St Philip Howard Catholic Voluntary Academy
Curriculum Policy

Reviewed: September 2026
Date for Next Review September 2027

Introduction

1. This document provides a general statement of policy on the Curriculum at St Philip Howard Catholic Voluntary Academy. For detailed statements relating to individual subject areas and to Special Educational Needs please see the policies relating to these areas.

2. In setting out the curriculum policy, we are aware that any statement should reflect the Catholic ethos of the school. Every enterprise in which we engage, therefore takes on an extra dimension. Fidelity to the Gospel is the basis on which the school curriculum is built. Drawing on local and national documents on the curriculum, we would want to include:

    - to develop lively, enquiring minds
    - to acquire and to apply knowledge, skills and abilities
    - to acquire a reasoned set of attitudes
    - to acquire an understanding of the social, economic and political order of the world
    - to appreciate human achievement in a variety of areas
    - to develop self-awareness and a sense of self respect
    - to appreciate human interaction
    - to develop co-operative skills through working in groups

3. We would also wish to espouse the stated aims of the National Curriculum which are:
    - To promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school; and
    - To prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experience of adult life.

4. These two sets of aims need to be interpreted in the light of the ethos and mission statement of the school. It is the fundamental right of all students to have access to the whole curriculum. The right is sacrosanct and prevails independent of age, gender, race, disability or social background. Within this principle, there may, in justice be exceptions. These are provided for in the Education Reform Act and from time to time we will allow certain exemptions in the student's best interests. This will always be done after full consultation. The organisation of groups of pupils within the school will be such that no individual is discriminated against.

5. We wish the curriculum to be an active force in the systematic formation of students' critical faculties; to bring them to a measure of self-control and the ability to choose freely and conscientiously. We wish our students to develop critical techniques, to establish what is good and integrate it into their Christian, human culture.

6. Finally, we are aware that cultural pluralism, so evident in our society, must mean that our students must be adequately prepared to move and live in such a society, and that there is a need to ensure the presence of a Christian mentality within such a society. This said, it is consistent with a Gospel vision of society that all discrimination on any grounds, but particularly of race, gender and disability, will be removed by positive measures and policies, from the school's curriculum.

Curriculum Key Stage 3

7. In as much as the formal curriculum can be translated into subject areas, the following is what we feel is a balanced curriculum for the first two years. All will study Religious Education, English, Mathematics, Science, Design Technology, History, Geography, Modern Foreign Languages, Art, Music, Computer Science, Physical Education (PE), Drama and Food Preparation. We believe that this represents a broad balanced and relevant curriculum and a good foundation for further study.

Curriculum Key Stage 4

8. At Key Stage 4 students will study Religious Education, English, English Literature, Mathematics, Science, Physical Education, as part of the core curriculum. Students will either follow a Separate Science or Science combined. Students in years 10 and 11 will also study subjects in three options which may include: Food, Preparation and Nutrition, Spanish, Music, Engineering, Art, History, Geography, PE (GCSE), Computer Science along with BTEC's Level 2 in Sport, Performing Arts, Health and Social

Extra-Curricular Activities

9. For both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 extra-curricular activities are worthy of mention. The staff at the school are known for the generosity of spirit they have which enables our students to take part in many activities outside the formal curriculum. The part played by interschool games, residential experiences, Duke of Edinburgh programme, music and drama productions, theatre visits, visits to exhibitions etc., must not be underestimated. It is often as part of these experiences that relationships are developed between participants and a great deal of learning takes place.

10. The school delivers the curriculum through a two week (50 period) timetable.

Provision for Students with Special Educational Needs

12. The school's policy is to provide appropriate support in the classroom situation and when necessary in small extracted groups. The school's teaching staff are well supported by Teaching Assistants and all staff are encouraged to use them under the guidance of the SENCO. From time to time there is a need to involve additional resources and we have access to relevant outside agencies when required.