



Notley High School & Braintree Sixth Form

Curriculum Policy

Curriculum & Standards Committee

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Designated Postholder:	Dr Catherine Cusick, Head of School

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Key Stage 3 Principles

At Notley High School & Braintree Sixth Form, we are committed to a three-year Key Stage 3 that ensures we have time to create confident and independent learners. When students join us in Year 7, they begin a five-year journey to GCSE success, with each year having its own distinct identity. Our curriculum is broad, balanced and inclusive. We establish a firm foundation to build on, as students gather the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to thrive in an education system that is increasingly linear and based on written examinations.

Key Stage 3 is unique as it involves no external exams. We use this freedom to innovate and design a curriculum that captures the imagination of all our students, and fosters enjoyment and enthusiasm for a wide range of subjects. Our students study English, Mathematics, Science, Computer Science, Music, Drama, Art, Personal Development Time PDT, Physical Education, History, Geography, Religious Education, Modern Foreign Languages, Design Technology and Food Technology. In Years 7 and 8 students also follow the Resilience Curriculum. Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are at the core of the curriculum, and many interventions are centred around these areas as they allow us to communicate effectively, make decisions and solve problems.

We do more than this. We build cultural capital and prepare citizens for the demands of life in the 21st century. Our learning extends beyond the classroom. We actively encourage students to take part in a wide range of enrichment opportunities across the curriculum - there is something for everyone. We have a Pledge Passport which students complete in KS3. Throughout the whole curriculum and especially in form time, PDT, and our programmes of student leadership, we instil our ethos:

“We strive to be a supportive and innovative learning community, committed to developing confident, caring and enquiring young people who respect others and have a lifelong love of learning”

alongside our motto,

“Working together, achieving together”.

The role of the tutor is central to this and enables the building of secure and lasting relationships. Careers, employability skills and pathways to success are emphasised from day one. A culture of aspiration permeates everything we do.

We have high expectations, promote a growth mindset and develop independence in students. We build in challenge, aspiration and clarity so students can see their own clear route to success. Positive, critical and formative feedback ensures students understand the next steps needed in order to make progress and achieve highly.

Key Stage 4 Principles

In Key Stage 4, it is important to ensure that students receive an education that is broad, balanced and relevant. GCSE content and skills feature in Year 9 Science and Mathematics lessons.

Our Key Stage 4 curriculum is made up of compulsory (core) subjects and chosen subjects that will enable students to follow courses appropriate to their interests and abilities. Students will follow a total of four option choices in all. We offer a range of qualifications, namely GCSEs, V-Certs, OCR nationals and Cambridge National Certificate. In addition, students complete a KS4 Pledge Passport which builds the pledges made in KS3 and captures the richness of this next significant stage in their learning and development journey.

Firstly, our ambition is for all our students to achieve to the maximum of their potential. This means that we would expect a significant proportion of them to be able to go on to study at sixth form level when they finish Year 11. We know that some of them will not want to, but they will have the choice if they do. The only optional subjects that they must have taken at GCSE in order to take the A Level are languages.

Secondly, this means that many of them will choose to go on to study at university. Competition for places is very high. Universities therefore have to find some way of deciding who should be offered a place. We believe that one way they will do this is to expect that applicants have at least a GCSE grade 4 or better in a modern foreign language, and they should consider very carefully before deciding not to continue with a language – this applies even if at the moment of choosing their options they think they will not go to university later. Despite all of this, it is still their choice, and whilst it is in their best interests to consider very carefully all of the advice they are given, ultimately, they should and must decide. For this reason, the school has not made the study of this subject compulsory.

EBacc Subjects

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) recognises those students that have studied a core of academic subjects – English, Mathematics, Sciences (which includes computing), History or Geography, and a Language.

EBacc subjects are likely to become more important with employers and universities – especially as there are also changes at A Level.

Compulsory (Core) Subjects

GCSE English Language and Literature	2 GCSEs
GCSE science – Combined Science or	2 GCSEs
separate GCSE Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)	3 GCSEs
GCSE Mathematics	1 GCSE

In addition to the above range of GCSE compulsory (core) and chosen subjects, students will have at least two lessons of Physical Education (PE) over a fortnightly timetable and two lessons of Personal Development Time (PDT), which includes a focus on careers education.

The Option Subjects

Students will be asked to express a preference for four subjects (options) from the following list. We strongly recommend that students take subjects from different areas, as this will help provide a broad and balanced education.

Students must choose one of the following subjects:

- Geography
- History
- French
- Spanish
- Computer Science

Other Subjects:

GCSE Art Craft & Design

GCSE Art: Graphic Communication

GCSE Art: Textiles

GCSE Business

Cambridge National Certificate Level 1/2 Child Development

GCSE Computing

Level 1/2 Award Constructing in the Built Environment

Cambridge National Certificate Information Technologies

GCSE Drama

GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition

GCSE French

GCSE Geography

GCSE History

GCSE Media Studies

GCSE Music

GCSE Physical Education

GCSE Product Design

V-Cert Product Design

GCSE Religious Studies (Philosophy, Ethics & Religion)

GCSE Spanish

GCSE Statistics

Key Stage 5 Principles

At Braintree Sixth Form, students choose the courses which best suit their interests and abilities, and which offer them appropriate opportunity for progression. Initial course choices are made via the online application form and all applicants have a counselling meeting to give advice and guidance on their choices.

In addition to their A Level studies, all students will follow a programme of enrichment that takes place on a Wednesday afternoon and includes opportunities for a range of extra-curricular activities and sports. Students also follow a programme of activities designed to develop competencies in organisation, teamwork and communication skills.

The current offer, subject to cohort size, is:

A Level Art Craft & Design
A Level Biology
A Level Business Studies
A Level Chemistry
A Level Computer Science
A Level Design Technology - Product Design
A Level Drama and Theatre Studies
A Level Economics
A Level English Language and Literature
A Level English Language
A Level English Literature
A Level French
A Level Geography
A Level Geology
A Level Government & Politics
A Level History
A Level Law
A Level Mathematics/Further Mathematics
A Level Media Studies
A Level Music
A Level Physics
A Level Psychology
A Level Religious Studies
A Level Sociology
A Level Spanish
Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Applied Science
BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Performing Arts
BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Sport
EDUQAS Level 3 Applied Diploma in Tourism
OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Diploma in Business
OCR Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Health and Social Care