



Curriculum Policy – Senior School

The curriculum at Austin Friars is underpinned by the School's mission and vision statements.

All pupils of compulsory school age receive a full-time supervised education. The curriculum at Austin Friars is broad and balanced. It gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative aspects. Pupils will acquire speaking, listening, literacy, and numeracy skills. The contribution of each curriculum area to these educational aspects is outlined in detail in the subject specific documentation.

In keeping with the School's philosophy to provide an all-round education, pupils have the opportunity to pursue a range of subject disciplines in the Lower School which steadily narrows in the GCSE years before choosing, usually, 3 subjects at key stage 5. High standards are expected and achieved through careful monitoring of pupils' progress, and dedicated teaching.

The Deputy Head (Academic) is responsible to the Headmaster for the oversight of the academic life of the School working closely with Heads of Department.

In accord with statutory requirements, the School seeks to make the curriculum accessible to each pupil as far as is reasonably practicable. The curriculum will not undermine fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. The school will provide personal, social, health and economic education which reflects the school's aims and ethos and encourages respect for other people paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equalities Act. Careers guidance will be broadly in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks and will be accurate and up-to-date. It will be (i) presented impartially, (ii) enabling pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of career options and (iii) help them fulfil their potential. There will be effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

Access to the various programmes of study is based on academic suitability and appropriateness, regardless of sex, race, disability, religion or belief. The curriculum will take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with an EHC plan.

Timetable

There are 9 periods per day of 35 minutes each within the Monday – Friday working week.

Lower School Curriculum (1st – 3rd Form)

The curriculum covering the first three years gives the essential and thorough grounding needed for later study. Pupils follow traditional courses in a broad mix of subject disciplines. They are set by ability for English, mathematics, science (taught separately as physics, chemistry and biology).

The provision of Modern European languages has been reviewed, and pupils will follow one European modern language, (either French or Spanish), based upon a combination of each pupil's preference, and teacher judgement of the most appropriate course for a pupil to follow. All pupils are taught Chinese in the 1st Form and are then set in the 2nd and 3rd Form to either continue with Chinese or, receive additional periods of consolidation lessons in maths, English and their chosen European language.

The remainder of subjects are taught in mixed ability groups, which were previously alphabetically selected, however, as of September 2021, these are based upon the European language option. All pupils take part in the Enrichment Programme, PE and games.

SUBJECT	1st Form	2nd Form	3 rd Form
Mathematics	5	4/5	5/6
English	5	4/5	5/6
Science	6	6	6
French/Spanish	3	4/5	4/5
Chinese	2	3/0	3/0
History (inc. Classics)	3	3	3
Geography	3	3	2
RE	2	2	3
ICT	2	2	2
Design technology	2	2	2
Art	2	2	2
Enrichment programme	1	1	1
Music and Drama	3	3	2
PE	2	2	2
Games	4	4	3

There is an Augustinian Focus week in the first term of the 1st Form in which all subject areas address issues of an Augustinian nature related to their discipline.

Middle School Curriculum (4th and 5th Forms)

The standard programme of study sees pupils normally taking courses leading to GCSE/IGCSE examination entry in up to 10 subjects. The curriculum for the 4th and 5th Form is divided into a compulsory core which is common to all pupils and the options where there is a wide element of choice. All pupils continue to take the Enrichment Programme, PE and Games. Full details of the courses and their specific requirements are given in the GCSE Prospectus.

SUBJECT	PERIODS
Mathematics	5
English	5
Sciences	9
Option block 1	5
Option block 2	5
Option block 3	5
Option Block 4	5
Enrichment programme	1
PE	2
Games	3

Core subjects

All pupils follow courses in the core subjects of English Language and Literature (IGCSEs), Mathematics (IGCSE), and Science (IGCSE, Double Award), which are arranged in sets based on ability. All pupils continue to participate in PE and games and in the enrichment (PSHE) programme.

Following the 5th Form mock exams, pupils will be advised to either: study all three sciences separately as Triple Award Science leading to three separate GCSE passes in biology, chemistry and physics; continue to follow the Combined Higher Science course, leading to two GCSE passes; or to follow the Combined Foundation Science course leading to two GCSE passes. The Foundation route however, has a cap at Grade 5, meaning Grade 6 and above is not possible on this pathway.

Option subjects

The option subjects are as follows: Art and Design, Classical Civilisation, ICT (IGCSE), Design Technology, Drama, French (IGCSE), Religious Studies, Spanish (IGCSE), Geography (IGCSE), History (IGCSE), Music, and Physical Education. Specialist Learning Support tuition is also offered as an option, which usually reduces examination entry to 8 subjects.

If any option does not attract significant numbers then there is a possibility that the option may not be viable and will therefore not run. Pupils choose one subject from each of the four blocks. The School does not operate a 'fixed block' system but rather a 'best fit' arrangement where we try to match our pupils' preferred choices in putting the blocks together.

VI Form Curriculum

The bulk of VI Formers' time is occupied with specialist A' Level, or Cambridge Technical studies. It is usually expected that VI Form pupils study 3 subjects.

The choice of subjects can be difficult. There is sometimes a conflict between what a pupil likes, what a pupil is good at, what is required for a particular career and what was a pupil's best subject at GCSE. Careful consideration must be given and subject teachers, Heads of Department, Deputy Head (Academic), Head of VI Form and tutors are available to be consulted. Full details of the courses and their specific requirements are available in the VI Form prospectus.

SUBJECT	PERIODS	
	L6th	U6th
Option block 1	10	10
Option block 2	10	10
Option block 3	10	10
Option block 4	10	10
VI Form Enrichment Programme	2	2
Games	3	3

Option subjects

The following subjects are available at KS5: Art, Biology, Business (CTECH), Chemistry, Classical Civilisation, ICT (CTECH), Design Technology, Drama, Economics, English, French, Further Mathematics, Geography, History, Mathematics, Music, Performing Arts (CTECH), photography, PE, (A' Level and CTECH), Physics, Psychology, Religious Studies, and Spanish.

The VI Form option blocks are constructed on the basis of the information provided by pupils during the course of the 5th Form. The School endeavours to fit the curriculum to the needs of the individual as far as is possible given the constraints of the timetable. Although final VI Form subject choices are not required until GCSE results are known, pupils will be asked to indicate their most likely choices so that the four VI Form option blocks can be finalised, usually by the end of the Spring term in the 5th Form.

In consultation with their tutor, the Head of VI Form and the Deputy Head (Academic), it is possible for a pupil to revise their subject choices after a short period of study at the start of the Lower VI year. The choice of A' Level subjects is an important step and the School recognises that pupils may need this period at the start of the Lower VI year to finally settle on their choices. A flexible approach is applied, for example allowing pupils to sample subjects in the first few weeks before finally deciding. During this period, changes to subject choices, within the limitations of the option blocks, are also accommodated. Since the summer of 2021, 5th form intending to return to VI form are expected to attend a period of induction, which includes timetabled lessons. This has significantly cut down on numbers of pupils changing course over the course of the LVith.

Austin Friars Internship (AFI)

The AFI programme is available to pupils for whom the traditional academic curriculum might not be wholly appropriate. It comprises of an opportunity for the pupil to spend some of the normal curriculum time gaining experience in the workplace. This is used to provide the stimulus material for an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Normally a pupil will follow a reduced A' Level curriculum to create the necessary time for the internship.

Homework policy

A new homework timetable is published each academic year which pupils enter into their planners. As far as possible, the academic departments keep to their allocated times for setting homework so as to ensure pupils are not overburdened on a particular evening.

In broad terms, homework per subject is as follows: 1st, 2nd and 3rd Forms - a maximum of 20 minutes; and 4th and 5th Forms – 30 minutes. VI Form – 1 hour per subject per day.

Academic monitoring

Assessment is a dynamic process and integral to the curriculum and lesson planning; it is an essential tool for effective teaching and learning.

Assessment takes place in the course of a lesson, homework, an end of topic or term test, skills-based evaluation, a mock examination or an end of school year examination. It provides information as to the level of understanding of each pupil as well as informing the teacher whether the presentation and pace of a lesson is right and the level of demand is appropriate.

The monitoring of pupil progress is carried out with both departmental and pastoral input. Subject teachers with their Head of Department are responsible for monitoring the progress in their subject. Tutors, their Heads of School and the Deputy Head (Academic) are responsible for reviewing the overall performance of the pupils across the range of subjects studied.

Decisions on the composition of teaching sets are made using all the evidence gathered from the individual pupil tracking data, and from subject teachers and heads of department. As pupils join the School, they are placed in the appropriate teaching sets based upon performance in Entrance Assessment tests. The composition of sets is reviewed at the end of each academic year. Parents are kept fully informed about any concerns on their son/daughter's progress which might lead to a change of set. Changes to teaching sets only take place in exceptional circumstances during the course of an academic year. Where a change to a pupil's teaching set is proposed, the Head of Department makes a recommendation to the Deputy Head (Academic) who is responsible for endorsing it.



Absence & Courtesies:

When pupils are selected to participate in extra-curricular activities which involve absence from lessons then the usual courtesies must be followed.

Pupils must **ask** staff whose lessons are likely to be affected for permission to miss the lesson. Wherever possible, permission should be sought in a timely manner and not on the day of the absence.

Pupils must make every effort *themselves* to find out what work was missed and to catch-up on both classwork and prep.

Pupils who repeatedly fail to catch-up or whose academic progress is compromised by participation in extra-curricular opportunities may find themselves ineligible for future selection.

Colleagues who are responsible for the activity are required to distribute a list of those pupils involved to all staff in a timely manner to assist with planning.

Staff have the discretion to refuse the request for a pupil to miss a lesson, *before the day of the absence*, and must inform the colleague who is responsible for the activity to facilitate contingency arrangements to be made.

Merits and credits, and commendations

Particularly good effort in academic work is rewarded with a 'merit' whilst work of outstanding quality (better than the norm for a particular pupil or age group) is recognised by a 'credit'. Merits are awarded 5 points and credits are awarded 15 points. These points are aggregated and lead to the award of individual 'commendations'. At House level, the merits and credits shield is presented on Speech Day to the House with the largest overall points total.

A Deputy Head (Academic) commendation is awarded when a pupil reaches 90 points. Headmaster's commendations are presented on a Friday at a School assembly to pupils reaching 180 points.



The Wider Curriculum

An extensive programme of residential visits both in the UK and overseas, coupled with shorter day trips run by the academic departments, form an integral part of the education which the School provides, and pupils are encouraged to make use of the opportunities available to them.

Taking place during the lunch period, and at the end of the school day, some 40 different extra-curricular activities (ECA) are available to pupils. Sport, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (3rd Form upwards), music, drama and art provide the bedrock of our diverse activity programme. The programme's breadth is ensured with other opportunities, for example, from computer games design to gardening club, philosophy to chess, and technology to cookery. The ECA programme is published to parents each term.

In the VI Form especially, pupils are provided with opportunities to develop leadership skills. During the VI Form induction programme, pupils spend time preparing for the VI Form routine and develop a 'team spirit' by taking part in a number of leadership challenges at a local venue. L6th pupils will have the opportunity to complete the NCS award. As pupils take up L6th duties, further training and support is provided with skills such as mentoring. All U6th pupils are given the opportunity to apply for leadership roles through their appointment as School prefects and take part in a training programme which includes a residential course in the Lake District.

Sporting fixtures are most often played on Wednesdays or Saturdays. Boys and girls picked for School sports teams are expected to turn out and represent the School.

Study in the VI Form

It is expected that pupils should work independently, without the close supervision needed in earlier years as preparation for university. Pupils should learn to strike a balance between an appropriate amount of individual study, and recreation periods in the VI Form Centre. A period of supervised study may be imposed where an appropriate balance is not struck. Pupils are encouraged to read broadly and find sources of their own to complement course materials. Some pupils might also use non-contact periods for enrichment activities within the School community.

Assistant Deputy Head (Academic)
September 2025

CURRICULUM POLICY – JUNIOR SCHOOL

The curriculum at Austin Friars is underpinned by the School's Mission Statement. It will not undermine fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

All pupils of compulsory school age receive a full-time supervised education. The curriculum at Austin Friars is broad and balanced and it takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with an EHC plan. It provides effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society. It gives pupils experience in linguistic, speaking, listening, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative aspects. For children below compulsory school age a programme of activities is offered which is appropriate to their education needs in relation to personal, emotional and physical development, communication and language. The contribution of each curriculum area to these educational aspects is outlined in detail in the subject specific documentation. The School provides personal, social, health and economic education which reflects the School's aims and ethos and encourages respect for other people paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equalities Act.

In keeping with the School's philosophy to provide an all-round education, pupils have the opportunity to experience and learn a range of subjects and to extend their interests beyond the classroom. High standards are expected and achieved through careful monitoring of pupils' progress, and dedicated teaching.

The Head of the Junior School is responsible to the Deputy Head of the Senior School for the oversight of the academic life of the Junior School working closely with the Assistant Head of the Junior School, Assistant Deputy Head (Academic) and Subject co-ordinators.

In accord with statutory requirements, the School seeks to make the curriculum accessible to each pupil as far as is reasonably practicable. Access to the various programmes of study is based on academic suitability and appropriateness, regardless of sex, race, disability, religion or belief.

Curriculum aims

The Junior School is characterised by a traditional and broad curriculum which develops pupils' knowledge, skills and talents, supporting them to become reflective, problem-solving, independent and confident learners. The curriculum is designed to enable pupils to make maximum progress and prepare them for the next stage of their learning.

Our curriculum aims to:

- Enable pupils to understand the value of knowledge and skills.
- Ensure that resources, teaching, planning and learning are purposefully linked and respond to the individuality and special potential of each child.
- Be broad, balanced and enriched through the taught curriculum and the programme of extra-curricular activities.
- Help pupils to become knowledgeable, confident and active learners with a desire to explore and solve problems in innovative ways.

- Encourage pupils to make well-informed decisions about matters which have significant influences on their lives and, where appropriate, the lives of others, especially in relation to values, beliefs and customs.
- Be monitored by subject co-ordinators to ensure that planning follows schemes of work, teaching ensures the curriculum is correctly delivered, marking follows School policy and standards in work are of a sufficiently high level.
- Be available equally to all pupils.

The curriculum aims to ensure coherence in pupils' learning and to help them to achieve well. Continuity and progression through the Infants and Juniors is promoted through the quality of whole-school curriculum planning and its response to the outcome of pupil assessment.

A seamless curriculum is planned across J3 – Second Form to ensure progression and continuity across the Key Stages.

Well established links between Pre-School and Kindergarten ensure a seamless Foundation Stage. Good links are being developed between Junior 4 and First Form in the Senior School through liaison between heads of the academic departments in the Senior School and subject coordinators in the Junior School.

Good teacher planning is expected in order to link different curricular areas, helping pupils to identify relationships between subjects. It is expected that literacy and numeracy skills are used across all subjects where appropriate. ICT should be used across the curriculum to present work, research information and present data.

Equality of access to each part of the curriculum implies courses of study are geared to the different needs and abilities of pupils. All pupils are taught the same knowledge and skills for each subject at a level appropriate to their needs. Schemes of work make provision for pupils with learning difficulties to receive extra support, whilst more able pupils have scope to enhance their learning through extension tasks. The curriculum encompasses all National Curriculum subjects, enriched by an emphasis on achievement in art and design, in the performing arts and sport, and an appreciation of classics.

Teaching arrangements

Infant and Junior classes have a class teacher. In addition, specialist staff teach French, Spanish, Speech and Drama (Juniors), Music, Art (Junior 4) and Design and Technology (Junior 3 and 4) and PE and Games. Specialist Science teachers are introduced in Junior 1.

In Junior 3 or 4, classes may be set by ability for Mathematics to better meet the needs of the range of ability within the year group. Decisions on the composition of teaching sets are made using all the evidence gathered from the individual pupil data. Parents are kept fully informed of any concerns about their child's progress which might lead to a change of set. Changes to teaching sets only take place in exceptional circumstances during the course of an academic year. Where a change to a child's

teaching set is proposed, the subject teacher makes a recommendation to the co-ordinator, which must then be endorsed by the Head of the Junior School.

Independent learning

As a School which encourages independent thinking and creates opportunities for diverse learning with built-in challenges, pupils are given every opportunity to be active learners. Teachers understand the principles of 'thinking' as an active, practical and creative skill to be developed. By giving pupils the ability to think for themselves, we aim to unlock their academic potential and unleash their curiosity.

Timetable

There are 9 periods per day of 35 minutes each, within the Monday – Friday working week. The exact time dedicated to each subject varies from term to term depending on the class focus. Children have access to all National Curriculum subjects throughout the year. Although there is a clear focus on the core subjects of English and Maths, specialist teachers are used across the School to enhance achievement in French, Spanish, Art, Design Technology, Drama, Music, P.E. and Science.

The wider curriculum

By taking pupils beyond the classroom, the Junior School offers pupils the opportunity to enrich their learning and widen their experiences. Day visits are arranged to museums, galleries, environmental projects, concert halls and theatres. The great outdoors is a valuable educational resource and is used for fieldtrips, sporting events and activities. Each year Preparatory, J2 and J4 also take part in a residential visit as part of the outdoor education programme.

Taking place at lunchtime, but mainly at the end of the school day, some 15 plus different extra-curricular activities (ECA) are available to pupils. Sport, music, drama and art provide the bedrock of our diverse activity programme. The programme's breadth is ensured with other opportunities, for example, from computer skills to crafts, science to chess, and mini media studies to grasshoppers. The ECA programme is published to parents on a termly basis. Sporting fixtures are most often played during the weekly games afternoon.

Academic monitoring

Proper assessment is one of the most important requirements for the motivation of pupils' learning. In the Junior School, assessment is carried out by regularly setting tasks and marking, by oral enquiry and by formal testing. Assessment provides information as to the level of understanding of each pupil as well as informing the teacher whether the presentation and pace of a lesson is right and the level of demand is appropriate.

The monitoring of pupil progress is carried out with both academic and pastoral input. Class teachers are responsible for monitoring pupil progress in their year group. Subject co-ordinators are responsible for reviewing the performance of pupils in their subjects. KS Co-ordinators in liaison with the Assistant Head of Junior School and the Assistant Deputy Head (Academic) is responsible for reviewing the overall performance of pupils.

Head of Junior School
September 2025

EYFS Curriculum Policy

General Educational Aims

The practice guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage contained in the 'Development Matters' document is central to planning for the Pre-School and Kindergarten. In addition, as some children achieve the Early Learning Goals in Kindergarten they progress onto the whole school curriculum. Activities are planned and the learning environment is organised to promote development in all seven areas of learning (the three prime areas and the four specific areas) in the EYFS Guidance. The Early Learning Goals establish expectations for all children to work towards, achieve and sometimes exceed by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Further details about the EYFS Curriculum can be found at www.gov.uk/early-years-foundation-stage

Children are encouraged to develop the characteristics of effective learning by giving them opportunities to play and explore, act out experiences and take risks by taking part in unfamiliar activities. Staff will help children to develop concentration and the ability to complete tasks by praising them for persisting and reaching a satisfactory outcome and by helping them to be proud of their achievements. Creative and critical thinking will be developed by asking children to make predictions, suggest ideas and by using strategies such as sustained shared thinking.

Our EYFS unit is led by a full time teacher, who is based primarily in the Kindergarten classroom. In Pre-School there is a lead practitioner both classes are supported by a suitably qualified teaching assistant. A Key Worker system is in place in Pre-School to enable each child to build up a strong relationship with a key member of staff. Children are assessed regularly both formally and informally and next steps are noted to enable children to progress in their learning.

A successful relationship with parents is the key to any good childcare provision. From the moment your child enters the Early Years Foundation Stage we aim to develop a close partnership with you so that together we can provide a good quality start to your child's education. The Friday 'Week Ahead' is emailed to all parents and carers in order to share learning at home. It is essential parents read this on a weekly basis. The Seesaw App which is a key working document cements the children/teacher/parent, carer link. Parents are invited to attend our weekly assemblies, when Pre-School, Kindergarten and the Infants come together to celebrate lots of different achievements. Kindergarten parents are also invited to Chapel Celebration assembly on a Friday afternoon.

PRIME AREAS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To encourage children to become independent and confident learners through the promotion of self-confidence and the ability to persevere to complete tasks satisfactorily. To encourage children to form positive relationships with others (staff and peers) and develop an appreciation and respect for others. To help children to learn to manage their own feelings and to behave in an appropriate way within the learning environment.

COMMUNICATION and LANGUAGE

To help children to develop confidence in speaking in a variety of situations, to listen carefully to others, to learn and use new vocabulary and to express themselves effectively using clear and grammatical language.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

To develop children's co-ordination and control in body movements and to promote a positive attitude towards physical activity. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. To develop children's fine motor control to enable sound progress in writing, art and other activities which require that level of proficiency, control and confidence. The children receive PE lessons from a specialist teacher.

SPECIFIC AREAS

LITERACY

To help children to link sounds and letters and develop confidence in the use of language as readers and writers.

MATHEMATICS

To help children to develop their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes, to measure and to describe position.

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD

To develop children's awareness of the world around them, their environment, people and features of the natural and man-made world. Noticing similarities and differences, patterns and change are important. We will provide opportunities for early science, early technology including ICT, exploring the concept of past and present, exploring the environment.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN

Children will be able to express themselves using a variety of media and will gain an appreciation of different aesthetic forms. Children will be able to use their imagination in play. Children are encouraged to use a wide range of resources in order to express their own ideas and feelings and to construct their individual response to experience in two and three dimensions. A variety of equipment along with a wide choice of resources provides for open-ended exploration of colour, shape and texture and the development of skills in painting, drawing and collage. We encourage children to join in and respond to music and stories and there are opportunities for imaginative role-play, both individually and as part of a group. Children will receive music lessons from a specialist teacher.

Equality and Diversity

In the EYFS we believe in equality of opportunity and we reject all forms of discrimination and prejudice. Our objective is to provide a high-quality, caring and socially aware Pre-School and on this basis we will respond to the cultural and religious needs of each child and family. Equality and respect between individual and groups is an integral part of the curriculum and it is applied across a very broad front. Through the use of books, photographs artefacts and magazines, the children will be made aware of the society to which they belong. We ensure that resources reflect a balanced view of all people regardless of their sex, ability, religion or culture.

Liaison and progression into Kindergarten

In the term before the children in Pre-School are due to move up into Kindergarten and those in Kindergarten are due to move up into Transition the pupils take part in a 'Move Up' day where they spend the day with their new teacher this helps ensure a smooth transfer can take place.



Head of EYFS
September 2025