



BALLYCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL

Curriculum Policy

- *Approval by the Board of Governors: **June 2016***
- *The implementation of this policy will be monitored by: Senior Management Team*
- *This policy will be reviewed every two years*





AIMS:

- The provision of a high quality, relevant education for all children.
- To assist all pupils to develop to their full potential by striving to cater for their different strengths, abilities and interests.
- To equip pupils with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for both the present and the future needs of the immediate community and society at large.


OBJECTIVES:

The Curriculum offered by Ballycastle High School seeks to:

- Provide balance and breadth;
- Promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of all pupils;
- Prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The School's curriculum should therefore assist pupils to:

- develop lively, enquiring minds, imagination, the capacity for creative thinking and the ability to question and argue rationally;
- develop practical skills and apply themselves to a variety of tasks;
- acquire appropriate skills in communication, application of number, information technology as well as thinking skills and personal capabilities;
- use number and language effectively;
- address any specific special educational needs;
- develop respect for religious and moral values and tolerance of other races, religions and ways of life;
- develop understanding of the wider community and of the ways in which individuals and groups relate;
- develop as individuals, as citizens and as contributors to the economy;
- prepare for the world of work in which flexible working skills will be needed for success;
- develop self-confidence and obtain satisfaction and personal fulfilment at each stage of development.



It is recognised that the achievement of these aims is not exclusively the responsibility of the School. The School emphasises the need for close co-operation between teaching staff, Board of Governors, parents and other relevant bodies in the community.

CURRICULAR PROVISION

The curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4 will meet the requirements of current legislation in education. It will take into account current views of best practice and will be broad, balanced, coherent and relevant to the needs of pupils.

Within this framework and given legislative and resource constraints the curricular choices open to pupils will be kept as extensive as possible.

The curriculum on offer at each Key Stage will maximise the opportunities for choice, progression and development at the succeeding key stage. The structure of the curriculum will be kept under review.

Future developments will take account of changes in legislation, advice from external agencies, the expressed wishes of parents and members of the wider community and the educational needs of pupils.

The school will continue to develop and maintain structures for liaison with feeder primary schools on curriculum matters.

Years 8 to 10 (Key Stage 3)

All pupils in Key Stage 3 follow a broad and balanced common course in line with the Revised Curriculum. Through the Learning Areas pupils develop their skills and capabilities. The cross-curricular skills of 'Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT' shall be assessed at the end of the school year with reference to levels of progression, specified by the Department of Education. Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities will be assessed as appropriate within Learning Areas.

Key Stage 4

The Entitlement Framework complements the Revised Curriculum by providing access to a wide range of relevant, high-quality examination courses for all pupils from age 14, with the addition of non-examination Physical Education, Learning for Life and Work and Careers Education. This provision is enhanced by collaboration with Cross and Passion College. The Key Stage 4 Subject Choices Booklet provides detailed outlines of all GCSE subjects highlighting course content, assessment, and employability links.



Sixth Form

Entry into Sixth Form is determined by overall GCSE performance together with high achievement in chosen AS options. Records of attendance and behaviour are also taken into consideration. Likewise entry from AS to A2 level will be determined by academic achievement at the end of Year 13. In addition to this, pupils beginning Year 13 sign a Sixth Form Contract which recognises the responsibility both of the school, the pupils and their parents to the learning experience.

At sixth form level the school will provide a range of GCE AS level and A2 courses, in addition to CTEC and BTEC courses. As part of the collaborative Coleraine Area Learning Partnership (CALP), pupils can access courses in cooperation with Cross and Passion College and the Northern Regional College. Choice of course will be guided primarily by the career aspirations of individual pupils in consultation with staff. An enrichment programme is provided where possible, covering a variety of interests which may include: academic, cultural, recreational, practical and community work.

The sixth form curriculum will be kept under review in the light of advice given by DE and examining boards, and of HE entry requirements. The Sixth Form Subject Choices Booklet provides a detailed outline of all A-Level subjects highlighting course content, assessment, and employability links.

CURRICULUM ORGANISATION

The School curriculum is delivered through subject departments. The timetable is organised on the basis of six periods per day over a two week cycle.

In keeping with the School aims, a variety of teaching strategies is encouraged to cater for the range and needs of pupils and to maximise the use of available resources. Pupils with special needs are provided for as appropriate and within the resources available to the School.

To ensure the effective delivery of the curriculum, teachers keep up to date in their subject and related areas by undertaking regular in-service training both inside and outside School.

Homework is set to consolidate classwork and to assist the teacher and pupils in determining depth of understanding. For more details please consult the Homework Policy.

A coherent, broad and balanced curriculum cannot be organised solely within the classroom. There are occasions when the educational experience of pupils is enriched by participation in events outside the classroom. Fieldwork, theatre or industrial visits are organised when considered beneficial to pupils. Similarly, there are occasions when it is appropriate to suspend the normal timetable for

some or all pupils to facilitate curriculum development either within a subject area, or through the involvement of outside agencies.

The curriculum is complemented by Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance to all pupils throughout their school experience.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE IN RELATION TO THE CURRICULUM

In the event of a complaint regarding the curriculum, parents should, in the first instance, write to the Principal. The Principal, in liaison with the Vice-Principal, will seek to resolve the matter.

If a resolution does not occur, parents may write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors who will raise the matter at the next meeting of the Board of Governors.

If a solution is still not arrived at, parents may write to the Chief Executive of the Education Authority, who has the power to invoke a Tribunal.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The school is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for all pupils. Teaching strategies, assessment procedures and examination entry policies will allow all pupils to demonstrate their full potential. Access to subjects will be available equally to boys and girls and the careers education programme will avoid sex stereotyping.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT/ETHOS

A stimulating, stable and supportive climate will be achieved through the pursuit of good personal relationships within the context of a welcoming, well-maintained and attractive environment. The physical surroundings and facilities will be appropriate to the educational needs of the pupils and will take account of the teaching methods and special requirements of particular subjects. Pupils will have opportunities to contribute to the stimulating nature of their surroundings and will participate in the creation of an environment of which they can be proud.



Teachers will take time to talk with and to listen to pupils both inside and outside the classroom. We will maintain systems of communication which are clear, widely known and well understood and encourage openness in discussion. We will work to create a climate of mutual trust and respect and to encourage pupils to take pride in their school, their work and themselves.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

The school will involve the wider community in its activities and will share its resources. We will invite the contributions of those with appropriate knowledge, experience and skills in academic and non-academic activities. Pupils will take part in events, projects, visits and experiences outside school with educational value, and will be encouraged to make contributions to the work of local and national charitable organisations. We will inform pupils about the opportunities and demands of the world of work.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is at the heart of the learning process and central to effective teaching. We will take into account the requirements and recommendations of DE and examining boards in reviewing assessment policies and procedures. Assessment will be regular and will be of high quality. Teachers will carry out formative and summative assessment by a variety of methods and ensure as far as possible the validity, reliability and manageability of assessment procedures. Teachers and pupils will use information generated by formative assessment to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies. We will produce assessment summaries in the form of written reports to be sent to parents at least once a year. Reports will include an indication of pupils' effort, attitude and attendance. We will enter pupils for external examinations at levels suited to their aptitude and ability. There will be opportunities for parent-teacher consultation.

LEARNING-TEACHING STRATEGIES

Teachers will be guided by the school's Learning and Teaching Policy. Teachers will use a range of techniques and diversity of styles, taking into account what is appropriate to particular subjects and recognising that pupils learn in many different ways and develop at different rates. They will give pupils opportunities to put received information to work and will set and mark homework regularly in accordance with the school homework policy in order to supplement and reinforce work done in class and to support pupils in their development towards independent

learning. Teachers will exchange information on learning and teaching strategies at department and school level.

PASTORAL CARE

All members of staff will be actively involved in pastoral care, providing support to enable pupils to achieve self-respect, self-discipline and full academic potential according to individual capabilities. All staff will be actively involved in the implementation of the school's policies for positive behaviour management and pastoral care.

CAREERS EDUCATION

Careers guidance will be provided as outlined in the Careers Department Policy and we will prepare pupils for the world of work. We will help pupils increase their level of self-knowledge and awareness and provide information on educational, training and career options. We will assist pupils to develop decision-making and interview skills and offer guidance and support as they research the entry requirements and application procedures for higher and further education and employment. We will take account of individual talents and aspirations, and will emphasise the need for pupils to take responsibility for making informed personal decisions relating to career choices.

OUT-OF-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Out-of-class activities play an important role in sustaining a positive school ethos and in developing good relationships between pupils and teachers. The school will provide as wide a variety of sporting, recreational and cultural activities as possible in order to complement the formal curriculum. Such a programme of activities will help pupils to develop a range of skills and increase their enjoyment of school.