**[Curriculum Policy](http://hollylodge.liverpool.sch.uk/policies/school-policies-2/curriculum-policy%22%20%5Co%20%22Permalink%20to%20Curriculum%20Policy)**

**Curriculum aims**

The aims of the curriculum of Holly Lodge Girls’ College are to enable students to develop

* a sense of enquiry, the ability to question, solve problems and argue rationally;
* a willingness to apply themselves and an aptitude for learning;
* knowledge and skills relevant to adult life and employment in a changing world;
* literacy, numeracy and competence in the use of information technology;
* their creativity, critical awareness, empathy and sensitivity;
* a recognition of their own and others’ achievements, in school and beyond;
* self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence;
* the skills of working as an individual and as a member of a group or team;
* appropriate moral and spiritual values and tolerance of others, to value each individual and to learn to live together in an atmosphere of mutual respect;
* an awareness of the pupil’s place in the community and the world

**Curriculum principles**

**Pupil entitlement**

As a fully comprehensive, 11 – 19 school, we are committed to the principle that all students, regardless of ability, race or cultural background have a right to the highest quality of education we can provide. This means that we seek to ensure:

* breadth and balance for all ;
* appropriate levels of expectation and genuine challenge;
* relevance, continuity and progression in learning;

by providing courses of study and teaching methods which are tailored to the wide range of needs, interests and aspirations of our students. It also means that many features of the curriculum are common to all students but also recognizes that some students require specialized alternative pathways to succeed.

**Access**

The principle above presents us with a responsibility to find ways of ensuring that all students are engaged in their learning, motivated and enabled to succeed. Teaching staff are expected to ensure that, wherever possible, students who are having difficulty or becoming demotivated are identified early and provided with appropriate support, encouragement, guidance and (if necessary) different teaching styles and work, so that they might continue to participate at the most appropriate level for them. The responsibility of finding means of access to the curriculum

for all is a result of our stated intention to include, not exclude.

**Expectations of staff**

Staff are expected actively to promote and seek to secure the curriculum aims (above) and, in particular to

* have high expectations of students;
* employ a variety of appropriate teaching and learning methods;
* ensure that, wherever possible, students are found means of access to the curriculum and given opportunities to succeed;
* deliver programmes of study which build upon students’ previous experiences, providing progression and continuity, and which conform to the requirements of the national curriculum;
* provide work which meets their students’ needs and aspirations, which offers depth and challenge, and which motivates and inspires them;
* involve the learner in the process of learning, by discussing work, giving regular feedback through assessment and marking, negotiating targets and encouraging pupils to evaluate their own achievements;                                     develop students’ skills to become independent learners;
* encourage, reward and value achievement and effort, both formally and informally, through praise in the learning environment;
* work in partnership with other staff, parents/carers and the wider community to achieve shared goals;
* keep parents/carers regularly and fully informed about the progress and achievements of their daughters.

**Curriculum structure**

**The timetable**

The school operates a 25 period week. There are 5 periods per day (3 in the morning, 2 in the afternoon), each of which lasts for one hour.  In addition, all students spend 20 minutes each day in Academic Review or Assembly

**Key Stage 3: Years 7, 8 and 9**

Pupils follow a common curriculum in line with the National Curriculum comprising;

English and Drama, Mathematics, Science, Art, Design and Technology, French, History, Geography, Music, Physical Education, Information Technology and Personal and Social Education From Year 9, students in the top sets for French also study German (Spanish from September 2009).

**Key Stage 4: Years 10 and 11**

At key stage 4, students take courses from a choice within a common core, and four further option choices. The common core comprises:

English (most students take both language and literature), Mathematics, Science (dual award GCSE or BTEC),

French or German, Information Technology, Physical Education and Religious Education.

They then make three further choices from a wide range of subjects. Their choices must include a Visual Arts subject, in line with our status as a Specialist Visual Arts College. Other choices include Drama, Dance, Health and Social Care, Geography, History, Business Studies, Graphic Products, Textiles Technology, Catering, Child Development etc.

Most courses lead to GCSE examinations or their equivalent on the National Qualifications Framework. Alternative provision is made for students who require it. This includes courses in Beauty Care, Text Processing, Young Apprenticeships, IFP courses in College or Work Based Learning providers.

**The Sixth Form**

Students can access a wide range of courses through our collaborative arrangements as part of the Liverpool East Collaborative and the East Liverpool Travel to Learn Partnership. There are 4 option blocks at Level 3 which are structured according to past opting patterns. This structure is reviewed annually in tandem with our collaborative partners. At level 3 it is expected that students will access the equivalent of up to 4 qualifications in Year 12 with the acceptance that these will drop to 3 in Year 13.

At level 2 students can choose from a range of subjects and are tutored extensively to help them achieve and make future choices and progress.

**Curriculum matters**

**Mixed ability teaching, setting and differentiation**

On arrival in Year 7, all students are placed in mixed ability tutor groups and teaching groups. They are then re-set into ability groups in many subjects once initial testing has taken place. We recognize that in all mixed ability classes, sets and broad banded groups, there is a wide range of ability. In addition, individual pupils have preferred learning styles. To take account of these differences and the range of ability in any class, all staff have a responsibility, when planning work, to meet the needs of all pupils. This will involve, at different times, adapting tasks, providing different resources, developing extension work, providing a variety of learning styles and environments, setting individual goals, giving different levels of support, and offering a variety of ways to demonstrate knowledge and understanding. In educational jargon, this approach is known as differentiation.

**Class sizes**

In Years 7 – 9, the usual teaching group is around 26-30 students. In some subjects, for example where there are health and safety issues to consider (as in design and technology, PE, art), smaller groups of about twenty to twenty-two are created.  Where setting exists, the norm is to create smaller groups for the least able students, so that more individual attention can be provided.

In Years 10 and 11, groups in English, mathematics and science average about twenty-four to twenty-five. Most other subjects are options, and group sizes vary, usually from around fifteen to twenty-eight. In the sixth form, the minimum size of a viable group is around seven to eight and very few groups exceed twenty two.

**The learning environment**

The school is aware that a lively, purposeful and structured learning environment is essential in promoting high standards and good working practices. Displays of students’ work, stimulus materials and appropriate resources are very important in setting standards and raising expectations. All departments are expected to emphasise good display in their areas and contribute to displays in public areas of the school. It is expected that classrooms are orderly environments where pupils can work effectively and in comfort, that adequate resources are provided and are accessible, and that students treat classrooms, workshops, study rooms and the resource centre with respect.

**Schemes of work and lesson planning**

Each department is required to have schemes of work for all of its courses/programmes related, where appropriate, to the national curriculum and or examination board requirements. These schemes of work are followed by all departmental staff and their delivery monitored by Curriculum Leaders. Schemes of work set out how the content of the course is structured, so that students’ skills, knowledge and understanding are developed progressively, and how the teaching is organised. These schemes of work are supported by assessment strategies and methods for ensuring standardisation of expectation and assessment. Teachers plan individual lessons, or sequences of lessons, in different ways.

**Homework**

Holly Lodge Girls’ College recognises the importance and value of homework as an extension of classwork, and a vehicle to practice skills, acquire new ones and develop good study habits.

Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 should expect homework to be set once a week in most subjects. Homework can, however, take a variety of forms, including reading, research, planning and evaluating and revising as well as the more-familiar written work.

Students in Years 10 and 11 prepare for GCSE examinations and undertake a wider variety of homework tasks. Quite often, teachers set homework which extends over more than one week.

We do not publish a homework timetable as these have been shown to restrict both the quality and quantity of homework set.

**Vocational education**

In the sixth form, a variety of vocational courses at different levels are offered. Students are able to mix vocational and academic courses.

At KS4, students’ vocational entitlement is met by a combination of curricular experiences and specific courses. These experiences include the careers education and guidance programme, Enterprise Days, work experience, awareness-raising (for example through assemblies and tutorial work) and personal management and decision-making skills delivered through the PSHE programme.

*HL Curriculum Policy*