set out in our “Pathways Option Booklet”, available on the academy website and by hard copy. Specific KS4 examination syllabus information is also set out in the booklet.

All students will study either history or geography and the majority of students will continue with a modern foreign language enabling them to gain accreditation in all five subject areas within the English Baccalaureate. All of the EBAC subjects are accredited at the end of Year 11 following a coherent five year programme of study. For some students we may feel it is to their advantage to sit examinations earlier, however this decision will only be made after careful and thorough consideration of their needs and never to the detriment of their overall most ambitious progress.

### **Modern Foreign Languages**

We strongly believe that studying a modern foreign language increases your potential to secure good offers at college, sixth form and higher education establishments. In today’s global economy, a second language is a demonstrable skill that could enhance your employment prospects.

With this in mind, students who are currently in the top two sets for foreign languages will continue to study GCSE German or French.

For all other students, studying a modern foreign language is optional but we strongly recommend that this is given serious consideration.

### **Religious Studies**

All students will have the opportunity to gain accreditation in GCSE Religious Studies by the end of Year 10. This enables more time to be spent studying English and mathematics in Year 11.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC):**

SMSC is promoted across the entire academy curriculum and all aspects of academy life. Our full SMSC policy sets out our vision and practice in ensuring that all students have the opportunity to develop an understanding of right and wrong; an appreciation of the Arts in all their forms and practise the skills and attitudes required for them to participate fully in a democratic society.

### **Differentiation and Personalisation:**

The academy seeks to ensure that its curriculum is delivered via well planned and engaging lessons which challenge all students whatever their ability or starting point. Students are generally taught in ability groups from year 7 through to year 11. As per the Academy’s “Setting Policy”, each student’s progress is reviewed every half term and if necessary, movement to a more appropriate group will take place.

If we feel any student is falling behind or requires more specialist provision we put in

place rigorous interventions which may be classroom based or exist at other times in the academy day/after academy or at weekends/holidays. Our SEN policy sets out our approach to meeting more complex needs of students.

The academy also has its own Pupil Intervention Base (the Bungalow) whereby students whom we believe may benefit from additional intervention will be accommodated. This level of intervention will often involve 1-1 support from the academy's learning mentor, primarily in the core subjects but also in other GCSE subjects.

### **Beyond the formal curriculum**

The academy curriculum is not narrowly constrained within formal lessons but extends to a vast array of extra- curricular opportunities which we term "Enrichment" and "WOW Days". All students have access to and are actively encouraged to take part in an extensive programme, which seeks to extend their learning and widen their life experiences. We seek to use active partnerships to support learning wherever possible and encourage students to interact with speakers and visiting groups/industries/organisations to extend their communication skills and learning capacity.

Work Related Learning is any planned activity that uses the context of work to develop knowledge, skills and understanding useful in work. Through work related learning activities and "WOW" days, the academy seeks to develop the employability skills of young people, provide them with the opportunity to 'learn by doing', raise standards of achievement and encourage positive attitudes to lifelong learning. Opportunities will be provided both within our various curriculum areas and as planned activities within our enrichment programme. All students have the opportunity to take part in a formal work experience in Year 10. All year 11 students have a careers interview with an external provider.

The academy believes the physical environment should reflect the diversity of our student body and curriculum. We use displays to enhance our formal study and celebrate excellent student work. Displays will be updated on a regular basis.

### **Homework**

Homework plays an important part in the academy's curriculum. It makes a vital contribution to the effective learning of our students and encourages the development of supported self-study.

Regular homework:

- Encourages independent study and self- motivation
- Develops perseverance and self-discipline
- Extends learning time beyond the formal school day and enables skills learned in the classroom to be practised
- Can help both staff and students to assess learning and identify areas of weakness
- Promotes positive relationships between home and school

Homework should therefore be set on a regular basis for all pupils. Each year, the academy publishes a homework timetable for all students and this can be found on the academy's website. Homework should be set for the days nominated on the homework timetable and only in exceptional cases should timetabled homework not be set.

Homework does not always have to be "written work" but it should always form an integral part of work that is being studied during lessons. Homework should be set very carefully and deliberately.

The Academy sets homework via the "Show My Homework" website. All students and their carers have access to their own account. Use of this site should be monitored regularly.

The homework timetable does not preclude the linking together of various "homework periods" to allow extended pieces of work to be undertaken at home.

Parents should be positively encouraged to take an interest in homework. It is recognised that many parents will be interested to read the work set. As with all work set, care should be taken to ensure the highest possible standards of written material leaving the academy. Regular information from departments to parents about homework set would be of benefit.

For homework to be regarded as important by pupils, it is essential that it is marked promptly yet thoroughly. The Academy Marking Policy sets out guidelines on this matter and applies equally to classwork and homework.

Base tutors should discuss homework with their pupils on a regular basis. Work Journals should be checked once a week and appropriate action taken at an early stage if either homework is not being properly recorded or if there is evidence that it is not be completed.



## **SIXTH FORM CURRICULUM**

In the Sixth Form students undertake specialised study of up to four subjects at AS and three or four at A Level. A broad range of subjects is offered which will equip students with the entrance requirements for any university course. Some will drop one of their four AS subjects at the end of the Lower Sixth, the decision being made in consultation with the Head of Sixth Form. We encourage the students to continue with four subjects wherever possible.

Subjects are allocated to an Option Block system which is driven by the students' own choices. Any subjects may be chosen provided that the choice is made before the timetable is constructed. Offers of chosen subjects may, in some cases, be limited by timetabling and resource restrictions. However, all efforts will be made to ensure students are offered their subject choices

Each subject is taught for 4 periods weekly; lower sixth pupils are expected to undertake at least four hours of private study per subject per week and Upper Sixth are expected to undertake at least six hours of private study per subject per week. The requirement for entry into the Sixth Form is a minimum of five A\*-C grades at GCSE (including English and Maths) and A\*-B grades in the subjects to be studied for A Level. Students without these grades may be admitted subject to discussion with the Head of Sixth Form.

In addition to the study of A Level subjects, a full enhancement programme is offered which gives students the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills. This is given through Sixth Form assembly, Enrichment and visiting speakers. They may also choose from the following range of optional activities:-

- Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- Music
- Sport
- Drama
- Public Speaking
- Extended Project Qualification
- ICAEW Accountancy programme
- UCAS support days
- Careers events

Students are encouraged to pursue individual interests in or outside of school including sporting and musical activities. They are encouraged to obtain work experience since this will facilitate the development of life skills.

Progress is monitored through an academic tutorial system which encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. Students are encouraged to make the most of the leadership opportunities open to them in the Sixth Form in order to learn to work with others and to take responsibility for their own lives.

Updated

### **Monitoring and Reviewing**

The academy via the Governor's Teaching and Learning Committee monitors the appropriateness of the curriculum, measuring its impact, taking into account levels of achievement and engagement.

The academy will regularly audit its provision seeking the views of all stakeholders, including students, parents, staff and governors.

All departmental areas will review regularly as part of their self-evaluation processes the successful delivery of their curriculum using the Ofsted Evaluation Framework supplemented by internal and external reviews.

### **Ratified by Governors:**

#### **Review Date:**

January 2018

**ANNEX 1**  
**2015-16 Curriculum Map**