



ALDENHAM SCHOOL

CURRICULUM POLICY

**Reviewed October 2018
by Deputy Head Academic (PJR)**

The Framework

Curriculum Time

In designing the school day we have deliberately designed a structure that ensures that the majority of lessons were in the morning, that it was not over long but still retained sufficient time for the teaching curriculum. Many day pupils travel a long way and a long teaching day was felt to be unproductive. Similarly, terms are intense and busy and lengthening them reduces effectiveness. The introduction of a 2 week timetable in September 2013 was done to allow a better balance of subjects in the curriculum.

Lesson Length

In deciding lesson length there needs to be a compromise between having lessons long enough for good teaching time and yet still allow frequent contact with the pupils. The length of lesson is also important to ensure that there was sufficient flexibility in the week. 50 minutes was settled on as the optimum length balancing the needs for length and flexibility. This was then reduced by 5 minutes travelling time in order to guarantee 45 minutes teaching time per lesson.

Timings of the day

It is important to ensure that every session of the day, particularly periods 1, 4, and 6 starts punctually. Staff are expected to set an example and address pupil tardiness.

General Principles of the Curriculum

Core and Compulsory elements

Mathematics	for essential numeracy skills
English	for essential communication skills
Science	to provide understanding of world around
MFL (Years 7-9)	to enable communication and understanding of other cultures
PRE	to provide an ethical and philosophical framework.
Life Matters	to provide PSHE
PE and Games	for essential physical fitness

The curriculum is composed of elements which are a pragmatic necessity for life in the 21st century (Core Subjects) as well as elements which allow pupils to explore the nature of humanity and creativity and so arrive at a more rounded understanding of the world and what it means to live responsibly in it. Alongside the Core the options provide further opportunities for the Humanities (Classical Civilisation, Latin, Geography, History and Religious Studies), as well as for Appreciation and Creativity (Art, Computer Science and Design & Technology) and Performance (Drama, Music and PE). Finally, explicit Life Matters lessons were introduced in September 2014 for the delivery of a more structured PSHE program.

For some pupils, because of LDD or SEN, this provision is too demanding. In such instances the pupil, their record and needs are taken into consideration to plan a suitable curriculum. For example, in a few cases boys and girls who have dyslexia may not do a foreign language. Instead they might have an organised learning support class or individual tuition to meet their specific needs during this timetabled block.

The crucial curriculum design is KS4. KS5 follows on from this and the shape of KS3 one is dictated by what is necessary for the KS4 study program.

KS4 Curriculum

Core Compulsory Elements over two weeks

Mathematics	8 periods
English	9 periods
Science	15 periods (3x5)
PE,	2 periods
PRE	2 periods
Games	4 periods
Life Skills	1 period

Within these core subjects the possibility exists for entries in more than 1 subject depending on the set and their ability. For example in English all will do the Language exam and most sets will do the Literature exam. In Mathematics the top set do Further maths as well. In Science the top sets will do the triple award and the lower ones double award Science. In addition all pupils attend 1 Life Matters lesson in the two week cycle for PSHE education.

Options (over 2 weeks) 4 blocks 28 periods (4x7)

Rules for selection:	4 choices
Suggest chose	1 Modern Foreign Language 1 from “Creative” or “Performance” (Ar, Dr, DT, PE, Mu, CS) 1 from “Humanities” (Cc, Ge, Hi, PRE)
Further free choice	from the above list and including Latin

KS3 Curriculum

This must provide a proper foundation for the study of subjects at KS4. It must also provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to make an informed choice about their subjects. Therefore all subjects of the KS4 curriculum should be represented to some extent. All pupils study Latin in Year 7. Whilst a useful subject in itself its early introduction helps with the rules and disciplines of English and Modern Foreign Languages further up the school. Following this, in Year 8, pupils study Latin as an option against DT. In Year 9 it is a choice against Computer Science and DT. All pupils joining the school in Year 7 study both French and Spanish before choosing their GCSE language in Year 8 which we encourage them to continue through to Year 11. Pupils also attend Life Matters lessons to provide appropriate PSHE education.

The number of periods per subject over a 2 week cycle is:

Mathematics	8 periods
English	8 periods
Science	12 periods (3x4)
MFL	6 periods in Year 7 & 8, 8 periods in Year 9
Music, Games, Art, DT	4 periods (Mu 2 periods in Year 9)
Geography, History, PRE	3 periods
PE, CS, Drama, Latin	2 periods (CS 4 periods Year 8, Latin 4 periods in Year 8, 6 periods in Year 9)
Life Matters	1 period

KS5 Curriculum

This follows on from the KS4 curriculum allowing a choice of 4 subjects initially. Most will discontinue one subject after the first half term to support the delivery of the new linear A levels, although a few may continue with 4. Some of those taking 3 may choose to take an additional course like the EPQ or Subsidiary maths which will continue into Year 13. As well as their 4 main courses pupils take courses in Careers in Year 12. Pupils who need to gain a passing grade GCSE in English or Mathematics will be prepared for retaking these exams.

Curriculum Plan

Year 7	Subject	MA	EN	PH	BI	CH	PE	LM	PRE	GA	CS	DR	DT	GE	HI	AR	MU	SP	FR	LA
	Lessons	8	8	4	4	4	2	1	3	8	2	2	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	2
Year 8	Subject	MA	EN	PH	BI	CH	PE	LM	PRE	GA	CS	DR	DT(La)	GE	HI	AR	MU	MFL		
	Lessons	8	8	4	4	4	2	1	3	8	4	2	4	3	3	4	4	6		
Year 9	Subject	MA	EN	PH	BI	CH	PE	LM	PRE	GA	CS(La)	DR	DT(La)	GE	HI	AR	MU	MFL		
	Lessons	8	8	4	4	4	2	1	4	4	2	2	4	4	4	4	2	8		
Year 10	Subject	MA	EN	PH	BI	CH	PE	LM	PRE	GA	OPT A	OPT B	OPT C	OPT D						
	Lessons	8	9	5	5	5	2	1	2	4	7	7	7	7						
Year 11	Subject	MA	EN	PH	BI	CH	PE	LM	PRE	GA	OPT A	OPT B	OPT C	OPT D						
	Lessons	8	9	5	5	5	2	1	2	4	7	7	7	7						
Year 12	Subject									GA	OPT A	OPT B	OPT C	OPT D	CA					
	Lessons									4	14	14	14	14	2					
Year 13	Subject									GA	OPT A	OPT B	OPT C	OPT D						
	Lessons									4	14	14	14	14						

Banding and Setting

On entering the school pupils are banded by ability based on the entrance test results. If appropriate this banding may be affected by significant pastoral considerations but this is not common. In Year 7 and 8 there is usually one accelerated form and parallel mixed ability forms. These forms are reviewed and adjusted at the end of Year 7 based on marked performance patterns seen in the exams and gradings over the year.

In view of the increase in setting arrangements from Year 9 onwards (Maths, English, Science and MFL) and the structure of the option block system, banding is discontinued in Year 9.

Factors considered under “pastoral considerations” may include the number of girls in the class, previous friendship groups and feeder school advice.

Setting is carried out in certain core subjects at various points in KS3 and KS4. This is based on more specific subject based evidence. Setting may change following testing or internal exams. The amount of change tends to diminish as public exams approach.

Gifted and Talented, EAL and SEN

Information about pupils is drawn from a number of sources to identify pupils who may be Gifted and Talented, or have other specific learning needs. These sources will include interview, baseline, previous school or specialist reports and family.

Once here pupils, if not already identified, may be identified through baseline testing, School testing, entrant screening and teacher referral.

Such a pupil has their need assessed and a suitable program of provision is put in place. For pupils who are gifted and talented this may involve extra –curricular activities or further opportunities in the area of talent. It will also involve extension work and activities during lessons. For pupils who have a specific learning need they may take a reduced or more directed range of subjects. Many pupils from overseas will take an English qualification as well as doing appropriate qualifications in their mother tongue. This may necessitate specific preparation for oral exams as an extra.

PSHE

Students receive PSHE from a variety of sources. Some is subsumed within academic subjects where topics within these subjects provide opportunity for debate and reflection. Major themes are often dealt with through presentations that might be for whole or part of a day using the resources of an outside agency. These can then be used as an impetus for further discussion and action within the dedicated tutor time in Martineau’s or ‘Life Matters’ program for Years 7-11. The ‘Life Matters’ program is taught by specific teachers and not by academic tutors.

Careers Guidance

Aldenham employs a careers adviser to deliver careers education to all pupils from Year 7 upwards. This takes place as part of the Life Matters syllabus and in the tutorial programme.

In terms of careers planning, choices at GCSE and A Level are important and require careful consideration. Pupils receive advice from a variety of sources on what subjects to take at each stage. Some of these sources are more expert and informed than others. An agreed pattern of subject choices is arrived at by conversation with tutor, teachers, pupil and parents. Housemasters, Head of UCAS, and the Deputy Head (Academic) are also involved in these discussions as appropriate.

In Year 12 pupils attend a course of lectures on various forms of employment in the professions and services and are encouraged to arrange work experience placements during the Summer holidays. The careers adviser will support and guide pupils in this endeavour and provide contacts wherever possible. Towards the end of Year 12 the pupils begin the UCAS process, receiving guidance from many different sources.

Prep

Prep is an important part of the educational programme for the pupils. Despite the large number of subjects studied in Martineau’s the number of preps is limited to 2 to 3 per night of limited length. In KS4, 22 longer preps are used in line with the more specific subject focus.

When more than 1 prep is set a week a written task should be set for at least one which can then be marked and feedback given to pupils. In 2018 the prep pattern looks as follows over a 2 week cycle:

Year 7		Year 8		Year 9	
Subject	Number of preps - 20/40 mins for Year 7	Subject	Number of preps - 20/40 mins for Year 8	Subject	Number of preps - 25/50 mins duration
Ma	4	Ma	4	Ma	4
En	2	En	2	En	2
Bi	1	Bi	1	Bi	1
Ch	1	Ch	1	Ch	1
Ph	1	Ph	1	Ph	1
Pe	0	Pe	0	Pe	0
CS	1	CS	1	CS (La)	1
Ga	0	Ga	0	Ga	0
PRE	2	PRE	2	PRE	2
Fr	1	Mfl	2	Mfl	2
Sp	1				
Latin	1				
Ge	1	Ge	1	Ge	1
Hi	1	Hi	1	Hi	1
Dr	0	Dr	0	Dr	0
DT	1	DT(La)	1	DT (La)	1
Mu	2	Mu	2	Mu	2
LM	0	LM	0	LM	0
Ar	1	Ar	1	Ar	1
Total	21		20	Total	20

Year 10	Number of preps of 45 mins duration
Subjects	
Ma	4
En	4
Bi	2
Ch	2
Ph	2
Ga	0
PE/LM/PRE	0
Block 1	2
Block 2	2
Block 3	2
Block 4	2
Total	22

Year 11	Number of preps of 45 mins duration
Subjects	
Ma	4
En	4
Bi	2
Ch	2
Ph	2
Ga	0
PE/LM/PRE	0
Block 1	2
Block 2	2
Block 3	2
Block 4	2
Total	22

Shape of Week

The shape of the week is designed to get the best from pupils. Most lessons are concentrated in the morning. Monday (weeks A and B) and Wednesday (week A) are the only days with 8 lessons. Apart from these most afternoons have 2 lessons and then some other activity, whether it be games and activities or pastoral time. On Friday the school finishes early. In addition to the factors mentioned before, other factors shaping the timetable include:

Pastoral

There is a need for quality contact time for Houses with pupils. To facilitate this, the PSHE program will be dealt with in subject specific days for particular year groups. These will then be followed up by support activities in the dedicated tutorial slots.

Use of Facilities

We aim to maximise the use of the school facilities without conflict between the various users.

Extra Curricular

CCF and the activities program are an essential element of the provision for pupils. Proper time needs to be given to these activities within the school week.

Games are equally important. Tuesday and Saturday fixtures happen for the senior school with timetabled games sessions at other times for year groups. In Martineau's there are Wednesday fixtures and Friday fixtures. Timetabled practices are linked in with Year 5 and 6 games in the Prep School and with St. Hilda's. This is to enrich the girls' provision in particular for these ages.

Some Music activities take place in lunchtimes. A full choir rehearsal happens on Tuesday afternoon.

Instrumental music and Lambda Lessons are 40 minutes and therefore run across lesson timings.

Departmental detentions take place in lunchtime. Students are required to be in the department at 1.10 pm, doing or redoing work or something else of value to the department depending on the offence for which they have been detained for 25 minutes.

As well as a rich and diverse activities program pupils take part in a varied program of events. House rivalry provides a powerful spur for Music, Drama, and Debating as well as sporting competition.