

SEVENOAKS SCHOOL

<i>Policy reference</i>	AC3
<i>Category</i>	Student and Parent Facing
<i>Name of policy</i>	Curriculum Policy
<i>Purpose of policy</i>	Outlining and defining the purpose and structure of the curriculum education offered by Sevenoaks School.
<i>Regulatory or legal requirement addressed by policy</i>	The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations, Department of Education, 2014, part 1 and 2.
<i>Scope</i>	Sevenoaks School (Senior)
<i>Other policies referred to</i>	• Learning Support Policy (SEND) • RSE Policy • Behaviour Policy • Safeguarding Policy
<i>Policy owned by</i>	Deputy Head Academic
<i>Date effective from</i>	June 2026
<i>Externally published</i>	Yes

CURRICULUM POLICY

1. Opening statement

Sevenoaks is a progressive, imaginative and academic school with a global outlook.

These characteristics are all reflected in the academic curriculum, which is complemented by a full and wide-ranging co-curricular programme and a well-established and successful framework of pastoral care.

Each of the three Divisions of the School (Lower, Middle and Upper) has its own distinctive curriculum. It is our aim to provide material which is appropriate for all of our students and to embrace the best of what is new in education, whilst guarding the best aspects of past tradition.

We want our students to learn how to study and work effectively on their own, and also how to contribute as part of a group; to listen in lessons, but also to speak and present. We want them to be as confident in the new technologies of AI, tablet and cloud as they are with book, paper and pen. They should learn how to collaborate without copying, how to debate while still listening and how enthusiasm and curiosity are the best tools to combat cynicism and self-interest.

The common goal of all Sevenoaks teachers is to communicate effectively and to encourage pupils to develop a commitment to learning for its own sake. Preparation for university and beyond is viewed with importance and each student is taught to develop the self-motivated attitude to study to which all education should lead. Syllabus selection plays an important part in this; academic departments review their courses regularly to ensure that learning is a stimulating and interesting experience.

2. General context

2.1 Sevenoaks School provides full-time education for students between Year 7 and Year 13. New students typically join the school at Year 7, 9 or 12, though entry is possible at other times. The Lower School encompasses Year 7 and 8, the Middle School Years 9 to 11, and the Upper School Years 12 and 13.

2.2 All students in the Upper School follow the IB Diploma programme, and many of the values of the IB Diploma pervade our curriculum elsewhere in the school. Students in Year 11 take public examinations (usually GCSEs or IGCSEs) in a range of subjects, most commonly 10 or 11, but also complete Sevenoaks School's own "Middle School Diploma".

2.3 The curriculum helps to develop knowledge, understanding and skills across different areas of learning: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human & social, aesthetic & creative, and physical education. Students acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills throughout their time at Sevenoaks School, learning at a level appropriate to their age, aptitude and needs.

2.4 The curriculum is aimed at preparing our students for life in a global society. Although much of our student body is international in flavour, we uphold and promote British values inside and outside of lessons, and students explore matters relating to democracy, the rule of law, freedom, respect, tolerance and combatting discrimination and extremism. In 2020-1 the school set up a structure to promote equity, diversity and inclusion, which includes the promotion of this agenda within the curriculum.

2.5 We are not a school that believes in constantly testing and measuring students. Our aim is to develop a lifelong love of learning in our students, and, although assessment is a crucial tool in our curriculum, we do not think that frequent summative examinations are beneficial. However, we do use data to inform our curriculum planning and our interactions with individual students. Our aim is to challenge all students appropriately; although the notion of a typical gifted and talented list is not especially helpful given the academic profile of our student body as a whole, we do run many programmes intended to stretch and enrich our most able students in different subject and cross-curricular areas.

2.6 Other unique aspects of our curriculum include the Core Critical Thinking (CCT) course, which runs through Years 7-11 and gives students opportunities to explore key ideas and develop their ability to interrogate their own understanding and views. This is picked up in the Upper School by the IB Theory of Knowledge programme. We also run a “Society and Change” course in Year 7 which introduces students to crucial current topics and societal problems. This is followed up in Year 8 with a programme related to social entrepreneurship. Also embedded within the curriculum are sport and PE, Music, Drama, Art, Technology and PSHE education. From Year 10 to Year 13, all students are involved in a compulsory Service afternoon.

2.7 Our Institute of Teaching and Learning (ITL) invites reflective critical thinking about our educational approach as a school. In pursuit of best practice, its work is both inward-facing, seeking to develop policy that can be shown to work well for us, and at the same time we look outwards to connect with schools and HE institutions both locally and overseas. The work of the ITL is spread over four main areas: Character Education; Wellbeing; Digital Learning and Learning to Learn.

3. Related Policies and Documents

Policies available publicly:

- Learning Support Policy (SEND)
- RSE Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy Documents available to staff:
- All sections of the staff handbook related to academic matters, including but not limited to those on assessment, homework, marking, reporting, EAL, academic honesty and examinations
- Yearly lists outlining the precise number of lessons per fortnight and number of classes for every subject in each academic year group

4. Lower School

Students in Years 7 and 8 follow a broad and exciting curriculum. They are free from impending exams, and are thus encouraged to enjoy these years, to use their time to develop a love of learning, and for co-curricular pursuits, for service and for fun.

A full articulation of the Lower School curriculum can be found here: <https://viewer.joomag.com/the-lower-school-at-sevenoaks/M0976463001575544072>

In summary, students in Years 7 and 8 have lessons in

- Mathematics
- English

- Physics
- Chemistry
- Biology
- MFL (French or Spanish in Y7; two of French, Spanish, Mandarin, Russian, German in Y8)
- Latin
- Geography
- History
- Core Critical Thinking
- Society and Change
- Drama
- Art
- Technology
- Music
- PSHE
- PE, Swimming and Games

5. Middle School

Every student in the Middle School is urged to be curious, creative and critically aware, and to develop their interests and talents to the full. We have a broad range of academically ambitious courses which prepare students well for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in the Sixth Form. Breadth is central to the Sevenoaks ethos and a key principle underpinning the IB. So too is coherence; as with the IB Diploma, in the Middle School a unique core connects and informs a balanced range of subjects, assessed through a combination of qualifications. We also allow students to choose particular subjects in which they have an expertise or interest. In this way, the Middle School provides a holistic academic profile; one that is analytical, creative, challenging, ambitious and fun.

A full articulation of the Middle School curriculum can be found here: <https://viewer.joomag.com/the-middle-school-at-sevenoaks-2021/0399904001605530845?short&>

The Sevenoaks School Diploma which we run in the Middle School is a unique, bespoke programme, designed to take account of this way of thinking about the school curriculum. Students are invited to see it as an opportunity to record many different elements of school life that can sometimes go unnoticed, but also to develop personal qualities and attributes that make them a more fully rounded person, and provide them with the means to learn more effectively.

The Diploma asks students to make formal record of their learning in the Middle School, both inside and outside the classroom. Provided they fulfil the core requirements, at the end of Year 11 they will be rewarded with a Diploma Certificate and a transcript that describes their journey through the Middle School years. Students record and interrogate their own progress in these categories:

- Academic Engagement
- Making and Performing
- Service and Social Impact
- Physical and Outdoor Education
- Other, via “tutor recommendation”

A full articulation of the Middle School diploma can be found here:
<https://viewer.joomag.com/sevenoaks-school-middle-school-diploma-middle-school-diploma/0988051001573492395?short&>

Year 9 students follow a similar subject programme to students in the Lower School, with options to begin the study of a new language or languages ab initio.

In Years 10 and 11, students follow a programme of core subjects:

- Mathematics
- English
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Biology
- PE and Games
- PSHE
- Service
- Core Critical Thinking

Students in Years 10 and 11 also opt to study four other subjects, from:

- MFL (French, Spanish, German, Russian, Mandarin)
- Latin (or Latin & Greek as one option)
- History
- Geography
- Classical Civilisation
- Art
- Music
- Drama
- Technology: Computer Science
- Technology: 3D Design

6. Upper School

A full articulation of the Upper School curriculum can be found here:
<https://viewer.joomag.com/the-ib-at-sevenoaks-2021/0174960001604490817?short&>

More than just a qualification, the IB Diploma provides a distinctive educational experience for Sevenoaks Students. It allows students to study a wide range of subjects throughout their Sixth Form, while giving them the freedom to choose which subjects to study in greater depth. A number of opportunities exist for students to develop specialised knowledge and skills in topics that interest them the most. IB students also develop the ability to take on new ideas from across the disciplines throughout their lives.

The IB Diploma programme involves the study of six subjects (three at Higher Level and three at Standard Level) taken from six curriculum areas:

- Group 1 (study of literature in English)
- Group 2 (language acquisition)
- Group 3 (individuals and societies)
- Group 4 (experimental Sciences)
- Group 5 (Mathematics)
- Group 6 (The Arts)

Group 6 also gives students the opportunity to study a second foreign language, a second Science, or a second humanities subject.

The Core of the IB Diploma includes the study of Theory of Knowledge, an extended essay, and a programme of "Creativity, Activity and Service". A fuller description of these crucial elements of the Sevenoaks School curriculum can be found in the "IB at Sevenoaks" booklet linked above.

7. RSE and PSHEE

The full school RSE policy can be found here: <https://www.sevenoaksschool.org/about-us/policies-reports/>

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) helps pupils to lead confident, healthy and responsible lives as individuals and members of society. Through work in lesson time and a wide range of activities across and beyond the curriculum, pupils gain practical knowledge and skills to help them live healthily and deal with the spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues they face as they approach adulthood. PSHEE gives pupils opportunities to reflect on their experiences and how they are developing. It helps them to understand and manage responsibly a wider range of relationships as they mature, and to show respect for the diversity of, and differences between, people. It also develops pupils' well-being and self-esteem, encouraging belief in their ability to succeed and to be resilient, enabling them to take responsibility for their learning and future choice of courses and career.

PSHEE has a regular place in the curriculum in Years 7-11, plus a fortnightly lecture slot for both years of the Upper School. Additional time is given for the exploration of PSHEE matters via the "Saturday 4" period which occurs for all years every week before an exeat, and in assemblies and form tutor time every morning. There is a core programme of matters covered, including:

- Relationships – positive relationships; relationship values; forming and maintaining respectful relationships; consent; contraception and parenthood; bullying, abuse and discrimination; social influences
- Health & Wellbeing - Self-Concept; mental & emotional wellbeing; healthy lifestyles and health related decisions; drugs, alcohol and tobacco; managing risk and personal safety; puberty and sexual health
- Living in the Wider World - learning skills; choices and pathways; work and career; employment rights and responsibilities; financial knowledge and choices; media literacy and digital resilience

...but teachers regularly use their discretion to cover issues arising in the news or in response to certain events, trends or concerns.

8. Learning Support (SEND)

The full school Learning Support (SEND) policy can be found here: <https://www.sevenoaksschool.org/about-us/policies-reports/>

The Learning Support department offers support and expertise to the whole school to help resolve difficulties and promote positive solutions for pupils experiencing barriers to their learning. We employ a range of strategies to achieve this including:

- Identification and assessment of individual needs
- Designing individual learning programmes, in consultation with students
- Advising and working with colleagues (academic and pastoral)
- Liaising with external agencies

- Communicating with parents

We are committed to equal opportunities and although not compulsory for independent schools, we believe that it is good practice to show due regard in our work, policy and procedures to SENDA 2001. As recommended in the SEND Code of Practice 2014 (updated 2020), the school takes a person-centred approach to its support of SEND students, taking into account student and parent voice. We are committed to making reasonable adjustments for students with disability and Learning Difficulties in line with the Equality Act 2010. We also recognise that students with SEN are sometimes more vulnerable to safeguarding issues and require extra support.

The School believes that the community is enriched by its ability to attract a wide variety of pupils from varied backgrounds and with varied talents. Our Learning Support (SEND) policy fully complements this belief. We welcome applicants with learning difficulties, or other disabilities, to the school. A full articulation of the work of the Learning Support department can be found in the policy linked above.

9. Careers Education and Guidance

Access to up-to-date careers and HE guidance is presented in an impartial manner to students via a number of methods, formats and media. This includes the work of the form tutor as an advisor on subject choices and future options, the PSHE programme, and the work of the HE department. We use tests and interviews to help students explore options and opportunities, and there are careers fairs, options evenings and HE events which feed into this process.

All of the above enable students to make informed choices about a broad range of post-school options and encourages them to fulfil their potential.

10. Closing Statement

The Sevenoaks School curriculum aims to affirm the following core principles:

- **Excellence:** To set high expectations for pupils; to offer the highest quality of learning and teaching; to ensure pupils achieve the best possible academic results; to stretch the more able, and give the less able all the help and support they need.
- **Active Learning:** To stimulate and inspire pupils; to encourage pupils to be responsive in class, and responsible for their learning outside of it; to foster a passion for knowledge and a love of learning for its own sake; to develop initiative and independence in pupils' attitudes to learning; to generate a sense of reflection in their approach to work.
- **Breadth and Depth:** To offer a wide range of subjects while maintaining a commitment to academic rigour; to ensure this extends from the Year 7 right through to the Upper School where the principle is enshrined in the pursuit of the IB Diploma Programme; to ensure that pupils make informed and balanced choices of subjects; to extend pupils' experiences beyond the traditional disciplines into more creative, technical and sporting fields.
- **Effective Assessment:** Reliably to measure progress and record achievement; to offer a balance of correction and praise; to recognise and reward effort as well as attainment; to show pupils how to improve; to encourage effective learning as a result.
- **Inclusion and co-education:** To offer a variety of teaching and learning methods sensitive to the needs of all students; to ensure all pupils feel included and valued; to foster a spirit of mutual courtesy and respect as well as healthy competition; to offer a moral and social framework that prepares for university and the world of work.
- **International-mindedness:** To celebrate intellectual and cultural diversity; to enlarge pupils' concern for, and responsibility to, the wider community and the world.
- **Cross-Curricular Links:** To ensure that vision and purpose are unified across the curriculum; to encourage links between the disciplines; to use opportunities within and beyond the school to help pupils develop their personal and social skills.