

COGNITA



**DOWNSEND**  
SCHOOL

**PREP SCHOOL  
CURRICULUM:**

**CURRICULUM POLICY**

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## 1.0 Introduction

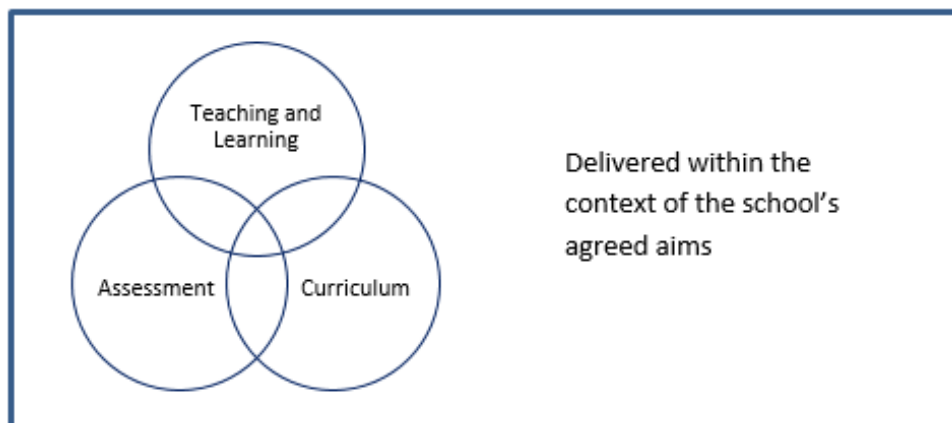
The purpose of this policy is to ensure that our curriculum supports our school ethos and fulfils our school aims.

Our **philosophy** at Downsend is **INSPIRING YOUNG MINDS** and to create a lifelong passion for learning and discovery.

Our **aim** is to ensure that Downsend offers our pupils a wealth of opportunities to develop their individual skills.

We see the curriculum as, the **total learning experience** for our pupils, which includes not only the taught lessons but also the routines, behaviours, events, activities and other opportunities that our pupils experience on a daily, weekly and annual basis in order to ensure that all of them make the best progress possible and attain high standards.

A **well-structured and coherent curriculum** is a fundamental element of the tripartite of education that underpins all successful schools and includes Teaching, Learning and Assessment as in the following model:



We aim to provide a curriculum to develop pupils who love learning. We understand that the curriculum, both within taught lessons and beyond them, and in everything we say and do, should create an environment where academic risk-taking, questioning and debating, challenging thinking and the freedom to learn from mistakes are all encouraged.

Our curriculum offers all pupils the opportunity to experience linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative aspects of education. We intend that our curriculum should instil in our pupils:

- A passion for life-long learning;
- A capacity for independent and critical thinking;
- Self-awareness, self-regulation and resilience;
- Self-confidence without arrogance; and
- Genuine interests that extend beyond the confines of the classroom.

**British Values**, which are democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, are actively promoted in every aspect of school life.

## 2.0 Taught curriculum

The Downsend curriculum is designed to fully cover the requirements of the National Curriculum whilst recognising the specific demands of the various examinations to independent Senior Schools following the ISEB Common Entrance Syllabus. Children in the Scholarship stream will follow the Common Academic Scholarship syllabus as well as additional aspects as required for other external school examinations. Once the Common Entrance or Common Academic Scholarship syllabus has been completed during Year 8, a mixture of revision, past paper practice, fine tuning and guidance on exam technique will prepare the pupils for the examinations.

Pupils entering Downsend in Years 2-8 take a written assessment in Maths and Reading. In addition, they will complete a written comprehension or creative written task. The outcomes of these entry tests are shared with parents as part of informed discussions about a pupil's ability and potential. They are used to make sure that the curriculum offer is individualised to need.

### Curriculum Allocation

Time awarded to each subject in each year group is visually explained in the curriculum allocation model below:

|            | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 | Y6 | Y7 | Y8 |
|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Maths      | 11 | 10 | 10 | 9  | 9  | 7  | 8  |
| English    | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9  | 9  | 8  | 7  |
| Science    | 5  | 5  | 5  | 6  | 6  | 6  | 6  |
| Reasoning  |    |    |    | 1  | 1  |    |    |
| Library    | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  |    |
| STEAM      | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  |
| PSHEE      | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  |
| History    | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 2  | 3  | 3  |
| Geography  |    |    |    |    | 2  | 3  | 3  |
| RS         | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 3  |
| French     | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 4  | 5  | 5  |
| Classics   |    |    |    |    |    |    | 3  |
| Spanish    |    |    |    |    | 2  | 2  |    |
| Art        | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  |
| Computing  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  |
| Drama      | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  |
| Music      | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  |
| Technology | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  |
| PE/ Games  | 6  | 7  | 7  | 7  | 7  | 7  | 7  |

Details of how the taught curriculum is translated into subject Schemes of Work (SoW).

Taken together, the taught curriculum will ensure that by the time they have completed their time with us, all pupils are able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding to enable them to move onto the next stage of their education at the highest level.

### **3.0 Special Educational Needs and Disability - SEND**

Our curriculum is inclusive. For those pupils with special educational needs or specific learning difficulties, the school has a well-established Learning Support department, led by the SEND Coordinator.

Further details of this provision can be found in our Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) policy.

### **4.0 SMSC**

Our policy follows the advice given by the DfE in the non-statutory guidance of November 2014 and meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards. Aspects of SMSC are infused within the day to day operation of our school; incorporated through the curriculum, both in content included in subject schemes of work and through other planned learning opportunities in the school. They are captured in our written aims and expressed in the ethos and behaviours of everyone. Our approach to SMSC ensures that principles are actively promoted which:

- Enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
- Enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England;
- Encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely;
- Enable pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England;
- Further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;
- Encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act; and
- Encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

Discriminatory or extremist opinions or behaviours are challenged as a matter of routine.

In addition, our approach to SMSC ensures that all pupils will gain an:

- Understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process;
- Appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their well-being and safety;
- Understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence;
- Understanding that the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law;
- Acceptance that people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour; and
- Understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.

## 5.0 Religious Education and PSHEE

Downsend responds to the legal requirement in maintained schools to teach Religious Education and Sex and Relationships education, and to non-statutory guidelines to cover other aspects of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE).

Our PSHEE course is delivered to all pupils through discrete PSHEE lessons taught by their tutors. There is one lesson of taught PSHEE a week. Elements of the programme may be supported through the bringing in of additional expertise such as outside speakers or the use of teachers with a particular interest or knowledge in a specific area. In addition to these discrete sessions, PSHEE is also dealt with across the curriculum (e.g. Social issues through the teaching of English Literature; Health through Science and PE; Citizenship through History & RE). There are also centrally organised sessions which supplement the delivery in houses, dealing with issues such as bullying, alcohol, sexual relationships and drugs, as well as supporting careers and economic education.

## 6.0 Co-curricular

A wide range of enrichment activities supplements the timetabled curriculum. Our pupils are encouraged to take part in an extensive range of art, drama, music, sport and other activities and clubs. Regular curriculum collapse days and weeks are held. These may include Book Week, Maths Week, STEAM Week, Languages Workshops.

Pupils are taken to places of interest on a regular basis. Visits, including residential opportunities, are organised annually, which help to develop independence, teamwork and responsibility in a different environment to that in school.

## 7.0 Other opportunities

Our school aims to provide an education for life. Other aspects of our curriculum and our pastoral leadership network which enable our pupils to gain the skills, knowledge and experience to be successful adults include:

- Pupil Councils;
- Downsend Diploma
- Head Boy & Head Girl
- School Prefects
- Digital Leaders
- STEAM Leaders
- Form, House & Team Captains
- Expeditions and trips;
- Fundraising Activities;
- Various Clubs and Activities; and
- Sport.

## 8.0 Responsibility

The person with responsibility for the overview and yearly evaluation of this policy is the Curriculum Manager. However, all staff are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and acted on.

When evaluating the use and impact of this Curriculum Policy, our school leaders will evaluate the extent to which there is evidence of a curriculum which:

- Fulfils the aims of the school;
- Embeds aspiration, attributes and the expectation to achieve high standards and high rates of progress; and
- Provides engagement and excitement for learning.