

## Curriculum Policy

**Primary person responsible for updates to this policy:** Liz Elam

**Job title:** Principal

**Last review date:** June 2020

**Next review date:** June 2021

**Relevant ISI coding (if applicable)**

**Circulation:** This policy has been adopted by the governors and is available to parents on request. It is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers and applies wherever they are working with children.

'Parents' refers to parents, guardians and carers.

## **Curriculum Policy**

The curriculum offered at ACM is designed to serve and support the students who enrol in the college. Courses are chosen too that will attract students to enrol. The curriculum evolves over time and may feature some significant changes when new courses are introduced. Decisions regarding the curriculum are driven by the Principal and SLT in collaboration with the Directors of Faculty (Strategic Committee). Any member of staff may, through the faculty channel, suggest a course which they think may be suitable to run. This will be considered by the SLT and Strategic Committee.

The college runs traditional courses such as GCSE and A-level alongside the ACM Combined Studies Programme (CSP) and the level 3 International Foundation Programme (IFP). The pathways that students are guided towards are those which will best allow them to achieve and gain success.

The curriculum options are driven by demand. The choice of specification lies with the Head of Department in liaison with a member of the Strategic Committee. Any changes to the specification must be approved by the Strategic Committee.

IFP is a bespoke course which has been developed within the Abbey DLD group. It has been designed to meet the needs of international students providing the required content, skills and rigour for them to be able to succeed and achieve at level 3 and then move into university study. The course units have been chosen to reflect the content and skills required in the different pathways. The IFP specification is subject to an annual review and refinement. New strands may be developed to meet demand.

The ACM CSP is a bespoke course which has been designed to meet the needs of UK students for whom A-level is not the most suitable pathway. The content and examination regime is modular and strands are designed to meet the needs of students wishing to progress to university.

GCSE, two-year A-level or two-year IFP with football is available for students with a talent for football. This programme comprises lessons in the morning and football training at International House in the afternoon (2-5 afternoons). A similar programme is available with basketball from January 2021

### **Curriculum Policy and Principles**

The curriculum should inspire and challenge all learners and prepare them for the future.

Specifically, the curriculum should help young people to:

- Become effective learners, who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve and to enable those not achieving age-related expectations to narrow the gap and catch up with their peers
- Become confident individuals, who are able to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives;
- Become responsible citizens who understand and practise British values and who make a positive contribution to society.

- Become equipped to cope at university or other courses/employment into which they move
- Use the 5Rs framework (Routine, Rigour, Responsibility, Resilience and Reflection) as a basis for achieving the above

The curriculum we offer:

- Provides flexible pathways with a very good range of choice
- Puts the needs and interests of students first;
- Provides smooth transitions between phases, integrating academic and vocational pathways;
- Develops literacy, numeracy and ICT skills through all subjects;
- Enables potential 6<sup>th</sup> form learners with a range of aspirations to succeed in their chosen pathway;
- Provides appropriate resources and learning materials which will support independent learning in and out of college;
- Meets statutory requirements.

High quality teaching and learning offers:

- Teaching strategies and a pace of learning planned to cater for individual needs
- A balanced attention to academic progress and welfare needs
- Assessment which encourages challenge, effective learning and helps students to make progress
- Teaching which is flexible, innovative, varied and challenging where appropriate
- Opportunities to develop an understanding of FBVs and an appreciation of their own and other cultures
- Interaction with the community in support of students' learning
- ICT support systems which increase learning opportunities and teaching and learning effectiveness across the curriculum
- Literacy and numeracy support
- Support for those students whose first language is not English
- Support for those students with SEND (see SEND policy)
- Opportunities to develop self-confidence and self-esteem

Each student is allocated a tutor and a Head of House. The tutor will work closely with the academic and pastoral staff to monitor students' progress. Tutors focus on helping students achieve their goals and track and review their progress. Tutors and Heads of Year will have a focus on ensuring students are happy and cared for with regard to KCSIE and Every Child Matters.

Abbey College aims to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. This supports the College in meeting the requirements of the SMSC standard that is set out in Part 2 of Schedule 1 to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended. Actively promoting the values means challenging opinions or behaviours in the College, including in home stay families and in the college residence, that are contrary to fundamental British values. Attempts to promote systems that

undermine fundamental British values would be completely at odds with the College's duty to provide SMSC. Teachers are expected to uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside College. This includes not undermining fundamental British values.

Parents and guardians or agents approved by parents are strongly encouraged to become involved in a partnership within the college. The Head of House is the main point of contact once a student has embarked upon their programme.

Through PHSE, tutor time, Enrichment, Academic Enrichment and subject lessons and receive support in becoming:

- More independent learners who can work effectively and flexibly in a team
- Problem solvers;
- Strategic and critical thinkers;
- Confident in communication and decision-making and able to contribute well to the college's regular review and development;
- Confident and capable in managing their finances;
- Able to make informed choices about their lifestyle, learning and careers;
- Active citizens who are well-informed about the community and wider world and have an understanding of Fundamental British Values.
- Aware of the moral and ethical dilemmas facing them in the modern world

Underpinning our approach to the curriculum are the 4Rs

- Routine: Students are supported in improving their organisation to submit correct work at requested time & date
- Rigour: Students supported in submitting high quality work
- Responsibility: Students are supported in making progress more independently of teacher guidance.
- Resilience: Students are supported in mental toughness for exams and healthy regimes
- Reflection: Students are supported in developing their ability to become self-regulating learners who can evaluate their own effectiveness and set goals

Individual students are supported by tutors and other professionals offering health, welfare and careers /educational guidance. There are support programmes for those with SEND and Academic English and General English are integrated into all programmes for students with EAL. The Student Services Hub offers students a range of services to support their learning and welfare including mentoring and study support.

A wide range of enrichment activities which extend and enrich the students' experience is offered on a Wednesday afternoon. Year 12 students participate in a Success in the Sixth Form programme which includes an academic enrichment to add breadth to the curriculum whilst developing their knowledge and skills

The College and departments works in partnership with a range of local businesses, education providers and agencies to provide additional educational experiences including educational visits.

## **Overview of the Curriculum**

### **GCSE (Year 11)**

At Key Stage 4, students are provided with a balanced range of courses. Individuals are able to plan their routes to FE, HE and jobs with training. Students study 5 or occasionally 6 subjects. The Year 11 course is delivered in its entirety in one academic year. Most students study Maths, English with Sciences, Business, RS or Art/Photography. Students have seven lessons per subject per week. (Eight in the 2020-21 year due to disruption of Covid-19)

Some sixth form students may need to study a GCSE e.g. English or Maths and this can normally be accommodated as an Academic Enrichment subject.

### **Sixth Form**

The College offers a vibrant, integrated sixth form with a course offer which is planned in line with Higher and Further Education in mind. This is designed to match students with local and national economic and employment needs. All students will be encouraged to choose the Post 16 route which is best for them (A-Levels, CSP or IFP). A-level, IFP and CSP strands each have seven lessons per week per subject. Year 12 and 13 A-level subjects have eight lessons per week and IFP/CSP strands have seven lessons per week allocated in teaching time.

**See Admissions Policy and Curriculum overview and entry requirements document for more details.**

### **Linear A-levels**

Students will sit college summer exams in linear subjects. Results of the summer college exams will be used to advise on progression routes into Year 13. Reasons for not taking the stand alone AS are:

- does not count towards the final A-level for linear subjects
- it only examines 40% of the content
- is a different and more straightforward examination style compared to the final linear paper
- the content is not delivered in year 12

As the linear A-levels have been designed to be more challenging and the stand-alone AS will not contribute to the final grade the work ethic and commitment to study will be important in determining year 13 progression. It is the primary reason why students will choose three A-levels and maybe permitted to do four if it includes Further Maths.

Year 12 follow a 'Success in the Sixth Form Programme' which will help to prepare students for the rigours of the linear A-levels along with an Academic enrichment. A key skills programme is part of the two year IFP course.

### Teaching and Learning

The College's leadership implement robust quality assurance systems to ensure high standards of teaching and consistent practice across the curriculum.

The following contribute to effective teaching:

- Our small class sizes ( normal maximum 12) allow for individual attention and support
- Classrooms, laboratories and studios which offer a positive, stimulating learning environment
- Effective planning for learning, shared with students offering carefully structured lessons and linked activities;
- A focus on language needs and specialist lessons for those with EAL
- All full time courses contain a compulsory Enrichment Programme to add breadth to the learning experience
- High challenge and high expectations from all teachers and support staff including effective support for literacy skill development;
- The use of a range of learning strategies appropriate to the courses being run and to support students' learning styles and individual aptitudes
- Regular 'assessment for learning' using a variety of methods, involving students in regularly in reviewing their own progress
- ICT integrated into lessons and tutor time as an important learning tool
- Appropriately challenging personal targets set, recorded and tracked by teachers and tutors
- Approaches to teaching which are relevant and interesting, motivating students and requiring their active participation
- Time and space for students to reflect, review what has been learned, how it was learned and how it will be used, including the opportunity for feedback on marked work
- Teachers monitor how students think and learn and will encourage them to take responsibility and manage their own learning
- Development of habits of effective learning including how to work with others in a team, how to evaluate information critically, how to be resilient in the face of difficulties and how to be creative, enterprising, innovative and inventive.

- A variety of educational visits to enhance the learning experience

Teaching time, schemes and units of work and courses will be planned to accommodate students' different levels and diverse approaches to learning. Learning targets will take account of the current level of an individual student's engagement and family circumstances. Regular tracking of progress will result in adjustments to teaching style or pace of learning as appropriate. Students requiring extra assistance will be supported by the Learning Support Department (see SEND Policy). Effective performance information will enable regular assessment reports to be generated and rigorous monitoring will ensure that any necessary interventions are swift and effective. Each student follows their own individual education plan which is reviewed regularly with tutors and teachers. Early intervention if students are struggling is designed to maximise outcomes.

### **Staff support and development**

The SLT place an importance on focusing upon teaching and learning and have high aspirations and expectations of students and staff. The support and extension of the skills of the staff is a priority for raising standards. Staff act as positive role models for students. Staff can contribute to the development of the curriculum through discussion with their Heads of Department who feed this information to the Directors of Faculty. Significant decisions are discussed at strategic meetings.

The recruitment and retention of high quality specialist teaching and support staff is essential to drive forward improvements in teaching and the delivery of personalised learning. A significant amount of effort and resources is focused on ensuring their readiness for teaching new courses, specifications and qualifications.

Continuous Professional Development keeps staff highly skilled and fully informed as to new developments in teaching and learning. CPD opportunities include:

- Sharing of good practice across the college and a programme of internal CPD days
- Classroom based research
- External courses enabling staff to draw on best practice, new ideas
- Close liaison with and attendance at courses and conferences run by the Examination Boards
- The support of the college in undertaking marking for the examination boards to further help their understanding of how to enable students to succeed.
- Coaching and mentoring
- Leadership development at all levels is a key priority.

### **Year Group Structure**

Abbey College Manchester is a Sixth form college offering level 3 courses (A-Levels, CSP and IFP). Available at level 2 are GCSE courses and the 'Pre A-level or GCSE' English programme aimed at international students.

Year groups normally define the nature and level of the academic programme of study a student follows, e.g. GCSE in Y11 and the first year of A-level in Year 12. However, the college

makes provision, where timetabling permits, for students to take courses usually associated with other year groups – e.g. Year 12 students taking a GCSE.

Significant numbers of students are of a different age (by one or two years) to the conventional age for that year group, usually as a result of students electing to retake a year or returning to education or international students who have spent a year learning English. Such students are still classified as ‘belonging’ to the year group within which they are studying and hence they are supported by the associated House System. The exception is where a significant disparity exists between their age and the norm for the year group such that the pastoral and academic frameworks provided do not suit their needs. In such cases, alternative arrangements are made for their pastoral care and programme of study on a case by case basis.

### Day-Week Plan

- All year groups and courses are taught on a one week timetable, Monday to Friday.
- The normal college day starts at 9.00 am and finishes at 4.30pm. The college building is open from 8am – 6pm
- Each day contains up to 9 lessons. Lessons are taught in combinations of single 40 minute long and double 80 minute periods.
- Y11 students register twice per day at 8.50am and after lunch.
- Year 12 and 13 students register once a day after lunch
- All full time students attend enrichment as a compulsory part of their programme.
- All boarders in the residence attend day break or twilight up to three times a week. They are taken back to the residence by bus after twilight on most occasions.

### Departments and Faculties

The academic curriculum is delivered and monitored through a structure of subject departments which exist within subject area faculties. All courses are located within the faculties.

Departments are managed by Heads of Departments (HoD) and the HoD is responsible for designing suitable teaching plans, schemes of work and teaching & learning activities and academic achievements. HoDs are responsible for the teaching & learning throughout their department and act as line managers for all staff within their department. In some small subject areas there may be a subject leader who reports to the DoF.

Each department is assigned to a subject-area faculty managed by a Director of Faculty (DoF). The DoF, through liaison with HoDs, is responsible for monitoring teaching & learning, reporting, academic achievements and administration across the departments within the faculty. DoFs and SLT meet regularly as the Strategic Team.

Science Faculty	Languages and Arts	Mathematics and Humanities Faculty
Biology Chemistry Physics Psychology Geography	IELTS General English Academic English Modern Foreign Languages	Maths Further Maths Business Economics RS

	English Art and Photography	History
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### **Subjects and Teaching Staff**

All lessons are taught by subject specialists. Several teachers teach more than one subject but are deemed to be specialist in these subjects based on experience and qualifications.

### **English for Speakers of English as a Second Language**

General English is part of the Year 11 English course and prepares students for everyday English speaking. Academic English is part of the Year 11 English course to prepare students for their academic subjects. IELTS classes are part of the programme for students in all years studying on academic course who do not have a recognised English Language qualification (e.g. GCSE) and require a higher band to access the next level of study.