Curriculum Policy

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Legal framework

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014 (Part 3)
- DfE Independent Schools Standards Guidance Update (April 2026)
- Education Act 2002

Availability of this policy

A copy of this policy may be downloaded from our website or is available on request from the school office, St Paul's Girls' School, Brook Green, London, W6 7BS (tel: 0207 603 2288). This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to all members of the school's community, including students, parents and employees. The policy summarises the curriculum that the school will follow in the 2026-27 academic year for both current and prospective stakeholders. The content and scope of the curriculum are reviewed regularly and are therefore subject to change. In keeping with our commitment to the development of independent thinking, greater flexibility is built into the curriculum as students' progress through the school.

What this policy is for

This policy aims to:

- Set out the curriculum in the Lower, Middle and Senior School in 2026-27
- Explain how class groups and form groups are composed and when they will change and any setting arrangements
- Set out the public examinations and School Directed Courses (SDCs) that the school follows
- Set out the non-examined curriculum on offer through the Lower, Middle and Senior School.

Other relevant school policies

- Learning support policy
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) policy including Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (SMSC) policy

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Aims and objectives

1.1 The school aims to give all students at St Paul's Girls' School (the school) an exceptional education. Central to our ethos are the development of the mind and the pursuit of excellence. In a climate that fosters academic ambition, the school encourages students to be curious, independent thinkers, to boldly challenge conventional wisdom, to debate complex issues and to take responsibility for their own learning, working co-operatively with others and making an active and sustained contribution to school life. Teachers and students alike are scholars and lifelong learners, and our collaborative staff room environment fosters inter-departmental and cross-curricular links, shored up by intentional planning in the curriculum. Students are taught to show respect for everyone in the community and to develop the self-confidence, resilience and compassion which will inform all aspects of their wider lives. Within the school and beyond, they are encouraged to show initiative, to make informed judgements and seize the opportunity to explore a wide range of academic, cultural, creative, aesthetic and sporting pursuits. An education at St Paul's involves the acquisition of excellent study habits, which together with an enquiring mind form the basis of an intellectual adventure of a lifetime. The curriculum has been developed with these objectives in mind.

1.2 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education of all students is fostered through the open, friendly, tolerant and respectful culture of the school. Frequent whole school or year group assemblies and the PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) and RSE (Relationship and Sex Education curriculum delivered by form tutors and visiting specialists on a weekly basis provide key avenues for delivery and discussion of these themes. A broad and rich academic curriculum provides numerous explicit and indirect ways in which spiritual, moral, social and cultural ideas are developed and investigated, most notably through the religious studies curriculum. The fundamental British values of democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and the mutual respect and tolerance of people of different faiths and beliefs are actively promoted through the pastoral system, the curriculum and the co-curriculum. All these principles are supported by our culture of respect for scholarship and the views of others within classrooms and through the extensive programme of co-curricular activities throughout the school. For more detail of how the curriculum supports spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and promotes fundamental British values, please see the PSHE (including RSE) policy and the SMSC policy. The curriculum respects the protected characteristics under Section 4 of the 2010 Equality Act and does not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

The academic curriculum

Please read in conjunction with the curriculum map at Appendix 1.

2.1 In **year 7 (MIV)** all students study English, mathematics, history, geography, computer science and creative technology, Latin, religious studies, art and design, drama, music, physical education, combined science and our Discovering Languages course. The Discovering Languages course introduces basic concepts in linguistics, unpicking common aspects of different languages and encouraging a focus on 'how we learn' languages. All students then undertake three seven-week preliminary courses in German, Mandarin Chinese and Russian to gain a flavour of three different language families. In the spring term, students pick their first modern language (ML1) which remains part of their core curriculum through to GCSE/ IGCSE level from a choice of French, German and Mandarin Chinese, with the option to switch to Italian or Spanish ML1 at a later date. Academic classes are comprised of a small number of students from each form group to allow greater opportunities for students to mix within their year group. The composition of form groups and academic classes changes at the end of year 7 and year 8 to enable students to have wider social interaction within their year group and to create a different class dynamic.

2.2 From **year 8 (UIV)** onwards, biology, chemistry and physics are taught separately by subject specialists. Mathematics classes are broadly streamed into sets by performance to date from the start of year 8 through to IGCSE and are blocked within the timetable so that setting decisions can be reviewed at appropriate

stages. We do not set by ability in other subjects. Students select a second modern language (ML2) from a choice of French, German, Italian, Mandarin Chinese, Russian or Spanish. Our computer science and creative technology course in years 7, 8 and 9 allows students to engage with new technologies, coding, physical computing, robotics and virtual reality in an innovative and practical manner as these new technologies evolve.

2.3 In **year 9 (LV)**, the start of the Middle School, students continue studying all subjects and start the IGCSE science specifications. From year 9 (LV) to year 11 (VI), the form group remains constant, and the form tutor will remain the same for continuity, where possible.

2.4 In the two years leading to GCSE, IGCSE or a school directed course (**year 10 (V), and year 11 (VI)**) a required core of subjects is balanced by an element of choice. The **seven core subjects** are: English, English literature, ML1 (French, German, Italian, Spanish or Mandarin Chinese), mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics. The Free-Standing Mathematics Qualification (FSMQ) additional mathematics specification is embedded in the schemes of work of all mathematics sets; students choose whether to take the FSMQ or not alongside their GCSEs. Academic classes and subject teachers remain the same through years 10 and 11, where possible.

2.5 Students also select **four optional subjects,** and the school makes every effort to accommodate combinations. There are eleven GCSE/IGCSE subjects available: classical Greek, geography, history, Latin, religious studies, ML2 (depending on which of the six modern languages students have taken from year 8), ML3 Spanish (ab initio accelerated course), ML3 Mandarin Chinese (for native speakers needing to perfect writing skills). Art, computer science, creative technology, drama, history of art and music are offered as School Directed Courses (SDCs) which are internally marked and externally moderated. Students can choose up to three School Directed Courses. All other subjects lead to GCSE or IGCSE qualifications. All subjects are graded on the 9-1 grading scale with the exception of Mandarin Chinese which remains unreformed as an A*-G qualification. All students also follow compulsory, non-examined courses in general studies and PE. General studies courses in year 10 (V) last for five weeks. Students follow the same six courses in a carousel that seeks to look in an interdisciplinary manner at the topic of 'Who we are'. Depending on the teachers allocated to teach it, options will vary and may include creative writing, jewellery as costume, psychology etc. In Year 11 (VI), general studies courses last five weeks and students select four options from: sceptics' guide to the universe; media studies; popular music and protest; the geography of disease; marine biology; journalism 101; the other Germany; women in German expressionism.

2.6 As students move into the **Senior School** (**year 12 (VII) and year 13 (VIII)**) 23 subjects are available at A level: economics, government and politics, philosophy and further mathematics can be studied in addition to the subjects offered earlier. All students choose four subjects in year 12 with further mathematics counting as a separate subject. Students do not sit standalone AS levels at the end of year 12 and sit all their public examinations at the end of year 13. An Extended Project Qualification is available in sustainability and in creative technology with study occurring during the St Paul's Senior Programme.

2.7 The St Paul's Senior Programme is undertaken by all year 12 students alongside their four academic subjects on one afternoon each week. At the start of the autumn term, an academic symposium gives all year 12 students the opportunity to discover the nature of independent study in the Senior School from a wide array of presentations by peers in year 13 who have just completed a senior scholarship project over the summer.

2.8 A carousel operates to allow all students to undertake academic electives, a service activity in the local community and a micro-internship programme run by the Senior School team and the Careers department. Additional sessions for all include understanding AI, networking, collaboration and leadership skills, graduate assessment centres, academic research and sources, and interdisciplinary studies. Students choose electives from a very wide range of courses in a non-examined curriculum, gaining an insight into different areas of scholarship and the wider academic interests of the staff. Many of these activities run in partnership

with St Paul's School, allowing our students to work alongside their peers from the boys' school as well as other local partner schools.

2.9 All Senior School students attend the Friday Lecture - a stimulating and varied programme of talks given by eminent speakers from the arts, sciences or public life.

2.10 The summer term of year 12 allows time to explore, plan and research a senior scholarship, mentored individually or in small groups by staff, with many of the students completing and submitting their projects after the summer break.

2.11 The school advises most students to focus on three subject areas in **year 13 (VIII)**. In practice this means that students taking maths and further maths (one domain) would sit two further A levels. Students are strongly encouraged to engage with their academic subjects in greater depth than the subject specifications allow, reading more widely around those areas that they find particularly interesting, and developing a scholarly passion for their academic work. This enriches their understanding, changes how they approach their studies and helps to inform higher education choices. If a student is focusing on a US university application, then it may be advisable for them to preserve more academic breadth. Specialist advice on US college applications is provided from the spring of year 10 (V) onwards. Students taking further mathematics have a timetable equivalent to four subjects in the VIII.

2.12 The school encourages parents to engage with the subject choices their children make, particularly in relation to GCSE and A level courses. In consultation with students, the school is able to accommodate nearly all combinations of subject choices; however, a student's programme of study will ultimately be as the school determines.

2.13 The content and scope of the curriculum are reviewed regularly and are therefore subject to change. In keeping with our commitment to the development of independent thinking, greater flexibility is built into the curriculum as students progress through the school.

The super-curriculum

Personal, social, health and economic education

3.1 Daily tutorial time in small form groups of up to fifteen students allows for one-to one and group discussions and the delivery of PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) in a dedicated lesson on Wednesday each week - a programme that continues throughout the school. Thursday form time is reserved for reflection and discussion of the Wednesday PSHE topic.

Digital literacy

3.2 The Digital Futures Programme is a whole-school initiative that develops every student's confidence, curiosity and responsibility in the digital world. Delivered through centrally timetabled sessions alongside integration within all subjects, including PSHE, the programme has Digital Innovation, with an emphasis on active rather than passive use of technology, at its heart; there are then four inter-related strands: Digital Foundations, Responsible Technology, AI Literacy, and Information Literacy. Each year group engages with the strand most relevant to its stage of development: year 7 (MIV) undertakes a wide-ranging digital induction focused on Digital Foundations before activating laptops in school; Year 8 (UIV) explores Responsible Technology; year 9 (LV) concentrates on AI Literacy; year 10 (VI) focuses on Information Literacy; and year 12 (VII) may extend learning through an optional Digital Innovation Project. Students in the Lower and Middle Schools record their progress in a Digital Passport, collecting stamps as they complete central training on each of the strands.

Co-Curriculum

3.3 Throughout the school, students participate in a wide range of co-curricular activities as a means of developing personal interests and academic passions, collaborative working, and leadership skills. Students

are given many opportunities to develop their public speaking - in assemblies, debating clubs, societies, and when presenting to their peers within the curriculum. Numerous trips in the UK and abroad are on offer to students in all age groups, including specialist language exchanges and students can also apply to take part in an exchange with one of our partner schools. Broader enrichment continues to be an important element of education in the Senior School.

Partnerships

3.4 Our Partnerships programme supports our high expectations on how our students interact with other members of the community and improves their sense of being an integral part of the wider world. Students collaborate in cross-sector projects designed to support both themselves and peers from a range of secondary and primary schools in the area. It opens the door to students learning a variety of essential skills directly tied to employability. The projects are designed to spark creativity, nurture leadership, enhance empathy and encourage entrepreneurship. Students are given access to a range of projects from all subjects; from Music and the Creative Arts, to STEM, Humanities and Modern Foreign Languages. Partnerships projects begin from years 7(MIV) to 13(VIII)

Careers and higher education

3.5 Our careers and higher education programme provides impartial guidance; offers up to date and accurate material; enables students to make informed choices; and encourages students to fulfil their potential whilst avoiding stereotyping, thus preparing students for British society. This scheme is undertaken by all students in years 9 (V) to 13 (VIII). Led by the Director of Higher Education, it is a rich and diverse programme which includes open days and events, seminars for students and parents, university preparation classes and interview practice. Our Director of Careers leads on career profiling, advice on work experience and a wide range of events focusing on careers in particular sectors. Preliminary higher education ambitions and career goals are considered during discussions with students that support the Senior School subject choices process in year 11 (VI).

Curriculum Map 2025-6

	Maths	Further maths	Biology	Chemistry	Physics	English Language	English Literature	French	German	Mandarin	Russian	Italian	Spanish	Latin	Ancient Greek	History	Politics	Geography	Religious Studies/ Philosophy	Economics	Computer Science and Creative Technology	Computer Science	Creative Technology	Art & Design	History of Art	Drama	Music	P E	General studies / St Paul's Programme	Form time / PSHE
MIV	4		combined science 5			4			Discovering Languages 4					3		2		2	2		2			3		2	2	4		1
UIV	3.5		2	2	2	3.5		ML1 2.5						3		2		2	2		2			2		2	2	3.5		1
								ML2 3																						
LV	4		2	2	2	4		ML1 3						2		2		2	2		2			2		2	2	3		1
								ML2 3																						
V	4		triple award 3	3	3	2 IGCSEs 4		ML1 3				ML1 3	ML1 3	3	4	3		3	3			4	4	4	4	4	4	3	1	1
								ML2 3		ML2 4	ML2 4	ML2 3	ML2 3																	
								ML3 4?	ML3 4?	ML3 4		ML3 4?	ML3 4?																	
VI	4		triple award 3	3	3	4		ML1 3 + 1				ML1 3 +1	ML1 3 +1	3	4	3		3	3			4	4	4	4	4	4	3	1	1
								ML2 3 + 1		ML2 4 +1	ML2 4+1	ML2 3 +1	ML2 3 +1																	
								ML3 4+1	ML3 4+1	ML3 4 +1		ML3 4 + 1	4 + 1																	
VII	7	7	7	7	7		7	7+1	7+1	7+1	7+1	7+1	7+1	7	7	7	7	7	7	7		7		7	7	7	7	2	4	1
VIII	8	8	8	8	8		8	7+1	7+1	7+1	7+1	7+1	7+1	8	8	8	8	8	8	8		8		8	8	8	8	2	4	1

IGCSE

GCSE

SDC

Compulsory

The St Paul's Programme in the Senior School

Total periods available per week = 40

"+1" = plus oral lesson. Oral lessons are timetabled in free periods, prep. periods, or during the lunch hour.

General studies in V = carousel of six different five-lesson courses around a central theme.
General studies in VI = choice of eight different five-week courses. Students select four courses.

UIV - maths and ML1 share a single lesson and have that lesson once per fortnight on a rotating basis to free a lesson for CS&CT

UIV - PE and English share a single lesson. PE has autumn HT1, spring HT 2 and summer HT 2: English autumn HT 2, Spring HT 1, Summer HT 1 to free a lesson for CS&CT