

## 1. Aims and Background

Wycombe Abbey was founded in 1896 to provide girls with a holistic education in a Church of England setting. Our curriculum is informed by this background and framed by the eight principal values of **trust, encouragement, mutual respect, dynamism, excellence, innovation, service and balance**. In particular, the School actively 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.

The aim is to provide a sound base in core academic subjects whilst treating every pupil as an individual. Committed to academic excellence and future-focussed approach pupils are prepared for success at School, and also at university and their careers beyond. Five academic qualities categorise successful learners; *Risk Taking, Resourceful, Determination, Reflection and Development*, and these are embedded within the teaching and learning.

A broad range of rigorously academic disciplines are offered, with greater choice as pupils move through the year groups. Pupils achieve excellent results in public examinations and the staff add considerable value. All pupils go on to higher education, generally at top-performing universities in the UK, the USA and elsewhere.

A comprehensive programme of Careers Guidance is offered throughout the school, appropriate to the needs of each year group and also tailored to pupils' individual needs.

## 2. Breadth and Balance of the Curriculum

The curriculum provides all pupils with the opportunity to learn and make progress, delivering subject matter which is appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of our pupils.

### 2.1 UIII to UV

The Key Stage 3 (UIII to UIV) and 4 (LV and UV) curriculum at Wycombe Abbey is designed to ensure that pupils experience linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education.

In UIII-UIV (Years 7-9) pupils take a wide variety of subjects, with the only option being the number and combination of Modern Foreign Languages and Creative subjects which they study in UIV. They select two or three languages from French, Spanish, German and Chinese. In UIV, they also select two or three from Drama, Music, Art and DT. In LV-UV (Years 10-11) most pupils study 10 or 11 subjects, which are a mixture of GCSE and IGCSE courses. English, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics are compulsory subjects. In addition, pupils select four or five from the range of optional subjects, including at least one Modern Foreign Language and one Humanities subject. This ensures pupils complete this element of their schooling with well-developed speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils are given extensive individual guidance when choosing options and emphasis is placed on breadth.

Pupils in UIII-LV attend weekly lessons in personal, social, health, citizenship and economic education (Wellbeing). The course reflects the School's ethos and lays emphasis upon our principal values. Within

this context pupils are given the opportunity to discuss the issues facing all children of their age. The School subscribes to the 'healthy body, healthy mind' maxim, and so all pupils attend weekly lessons in Physical Education. Pupils may pursue their own interests in PE as they move up the School.

## **2.2 Sixth Form (LVI and UVI)**

In the Sixth Form pupils should have a free choice and have the opportunity to specialise or retain breadth. Again, pupils are given significant individual guidance with particular focus on the entry requirements and expectations of universities and on pupils' higher education and career aspirations. Pupils choose four subjects from a range of up to 24. In addition, all Sixth Form pupils follow an enrichment programme entitled the Carrington Award; as part of this they all write an extended essay which may lead to an Extended Project Qualification.

The Carrington Award includes a programme of weekly Sixth Form lectures; LVI Management, Leadership and Communication Conferences; Community Service; and an extensive and carefully planned programme to support Higher Education applications, including a tailored approach to US university applications. There is a series of Wellbeing events, focusing on topics such as self-defence, careers education and drugs and alcohol education.

## **3. Prep**

The curriculum at all levels is supported by the setting of regular prep (homework). Teachers are expected to set prep which enhances and furthers the learning that takes place in the classroom. For UIII-UIV pupils there is a weekly prep timetable. In the UIII there are timetabled and supervised prep sessions, but all other pupils are expected to take a great deal of responsibility for managing their own time. Extra support is given for pupils who need it to complete their prep.

## **4. Beyond the Academic Curriculum**

The academic curriculum at all levels is supported by a comprehensive programme of co-curricular activities which encompasses sport, music, drama, dance, art, engineering, debating, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, Tycoon Enterprise competition, Model United Nations and much more. There are more than 30 sports on offer to pupils and the aim is to provide competitive opportunities for all pupils whatever their level of skill. The choices provide opportunities for pupils to develop their skills as an individual and as part of the team. Even in the case of sports such as fencing and squash an emphasis is placed on team ethos. Equally, in music and drama all abilities are catered for. All pupils have access to instrumental music lessons whether they are just starting out or have already gained their Diploma, and the Music department provides a wide range of occasions to perform, from small lunchtime concerts to grand performances at venues both in the UK and elsewhere. The Drama department offers performance opportunities in most year groups. A dance show, called Highlights, presents performances from more than 120 pupils.

### **4.1 Chapel and Charities**

All pupils attend regular Chapel services. These services not only contribute to spiritual education but are also closely linked with our charity work. Chapel appeals are often designated to House charities, while the Chaplain, as chair of the Charities Committee, directs operations for whole-school causes. There are strong links with schools both near and far as part of its community outreach programme, including Cresser Community College in High Wycombe and St Patrick's College in Vanuatu.

### **4.2 Educational Visits**

Educational trips are a regular part of life at Wycombe Abbey. Most residential trips, especially overseas trips, take place during school holidays; while academic departments often take year groups on day trips during term time to museums, theatrical performances, outdoor education centres and the like. There are four designated activity days each year where pupils engage in academic enrichment. Pupils are also encouraged by their teachers to enter local and national competitions (e.g. Maths Challenge, Salters' Chemistry Competition), and some departments offer competitions within School (e.g. the English

Department runs several creative writing competitions). Many departments offer societies such as the Business Breakfast Club (Economics department), Debating Society (Pupil led) or Medical Society (Science department).

#### **4.3 Careers**

Careers advice and guidance plays a central role at Wycombe Abbey and is delivered across all years through a combination of tutor time activities and Wellbeing sessions for UIII-LV, General Studies sessions for UV and the Carrington Award programme for LVI-UVI. Pupils have the opportunity to hear from inspirational speakers through regular Career Spotlight events, year-specific events such as the LIV Careers Day and the annual Careers Seminar, compulsory for UV – UVI inclusive. In addition, pupils have the opportunity to attend Career Insight events out of school, for example a LVI visit to a law firm. In UV all pupils take the Morrisby Profile and review their results and aspirations with an independent careers adviser. UV and Sixth Form pupils attend workshops on networking and maximising their personal impact and Sixth Form pupils are able to connect with a mentor through the alumnae network. Careers guidance is also integrated within the curriculum, for example engineering challenges in Physics and author visits in English. Work experience is encouraged and all pupils are supported in order to gain suitable work experience placements, usually in the summer following UV or LVI years.

#### **4.4 Wellbeing and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE)**

All provisions and activities are a central part of our holistic education which prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. They are important as part of a preventative education approach, in tandem with the academic curriculum, in ensuring that pupils' educational, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills are appropriately developed. These are underpinned by the implementation of the behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence-based RSE delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. The aim of the RSE programme is to help and support pupils through their physical, emotional and moral development. (Refer to the Relationship and Sex Education policy for further information).

#### **4.5 Digital Resources and Online Safety**

Online safety training is integrated and aligned as part of the whole School approach to safeguarding and curriculum planning. All pupils are given opportunities to apply and develop their ICT capability through the use of ICT tools to support their learning in all subjects.

Pupils are taught what positive, healthy and respectful online relationships look like, the effects of their online actions on others and knowing how to recognise and display respectful behaviour online. This includes how to use technology safely, responsibly, respectfully and securely, and where to go for help and support when they have concerns about content or contact on the internet or other online technologies.

All pupils have a device to use in School to use in lessons and for private study and communications. We take seriously the training of all staff and pupils in online safety.

### **5. Monitoring Learning and Progress**

Learning and progress are carefully monitored by teachers, Housemistresses, Tutors, Heads of Section and Senior Leadership, who all take an active role in ensuring pupils develop and reach their potential.

All staff subscribe to the view that pupils should gradually take more responsibility for their own learning as they progress through the School.

Monitoring takes the form of regular class work, prep and tests, as well as annual School examinations.

#### **5.1 Cycle of Reporting**

Wycombe Abbey has an annual cycle of reporting which ensures parents are kept informed of the academic and co-curricular progress of their child. The aim is to provide incisive, relevant and up-to-date comments and data which assess a pupil's current performance and determine how they can continue to make progress. Given this aim, the information is also of significant importance to pupils and to the staff who support them: Housemistresses, Tutors, Heads of Section, etc. Usually reporting is shared with a pupil, undertaking to ensure that they are given guidance on how to interpret it.

The cycle of reporting includes formal written reports, tracking grades for achievement and effort, School examination results and parents' meetings. The reporting plan is published and includes a description of the achievement and effort grades awarded for tracking.

## 5.2 Parents' Meetings

Parents have the opportunity to meet with all their child's academic teachers and some co-curricular teachers on an annual basis. Parents of pupils in U11 and LVI have a further opportunity to meet their child's teachers. Hopefully all parents will try to attend these meetings, but alternative arrangements can be made for parents where necessary. Many of these meetings are conducted via an online video platform, rather than in person. In addition to these annual meetings, a meeting with Learning Enhancement teachers is held annually.

LV-UVI pupils attend parents' meetings with their parents.

## 6. Learning Enhancement and Differentiation

The School is able to support fully pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including those with a Statement or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC). It is also able to support pupils who have English as an Additional Language (EAL), as long as they have good fluency in English. Most SEND pupils have an Individualised Education Passport (IEP) which sets out for staff the difficulties an individual faces and what they should do to support the pupil. All our policies, including the Admissions Policy and the Behaviour, Discipline and Rewards Policy, take account of pupils with SEND. See our SEND Policy, EAL Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy for Pupils for further details.

Staff use a variety of methods to differentiate where necessary, and certain subjects and at certain levels are divisioned (set) by ability to ensure all pupils are fully supported and stretched. University preparation lessons are optional in the Sixth Form and encourage pupils to stretch themselves academically in preparation for the more independent learning style at university.

## 7. Able, Gifted and Talented Pupils

Pupils at Wycombe are identified as able, gifted and talented if they work at a level that is above most of their peers in their context, and if they demonstrate creative thinking, intuition, initiative and inquisitiveness.

Pupils are identified as able, gifted and talented following recommendations from subject staff. Subject teachers are expected to use their professional judgement when identifying pupils. Recommendations are reviewed each academic year for all pupils.

Member of staff	Deputy Head (Academic)
Reviewed	August 2023

**Related Policies:**

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Online safety

Work Experience and Career Education

Relationship and Sex Education