



The
Henrietta Barnett
School

Curriculum Policy

1. Curriculum Principles

The Henrietta Barnett School curriculum is rooted in our core values: **Authenticity, Endeavour, Curiosity, Connection, and Kindness** and in delivering it, we embrace the true spirit of a grammar school: an environment where the lives and future opportunities of young women with academic aptitude and mindset - from any background - can be transformed by an education which is both traditional and rigorously modern.

We meet all general and specific requirements of the **National Curriculum (2014)**, providing a broad and balanced experience that promotes students' spiritual, moral, social, cultural, and physical development. However, our provision intentionally exceeds these benchmarks. We offer an enriched academic and pastoral programme that provides greater depth in subject content, a higher degree of intellectual challenge, explicit inclusion of cognitive competencies and skills and a focus on well-being and ethical thinking. Together, these ensure students are prepared to meet the demands of the most competitive higher education and professional opportunities- and future life- with resourcefulness and resilience.

Our curriculum is particularly distinctive in the following ways:

- **Linguistic Foundation:** our emphasis on languages (modern and classical)- including the compulsory study of Latin in Year 7- and of three languages overall throughout Key Stage 3, is designed to build cognitive facility, cultural capital and international awareness;
- **STEM and Critical Inquiry:** lessons in mathematics, the sciences, design technology and a recently expanded computer science programme focus on empirical reasoning and discernment. These subjects aim to move students beyond the acquisition of facts toward a resilient understanding of complex systems and logic;
- **Scholarly Exploration:** in humanities, arts and sport, creative and practical exploration is always combined with rigorous theoretical and contextual appreciation, encouraging students to develop the independent opinion, verbal and physical expression and the analytical depth characteristic of scholarly study;
- **The Compass Curriculum:** our approach to personal development education is being structured through the Compass Curriculum, an evolution of our previous PSHCE curriculum, which is still under development. While our provision already ensures full compliance with statutory careers, health, character, citizenship and relationship and sex education requirements at every key stage, the Compass curriculum is designed to be more expansive and ambitious. It integrates specific instruction in financial and environmental literacy, leadership, project management. And philosophical and critical thinking; these help students

navigate complexities of modern living and develop a principled, self-disciplined approach to their lives;

- **Facilitating & Stimulating Learning Programmes:** at Key Stage 4, all students will study for 10 GCSE qualifications, with separate science GCSEs as standard and the expectation of at least one language, one humanity and one creative subject. At Key Stage 5, all Year 12 students are enrolled upon 4 A-levels. The enjoyment of learning is fundamental to the success of our school and the happiness of our students. We encourage our teachers to use innovative teaching and learning methods to stimulate higher-order thinking to keep students enthused, focused and motivated. Lessons are interactive and carefully planned, with a commitment to high standards of academic achievement.

2. Equality and Inclusion

- We are mindful of all students' individual learning needs, seeking both to reduce any individual barriers to achievement and to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning, with many opportunities for independent research and leadership to extend their learning both in and outside the classroom.
- We extend the same high expectations to all students of their learning and learning programmes, and never lower expectations for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities or from backgrounds of vulnerability or disadvantage.
- Teachers are directed to use informed and proportionate adaptive teaching strategies in order to ensure all students, and particularly those with special educational needs or disabilities are able to access lessons fully. Particular regard is paid to the EEF '5 a day' recommendations with explicit instruction, metacognition, scaffolding, flexible grouping and use of ICT at the heart of such strategies.
- In a small number of cases (usually no more than 1 per year group) structural changes to the standard learning programme at Year 7-11- either permanent or temporary- may be implemented in order to support an individual student to achieve as well as possible overall. Such changes could involve reducing the number of optional GCSEs being entered, or receiving additional support in key subjects in place of another subject on a temporary basis at Key Stage 3. In such cases, no changes are made without full consultation with student, parent, SENCO (if relevant), pastoral and curriculum leads and without the approval of the Deputy Head (Curriculum & Academic) and Head.
- At the end of Year 12, students with extenuating circumstances or who are prohibitively struggling with the workload expectations of four A-levels may be permitted to convert to a three A-level programme. This tends to be a minority of students (no more than 25% in a year) and registered and directed private study sessions will replace these lessons in their Year 13 timetable. These decisions are taken in consultation with students, parents and relevant staff and are determined by the Head of Sixth Form (Curriculum & Academic).
- In accordance with statutory requirements, there is provision for withdrawal from Religious Education and from collective acts of worship. Applications for this should be made in the first instance to the Deputy Head (Curriculum & Academic).
- In accordance with statutory requirements, there is provision for parents to withdraw their child from Relationships Education up until their 15th birthday. Applications for this should be made in the first instance to the Deputy Head (Pastoral & Personal Development) following the procedure set out in the school's separate RSHE policy.

3. Key Stage 3:

- Key Stage 3 occupies Years 7, 8 and 9; some subjects choose to introduce GCSE content in Year 9 schemes of work.
- At Key Stage 3, all students study the following: *English, Mathematics, Science (divided into Biology, Chemistry and Physics), Latin, Modern Languages, Computer Science, History, Geography, Religious Studies, Art, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Design, Technology and Engineering (DTE), Compass (PSHE)*. See Appendix 1 for details of delivery in any particular year.

4. Key Stage 4:

- Key Stage 4 occupies Years 10 and 11.
- All students study as a standard core the following GCSE subjects: *English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics (separate sciences)* and non-qualification programmes in *Physical Education (PE)* and *Compass (PSHE)*.
- From September 2026, all Year 10 students follow a further 4 optional GCSE subjects including one humanity (*History, Geography, Religious Studies or Classical Civilisation*), one language (*French, German, Spanish or Latin*), one creative subject (*Art, Drama, Music or DTE*) and one free choice. As a legacy year group, Year 11 are studying 5 optional GCSE subjects.
- GCSE option choices likely to be available are: *Art, Drama, Music, History, Geography, Religious Studies, Classical Civilisation, DTE, Latin, French, Spanish, German, Computer Science*.
- Every effort is made to satisfy the greatest proportion of students' requests. Within the limits of available resources, every effort is made to satisfy the greatest possible proportion of students' requests by creating option blocks after they have made their choices. However, any subject with too few students opting for it to be considered viable may not be timetabled. This decision will be based on staffing availability and the particular circumstances involved in any academic year.
- All students in Year 11 undertake one week of work experience in June / July as part of the Careers Education programme.

5. Key Stage 5/Sixth Form:

- Key Stage 5/Sixth Form occupies Years 12 and 13.
- All students study for four A-level subjects as a standard core; they also follow non-qualification programmes in *PE* and *Compass (PSHE)*, the latter of which is delivered through form time sessions and a weekly 'Life Skills' session in Year 12.
- From September 2026, all Year 12 students will also have an 'assessment' period documented on their timetable. This is a ring-fenced period set aside for multi-class subjects to schedule key progress tests, which can then be sat at one time with supervision, countering concerns around information leakage and AI assistance.

- Available A-level option choices: English Literature, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Art, Music, History, Geography, Classical Civilisation, DTE, Latin, French, Spanish, German, Economics.
- Within the limits of available resources, every effort is made to satisfy the greatest possible proportion of students' requests by creating option blocks after they have made their choices. However, any subject with too few students opting for it to be considered viable may not be timetabled. This decision will be based on staffing availability and the particular circumstances involved in any academic year.

6. Assessment in and of the curriculum:

Assessment, recording and reporting of progress at HBS is integral to teaching and learning. It should enable all students to recognise their strengths and areas for development in order to achieve their full potential, as well as fulfilling statutory requirements.

We take a research-based approach to assessment, focusing on formative assessment and on-going feedback through assessment for learning (AfL) strategies that teachers employ in every lesson rather than relying solely on high-stakes formal testing. The latter has its place, particularly as students move more closely towards public examinations, but alongside this summative method, teachers use a variety of ways of checking students' understanding in the classroom **to ensure that all are ready to move on to the next stage of learning**. Feedback will be both verbal and written and to make further progress students will be supported to act on it.

In order to reduce academic anxiety, teachers focus on encouraging students to prioritise a love of learning, intellectual curiosity and involvement in classroom discussion over an unhealthy preoccupation with tests and examination grades. Parents are also discouraged from discussing test results and ranking with their daughters in order to reduce the pressure on them, and to focus instead on a discussion of the day's learning.

We provide parents and students with three formal points of communication per year about progress, one each term:

- (i) a Consultation Evening attended by parents and the student
- (ii) an interim report
- (iii) a full report.

At KS3 the school's own skills-based assessment code, linked to content and skills mastery is used rather than a national grading system in order to place the emphasis on on-going progress rather than fixed attainment. At KS4, GCSE grading is used. At KS5, A-level grading is used.

In all Key Stages students receive a grade for learning skills or 'Attributes' in addition to academic attainment in acknowledgement of the important role these play in their overall achievement. **For more information, please refer to the separate Assessment & Reporting Policy.**

7. Extra-curricular learning:

Our curriculum is enriched by an extensive extra-curricular programme, in any year made up from over 80 weekly clubs, events and educational visits. We encourage all students to participate in these

on a regular basis and in Key Stages 4 and 5, students may have the opportunity to lead a club for younger year groups with staff supervision. To ensure a comprehensive and balanced experience, our internal programme, volunteering initiatives, and partnership activities are specifically designed to meet the needs of our students.

To maintain the highest standards of safeguarding and risk management, all activities or competitions undertaken in the school's name must be managed directly by HBS staff. Consequently, we require that all extra-curricular activities are led by staff. This allows us to guarantee the safety of our students while providing a balanced, high-quality extra-curricular programme that serves all members of the school. On occasion parents may wish to support their child on a school trip such as a competition or sports fixture, and where this happens we request that such support remains away from the main body of the activities and does not interfere or override staff management of the pupils in their care.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

The appendices will be updated when and if necessary.

This policy was last reviewed in May 2026.

Appendix 1: Operational Delivery of the Timetable 2026-7

- From September 2026, the school timetable is organised into a 50 period fortnight, with 25 hours of teaching per week (5 hours per day). In addition to this there is form-time before school.
- The 'Compass' curriculum has been revised and prepared for first delivery in Year 7-10 in 2026-7; revised schemes for Years 11, 12 and 13 will follow in 2027-8. During 2026-7, those latter year groups will study our current PSHE curriculum.
- Year 11 and 13 in 2026-7 are considered 'legacy' year groups as their teaching requirements need to remain from a previous timetable model. From 2027-8, Year 11 and 13 delivery will be the same as in Years 10 and 12.

Key Stage 3:

Subject	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9*
English	6	6	6
Mathematics	6	5	5
Science	6	6	6
Geography	3	3	3
History	3	3	3
RS	2	2	2
Latin	2	Students have opted for a pathway of 3 of these 4 languages and will have 9 periods per fortnight in them (3 per language)	2
French	3		3
German	3		3
Spanish	0		3
Music	2	2	2
Art	2	2	2
Drama	2	2	2
Computer Science	2	2	0
DTE	2	2	2
PE	4	4	4
Compass/PSHE	2	2	2
Total	50	50	50

*Year 9 is a legacy year group. They need to follow the curriculum established for them in Year 8, where Computer Science was not present and all students took 4 languages. From 2027-8, Year 9 delivery will be identical to Year 8 delivery.

Key Stage 4:

Subject	Year 10	Year 11
English Language GCSE	6	5
English Literature GCSE		
Mathematics GCSE	6	5
Biology GCSE	4	3
Chemistry GCSE	4	5
Physics GCSE	4	3
GCSE Option 1 (Humanity)	5	5
GCSE Option 2 (Language)	5	5
GCSE Option 3 (Creative)	5	5
GCSE Free choice option(s)*	Year 11 is a legacy year group where 2 free choice options were possible (totalling 10 periods of teaching per fortnight in 2026-7). Year 10 now have 1 free choice option totalling 5 periods of teaching per fortnight. From 2027-8, Year 10 and Year 11 will have identical delivery.	
PE	4	2
Compass/PSHE	2	2
Total	50	50

*Year 11 is a legacy year group. They need to follow the curriculum established for them in Year 10, which means adjustments have been made to ensure that students can have at least equal teaching time in all GCSE subjects. This has a temporary knock-on on PE and PSHE delivery. From 2027-8, Year 11 delivery will be identical to Year 10 delivery.

Key Stage 5:

From 2026-7, all A level subjects are delivered on 9 periods a fortnight as standard with the following exceptions:

- Maths and Further Maths are delivered on a combined 17 hours/fortnight
- Where a subject is particularly small in student numbers but still being run, it may run on 8 or 7 hours/fortnight
- Where a subject is particularly large, it may run on 10 periods/fortnight where teaching periods are available.

Subject	Year 12	Year 13*
A level option 1	9	9
A level option 2	9	9
A level option 3	9	9
A level option 4	9	9
PSHE/Life Skills	2	0
PE	2	2
Total	40	38

*Year 13 is a legacy year group. They need to follow the curriculum established for them in Year 12, which means PSHE only being delivered through form time and occasional Life Skills talks and no delivery of PE. From 2027-8, Year 13 delivery will be identical to Year 12 delivery.