

Rochester Independent College Curriculum Policy

The College primarily offers A levels and GCSE subjects although students are also prepared for IELTS examinations, Advanced Extension and STEP papers. Examinations are set by one of three main accredited UK Examination Groups. Choice of syllabus is left to the professional judgement of individual teachers.

All students from overseas for whom English is not a first language benefit from specialist English tuition leading to IELTS or other relevant examinations.

For students of statutory school age RIC's curriculum is designed to ensure the education offered to all students is broad and balanced and includes access to linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative areas. In the Lower School there is a particular focus on environmental and international issues across the curriculum. Art is treated as a core subject up to year 9. College wide initiatives such as the Arts Mark and International School Award applications play a role in consolidating different aspects of the curriculum. In Lower School Science there is a marked emphasis on practical work and hands on experience of experiments and research. In Maths we value traditional numeracy but teachers also try to introduce abstraction at an early age. We expect all students to know their times tables and to be able to survive without calculators! In Humanities there is a particular focus on local History and Geography and in English we are committed to ensuring that students read widely in their own time throughout their teenage years.

The curriculum also offers opportunities for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, through many subject areas, PHSE, the College's overall ethos and the extensive programme of trips and visits open to all students. The PHSE programme also includes aspects of citizenship. Education with regard to the world of work is part of PHSE for Lower School students and delivered through the Personal Tutor system for sixth form students. The College's Personal Tutor system is particularly designed to give students individualised advice particularly with regard to careers and university entrance once options are chosen.

We want our students though to develop an interest in their subjects for their own sakes, not just to learn which boxes to tick in an exam. We offer the opportunity to try out a range of subjects, sometimes just for enjoyment. We don't just look at the national frameworks for Key Stage 3, or GCSE and A level specifications, and decide that's all our students need to know. Our teachers in the Lower School encourage students to aim above overly prescriptive GCSEs to A level and beyond that, to work and university. As well as acceleration of some GCSE courses there is a focus on enriching the educational experience, through for example the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

The College's curriculum offers flexibility of course length, few restrictions on subject choices in later years and students are encouraged to follow a personalised programme where they take exams as and when they are ready to do so rather than being held back by school year group.

The College's key objective is to imaginatively tailor an education around the students who come here and we are able to deal with both the most academically able and those who may need extra handholding and support through differentiation deployed in small classes. The focus is on identifying individual strengths, weaknesses and interests and developing a programme of study that allows them to move at a pace appropriate to them.

The College is keen to ensure all students acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy skills. Obviously much of this is contained within individual subjects. The College does not offer Key Skills Qualifications. Personal Tutors encourage students to read newspapers and periodicals.

The College encourages students to put together as broad a package of A level subjects as possible, particularly in the Lower Sixth. Science and Mathematics students for example are encouraged to take Sociology to foster essay writing and communication skills, even if this does not lead to a final examination in the subject.

The College treats its two year A level programme as just that and students may not always be entered for full AS modules at the end of their first year of study as experience has demonstrated they often perform much better in year two. This approach also means that less teaching time is lost in year 12.

Students wishing to specialise in the Creative or Performing Arts at A level are encouraged to take at least one more traditionally academic subject alongside. Subject combinations with too much overlap, e.g Media Studies and Film Studies, Business Studies and Economics are discouraged.

All students are encouraged to take advantage of the College's Creative Arts provision, regardless of whether they are studying a particular subject to A level. Other non examination courses offered include Lifedrawing, Software Training and DV Film Making.

The flexibility of the sixth form curriculum means that the timetable is a very fluid one, revised at various points in the academic year, e.g after January retake students leave and in the revision period.

The College's curriculum is non demoninational as appropriate for an international community.

This policy is supported by relevant departmental schemes of work.

Revised June 2009.