



The Prior Foundation
**PRIOR PARK
COLLEGE**

ACADEMIC POLICIES 2015

Foundation Wide? No	Statutory? No	Website? Yes
Prepared: December 2014	Next review: Sept 2015	FINAL

Contents

1.0 CURRICULUM POLICY.....	3
2.0 TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY	6
3.0 POLICY FOR EDUCATING PUPILS WITH HIGH LEARNING POTENTIAL	8
4.0 HOMEWORK and PREP POLICY	10
5.0 MARKING POLICY	14

1.0 CURRICULUM POLICY

Prior Park College seeks to provide an environment in which pupils, staff and parents are committed to the idea of excellence within a caring, supportive community.

Prior Park College aims to give access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which is suited to the abilities and aptitudes of each pupil.

1.1 Basic Aims

Through the opportunities offered to pupils within the classroom and beyond:

- Skills and interests are developed in order that pupils might respond effectively to social, economic and political changes and to changing patterns of work and that they might gain personal satisfaction in the use of their leisure time;
- Knowledge is valued and acquired for its own sake, as a means of understanding reality and to help pupils to know more about themselves and the society in which they live;
- Individual autonomy is fostered and individual aptitudes are developed in an environment in which there is equal opportunity in order that the pupils might be capable of independent thought and that their self-respect may be enhanced;
- Moral standards are encouraged so that pupils have a respect for others and become responsible members of their community.

1.2 The Academic Curriculum

a) Years 7–8

- Pupils will be given experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education through the Core and co-curriculum;
- All pupils follow a Core Curriculum of English, Mathematics, Science, at least one Modern Language, Humanities (History, Geography), IT, Performing and Creative Arts (Art, Music, Drama), Theology, PE, PSHCE and Games;
- Pupils acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy through the core curriculum, especially English, Mathematics and the Modern Foreign Language;
- Latin is studied by most students in Years 7 & 8;
- Pupils for whom English is a second language or who have a special educational need may follow an amended Core Curriculum as their needs dictate;
- Dedicated LDP classes run in parallel with the timetabled curriculum.

b) Year 9

- Pupils will be given experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education through the Core and co-curriculum;
- Pupils in receipt of EAL or LDP support generally will select 4 optional subjects leaving space in the timetable to accommodate specialist support classes;
- Pupils acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy through the core curriculum, especially English, Mathematics and the Modern Foreign Language;
- All pupils follow a Core Curriculum of English (or EAL for overseas pupils), Mathematics, Science, a Modern Language (to be selected from French Spanish, German), Theology, PE, and Games. All pupils also study History, Geography, IT and PSHCE;

- In addition pupils select 5 optional subjects including first MFL, Art, Drama, Music, DT, Second MFL (French, German, Spanish), Sports Leadership, Philosophy, Classics (Classical Civ, Latin);
- Pupils acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy through the core curriculum, especially English, Mathematics and the Modern Foreign Language;
- Pupils for whom English is a second language or who have a special educational needs may follow an amended Core Curriculum as their needs dictate. In particular overseas student in Year 9 generally do not study a modern language;
- Dedicated LDP classes run in parallel with the timetabled curriculum. In Year 9 LDP class are scheduled according to student needs are scheduled against Classics and MFL classes.

c) Years 10-11 GCSE

- Most students study 11 subjects at GCSE or IGCSE;
- These include the core subjects: English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Modern Language (either French, Spanish or German), Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics), and Theology;
- Students then choose a further three subjects from a range of options, including: History, Geography, Art, Drama, Dance, Music, PE, Classical Civilisation, Latin, second language, and DT (Textiles or Prod Design);
- Students in receipt of LDP, as well as EAL generally study fewer subjects. This is achieved by dropping either one of the optional subjects, of the Modern Language. Support classes in LDP and EAL are offered during ensuing curriculum time;
- Most EAL students study for IGCSE English in a dedicated set, and do not take English Language and Literature separately;
- The academic curriculum is complemented by an extensive co-curriculum, including Games and CCF. A broad range of educational visits extends and enriches the taught curriculum. In addition selected pupils are given the opportunity to develop their gifts and talents during co-curricular time.

d) Setting in Years 7 – 11

- It is policy to set by academic ability in a number of subjects.

Mathematics:	From Christmas in Year 7 onwards
French:	From Year 8 onwards
Spanish:	Year 9, and GCSE
Latin:	Year 8
Science:	GCSE
- All other groups are generally mixed ability.

e) Sixth Form

- Pupils are given as much choice as possible in selecting subject options at AS and Advanced level;
- There are a large range of subjects available, including:
Art, Art with Design (Textiles) Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Classical Civilisation, DT (Prod Design), Dance, Economics, French, Geography, German, Greek, History, Latin, Mathematics, Music, Music Technology, Philosophy, Physics, PE and Sports Studies, Psychology, Spanish, Theatre Studies, Theology;
- Sixth Formers have the opportunity to extend their studies through enrichment courses (PSHCE, RE and General Studies) and, in common with all pupils, take Physical Education with Games;

- Students also that the opportunity where relevant to study for specialist qualifications including: Extended Projects (EPQ), Advanced Sports (AASE), and vocational drama;
- A broad range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits extends and enriches the taught curriculum.

1.3 Roles and Responsibilities

- The Headmaster, supported by the Academic Deputy Head reports to the Board of Governors on all matters related to the curriculum;
- The Academic Deputy Head and Assistant Head for Pupil Development have responsibility for curriculum matters in School. They are in turn supported by a dedicated timetabler, examinations officer, and MIS manager;
- Academic Committee is comprised of the majority of Heads of Department, and is the principal forum for discussion and management of all matters relating to the academic curriculum. The Academic Committee reports directly to the Headmaster and Senior Management team. This body is supported by an informal HoDs committee who meet regularly with a specific agenda;
- All departments are reviewed annually by the Headmaster and Academic Deputy where they report back on matters such as: Public Examination performance, development plans, curricular change, and staffing/resourcing needs;
- Heads of Departments have responsibility for the curriculum in their subject departments. Heads of Department report directly to the Academic Deputy Head;
- Priorities for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are set down in the staff handbook, as well as general information to pupils and parents. Key policies are:
 - Marking and Assessment Policy
 - Teaching and Learning Policy.
- These whole school policies link in with the Curriculum Policy.

2.0 TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

2.1 Philosophy and Aims: Inspiring education for life

a) Inspiring Values for Life

- Vision, values and ethos as defined in the College mission statement are shared by the whole school community;
- Students are happy, secure, confident and valued for their individuality;
- Students develop spiritual and moral values, self-discipline, responsibility, resilience and respect for themselves, others and the environment;
- Staff are energetic and passionate advocates for their subject and committed to the value of an all-round education;
- A positive and inclusive relationship is nurtured with parents, alumni, and the wider community;
- The School at all times holds true to its Catholic Christian principles and values.

b) Inspiring Learning for Life

- Students achieve their academic potential through outstanding teaching which is innovative, encourages independent thinking and lays the foundations for lifelong learning;
- Staff continue to develop in their roles through high quality support, guidance and CPD;
- The facilities and learning environment should support the philosophy and aims of the School;
- Regular and robust self-evaluation and collective review ensures underpins the maintenance and development of these core principles.

c) Inspiring Interests for Life

- The curriculum is broad and balanced, offering rich and varied opportunities for the development of academic interest and intellectual curiosity.
- The co-curriculum offers a wide range of enriching, enjoyable and challenging activities, which stimulate and develop the interests of each child, and promote a healthy lifestyle
- Whilst maintaining a high academic standard pupils of all abilities are encouraged to make the most of all the opportunities open to them beyond the academic curriculum

2.2 We believe in helping pupils to become balanced and interesting people, with the intellectual freedom to be creative, the confidence and resilience to cope with adversity. The learning environment should foster in pupils the application of effort, an interest in their work and lifelong learning and the ability to become independent thinkers.

2.3 This Teaching and Learning policy lays the foundations for the whole curriculum, both formal and informal and, along with our Mission Statement and Aims, forms the context in which all other policy statements should be read. It is written for the benefit of all members of the school community to ensure that all are aware of the fundamental principles underpinning the work of the school.

2.4 This policy works in conjunction with Assessment, Recording and Reporting, Curriculum, Behaviour and Discipline, Equal Opportunities, Gifted and Talented, and Special Educational Needs. Other documentation should also be considered such as Staff, Staffing qualifications, Staffing ratios.

2.5 This policy is available to parents and prospective parents on the school's website and by request from the School office.

3.0 POLICY FOR EDUCATING PUPILS WITH HIGH LEARNING POTENTIAL

Background: *There is evidence that successful provision made for pupils identified as having high learning potential results in an increase in general levels of achievement for all pupils and a culture of success is created.*

3.1 Aims

Prior Park College is committed to providing a stimulating learning environment which:

- Continually challenges and encourages all pupils to raise the level of their aspirations and maximise their potential;
- Recognises and nurtures the learning potential and talents of all pupils;
- Seeks to inspire individuals to develop their potential, with self-belief and realistic but high expectations;
- Supports and encourages pupils to value and share their talents within the community.

3.2 Identification of Talented Pupils and those with High Learning Ability

We aim for the process to be 'inclusive' rather than 'exclusive'.

The following encompasses the methods used at the school to identify pupils with specific talents and high learning potential. It should be understood that is a dynamic process, and it is recognised that pupils' talents develop at different stages of their education and thus evaluations for every child must take place throughout their educational life.

- Entrance testing for all pupils joining the school at whatever level;
- Baseline assessments using MIDYIS and ALIS;
- Scholarship examinations and assessments;
- Public Examination results;
- Teacher nomination;
- Specialist teacher/coach nomination.

It is recognised that talented pupils as well as those with high learning potential may be:

- Of high ability across the curriculum as a whole;
- Of high ability in one area only;
- Of high ability but low motivation;
- Very able but with a short attention span;
- Of good verbal ability but poor writing skills;
- Very able with limited interpersonal skills;
- Keen to disguise their abilities;
- Could be SEN or with general behavioural issues.

Everyone in school has a responsibility to recognise and value all pupils' abilities. We recognise that:

- The pupil with high learning ability may not necessarily be the one who is the most attentive in class or have the best set of notes;
- Unnecessary repetition of work is demotivating and demotivated pupils will not always demonstrate potential;
- There is sometimes peer pressure to under-achieve.

3.3 Provision for the gifted and talented

In meeting the needs of high ability pupils it is very important to create an environment of high quality, challenging teaching through opportunities for extension and enrichment. To facilitate this every scheme of work must give details of specific provision for pupils with high learning potential.

Such provision may be provided via the following methods:

- Enrichment and extension tasks;
- Bespoke timetables;;
- Fast tracking;
- Through internal 'in house' competitions, as well as those organised externally (eg. Maths Challenge, Biology Olympiad);
- Lectures (eg. Ralph Allen Lectures, HM's Academic Society Lectures etc);
- Music/performing arts;
- Languages (eg. variety of languages offered beyond the curriculum (eg. Italian, Korean, Japanese etc);
- Masterclasses;
- Leadership opportunities;
- Trips and visits;;
- Specialist teaching (eg. Science taught separately from F4, as well as peripatetic provision in MFL, music and sports);
- Partnership with local and national institutions (eg. Bath Uni supporting the AASE programme for young athletes).

3.4 Within the classroom:

- Each dept should define success, high standards, and appropriate levels of progress;
- Teachers have high expectations and continually raise the bar;
- Tasks should be designed to take account of levels of existing knowledge, skills and understanding, whilst encouraging intellectual curiosity;
- There are planned extension opportunities or open-ended tasks available;
- Small group work;
- Grouping by ability where appropriate;
- Differentiated homework.

4.0 HOMEWORK and PREP POLICY

'Homework is a generic term which students, parents and schools readily recognise and encompasses other activities and descriptors such as prep, out of hours learning, coursework, extension activities, etc.'

4.1 Rationale

The aim of the homework policy is to promote independent learning beyond the classroom. Homework reinforces classroom learning, and helps students to further develop skills and attitudes they need for successful lifelong learning. It supports the development of independent learning skills, including the habits of enquiry and investigation.

Homework is most beneficial when:

- It develops and extends the core learning skills of inquiry and independent study;
- It reinforces and extends classwork and consolidates basic skills and knowledge;
- It is challenging and purposeful, but not so demanding that it has adverse effects on the student's motivation;
- Students take responsibility for their homework, supported by their parents and staff;
- It is well coordinated and teacher expectations are well communicated;
- It is set on a regular basis and establishes a routine of home and beyond the classroom study;
- Teachers set suitable amounts of homework which are varied and at an appropriate level considering the age, stage of schooling and capabilities of students;
- It takes into account students' responsibilities and extracurricular activities such as clubs, sport and musical commitments;
- It is marked promptly and accurately according to the *Marking Policy*;
- Feedback and follow-up are provided regularly to students.

4.2 Principles

a) School

- The school will keep parents and students informed of the *Homework Policy* and the expectations of individual students;
- Homework tasks should be carefully planned as part of a department's Scheme of Work. It is important that homework forms a meaningful part of the work of the particular subject;
- Each subject will set regular homework tasks within the context of the subject specific needs and arrangements;
- Homework tasks should be varied in style and appropriate to the needs of the learner, and as laid down and agreed within department schemes of work;
- Teachers will keep a record of homework tasks and provide diagnostic and development feedback in accordance with the department's marking policy. Feedback may be a combination of sources: teacher, peer, self;
- The developing use of the school IT network and parent/pupil portal will result in appropriate homework tasks, supporting materials and link sites increasingly being made available through this medium;
- The school will support students in their completion of homework tasks through access to study facilities, including the Library, IT facilities, as well as dedicated spaces such as Academy Hall, and House study rooms.

b) Students

- Students will be encouraged and supported to take responsibility for their prep time learning, both in school and at home. This will include managing their time, meeting all extended coursework deadlines;
- A “School Diary” will be given to each student at the beginning of each academic year, in which students will be required to take responsibility for the recording of all homework tasks. These journals will be checked by tutors on a regular basis;
- Students will be encouraged to view learning outside the classroom as more than the specific homework set. Such activities as reading around subjects; undertaking extended personal research; or simply organising folders and notes are ways in which a student can positively impact on their performance.

c) Parents

- The support of parents and guardians is crucial, in helping, monitoring, providing feedback, encouraging and creating an appropriate learning environment in which to complete homework;
- Parents will be encouraged to provide support and to contact tutors about homework should concerns or issues arise. In this context inspection and countersigning of the student’s diary is particularly effective and must be encouraged;
- Further development of IT facilities will see increased opportunity for parents to access up to date information on homework etc.

4.3 Guidelines for Setting and Marking of Homework

The homework timetable will be published annually to complement the lesson timetable. This will detail for each year group the frequency and timing of preps in each subject. This document should be read with care, and tutors will be required to ensure that all pupils have access to their prep timetable at the start of the academic year. The nature and length of homework will vary according to the needs of the subject and course being followed.

Homework must:

- Be set for all pupils according to the published homework timetable established for each year group at the beginning of the academic year;
- Be planned as an integral part of the lesson;
- Have a clear purpose;
- Be written down accurately by students in their diaries, with clear and reasonable deadlines for completion;
- Be marked as quickly as possible and returned to pupils with meaningful feedback.

In addition:

- Appropriate differentiation must be made for students with special needs;
- Tutors must ensure that pupils keep their diaries up to date, and that appropriate support is offered to help students get the best out of homework.

4.4 Day To Day Management of Homework

- Subject teachers should indicate a suggested completion time for each homework task/activity. This should be written by students alongside the entry in their diaries.
- Subject teachers are to ensure that the recording of homework tasks in diaries is completed by all pupils.

- In the case of extended homework tasks, Pupils are to be given interim deadlines by the subject teacher at the beginning of extended tasks to assist the pupils in completing those tasks to the best of their ability.

4.5 Types of Homework

The three main types of homework are:

- Practice exercises:** providing students with the opportunities to apply new knowledge, or review, revise and reinforce newly acquired skills, including:
 - Consolidation exercise, eg maths, including memorisation of tables;
 - Practising for mastery, eg spelling words;
 - Revising information about a current topic;
 - Practising words or phrases learnt in a language other than English;
 - Reading for pleasure;
 - Essay writing.
- Preparatory homework:** providing opportunities for students to gain background information on a unit of study so that they are better prepared for future lessons, including:
 - Background reading;
 - Reading, eg English text for class discussion;
 - Researching topics for a class unit of work;
 - Collecting items, eg geometric shapes.
- Extension assignments:** encouraging students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively, including:
 - Writing, eg a book review;
 - Making or designing something, eg an art work;
 - Investigations, eg science;
 - Researching, eg history, local news;
 - Information and retrieval skills, eg. using a PC to find material on the Internet;
 - Monitoring, eg. advertising in particular newspapers.

4.6 Time Allocation for Homework by Year Group

Year Group	Time Allocation per day.
Lower 3 & Form 3	60 minutes
Form 4	90 minutes
Lower Five & Upper Five (GCSE)	120 minutes.
Lower Sixth (AS)	3 hours per subject per week outside of timetabled lessons
Upper Sixth (A2)	4 hours per subject per week outside of timetabled lessons

4.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

- The school will review this policy annually to assess its implementation and effectiveness;
- Heads of Department will monitor, on an ongoing basis, with academic teams the effective implementation of homework practices;
- Housemasters, Housemistresses and Tutors will provide support and guidance, and mentor students as necessary;
- Feedback to and from students and parents will be sought and provided. These will be recorded in the student's diary, with appropriate targets agreed and reviewed in a weekly basis;
- Parents will be encouraged to monitor homework and to inform the school should issues arise.

- The Academic Deputy Head will monitor the effective implementation of the Homework Policy, including individual student sampling and discussions with parents.

4.8 The Role of the House

Most pupils will complete a good proportion of their homework at in their Houses.

House should provide support and encouragement by:

- Providing a suitable quiet space in which can work be done;
- Providing suitable supervision during 'prep' time;
- Tutors talking with students about their homework, the standards they are achieving and reinforcing the importance of carrying out homework tasks;
- Checking deadlines and helping students manage their time successfully so that these deadlines are met;
- Positive reinforcement though praise and sanctions as appropriate.

4.9 The Role of Parents

Parents and guardians are also in a position to offer vital support and encouragement to their sons/daughters as they complete homework tasks. For older students in day Houses there is an expectations that a proportion of their homework will be completed at home. Support and advice to parents will be given via:

- Newsletters;
- Year Group Handbook;
- Special presentations in key year groups (eg. F4);
- Contact with the home by subject teachers and pastoral staff;
- Discussions at parents' evenings.

5.0 MARKING POLICY

The School has a variety of marking practices in different curricular areas. This is appropriate given the range of different skills, understanding and competencies being assessed. Nonetheless it is essential that the basis for all marking should be clearly stated, commonly understood (both within and between departments) and consistently applied.

5.1 Principles

- Marking of pupils' work in all subjects should be regarded as a regular means of communication with pupils about their individual progress;
- This communication must be in a form that is comprehensible and clearly able to be understood by the individual pupil;
- The feedback on progress that this represents should inform the next step in a pupil's learning.

5.2 Purposes of Marking

Each department should establish a Marking Policy which reflects the need of the individual subject, but which does not conflict with the College's overall policy.

Each individual marking policy must take into account differentiation and should wherever possible include the following aims:

- To encourage and stimulate pupils by praising current achievement;
- To assist pupils by the setting of clear targets to focus on aspects of work where further development is needed;
- To provide the teacher with feedback on how well pupils have understood the current work and enable him/her to plan the next stage of teaching and learning;
- To enable the teacher to make judgements about pupil attainments, particularly with regard to the assessment criteria at GCSE and A level.

5.3 Guidelines for Marking

In order to provide a degree of consistency across departments, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- Work should be collected in regularly and returned as quickly as is practicable; departmental policy should establish the frequency of collection and return;
- Written comments should be predominantly constructive, acknowledging what has been achieved as well as highlighting areas for improvement;
- A specific comment on learning should be made at the end of a piece of work. The aim should be to summarise achievement and to set a further target;
- Pupils should have access to the marking criteria and understand the meaning of the marks/grades they receive;
- Marking should usually recognise achievement and attainment but should not confuse the two;
- Pupil self and peer-assessment should be encouraged;
- Marking practices and procedures should be consistently applied and should be in keeping with the School's overall policy on assessment.

5.4 Responsibilities

a) It is the responsibility of the Head of Department:

- To ensure that the Department has an effective marking policy which is fully understood by all department members and that the policy is regularly reviewed;

- To ensure that the Department's policy is in keeping with the School's overall policy on assessment;
 - To ensure the implementation of the Department's marking policy;
 - To establish a centralised system of recording marks and assessments made by individual teachers within the department;
 - To ensure that these marks and assessments are standardised so that meaningful grades are recorded and communicated to pupils.
- b) It is the responsibility of all classroom teachers:**
- To ensure that all class work and homework is marked regularly according to the Department's marking policy;
 - To ensure that when marking takes place any unfinished pupil work is subsequently completed;
 - To keep a record of marks and assessments achieved in accordance with the agreed procedures within the department;
 - To explain the marking and assessment grading system to the pupils;
 - To ensure that assessment information informs further curriculum planning.