



The Royal Belfast Academical Institution

Curriculum Policy

RBAI is committed to maintaining the highest educational standards in a caring environment. The curriculum is how we translate this vision into practice. Parents wishing to query the content of the curriculum should, in the first instance contact the Vice-Principal (Curriculum).

The School week is divided into 49 periods and the timing of the school days are as follows:

Table 1: The School Day

Monday	Tuesday, Friday	Wednesday, Thursday
Registration & Assembly 8.45 – 9.10	Registration & Assembly 8.45 – 9.10	Registration & Supervision 8.45 – 9.10
Period 1 9.10 – 9.45	Period 1 9.10 – 9.45	Period 1 9.10 – 9.45
Period 2 9.45 – 10.20	Period 2 9.45 – 10.20	Period 2 9.45 – 10.20
Period 3 10.20 – 10.55	Period 3 10.20 – 10.55	Period 3 10.20 – 10.55
Period 4 10.55 – 11.30	Period 4 10.55 – 11.30	Period 4 10.55 – 11.30
Break 11.30 – 11.45	Break 11.30 – 11.45	Break 11.30 – 11.45
Period 5 11.45 – 12.20	Period 5 11.45 – 12.20	Period 5 11.45 – 12.20
Period 6 12.20 – 12.55	Period 6 12.20 – 12.55	Period 6 12.20 – 12.55
Lunch 12.55 – 1.40	Period 7a 12.55 – 1.30	Period 7a 12.55 – 1.30
Period 7 1.40 – 2.15	Period 7b 1.30 – 2.05	Period 7b 1.30 – 2.05
Period 8 2.15 – 2.50	Period 8 2.05 – 2.40	Period 8 2.05 – 2.40
Period 9 2.50 – 3.25* (Year 8 & 9 finish at 3.20)	Period 9 2.40 – 3.15 (Year 8 & 9 finish at 3.10)	Period 9 2.40 – 3.15 (Year 8 & 9 finish at 3.10)

*Please note the later finish time on Mondays and the later start time on Thursdays.

With the exception of Mondays when there is an extended lunchtime, pupils in Years 8-10 have their lunch during Period 7a and pupils in Years 11-14 have their lunch during Period 7b.

The aim of the Curriculum at RBAI is to develop all pupils by:

- providing a broad and balanced curriculum which equips pupils with the knowledge and skills needed for the modern economy;
- creating a learning environment in which all pupils are stimulated and encouraged to achieve their full academic potential;
- fostering independence, self-discipline, and responsibility;
- promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual, emotional and physical development of all pupils;
- encouraging respect for others and the environment;
- developing lifelong learning through innovative educational practice, which will promote critical thinking;
- building on individual strengths, interests and experiences and ensuring progression from admission to leaving school;
- developing pupil's ICT, Literacy and Numeracy capabilities across the curriculum;
- promoting the development of Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities;
- preparing pupils for further study and the world of work so that they can make a valuable contribution to society and the economy;
- providing opportunities for cross-curricular and collaborative learning;
- offering a wide range of enriching extra-curricular activities;
- promoting positive relationships with parents and the wider community.

Key Stage 3 (Pupils in Years 8, 9 & 10)

Pupils in Years 8-10 follow the Northern Ireland Curriculum. This entitlement ensures the development of subject specific knowledge and understanding. There is also an explicit emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities for lifelong learning. These skills consist of the Cross-curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT, and the Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities of Managing Information, Working with Others, Creativity, Problem Solving and Self-Management.

Key elements of learning are identified and include; Personal Health, Media Awareness, Moral Character, Education for Sustainable Development, Cultural Understanding, Economic Awareness, Ethical Awareness, Spiritual Awareness and Mutual Understanding.

The curriculum facilitates and promotes opportunities for learners to see the relevance of their learning and to make connections across the curriculum. Learning for Life and Work (LLW) includes the contributory strands of Home Economics, Personal Development, Citizenship and Employability and develops the fundamental skills, qualities and dispositions that are a pre-requisite for life and work.

Table 2: KS3 Curriculum

Subject	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
	NUMBER OF PERIODS PER WEEK		
English (inc. Literacy & Drama)	7	6	6
Mathematics	6	6	6
Science	6		
Biology		2	2
Chemistry		2	2
Physics		2	2
French		3	3
German		3	3
Spanish	3	3	3
Latin		2	2
Music	2	2	2
Religious Studies	2	2	2
Art	2	2	2
LLW/ Home Econ. /ICT	2 (ICT +1)	2	2
Technology & Design	2	2	2
Geography	3	3	3
History	3	3	3
Digital Technology			2
Physical Education	2	2	2
Games	3	2	2
Personal Development/CEIAG	1	1	1
TOTAL	45	45	45

- In Year 9, pupils choose a 2nd MFL – either German or French – and continue with this in Year 10.
- Years 8 & 9: LLW, ICT, and Home Economics are delivered through a round robin.
- Pupils have the opportunity to do Latin in Year 9 and Year 10.
- In Year 10, pupils choose to do Latin, Music, Latin & Music, or LLW

Key Stage 4 (Pupils in Years 11 & 12)

RBAI offers a very broad and balanced GCSE curriculum, with the school fully meeting the requirements of the Entitlement Framework.

All pupils study a full GCSE in the following subjects:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics

Pupils have the option of picking one, two or three Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) **OR** they can choose Single Award Science. Pupils then choose their optional subjects – the number of which is dependent on their Science choice. The optional subjects currently offered are listed below.

- Art & Design
- Astronomy
- Business Studies
- Design & Technology
- Digital Technology – Multimedia
- Digital Technology – Programming
- Engineering
- French
- Further Mathematics
- Geography
- German
- History
- Latin
- Learning for Life and Work (LLW)
- Media Studies
- Motor Vehicle and Road User Studies
- Music
- P.E.
- Religious Studies
- Spanish

All pupils have access to CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance), LLW and Religious Studies through the Tutor period held each week.

GCSE subjects with class sizes below 10 pupils will only proceed with the approval of SLT and the Board of Governors.

Sixth Form (Pupils in Years 13 & 14)

Pupils wishing to enter the Sixth Form will normally require a minimum of 12 points (A* = 4 points, A = 3 points, B = 2 points, C* = 1 ½ points, C = 1 point) and undertake 3 AS or equivalents. Pupils are generally expected to have achieved at least a Grade B or a high Grade C* at GCSE level in the subjects they wish to continue with in the Sixth Form. If a subject is oversubscribed criteria may be enhanced. Returning to the Sixth Form is also dependent upon a pupil's disciplinary record, an average attendance of 95%, and the professional judgement of staff that a pupil has the self-motivation to follow a post-16 course. Credit will also be given to the contribution a pupil has made to the co-curricular life of the school. Progression to A2 requires students to have achieved a minimum of 3 D grades. A pupil will only be considered to repeat Year 13 under exceptional circumstances.

Pupils will study a minimum of 3 AS subjects. Only one collaboration subject, offered in partnership with neighbouring schools, is permitted and this must be a pupil's 4th AS subject (unless offered within a common timetabling arrangement). Subjects with fewer than 3 pupils will only proceed with the approval of SLT and the Board of Governors. Classes with fewer than 6 pupils may be allocated a reduced number of taught periods per week. In the event of a subject being oversubscribed, places will be assigned using subject-specific criteria.

In Year 14, pupils continue with three or four A2 subjects. There is an opportunity for pupils to repeat an agreed number of AS modules in Year 14. Progression to Year 14 is usually subject to a pupil obtaining a minimum of 3 D grades at AS level (or equivalent) and a pupil conforming to the required standards of behaviour and attendance.

Modern Foreign Language pupils will be allocated Conversation Classes with a Language Assistant.

The KS5 curriculum at RBAI is fully compliant with the Entitlement Framework. Subjects offered in the Sixth Form at RBAI include:

Art & Design	Geography
Biology	German
BTEC Engineering	History
BTEC IT (Single and Double Award)	Latin
BTEC Sport	Life & Health Sciences
Business Studies	Mathematics
Chemistry	Media Studies
Computer Science	Music
Design & Technology	Physics
Economics	Politics
Engineering	Religious Studies
English Literature	Spanish
French	Sports Science
Further Mathematics	

In terms of collaboration, additional subjects are offered and studied off campus.

Sixth Formers also have supervised Private Study periods on their timetables; this enables them to learn how to use their time profitably in support of their own studies.

Scheme of Learning

A Scheme of Learning for each subject will translate the School Curriculum into the everyday procedures and practices in the classroom. Schemes plan teaching and learning within and across subjects, as well as documenting curricular activities, learning intentions and core assessments. Subject departments will produce a Scheme of Learning for each unit of work that is studied and will review and update on an annual basis. RBAI has a standard template for Schemes of Learning.

Differentiation

Pupils are encouraged to work at a level and a pace appropriate to their potential. A differentiated approach is utilised to ensure that all abilities and interests are taken into account, enabling all pupils to experience progression and success.

Religious Education

At Key Stage 3, pupils have timetabled Religious Studies classes. At Key Stage 4, all pupils have access to Religious Studies and have the option of choosing this subject as a GCSE option. Pupils may choose to study Advanced Level Religious Studies in the Sixth Form.

Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)

A planned programme of CEIAG is delivered from Year 8 through to Year 14 and across the curriculum, with discrete timetabled careers periods. The Employability element of Learning for Life & Work is also used as a conduit for careers education. This is enhanced with individual interviews and direction from the Careers Department specifically preparing pupils for the key decision-making points in their educational careers. In the Sixth Form, a comprehensive programme of preparation for university/college applications is followed. A period of Work Experience is a key element in the careers programme.

Homework

Homework is set to enable pupils to consolidate and extend schoolwork, to carry out private study and research, and to develop good study habits and independence. Regular and appropriate home preparation is used to support the effective delivery of the curriculum for all pupils.

Leadership, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Curriculum

Overall responsibility for the curriculum rests with the Board of Governors in consultation with the Principal and the Vice-Principal (Curriculum). The Heads of Department and subject leaders are responsible for the day-to-day monitoring, evaluation, and review of their subjects.

Links with other policies:

- Teaching & Learning Policy
- Homework Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Literacy & Numeracy Policy
- Careers Education Information Advice & Guidance Policy
- Special Educational Needs & Inclusion Policy

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