



Secondary School Curriculum Policy

This document is under consultation with Secondary Staff and could be subject to amendments.

At the British School of Amsterdam, we aim to create a stimulating and caring environment which enables all individuals to realise their potential and by doing so, develop skills and confidence for a fulfilling and responsible life in a changing society.

The curriculum at all Key Stages is based on the National Curriculum of England and Wales. It has been adapted to draw on the geographical location and context of Amsterdam and The Netherlands as a resource to enrich students' learning and to take into account the diversity of BSA students, their varied backgrounds and future destinations. External examinations are the framework for assessment and accreditation. The curriculum undergoes regular and systematic **review** to ensure quality and relevance and respond to change.

Draft

Areas of experience

The curriculum at the BSA Secondary School aims to provide all students with experience in the following areas:

- Creative and expressive
- Human, social and environmental
- Spiritual and moral
- Communication (including ICT and an additional language to English and one's own)
- Mathematical
- Scientific
- Technological
- Physical and recreational

Principles

The delivery and content of the curriculum is based on the following principles:

- **Progression and continuity**
The principles of progression and continuity are maintained throughout the key stages by taking into account the transitions from key stage 2 through to the world of work or further education. In addition the curriculum through the principle of progression enables students to systematically expand their knowledge, understanding, skills and values by building on earlier learning.
- **Breadth and balance**
The principles of breadth and balance are applied to all key stages, ensuring that students are given the opportunity to experience a wide selection of subjects. The timetable ensures that there is a balance across all areas of experience. This balance is planned and prescribed for each individual at each key stage. This means that not all students will necessarily follow an identical curriculum. So **at key stage 4 and 5** students will choose different combinations of courses but still continue to have experience in all areas.
- **Relevance**
The principle of relevance within the curriculum is informed by the multicultural and diverse nature of the student community within an international setting. Through all key stages the curriculum is designed to meet the needs of a dynamic and multifarious community with a range of abilities. The curriculum will celebrate the multicultural nature of the school and be **differentiated** to meet the needs of individual students.

These principles underpin the total curriculum experience.

Through the curriculum students will have opportunities to acquire:

(1) Knowledge and understanding

As informed by the National Curriculum and set out in the school's programmes of study, knowledge and understanding can be defined as the acquisition and application of a range of information both theoretical and practical. Such knowledge and understanding allows assumptions, inferences and insights to be made. It promotes the development of abstract thought.

(2) Skills

The curriculum will give students the opportunity to develop the skills needed to be a life longer learner. These include the following skills:

- Communication
- Evaluation
- Practical
- Problem-solving
- Social
- Study

(3) Values

The curriculum will promote certain values, for example:

- Self esteem
- Life long learning
- Understanding of their place in the community and feelings of responsibility to that community
- Celebration of human achievement
- Appreciation and respect for the opinion of others
- A responsibility to society and its future

The curriculum also encourages students to develop their own personal value system.

Students and the Whole Curriculum

Context

The "whole curriculum" is one where the total needs of all students are taken into account. The stated aims of the BSA make clear our belief that educating our students means preparing them in every possible way for life beyond the time they actually spend at school. Much of what students learn about life is achieved in encounters with staff and other students. This occurs in timetabled lessons no less than in performances, camps and other activities.

In all aspects of school life, teachers guide, support and challenge students in their development into maturity. The development of students' skills in and knowledge of the timetabled subjects is to be treated as neither separate from or in competition with the development of their social and personal skills, their confidence and their self-esteem. All are recognised as complementary parts of an overall developmental process, in which parents are acknowledged to be positive and active partners.

Equality of opportunity is an essential part of this policy. All students will be treated as being of equal worth, with equal claims on the time and attention of teachers.

Guidelines

All teachers are contributors to the pastoral care of students. The form tutor has a special role as a continuing point of personal contact for each student and a channel for support and guidance on all issues affecting students' progress and achievement.

Cohesion in the whole curriculum is achieved through:

- the incorporation of cross-curricular themes, including lifeskills;
- the explicit linkage wherever possible of non-timetabled and extra-curricular activities, such as trips and enrichment, to the timetabled curriculum;
- curriculum planning involving the Head of School and Deputy Head of School in partnership with those with curriculum planning responsibilities;
- a common structure wherever possible for assessing, recording and reporting achievement.

Job descriptions will be consistent with all the above requirements.

Student Entitlement to Courses and Assessments

Context

Every student should follow the timetabled curriculum specified for the year group concerned. Where options exist, all courses are open equally to all students, subject to specified choice restrictions and to resource limits. While some students will need learning support if they are to benefit fully from the learning experiences provided, only in exceptional circumstances will any student be withdrawn permanently or even for a considerable period of time from any part of the timetable. This will never be for reasons wholly concerned with the student's behaviour.

Only in exceptional circumstances will any student be directed away from a particular examination course on grounds of ability. Every student following an examination course is entitled to be entered for the examination.

Guidelines

The "exceptional circumstances" above might include the following.

- (a) Students joining late in year 9 with no background in the foreign languages on offer may be withdrawn from languages until the start of year 10, when they may be guided into the study of a language which starts from scratch in year 10.
- (b) A student assessed by the Learning Support Team as being unable to benefit in any way from the study of a particular subject, or group of subjects, may be withdrawn. Alternative arrangements will be made for the productive use of the time.

In all such exceptional cases, action will only be taken after consultation with the student, parents, subject teachers and head of school. Under no circumstances may subject teachers or faculty heads unilaterally remove students from their courses, or prevent them from joining such courses.

GCSE entry is regarded as the norm, and the value of all GCSE grades as indicating positive achievement will be promoted. GCSE target grades will be pitched to provide students with realistic challenges rather than insurmountable hurdles. Subject teachers and faculty heads may not, in student reports or elsewhere, indicate either that a student will not be entered for GCSE or that grades G to D represent failure.