



Curriculum Policy

1. Aims

Stour Valley Community School will provide a broad and balanced curriculum which has been coherently planned and sequenced to inspire, challenge and safeguard all of our students. Our vision is for all students to:

- Achieve their potential through a culture of high academic, personal and social expectations and aspirations alongside appropriate levels of challenge and support;
- Have their needs met and be recognised as individuals through tailored programmes of study which are underpinned by high quality inclusion and pastoral care systems;
- Learn in a safe, healthy and stimulating environment;
- Enjoy a broad extra-curricular programme which enables students to develop their experiences beyond the classroom and discover their latent talents;

We will provide the necessary experiences which will enable our students to become:

Successful learners, who:

- Have the essential learning skills of literacy, numeracy and information technology;
- Are creative, resourceful and able to solve problems with the knowledge and cultural capital to do so successfully;
- Have enquiring minds and think for themselves to process information, reason, question and evaluate;
- Communicate effectively in a range of ways;
- Understand how they learn, and learn from mistakes with a high level of resilience;
- Are able to learn independently and as part of a team, being able to apply their learning in relevant situations;
- Understand the ideas and events which shape the modern world;
- Enjoy learning and are motivated to become lifelong learners, having sufficient knowledge for skills and future learning and employment;
- Are well prepared for life and able to adapt within a changing workplace.

Confident learners, who:

- Have a sense of self-worth and believe in themselves;
- Relate well to others and are able to form good relationships;
- Are self-aware and deal with their emotions appropriately;
- Have secure values and beliefs;
- Become increasingly independent, and are able to take the initiative;
- Make healthy lifestyle choices in relation to physical development and an active lifestyle whilst taking responsibility for their own physical and mental health;
- Take managed risks and know how to keep themselves safe;
- Are willing to try new things and make the most of opportunities presented to them.

Responsible citizens, who:

- Are well prepared for life, work and independence;
- Are enterprising and able to work co-operatively with others;
- Respect others and act with integrity through well-developed spiritual, moral and social understanding;
- Understand different cultures and traditions and understand their place in the world;
- Appreciate diversity and the benefits it can bring;
- Challenge injustice and are committed to human rights;
- Maintain and improve the environment, both locally and globally;
- Make choices which support current and future generations;
- Are committed to change for the better.

Curriculum Policy

Date approved: **November 2023**

Next review date: **November 2024**

Through this vision we intend for our students to be equipped to take their place in society as valued, economically independent, co-operative and motivated young adults with the necessary skills for successful and happy lives.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy reflects the requirements for academies to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the Academies Act 2010, and the National Curriculum programmes of study which we have chosen to follow.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 and Equality Act 2010, and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's Governance Handbook. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Responsibilities

Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

The Local Governing Body will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets;
- The school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes English, Maths and Science, and enough teaching time is provided for students to cover the requirements of the funding agreement;
- Proper provision is made for students with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND);
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum;
- Students are provided with impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school;
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the Local Governing Body;
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate;
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements;
- The Local Governing Body is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum;
- The governing board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions;
- Proper provision is in place for students with different abilities and needs, including children with SEND.

Other staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.

Students

At Stour Valley Community School, students are expected to be fully involved in their own learning and the wider life of the school.

All students are expected to:

- Work closely with their teachers and other adults to develop an understanding of how they can achieve, or exceed, their targets;
- Work hard during lessons to maximise progress and minimise wasted time;
- Co-operate with adults and other students for the benefit of their learning, achievement and progress;
- Attend school, be punctual to lessons and meet deadlines for homework and Non-Examination Assessments;
- Take responsibility for their own learning, achievement and progress;
- Have high aspirations and the confidence to challenge themselves to extend their learning;
- Have pride in their achievements and the determination to build on these for their future learning.

4. The School Day

The structure of the school day is organised as follows:

Time	Activity
8.05am	Students allowed on site
8.20am – 8.30am	Registration
8.30am – 9.30am	Lesson 1
9.30am – 10.30am	Lesson 2
10.30am – 10.55 am	Break
10.55am – 11.55am	Lesson 3
11.55am – 12.55pm	Lesson 4
12.55pm – 13.40pm	Lunch
13.45pm – 14.00pm	Form Time / Assemblies
14.00pm – 15.00pm	Lesson 5
15.00pm – 16.00pm*	Period 6 (Enrichment activities)

**Period 6 activities take place on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Students are expected to go home at 3.00pm on Tuesdays and Fridays unless they have a prior arrangement with staff.*

5. Curriculum Structure

Years 7, 8 & 9

The curriculum is delivered in a two-week cycle of fifty, one-hour periods.

	Number of periods per two week cycle		
Subjects	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	7	7	7
Mathematics	6	6	6
Science	6	6	6
French	4 periods of French OR 4 periods of Spanish	4 periods of French OR 4 periods of Spanish	4 periods of French OR 4 periods of Spanish
Spanish			
History	4	4	4
Geography	4	4	4
Religious Studies	2	2	2
Art	2	2	6 periods, taught on a carousel
Music	2	2	
Drama	2	2	
Resistant Materials	4 periods, taught on a carousel, which includes Graphics, Food & RM	4 periods, taught on a carousel, which includes Graphics, Food & RM	4 periods, taught on a carousel, which includes Graphics, Food & RM
Food & Nutrition			
Graphics			
PE	4	4	4
Computer Science	2	2	2
PSHE	1	1	1

Each department has a curriculum document detailing short and long term plans, which demonstrate the development of skills and knowledge in the subject.

Year 10 & Year 11

In Years 10 and 11 all students follow a range of core subjects including English, Maths, Science, Physical Education, Religious Studies and PSHE. All students follow either Combined Science (2 GCSEs) or Triple Science (3 GCSEs).

	Number of periods per two week cycle	
Subjects	Year 10	Year 11
English	6	6
Mathematics	7	7
Science	10	10
Religious Studies & PSHE	1	1
PE	2	2

In addition to core subjects, students make four Option Choices from the option blocks outlined below, which indicate options which are available from September 2023. Each option subject chosen is studied for six hours over the two week programme of study.

Curriculum Policy

Date approved: **November 2023**

Next review date: **November 2024**

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Computer Science	Computer Science	BTEC Sport	Art
French	Geography	Drama	Food & Nutrition
Geography	Music	Food & Nutrition	History
History	Prince's Trust	Photography	Psychology
Spanish	Religious Studies	Psychology	Technology - Graphics
	Spanish	Technology - RM	Technology - RM
	Statistics		

Option 1 is a 'compulsory EBacc' choice option block which enables most students to fill the EBacc requirement for Progress 8 and Attainment 8. GCSE options are reviewed annually according to the nature of the Year 9 cohort to ensure the subjects available reflect the most appropriate choice for students. Any review takes into account current legislation and guidance. Details of option choices are published on the school website annually. Stour Valley Community School operates an inclusive policy whereby students are able to freely select their option choices, regardless of ability.

During the options procedure in the Spring Term of Year 9, students are asked to select their first and second preferences in each option block. Every effort is made to ensure students receive their first preference wherever possible. Restrictions of class size and resources mean that first preferences cannot be guaranteed, although students typically receive a minimum of 3 out of 4 of their first preference subjects. Alternative provision is made available for a small number of students who are unable to access a large number of mainstream GCSE courses. In close consultation with students, parents and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator, these students follow a bespoke programme of study which follows all core subjects and 3 GCSE courses, alongside the Prince's Trust course.

6. Teaching and Learning Groups

On arrival at Stour Valley in Year 7, students are placed in academic ability groups in Maths and Science and mixed ability teaching groups in other curriculum areas. There are five teaching groups within each year group, with numbers of students ranging from approximately 30 in the highest ability group, to approximately 12 in the lowest ability group, where students have been identified as being in need of additional support. The progress of students in individual groups is reviewed regularly. Parents and students are informed of any possible mid-year changes to groups. The full range of setting arrangements is reviewed annually.

7. Homework

Homework is an essential tool in allowing students to develop the skills which will enable them to take control and responsibility for their own learning, both at school and during their later lives. It enables students to progress to higher qualifications which require more independent study and become life-long learners. Homework enables students to extend their knowledge, skills and experience through learning and working in a different

Curriculum Policy

Date approved: **November 2023**

Next review date: **November 2024**

environment and encourages individuals to take greater ownership of their levels of application and determination.

Specific homework study tasks are designed to extend knowledge and skills in a variety of ways, including:

- Practising and consolidating learning completed at school;
- Extending and developing learning;
- Preparing for future learning tasks or Non-Examination Assessments at GCSE;
- Developing research skills;
- Spending time on more detailed and thorough research;
- Providing individual evidence for assessment and evaluation;
- Developing skills for planning and organising time;
- Providing the opportunity for engaging with parents to support their learning.

All students are set homework tasks in a range of curriculum subjects. Homework is recorded on Edulink, so is accessible by students and parents, and there is an expectation that students will meet deadlines.

In Years 7, 8 and 9 homework expectations are that students spend 30 minutes on each piece of homework, with each department selecting the frequency of their tasks. A suggested timetable would be the completion of two pieces of homework each evening, however staff are mindful about students' wide range of additional commitments.

In Years 10 and 11 homework expectations are increased. During Year 10 students are expected to spend a minimum of 45 minutes studying for each of their GCSE subjects weekly. At key times during the year, notably during Non-Examination Assessment tasks and revision periods, students are required to spend considerably more time. In the final few weeks preceding the Year 11 GCSE examinations, students are expected to spend a significant amount of time on preparation and revision, both during school time and at home.

Homework support is available during breaktimes, lunchtimes and during Period 6. Students who do not complete homework will be expected to do so and may be required to stay behind after school to complete the work. Parents are given a minimum of 24 hours' notice of detentions.

8. Statutory Requirements

Religious Studies

Religious Studies is taught in every year group and, additionally, offered as a GCSE course. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from this aspect of their education and should contact the Headteacher directly to discuss these arrangements.

Religious Studies encourages students to learn from different religious beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and understanding. It challenges students to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics. Religious Studies encourages students to develop their sense of identity and to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society and global community.

Relationships & Sex Education

The school's Relationships and Sex Education Policy has been developed with regard to the DfE's 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019' and is available on the school website. The school provides sex

Curriculum Policy

Date approved: **November 2023**
Next review date: **November 2024**

education in the PSHE curriculum for all students, in which students are guided by moral principles and health and safety considerations.

In accordance with the law the biological aspects of human reproduction remain compulsory and are taught within the Science programme of study. Parents may choose to withdraw their children from any other part of the sex education programme and should contact the Headteacher to discuss these arrangements. If parents choose to withdraw their children from Sex Education classes they have a responsibility to provide an alternative sex education.

Careers Education and Work Related Learning

The school provides careers education to all students through the PSHE curriculum. Work related learning is augmented by a two week work experience programme in Year 10 during which students have the opportunity to experience the work environment. Meetings with employers take place within the curriculum in different year groups.

E-safety

Awareness of safety considerations when interacting with the wide range of IT resources available in school is an entitlement for all members of the school community. Staff follow an Acceptable Use Policy regarding the use of IT in school.

As part of their Computer Science curriculum students are taught how to recognise and avoid danger when using IT resources and are also required to sign an Acceptable Use Policy. The school works to prevent any member of its community becoming the victim of online exploitation or cyber bullying and will take measures to address this type of behaviour.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Stour Valley Community School is an inclusive school and caters for students of all abilities and circumstances. Students with defined special educational needs access a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which is differentiated to meet their individual needs while following the typical school curriculum as closely as possible. This is monitored and evaluated to ensure the curriculum continues to support academic progress and self-esteem throughout the student's school career. Parents are fully involved in their child's education and in all decisions made. Full details of the school's SEND provision can be found in the SEND policy on the school website.

British Values

British values are promoted across the curriculum with the aim of providing students with understanding and knowledge in the following areas;

- an understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process;
- an appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety;
- an understanding that there is a separation of power in Britain and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence;
- an understanding that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law;
- an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour;
- an understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.

Curriculum Policy

Date approved: **November 2023**
Next review date: **November 2024**

9. Attendance During External Examinations in Year 11

At Stour Valley Community School we believe in supporting individuals right up until the moment they complete their final GCSE examinations. Accordingly, students only have a short period of formal study leave during their Year 11 final GCSE examinations and their timetabled lessons remain in place. In this way students are fully supervised and supported throughout the examination period and where students have completed individual GCSE examinations, they continue to study for subsequent examinations during timetabled lessons.

However, we appreciate that for some students it supports their physical and mental health to be able to structure their revision time in a more flexible way than is afforded by the normal school timetable. From the point when they do not have an exam every day, students may request that they complete revision at home.

Protecting Students from Extremist Views, including Religious and Political Extremism

At Stour Valley Community School we recognise the responsibility to make sure that our students grow up with a balanced view of the world, its peoples and opinions. We also recognise that there are many opportunities within a school curriculum to address these issues and support balanced and informed debate about many contentious issues.

The Religious Studies department at SVCS, through following the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus, studies the main world religions and promotes tolerance and understanding of world views. When appropriate, current issues in the news are discussed and that may prompt students to question human behaviour and their motives behind it. Students are encouraged to use critical thinking skills to identify bias and in doing so develop the skills of analysis and evaluation. Lessons regularly look at 'right' and 'wrong' in terms of religious beliefs and British law so it is made clear what is acceptable behaviour in this country.

The concept of nationalism in its extreme form arises in History lessons from Year 9 onwards is discussed in PSHE and, as issues arise, in tutor times. Students are encouraged to discuss, as far as possible, why these views are extreme and why and how people in the world may express them. Within work on British citizenship this leads to discussions about freedom of speech and association. As part of Sex and Relationship Education and in PSHE students discuss how to make choices about right and wrong, how to resist peer pressure and how to cope with upsetting news or emotional difficulties. These themes are also explored through the Drama curriculum.

The school will not tolerate any extremist political or religious views expressed openly by staff or Governors either in school to students or other staff members or in more public forums such as social media. Staff members may be subject to disciplinary action as necessary. The school does not tolerate any extremist views expressed by any visitors to the school, including parents. If a staff member hears such views then they must inform a member of Senior Staff immediately.

Any of our students may come into contact with extremist literature or propaganda at any time including when on school visits and in the community. Staff leading or accompanying visits must be vigilant to this possibility. Staff will support students who may be distressed or frightened by what they read or see. Students will be helped to have a balanced view as well as give them coping strategies in dealing with what may be external pressures, however it is important to ensure that students do not become phobic about certain groups or religions.

There may be occasions where students have come into contact with extremist propaganda and have come to school to proselytize or 'spread the word'. All adults must be vigilant and

Curriculum Policy

Date approved: **November 2023**

Next review date: **November 2024**

report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (as detailed as Reception) any suspicion or incident. Students are vulnerable to such influences and must be safeguarded from any grooming activities related to extremism.

Monitoring and Review

Governors monitor whether the school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a “broad and balanced curriculum” which includes the required subjects, through reports provided by Senior Leaders, signing off the Year 9 options choices annually and visits to the school.

Heads of Department monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school through department meeting discussions, learning walks, lesson drop-ins and book trawls. They also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

The Local Governing Body will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and reviewing it annually. Any changes will be made in line with legislation.

Ratified by Governing Body	SVCS LGB
Date	28 November 2023