ABBEY COLLEGE IN MALVERN
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Curriculum Policy

Related Documents Include:

- Introduction to the Academic Courses Offered at the Abbey College
- Curriculum Overviews for the individual courses (see relevant files)
- Schemes of Work for the individual courses (see relevant files)
- Managing Academic Performance Policy
- Abbey College Teacher Development Policy
- English as an Additional Language Support Policy
- Academic Staff Handbook
- Homework Policy
- Citizenship Policy, Scheme of Work and Lesson Plans
- PSHEE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) Policy
- SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development) Policy
- Parental Questionnaire (including opt-out RSE question)
- Applying for University – Student Help Sheet
- Examination Papers

Legal Status:

- This is a statutory policy for the purposes of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Schedule, Part 1, particularly paragraphs 2 and 3.
- The policy is supported by the College's curriculum plans, course overviews and subject schemes of work. These documents must be implemented effectively and must take account of pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs, including pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.
- The curriculum and its supporting documents must not undermine 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 College has regard to the Department for Education's Independent School Standards Guidance (April 2026), the current ISI Inspection Handbook and applicable statutory guidance, including the revised Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance effective from 1 September 2026.

Principal Legislative and Regulatory References

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Schedule, Part 1, paragraphs 2, 2A and 3 (as amended and in force).
- Education Act 1996, including section 8 (compulsory school age).
- Equality Act 2010, including the duties relating to disability and the protected characteristics.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, as applicable.
- Department for Education, Independent School Standards Guidance for Independent Schools, April 2026.
- Department for Education, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance, effective 1 September 2026.

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- Independent Schools Inspectorate, current Inspection Handbook and Framework.

This list is not exhaustive. The College will have regard to any subsequent amendments, replacement guidance and other applicable legal requirements.

This policy should be read alongside the separate policies and arrangements listed above. It does not replace the College's separate written RSE policy.

Monitoring and Review

- The Principal will undertake continuous monitoring, refinement and audit of the curriculum and its implementation.
- The Principal will formally review this policy at least annually, and sooner if significant changes to the curriculum, pupil profile, systems, legislation, regulatory requirements or relevant guidance make this necessary.
- Monitoring will consider the quality and breadth of curriculum coverage; the suitability of provision for individual pupils; teaching and assessment; pupil progress and outcomes; the effectiveness of support and reasonable adjustments; and feedback from pupils and parents.
- The College will retain appropriate evidence of curriculum planning, schemes of work, assessment, progress, intervention and review. Curriculum documentation will be available in English for inspection.

- The next official date for review is **December 2027**

Introduction

Abbey College in Malvern aims to provide a thorough cultural, linguistic and academic preparation for boys and girls from non-British educational backgrounds who wish to join the British educational system. The College also provides academic programmes for students preparing for further and higher education. The curriculum is the responsibility of the Principal (Academic).

The College is an independent school and exercises its independence in the choice and organisation of courses, while ensuring that the curriculum and its delivery meet the Independent School Standards. The curriculum is designed around the College's pupils, who may join at different points in the academic year and may have a wide range of prior educational experiences, first languages and future aspirations.

Objectives

1. Through small class groups, qualified and suitably experienced teachers, and appropriate resources, to bring each student's knowledge and proficiency in spoken and written English, general academic subjects (especially Mathematics and Science), and cultural fluency to a level at which he or she can function successfully in a traditional British independent school or higher education institution (HEI).
2. To achieve the best possible academic, personal and social development for each student, according to his or her individual abilities, aptitudes and needs, and to provide an extra-curricular

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and cultural programme which prepares students for entry to traditional British independent schools or HEIs.

3. To prepare each student for, and enter him or her for, relevant and accessible British public examinations, where appropriate.
4. To provide each student, as appropriate, with the advice, assistance and qualifications required to select and gain entry to a traditional British independent school or HEI for the next stage of his or her career in the British educational system.
5. To report in writing to parents of current students on the progress of their sons/daughters at least once each term, supplemented by other academic feedback where appropriate.
6. To concentrate on providing an extensive core curriculum, including speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy, with other compulsory and optional subjects available in line with the Independent School Standards and the College's educational aims. Provision will take account of the linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative areas of education, as well as timetable constraints, academic and linguistic ability, and future academic need.
7. To provide a range of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) courses to meet the needs of students for whom English is not their first language.
8. To provide additional subjects or subjects at a higher level where appropriate, including additional languages or higher Mathematics, in order to extend more able students or provide further academic assistance for students who need additional support.
9. To ensure that an effective curriculum is in place in relation to student need. The College will continually assess performance through a variety of formal and informal methods and use the outcomes to inform teaching, learning and future targets; provide academic feedback to students and staff through regular internal reporting; seek further appropriate educational assessment where a student appears to need particular additional support; and use the results to plan a more effective learning experience.
10. To seek oral student feedback about differences between the education system of their home country and that of the United Kingdom, and about teaching styles and methods experienced at the College, so that teachers can understand difficulties and plan more effective learning.
11. To be sufficiently flexible academically to allow students to enter the College at the beginning of the Autumn, Spring or Summer Terms, subject to an assessment of suitability and the availability of an appropriate programme.
12. To provide PSHEE and RSE instruction in line with the College ethos, the ages and needs of students, relevant statutory requirements and the particular needs of international students, many of whom normally remain at the College for one academic year.
13. To provide help and advice regarding future schooling, careers and higher education in line with the needs and age-range of students.
14. To encourage and facilitate the movement of students to British independent schools and HEIs as soon as they are linguistically, emotionally, educationally and culturally ready to do so, and have become familiar with the basic curriculum offered at such schools.

Students of Compulsory School Age

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. In England, the school leaving date is the last Friday in June in the academic year in which the pupil turns 16. The separate participation duty for young people up to the age of 18 should not be confused with compulsory school age.

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Students of compulsory school age receive full-time supervised education. At Abbey College, this means that they have a full, supervised programme during the school day (normally 08:30 to 16:15, Monday to Friday), with no unsupervised free periods. Any study or other non-taught periods form part of a planned and supervised programme, and students remain under the supervision of a responsible adult.

Students of compulsory school age usually attend GCSE or IGCSE courses. In some cases, students may need to develop their language skills on the Pre-sessional programme before joining GCSE or IGCSE courses in academic subjects. Individual programmes are designed according to prior attainment, age, aptitude, English-language proficiency and intended progression.

There may be exceptions to the usual course pattern. For example, a student aged fifteen may be accepted onto an A-Level course where the student has already completed compulsory education in their own country and the course is suitable. The College will assess each such case individually and ensure that the programme meets the student's educational needs and any applicable requirements.

Curriculum Areas for Students of Compulsory School Age

The College's curriculum provides experience across all of the areas specified in paragraph 2(2)(a) of the Independent School Standards. The precise subjects and balance of study are adapted to each student's age, aptitude, prior learning, English-language proficiency, intended destination and length of stay. The College's course overviews and schemes of work identify how these areas are covered at each relevant stage.

Linguistic: Developing communication skills and command of language through listening, speaking, reading and writing. English-language development is central to the College's provision. Where appropriate, students may also study other languages.

Mathematical: Developing calculation, understanding of relationships and patterns in number and space, logical thinking and the ability to express mathematical ideas clearly. Learning includes explanation, practical activity, exploration and discussion.

Scientific: Increasing knowledge and understanding of biological, chemical and physical concepts and developing scientific enquiry skills, including observing, forming hypotheses, conducting investigations and recording and evaluating findings.

Technological: Developing appropriate technological and digital skills, including the use of information and communication technology, digital resources, planning and communicating ideas, and understanding the role of technology in everyday life and work.

Human and Social: Developing understanding of people, places and the environment, and how human actions, now and in the past, have influenced events and conditions. History, Geography, Citizenship and relevant elements of PSHEE make contributions to this area.

Physical: Developing physical control, coordination, tactical skills and imaginative responses, and helping students to evaluate and improve their performance. Students also acquire knowledge and understanding of fitness, health and safe participation. Physical Education is timetabled and is not treated merely as an extended break.

Aesthetic and Creative: Developing the processes of making, composing, designing and inventing. Art, music, drama, literature and other creative activities contribute to personal, imaginative and practical responses. The College ensures that this area is meaningfully represented in the curriculum.

The Independent School Standards do not prescribe a separate subject of Religious Education for independent schools. Nevertheless, the curriculum and wider life of the College provide age-appropriate opportunities to learn about religions and belief systems, and to develop respect for

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people with different faiths and beliefs. This supports the College's SMSC provision and its duty to promote fundamental British values.
To see how these areas are incorporated into each course, please refer to the individual Course Overviews and Schemes of Work.

To see how these areas are incorporated into each course please refer to the individual **Course Overviews**.

Speaking, Listening, Literacy and Numeracy

The College places particular emphasis on the acquisition and development of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. These skills are taught explicitly where appropriate and reinforced across subjects. Teachers support students in understanding subject-specific vocabulary, expressing ideas accurately, reading for meaning, writing coherently, interpreting information and applying numeracy in relevant contexts.

Students' English-language development is considered when planning lessons and assessing progress. The College does not assume that a student's ability to understand a subject is accurately reflected by written English alone; teachers use appropriate methods to establish understanding while continuing to develop the student's English.

Personal, social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE), RSE, Citizenship & SMSC

The College provides a planned programme of PSHEE which reflects its aims and ethos and prepares students for adult life. It is adapted to the ages, aptitudes, maturity, cultural backgrounds and needs of students, including international students who may be unfamiliar with aspects of life in the United Kingdom.

The PSHEE curriculum encourages respect for other people, with particular regard, in an age-appropriate way, to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. Teaching must not encourage discrimination or disrespect towards any person because of a protected characteristic.

The College provides relationships and sex education (RSE) to secondary-age pupils in accordance with paragraph 2A of the Independent School Standards and has regard to the DfE statutory guidance in force from 1 September 2026. The College maintains a separate written RSE Policy explaining what is taught, when and how, and the arrangements for parent consultation, publication and requests for withdrawal from sex education. Parents may request that a pupil be excused from sex education taught as part of RSE, subject to the provisions of the Regulations and the decision-making arrangements set out in the RSE Policy. Parents cannot withdraw pupils from relationships education or from sex education taught as part of the science curriculum.

For an independent school, the statutory health-education requirement in paragraph 2A(1)(c) applies to academies, not to independent schools. Abbey College addresses health and wellbeing topics through its PSHEE curriculum as part of the requirement in paragraph 2(2)(d) of the Independent School Standards.

Citizenship enables students to make informed decisions, take responsibility for their own lives and contribute to the communities in which they live. It includes awareness of current affairs,

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government, the law, democratic processes, rights and responsibilities, and cultural events and practices.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development is incorporated into teaching and the wider welfare and co-curricular life of the College. The College 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. These values are reflected in curriculum planning, classroom discussion and the way students are prepared to participate in life in modern Britain.

Please refer to the separate PSHEE, RSE, Citizenship and SMSC policies, schemes of work and lesson plans for further detail.

Careers Education & Guidance

Students receiving secondary education have access to accurate, up-to-date and impartial careers guidance. Guidance is intended to enable students to make informed choices from a broad range of career options and to encourage them to fulfil their potential. It is not restricted by assumptions based on sex, race, disability, religion or belief, or any other protected characteristic.

Careers education includes helping students to understand their strengths, interests and areas for development; exploring different careers and employment sectors; considering further and higher education, training and other progression routes; and obtaining individual advice appropriate to their circumstances. Where practicable and suitable, students are encouraged to engage with universities, employers, careers events and relevant work-related opportunities.

Advice on GCSE and post-16 subject choices is provided at the appropriate stage. Students intending to progress to higher education receive support with course and university choices and with applications, including UCAS where applicable. The College's careers guidance arrangements and related student information provide further detail.

Differentiation & Assessment

Teachers are aware of the importance of differentiation and this is reflected in their schemes of work and lesson planning. Teaching takes account of students' ages, aptitudes, prior attainment, language proficiency and individual needs. Work should be sufficiently challenging to enable able students to extend their learning, while providing appropriate explanation, scaffolding, practice and support for students who need it.

Assessment is a continuous process and includes formal and informal methods, such as questioning, classwork, homework, coursework, practical work, tests, internal examinations and public examination results. Assessment is used to identify what students know and can do, monitor progress, identify gaps or misconceptions, set targets and inform subsequent teaching.

Teachers maintain appropriate records of assessment and progress. The College reviews the progress of individual students and relevant groups, including students receiving additional support and students who speak English as an additional language. Where progress is below expectation, the College considers appropriate action, which may include changes to teaching, additional support, further assessment or consultation with parents.

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The College uses student feedback, work scrutiny, internal reporting and review of examination outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and curriculum provision. The Principal oversees this process through the College's academic monitoring and performance arrangements.

Students Studying Further Education Courses

The College offers a range of further education courses, including A Levels, Pre-University Foundation courses and a Pre-Medical Foundation course. Course availability and combinations are subject to the student's prior qualifications, academic suitability, English-language proficiency, timetable and the requirements of the relevant awarding body.

A-Levels

Students usually study three or four A-Level subjects in their first year, in addition to EFL lessons (including academic English and general English to develop their language skills) and Citizenship where appropriate. Students are entered for the relevant examinations in accordance with the examination timetable and awarding-body requirements.

The structure of A-Level qualifications varies by subject and awarding body. Most A-Level qualifications are linear, with assessment at the end of the course; an AS qualification does not normally contribute to the final A-Level grade unless the relevant specification expressly provides otherwise. The College will explain the structure and assessment arrangements for each subject to students.

Students receive careers and university guidance from the first year. This includes opportunities, where available, to attend university fairs and speak to representatives of universities and other providers. In the second year, students receive individual advice and support with applications to higher education, including UCAS applications where appropriate. IELTS or other English-language testing may be recommended or required according to the student's intended progression route and the requirements of the receiving institution.

Foundation Courses

Students follow several subjects related to their chosen core specialism and, in addition, attend EFL lessons and Citizenship classes where appropriate. The programme is designed to provide the academic knowledge, subject-specific skills, study skills and English-language proficiency required for progression to the next stage of education.

Students receive careers and university guidance during their course, including support with identifying suitable progression routes and completing applications, including UCAS applications where appropriate.

Study Skills

At Abbey College, a high priority is placed on the development of Study Skills, provision for which is built into each student's timetable. Additional English lessons are incorporated into student timetables where appropriate, giving students the opportunity to learn how to use a dictionary and

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other reference resources effectively, expand their vocabulary and understand ordinary English and specialist vocabulary encountered in their subjects.

A thorough understanding of vocabulary is essential to learning. Misunderstood words can cause students to lose confidence, become anxious or disengage from a subject. Students may otherwise attempt to memorise material without understanding it or being able to apply it. Teachers therefore place emphasis on explaining, checking and revisiting subject-specific vocabulary, definitions and concepts, and on enabling students to demonstrate understanding and apply what they have learned to unfamiliar questions and real-world contexts.

Homework & Prep

All students, irrespective of age, are expected to complete some Prep each weekday evening (except Friday), as appropriate to their course and individual circumstances.

Prep work is an essential part of the learning journey. It affords students time to review and assimilate new information and to apply that learning to homework, coursework and classwork.

Weekday Prep is an individual study period designed to allow students to develop the skills to work independently and in a quiet environment. It is usually 1.5 hours Monday to Thursday.

Students may also undertake Prep during the weekend, preparing for forthcoming lessons and completing work for the following week. They are encouraged to organise their books, learning materials and, where applicable, uniform for the next day or week. These routines help students develop the independence and organisation required for further and higher education.

The amount and nature of Prep will be appropriate to the student's age, course, timetable and individual needs. Please refer to the Homework Policy for further detail.

Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The College's curriculum is designed to provide access and opportunity for all students. Curriculum plans and schemes of work take account of the ages, aptitudes and needs of all students, including students with SEND and those with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. Where it is necessary and reasonable to adapt the curriculum or the way in which it is delivered to meet an individual student's needs, the College will consider appropriate adjustments and support, consulting parents and the student as appropriate.

- If a student has an identified special educational need or disability, the College will consider the student's needs and take account of relevant information, including any EHC plan, professional advice and information provided during admission. The College will comply with applicable legal duties and will make reasonable adjustments where required.
- If a student displays signs of having additional needs, the teacher will raise the matter with the Principal. The student's needs will be considered through appropriate assessment and discussion, and in many instances suitable resources, teaching strategies and educational opportunities can be provided within the teaching group.

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- Where a student's needs require further investigation or support, the College may, in consultation with parents and as appropriate, seek advice from relevant external agencies or suitably qualified specialists and consider additional support or specialist teaching.

The College monitors whether support and adjustments are effective by considering the student's access to learning, participation, progress and wellbeing. The Accessibility Plan and SEND Policy should be read alongside this policy.

Students with an Education, Health and Care Plan

Where a student has an EHC plan, the College will consider the plan's specified needs and provision and will work within the scope of the College's registration, resources and expertise. The College will discuss with parents and, where appropriate, the local authority whether the student's needs can be met. The College will not assume that it can deliver provision which is beyond its resources or the scope of its registration. Where the student's needs cannot appropriately be met, this will be addressed openly during the admissions or placement-consultation process.

The term 'statement of special educational needs' in older documents has been replaced by 'EHC plan' under the current statutory framework.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

The College is committed to providing students who require English-language support with appropriate teaching and assistance. English-language proficiency is assessed and considered when students are placed into courses and groups. Support may include EFL lessons, academic English, vocabulary development, language support within subject lessons and advice on effective communication.

At Year 10, students may sit an IGCSE in English as an Additional Language where suitable. Year 11 students may focus on IGCSE English as a Second Language, subject to their prior attainment, language needs and examination suitability. Course and examination choices are made individually. The College has a separate English as an Additional Language Support Policy and established practices to guide students towards more effective communication and access to the wider curriculum.

Curriculum Documentation & Implementation

This policy sets out the College's overall approach to the curriculum. It is supported by course overviews, curriculum plans and detailed subject schemes of work which identify the content to be taught, the intended sequence and the expected learning for each course or group. These supporting documents must be consistent with this policy and must be implemented effectively.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that curriculum documentation is maintained, reviewed and available for inspection. Teachers are responsible for following the relevant course plans and schemes of work, adapting their teaching appropriately and recording relevant assessment and progress information. Any significant gaps in curriculum coverage, staffing, resources or student access must be brought to the attention of the Principal. The College's curriculum is reviewed in the light of pupil outcomes, feedback, examination performance, changes in awarding-body specifications, statutory and regulatory developments and the needs of current and prospective students.

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