

St Mary's High School Downpatrick



'Every Child Matters'

Curriculum Policy



*Spirit of Catholic Education
Award 2022*



Rationale

The curriculum offered in St Mary's High School seeks to fulfil the educational aims as outlined in the School Development Plan. In addition to the compulsory subjects specified for study at each key stage, the school seeks to provide an enriched curriculum for all students, offering optional subjects as appropriate and offering extra-curricular activities to all age groups.

Aims

Our aim is to ensure that through the planning and implementation of the curriculum that every student is encouraged to reach their full potential. We will aim:

- To improve the quality of learning and teaching by embedding assessment for learning and active learning practices across all subject areas
- To raise the level of student achievement at all levels
- To further embed the culture of tracking including target setting by staff and students
- To develop the use of ICT and e-learning to improve student attainment and the student experience
- To further develop the sharing of best practice in learning and teaching across the school
- To make every effort to encourage parental involvement in their child's education

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

Our curriculum is designed to develop our students as:

- Individuals
- Contributors to society
- Contributors to the economy and the environment

At KS3 (Years 8-10) the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum and has fully implemented the Revised Curriculum as required by the Education Order 2006, including Learning for Life & Work (incorporating Home Economics, Personal Development, Local and Global Citizenship and Education for Employability) Skills and Capabilities.

At KS3 students will study the following subjects:

- Art
- Careers
- Coding
- Entrepreneurial Skills
- French
- Geography
- History

- Home Economics
- Learning for Life and Work
- Mathematics
- Music
- Physical Education
- Personal Development
- Religious Education
- Science
- Spanish
- Technology

Coding, Home Economics, Learning for Life and Work is delivered through a carousel arrangement.

In their final year of KS3, Year 10 students make their option choices for GCSE during the second term. This will enable them to develop their strengths and consider a wide range of career options as they progress into KS4.

Key Stage 4 Curriculum

At KS4 we offer a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the requirements of the Entitlement Framework and allows students to reach their full potential. There are two different pathways open to students.

Pathway 1: Students study:

- GCSE English
- GCSE Mathematics
- GCSE Learning for Life and Work
- GCSE Religion/OCN Religion
- GCSE Single Science
- Non-exam PE
- + 3 option choices

Pathway 2: This is a mixture of academic and vocational courses. The vocational courses are equivalent to GCSE. Students study:

- GCSE English
- GCSE Mathematics
- CCEA Preparation for Adult Life
- Occupational Studies in Horticulture
- OCN Person Wellbeing
- Non-exam PE
- +3 option choices

The students' choices enable option blocks to be drawn up. Students will be assigned to option blocks based on their option choices. Parents and students are informed of the option choices they have been assigned to. Students and parents will have the opportunity to speak to a member of Senior Management if they have any concerns or questions.

Key Stage 5 Curriculum

Students enter Sixth Form after having successfully completed their GCSE courses. There is an extensive range of subjects on offer to students from at AS and A Level. Collaboration arrangements between our school, St Patrick's Grammar School & De La Salle High School have been in place since 2010. The arrangements enable our students to have access to 29 different subjects and ensures that we are meeting the Entitlement Framework. This enables students to have an enhanced range of academic and vocational subjects to suit their career pathways. Students can study subject choices at the three post primary schools. Students will have the best possible combination of subjects that will prepare them for university, further education, an apprenticeship, or the world of work.

Financial Viability

Due to the economic and budgetary constraints, it is imperative that we achieve best value for money for each of our students. To this end classes need to be financially viable and this means that minimum class sizes will need to be considered where appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities

Heads of Department

HoDs work with colleagues to promote and sustain high quality teaching and learning in their subject area and to ensure the best possible outcomes for students. They ensure that appropriate Schemes of Work and syllabi are in place and used by colleagues in all year groups which are in accordance with Department of Education guidance. Careful monitoring of student performance is also carried out.

Subject Teachers

The subject teachers will work under the direction of their Head of Department to deliver the appropriate Schemes of Work to ensure that students are given the opportunity to achieve their best possible outcomes.

Heads of Year

HoYs will take an overview of each student's progress at each assessment. They will communicate with parents regarding student under performance and low performance. Strategies will be agreed and put in place for improvement.

This policy should not be read in isolation, but should be considered in conjunction with the following:

- Learning & Teaching Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Homework Policy
- Inclusion & Special Needs Policy

