

**Plymouth  
School of  
Creative Arts**

make  
discover  
perform

**Plymouth School of Creative Arts**

**Curriculum Statement and Policy**

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to support our whole school purpose of *Creating Individuals, Making Futures*. It ensures that our practice is based on principles that relate to the ethos and distinctiveness of the school. Particularly Making to Learn and Individual and Different Learning and Development.

### ***Making to Learn***

Life is not a theoretical process. It involves *doing* alongside *being* and is a 'whole body' experience. We recognise that to fulfil our potential requires us to be active in mind and body together; making something connects us to ourselves and to others.

### ***Individual & Different Learning & Development***

In our school we recognise that every individual makes sense of things differently, and also learns and develops differently. A whole range of different factors (including physical and inherited characteristics, our past experiences and our environment) can affect the ways we understand and relate to the world around us. These differences can contribute to both difficulties and strengths within learning and development. Our framework for *Individual & Different Learning and Development* is genuinely inclusive and addresses *both* strengths and difficulties. Our differences are what connect us together.

1.1 There is a continued intention for the National Curriculum to be 'balanced and broadly based'. ***As a Free School, Plymouth School of Creative Arts (PSCA) is not bound (unlike maintained schools) by the National Curriculum.*** However, it is with this balanced and broadly based principle aim in mind that the PSCA curriculum has been designed. We have the same accountabilities to Ofsted and National Assessments that other schools have.

1.2 We also want to ensure that the style of teaching, development of learning habits, use of assessment and the curriculum experience combine to provide a context where students thrive.

## 2. Curriculum Policy Statement

2.1 In keeping with its vision, ethos and rationale PSCA will offer a broad and balanced curriculum that provides opportunities to learn creatively across all subjects. The curriculum is a vehicle to realise the school's core purpose of *Creating Individuals, Making Futures*. Learning is underpinned by the process of making, performing and discovering to develop the following attributes in its learners:

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Our approach will enable us to:

- Raise aspirations
- Develop life skills, confidence and improve active participation
- Enable seamless progression from primary through to higher education
- Improve achievement and close the attainment gap
- Achieve high standards in National Qualifications

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The table below exemplifies these across the school age range for illustrative purpose

	Reception aged 4/5	Year 4 aged 8/9	Year 8 aged 14	Year 11 aged 15/16
<b>Playing And Experimenting</b>	A play based curriculum that uses our locality and imagination. When you are four play is your job description!	Constructing a shelter that I will sleep out in on the moors.	Creating my own science experiment in response to a provocation	Through being playful in specialisms I begin to develop my own approach and style.
<b>Learning Together</b>	Having jobs and responsibilities that help our classroom be a great place.	Developing an idea through a number of team activities about what helps us work together well for a common goal.	Working with a local business to provide a design service based on their needs; this involves project management and responding to feedback.	I have a role to lead the learning of younger students as a part of me taking increasing responsibility.
<b>Thinking For Myself</b>	I have times where I choose where and how I play	I have a personal learning journal for my thoughts and ideas that I share with others at various planned points.	I have personal projects and use blogging to express my thoughts.	I can deal with high levels of uncertainty coming up with original thinking in a variety of contexts
<b>Embracing Uncertainty</b>	I design, through play, an object with a purpose using a range of different materials.	I experience living and learning somewhere else as a part of the schools residential experience	I have designed an original science experiment where nobody knows what will happen	My learning is linked to enterprise and running a small-scale business.
<b>Purposeful Practice</b>	Visiting the city at night to broaden my experiences and to see things differently. Children turn the 'home corner' into a city street	Making a film with older students that is shared with others	I am being the artist through my work being exhibited rather than just learning about art.	Sharing my talents in a variety of ways as a part of my final year exhibition of learning for the community.

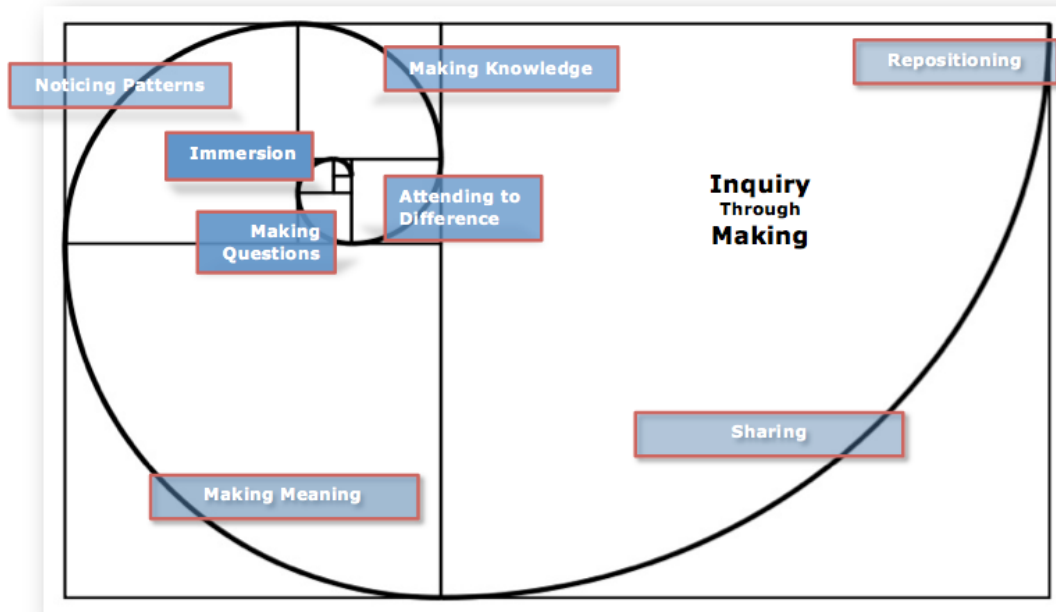
2.2 The curriculum model is one in which:

***It is essential that the work that students take part in is purposeful, has context and looks at how I am learning as well as what I am learning.*** This fits with our focus on developing intrinsic motivation, which supports students to recognise the choices they make in life and the associated consequences.

2.3 This is realised through the following dimensions:

- The student is at the centre of the learning process. Whilst both learning and teaching are important, learning rather than teaching should drive our processes
- Making is at the core of our ethos. Our pedagogy is often linked to an inquiry through making. The process of making can lead to the rest of the room disappearing and being purposefully absorbed

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- Our approach could be seen as Project Based Learning. It is connected into the process of making and having a real purpose and audience in relation to any project
- A stage not age approach where your needs rather than age drives your experience
- The arts and cultural learning are used in developing understanding, skills and attributes in all subject areas
- The school has developed a Studio Ecology that utilises a team approach to co-construct the curriculum. This means that students, staff, other experts and parents all have the potential to shape what we do
- Creativity is a thread that runs through all subjects – See Ken Robinson - [https://www.ted.com/talks/ken\\_robinson\\_says\\_schools\\_kill\\_creativity](https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity)
- Developing a growth mindset in our learners is important – See Carol Dweck - [https://www.ted.com/talks/carol\\_dweck\\_the\\_power\\_of\\_believing\\_that\\_you\\_can\\_improve](https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve)
- Building a strong conceptual understanding of an area allows for a strong foundation for future learning. This could be referred to as mastery learning. – See Sal Kahn [https://www.ted.com/talks/sal\\_khan\\_let\\_s\\_teach\\_for\\_mastery\\_not\\_test\\_scores](https://www.ted.com/talks/sal_khan_let_s_teach_for_mastery_not_test_scores)
- We do not believe that it is a choice between Academic success and Creativity. These areas are complementary. For example, consider the creativity required as a scientist to design an original science experiment
- The curriculum should reflect and be tailored towards needs. This includes individual, local and national needs. Individual needs and aspirations are met, and obstacles to progression removed
- Assessment forms an integral part for understanding where students are and what will help them improve
- As an 'All-Through' school we are able to utilise specialist staff and spaces from an early stage. This links to the developmental needs of each learner
- Our approach is linked to research and can be evidenced internally through the outcomes of students. Students also act as researchers
- The curriculum actively plans to develop the attributes described in our Language of Learning illustrated on Page 4
- The curriculum looks to connect to personal aspiration and has an ongoing element around

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*Being the best you can be*

- We utilise TED questions – Tell me ..., Explain about ..., Describe ... to promote self-inquiry and responsibility within your learning
- Students are seen as leaders of their own learning and as such facilitating student voice is essential
- We recognise that all the choices we make as a learner have consequences
- The curriculum will give students the opportunity to select projects and subjects for study from a range of pathways that are equally valued and held in equal esteem. Not all students will be expected to do the same things
- We are developing a curriculum that is appropriately broad and balanced to help prepare young people for life in modern Britain
- Curriculum experience is resourced in a way that enhances and transforms learning. This includes the use of ICT
- Learning outdoors and utilising the city as a resource enhance the context for learning
- We support learners to curate their own learning and life
- Technology will be embedded in all aspects of school life to enable children to develop digital wisdom
- Interdependence as well as independence in learning are fostered
- Learning has a context, preferably real. This means we consider the value of audience and purpose on an on-going basis to develop Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

2.4 The Governors and the Senior Leadership Team will ensure that planning for curriculum experience facilitates effective outcomes for learners. They will ensure that the curriculum provision supports the principles of life-long learning and educational opportunities beyond school for students while they are at school and when they leave school. It will ensure that all students have the opportunity to achieve nationally accredited qualifications in all courses of study and that all students have the opportunity to follow programmes of study that can contribute towards subsequent accredited study.

2.5 Every student will have a personalised curriculum based on prior attainment data, student aspirations and challenging targets. Within their individual learning programme, the students will be offered a level of learning appropriate to their recognised needs

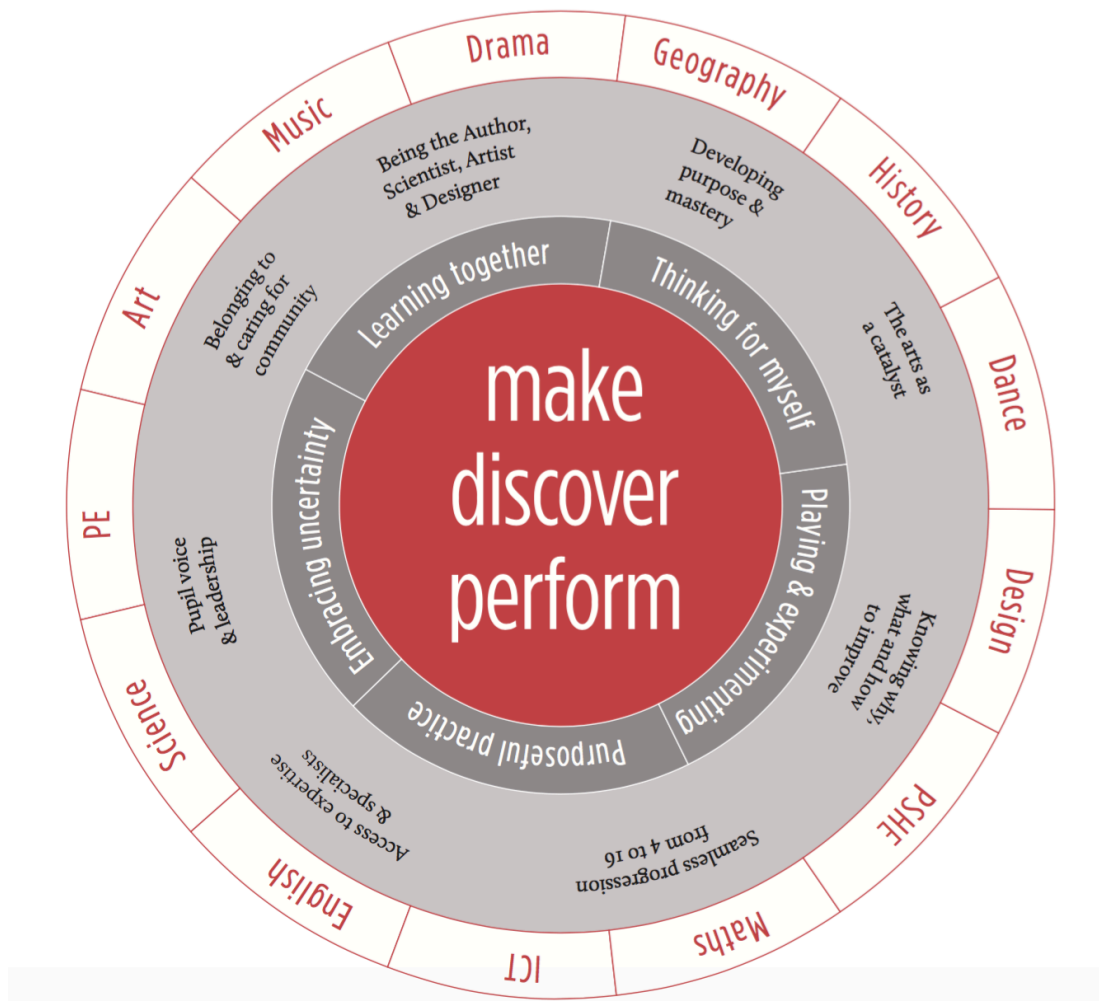
2.6 Our model has been developed in response to a range of best practice evidence, research and real world experience. Innovation in the curriculum is evaluated for impact and revision

2.7 Our staff will ensure progression and coherence by regular monitoring and evaluation and provide equality of access to all individuals, taking due account of special needs or disabilities.

2.8 Each phase of the school will adopt these intentions and principles, interpreting them as appropriate to the age range of the section and the specific needs, rather than age, of each learner

2.9 Curriculum Model Diagram Overleaf.

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### 3. Curriculum Planning and Provision

3.1 Curriculum planning and provision is a collaborative exercise involving various teams, students and other groups including those with expertise. The process of planning is not the same as having a plan

3.2 This planning is shared across staff teams to look for opportunities to enhance our quality as an all through school. This is to support the utilisation of staff specialism and expertise in a creative manner

3.3. Staff reflect in teams about the impact on learning of experience. This means we use feedback to continually challenge and improve what we offer. This is developed collaboratively in the Team Learning Profiles that studios and staff teams use

3.4 Staff studio practice and willingness to share what we do with leaders, external experts and parents demonstrates the process of co-construction that we use to develop the curriculum

3.5 Planning is developed in sequences, of varying lengths depending on the situation. For example, some planning runs across years, others may focus on a three-week period or others over a term. Weekly planning is posted each week to enable greater collaboration and transparency across the staff team

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3.6 Staff may share various parts of this with parents as this helps secure greater opportunities for learning outside of school. The detail may not be shared as it is likely to have information about individual's needs on it

3.7 Some of the curriculum will be partly developed and delivered by people from outside the school who have specialist skills and knowledge applicable to specific courses of study, which may be creatively, vocationally, or business focused. The school retains accountability for this

## 4. Developing the Curriculum

4.1 Phase Teams will develop and deliver the curriculum alongside the supervision of leaders including the Strategic Leadership Team who are accountable to the governors

4.2 The school has developed a Quality Framework. This supports staff in their Performance Management to challenge themselves positively to improve their practice as an on-going process. This also fits with the Team Learning Profiles A habit (such as good teaching or good learning) is formed when a person (teacher, student) knows *what* to do, knows *how* to do it and knows *why* they are doing

4.3 Learning sequences and schemes of work are developed across the school. This ensures consistently high standards in learning and teaching across all phases documenting the curricular activities planned for groups of students and maps coverage of the curriculum and GCSE / BTEC / UAL syllabi. Schemes of work will also provide a basis for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum.

## 5. Curriculum Overview

### Phase 1

Phase 1 is based in four studios which include Preschool, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. The purpose of this Phase is to build the foundations for children to thrive in their learning. We focus on the development of being literate and numerate alongside learning how to learn well and get on with those around us. Phase 1 children have smaller studios but are a part of the whole school and have opportunities to learn with older students.

### Early Years – Preschool and Reception

The learning principles are developed into play-based provision that responds to children's needs. We recognise the importance of play and blend an approach that draws from Alastair Bryce Clegg, Reggio Emilia and Montessori. The needs and interests of the learners inform planning. Staff utilise a mixture of continuous provision and small group work, workshop and work alongside. This means that the curriculum responds to individual need and development. There are opportunities to learn inside and out.

In Preschool and Reception, we use the Early Years Foundation Stage and provision reflects the

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different areas of learning. Assessment is used to inform the planning of provision. The areas of learning are:

- communication and language
- physical development – using Leap into Life
- personal, social and emotional development
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

Health related learning is planned in a structured manner to build an understanding of healthy lifestyles and safety during the year.

## Year 1 and Year 2

From Years 1 to 2 we look to capitalise on learners' confidence helping them build essential skills, knowledge and understanding as a platform for leading their own learning. Students will be immersed in a broad, engaging and highly creative experience. Fundamental to this is the development of language and literacy, numeracy, personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and (of course) creative development. There is flexibility in how weeks, terms and the year is planned indeed we will look to develop a thread through the entire year. The areas chosen have some areas of overlap and connection across year groups. Children will develop projects with a clear purpose and audience wherever possible.

The school currently assesses English and Maths using PSCA points which relate directly to National Curriculum descriptors. Student progress is carefully tracked throughout the school.

## Phonics

The school uses a blend of phonics approaches linked to Read Write Inc. This includes our reading scheme 'Bug Club' which has both books and online resources and the use of games including Trugs. As with other areas of the curriculum learners' progress is carefully tracked.

## Phase 2 and 3

**Phase 2 and 3 looks to rigorously apply and develop the core skills around being literate, numerate and making whilst fostering a student's creativity and intrinsic motivation.** Play develops into a playful inquiry. We do this through a distinctive blend of making to learn, studio ecology, individual and different learning and development, intrinsic responsibility, and continuum experiences working with Plymouth College of Art. Our approach is **Making Based Inquiry** and shares aspects of approaches such as Project Based Learning (PBL).

### Making Based Inquiry

During the Project the learners go through a number of connected parts:

- **The Inquiry** responds to an overarching Phase question as well as a personal question about what will I make. The Phase question is launched as a part of the Hook where the learner

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becomes excited about an area – this is planned for. The personal question emerges following immersion in experiences. The Inquiry is developed further through the making of something in response to the question.

- **The Provocation** looks to provide motivation for learning. Initially as the theme and question is launched we look to **hook** the student so they want to inquire. We then **immerse** them in experiences, which allow for a refining of the personal question, ‘What do I want to make?’.
- **The Making** looks to provide a further felt experience where I design, iterate based on feedback and finalise my ‘product’. The children’s process is structured depending on ability to work independently and manage my project. The process of making is **captured** via film, audio and / or journaling / blogging.
- **Sharing the Learning** involves recognition based on **reflection** and feedback of what has been learned about the making and myself. Self, peer and adult assessment are all important aspects. The object that was made and the learning are both used to **engage** with a real audience that are not just staff. Following this the learners **reposition** and ask themselves where am I going next?

All of the above are planned for. HERO is used as an on line platform for supporting learners to work through a project and share their learning with others, including their parents. The Throughout this we need to plan to meet the various needs of our learners. The above stages are dynamic and interrelate in a manner that is not a linear sequence. For example, you might provide a provocation to aid repositioning

## Phase 2

The day is split into four parts using mixed age groups in a ‘Stage not Age’ manner. The sequence of the first three will vary from day to day. **There are sessions for Making Based Inquiry (PBL theme), English and Maths.** The final part of the day is one that allows for further development of reading and enrichment so the learner feels good about their achievements and what to do next. During the last week of each term we have a ‘exhibition week’. During this time students have a chance to lead their learning linked to the project in an increasingly independent manner. For some students, like other areas of learning, this week will need to be more structured. At the end of the theme there is a link towards an event and engaging an audience. During this time, we continue to teach English, Maths and Project Based Learning.

Our approach gels together the curriculum experience, pedagogy and assessment. We provide opportunities for formative assessment of English, Maths and around the attributes of learners in PBL. This includes students self-assessing and develops a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. Rigorous assessment ensures that we attend to difference so that students can access learning and are stretched out of their comfort zones appropriately. The Phase is transparent in the way that learning is visible and shared with parents and other staff and learners.

There is a mixture of adult and student initiated learning. The environment, including technology, is seen as the third educator.

### Long Term Plan

The year is broken into three themes. This creates a 4-year rolling programme so that students don’t repeat but build on their learning. The themes and questions provide connections over the year and through the Phase. Central to each theme is a clear sense of purpose and audience to develop an

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authentic experience.

	<b>Year 16/17</b>
<p><b>Autumn Term</b></p> <p>How do I become the best I can be? Comfort zones</p>	<p><b>Inventions that have changed the world</b></p> <p>Importance of imagination</p>
<p><b>Spring Term</b></p> <p>What does my book, my way mean to me? Loving a Book</p>	<p>Fiction based theme – <b>Exploration</b></p> <p>Embracing uncertainty New horizons Seeing things differently</p>
<p><b>Summer Term</b></p> <p>How do we make a better world? Exploring the Horizon</p>	<p><b>Being the Artist, Athlete, Scientist, ...</b></p> <p>A deeper understanding of jobs and styles of thinking</p>

### Phase 3

In Phase 3 students use an abstract thematic which links subjects to a theme, such as adaptability in Year 7. The theme has an overarching question used across subjects. Within a subject students develop a Project with a real context and purpose. We use predominantly specialist teachers to create the subjects within a subject. This builds and extends the approach in Phase 2.

The purpose of Phase 3 is to ensure that on entry into Phase 4 students can read and write well, are numerate and know how to learn independently and with others.

All subjects use HERO as a platform for accessing and sharing learning. Standards are clearly linked to projects and self assessment is an important part of being able to identify your own next steps with increased accuracy.

The timetable structure for the curriculum is delivered through a 25 approximately hour long lesson a week timetable. We also have a literacy session for Reading and Writing. Tutor time gives opportunity for PHSE and the wider meeting of need.

The table on the next page shows the number of sessions for a fortnight. A tenth day is the tenth day of the fortnight and allows us the flexibility for extended learning sessions, visitors and visits with greater agility.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number of lessons in Year 7/8</b>
English (Not including daily literacy sessions)	5
Maths	6

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Science	4
History	3
Geography	3
Art	3
Design Technology	3
Culinary Art	2
French	2
Drama	3
Music	3
Computing	3
PE inc Dance	4
Tenth Day	5

The schemes of learning in relation to the above subjects are available on request. They give students the chance to develop wider skills in relation to leading their learning and applying literacy and numeracy. Students also have 5 notional days for the developments of their own projects each term. This may fit with a group looking into an area of personal interest or be part of a wider community project.

## Phase 4

In Year 8 students choose their options to study qualifications in Year 9, 10 and 11 (Phase 4). In Phase 4 all students learn English and Maths and choose from 5 other option blocks. At this point students no longer have to study the wide range of subjects that they did in Phase 3.

Please see the Options booklet on the Web Site to see the wide range of courses on offer. These include GCSE's, BTEC's and other Level 2 qualifications. We also support students to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh during this Phase. We are keen to support students in their pathways beyond the school and to ensure that their progress is outstanding in all subjects. The expectations of each exam board are within the public domain. If anyone would like support in accessing these then please request this from the subject teacher.

The overall approach to learning does not change with the continuation of projects using HERO as a digital platform providing purposeful practice as students move towards further pathways in education and the world of work. Careers Education takes an increasing focus from Year 10 onwards.

## 6. RE

As a school we teach RE and do this through the following methods:

- Integration into the wider curriculum and tutor time
- Celebration of different cultures and festivals including Christianity
- Direct teaching of RE via 10<sup>th</sup> days

## 7. Working with Parents

6.1 Parents are able to find out more about the curriculum by speaking to their child's teachers or the

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Phase Leader. Teachers are normally available most days at the beginning and end of the day. Please make a booking if you require a different time

6.2 Parents are also able to access important information digitally via HERO and Progresso

6.3 Parents are also invited in to the school to see what is happening on a regular basis. This includes coming on tours / learning walks with members of the Strategic Leadership Team. Our approach is to be transparent, learn and develop. Exhibition weeks and events or volunteering all provide opportunities for parents to engage in and make sense of the school curriculum

6.4 We are keen that if parents have questions they come and talk to us

## **8. Extended School Day and Extended Learning**

8.1 The school operates an extended day to enable pupils to take part in a range of activities. There is a quiet study space set aside to support students with their home learning and access to studios so that pupils can complete work

8.2 There are a range of afterschool clubs provided by both staff and other educators

8.3 We believe that students learn all the time. For younger students it is essential that we build a love of learning. More formalised home learning is a part of the overall learning experience of our students as they get older in Phase 3 and 4. The aim is to establish habits that promote learning and to provide preparation for learning in school, as well as extension, reinforcement and practice of learning. From Year 7 onwards we recognise that some students may choose to benefit from the school being open beyond the formal school day and therefore may choose to complete their extended learning at school. In response to this a variety of areas are open beyond the formal school day to help provide facilities for further research and study.

## **9. Monitoring and Review**

9.1 The SLT will review this policy alongside governors on a yearly basis.

9.2 Part of our process to monitor and review will include the use of research, learning walks and evaluation of a variety of forms of data.

9.3 The policy's implementation and effectiveness will be monitored by the Deputy Headteacher and be promoted and implemented throughout the school as part of our development of Pedagogy, Assessment, Curriculum Experience and Learning Habits.

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